Identity Construction of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities

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Abstract

In light of the expansion of Business English as a new discipline in China, there is a gap between the recruitment of Business English teachers and their actual career position, in which these teachers' identity construction is crucial to their professional development. This research aims to explore the identity and its construction of Business English teachers from a sociocultural perspective in the context of Chinese universities. A dynamic interrelationship of identity construction within practical and contextual frames is applied into the investigation of Business English teachers' (1) professional identity, (2) influencing factors to identity construction, and (3) addressing measures to their identity challenges. This research is conducted in two universities in Ningbo, targeting 30 Business English teachers for the depth and width of their real career life. A mixed-method approach is applied for the purpose of a holistic view of the working mechanism of identity construction by seeing Business English teachers' professional development as dynamic and socially created. Business English teachers in this research show a teaching-focused identity with research vulnerability and inactivity in Business English area. However, their professional identity is not fully established as a group of disciplinary community which is loosely organized with the problems of lack of competent leaders, mobile and hesitant members, and exclusion of part-time business mentors. The uncertain status of Business English as a discipline and the lack of institutional support are the major obstacles to the commitment in teachers' career shift. For coping strategies, most Business English teachers in this study make the most of their personal relationships in looking for professional developing opportunities and resources. School-based training is still insufficient and not effective, and social resources are not well utilized.

Key words: teacher identity; Business English discipline; Chinese universities

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the “teaching and learning of English as an additional language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain and for particular purposes” (Starfield & Hafner, 2025: 2). Business English is a good example of the emergence of ESP as a discipline. The increasing need for Business English is closely related to the impact of English as the lingua franca worldwide (Cheng & Anthony, 2014). The need for English as a tool for communication is exacerbated by forces of globalization which is keenly felt in the business world with the adjustment of economic structure all over the world specifically in China (Cai, 2015). In Europe, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been enhanced for the goal of “preparing students for the multifaceted challenges of the marketplace” (Fortanet-Gómez & Räisänen, 2008: 1) after the Bologna Declaration. The introduction of CLIL into classrooms is for the “practical need for the essential development of language education” (Kováčiková, 2020: 19) in many European countries. Structural changes have also taken place for the need of language for specific purposes (LSP) in universities in the United States (Grosse & Voght, 2012). Asian countries put their focus on internationalization of business and education (Zhang, 2007; Cheng & Anthony, 2014). For example, international corporate companies in Japan require all forms of communication be carried out in English including meetings, telephone calls and emails (Botting, 2010). An increasing number of courses in universities of South Korea and Southeast Asia are reported to be conducted in English (Kang, 2012). China’s export-oriented economy has a pressing need for compound talents who are qualified in both language skills and

industry-related knowledge (MyCOS Institute, 2010-2019).

In the light of such need, there are educational changes, and the emergence of Business English, as a discipline, has been developing very fast in the past two decades in China. In March 2007, the Chinese Bureau of Education officially approved Business English as a BA programme, authorizing the University of International Business and Economics the first institution to offer this programme. In 2012, Business English was officially included in the "Catalogue of Undergraduate Majors in Regular Higher Education Institutions (the 4th revised edition)" for the purpose of cultivation of inter-disciplinary talents. In 2015, the Teaching Collaboration Group for Business English formulated the "National Standards for Undergraduate Teaching Quality in Business English Programme in Higher Education Institutions", supplemented with the interpretation of the key points of the standards by major scholars in Business English (Wang et al., 2015).

According to the national standards, the total credits of Business English programme are generally 150-180, featuring language and business-related courses as its core courses. Universities of different tiers are entitled to determine the proportion of each part of the curriculum system based on its own educational positioning and training objectives. It is suggested that the student-teacher ratio should be not higher than 18:1 and full-time teachers should have doctoral degrees.

At the time of writing, 415 universities in mainland China offer programs with a BA degree in Business English (MOE, 2020). Such pressing need triggers a heavy recruitment of Business English teachers and accordingly changes their career trajectories.

This study investigates the identity and its construction of Business English teachers in Chinese universities. It is a study of Business English teachers in the context of higher education in Ningbo, a coastal city of China, where businesses are based on the export-oriented economy. The past decade saw a surge of Business English discipline at the university level in Ningbo with four local Tier-2 universities were approved to offer Business English programmes in 2013, but there was a relapse with one Business English programme cancelled in 2019 (MOE, 2020). Such expansion and contraction of a new discipline, also taking place in other universities of mainland China, has an impact on Business English teachers (Zhu et al, 2011). The “change and development” (Ai et al., 2019: 183) of Business English teachers are worth noticing since “the primary challenge” for a new discipline is “to ensure the quality of Business English teachers” (ibid).

Another challenge lies in how ESP teachers deal with the changes in their career trajectories (Wu & Badger, 2009; Campion, 2016) and how they identify and negotiate with themselves when they come across struggles in their new profession (Ai et al., 2019). Atai and Fatahi-Majd (2014) notice different beliefs between language teachers and subject teachers in discipline-based EAP reading in Iran. These beliefs reflect conceptions of two groups of teachers and lead to different classroom practices. It is found in a case study carried out by Tao and Gao (2018) in Hong Kong that identity crisis arises when teachers come across failures and obstacles in their development. In Taiwan, ESP teachers’ professional qualifications are questioned by students and specialist professors (Tsou & Chen, 2014). In mainland China, Business English teachers’ self-cognition is challenged when they experience in-class subject knowledge dilemmas (Wu & Badger, 2009). They also receive questioning from both students (Wang, 2017; Xu & Li, 2020) and academic professors (Tao & Gao, 2017) against their professional qualifications.

These research indicates a gap between the high requirement of Chinese Business English teachers and their actual position. How do Business English teachers deal with the challenges of adjusting themselves to their profession in a newly-established discipline? It is important to explore the current status of Business English teachers' identity, the construction and negotiation of their identity and the influencing factors. Therefore, problems can be identified and constructive strategies can be suggested for Business English teachers and school administrators, so that measures can be put in place help to enhance the sense of belonging and positive orientations towards Business English discipline.

1.2 Background of Study

Business English, a sub-field of ESP, refers to English for business purposes. It is integrated with English language, business discipline and intercultural business skills (Bao, 2019). Additional knowledge and skills is required and necessary by experienced English language teachers to teach ESP, which is a specialized area of language teaching. However, such knowledge and skills are often neglected by administrators and leaders (Basturkmen, 2025). Therefore, it raises challenges for Business English teachers when they identify themselves in the new profession. Since the question raised by Hutchinson & Waters (1987) on what kind of knowledge is required for Business English teachers, researchers have reached an agreement that Business English teachers are neither business teachers nor English teachers. Focus should be on both language and business skills (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Ye, 2012; Bao, 2013). Business English teachers are supposed to acquire Business English ontological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and instrumental knowledge (Bao, 2017). Business English ontological knowledge includes integrated knowledge of English and Business and intercultural business communication knowledge, which differentiate Business English teachers from general English language teachers. Pedagogically, Business

English teachers should be qualified in carrying out teaching practices in and outside classrooms, both in English language and business skills. Instrumental knowledge is knowledge and skills that can help improve teachers' teaching outcomes and efficiency, such as educational and psychological knowledge (ibid).

The high expectations and requirements of Business English teachers are debated and emphasized by many researchers in the past decade (Wu & Badger, 2009; Cai, 2015). Anthony (2009: 26-27) points out that the pressure on Business English teachers mounts the reason that Business English is overwhelmingly needed by society but the time and resources for teachers to teach and do research are limited. What is more, in Netherland, Germany and Spain, Nickerson (2005) finds that there is a gap between Business English research outcomes and textbooks. On the one hand, practice in Business English teaching does not benefit from or reflect the latest findings of its research. On the other hand, Business English research is not focused on the changing of practice. The disconnection of the research and teaching practice in Business English is so serious that it makes worse the conflicts between the demands for teachers and the lack of developing opportunities.

In Japan, the challenges that Business English teachers encounter in real practice are studied and well-described by Anthony (2009). Heavy workload is found to prevent the teachers from having the opportunity to "meet, let alone discuss issues" (ibid: 25) of Business English. In addition, teachers are short of teaching materials and find it difficult to decide how students should be assessed. Anthony (2009) expresses his worries that without professional support, Business English teachers may make assumptions about teaching materials and evaluation standards. He argues that the lack of support and communication among Business English teachers leads to the obstacles of teacher training. To solve the problem, Japanese universities choose to hire

part-time and visiting teachers from other universities or companies. However, it brings other problems such as who should be hired and what courses should they teach (ibid: 26-27). Unfortunately, it is not discussed in his article on the relationship between borrowed teachers and university staff, whether borrowed teachers can contribute and benefit university staff.

The problems of belonging exist especially in second-career teachers from companies (Trent & Gao, 2009). In Hong Kong, Business English teachers who used to work in companies express their discontent by not actively participating in school academic activities. These teachers feel that they are marginalized by academia and their professional training is not within consideration of the university administration.

Seen from a wider range, studies on language and ESP teachers' identity may provide information for Business English research. Conceptually, identity construction is considered as ongoing, complex and interactive (Day, 2018), influenced by factors such as teachers' previous experiences (Trent, 2012; Bukor, 2015), their emotions and feelings in different life stages (Tsui, 2007), and changes in working contexts and political environments (Smit et al., 2010). ESP teachers are reported to encounter challenges when constructing subject-matter knowledge (Wu & Badger, 2009). Ha (2007) and Richards (2008) stress the importance of social and cultural factors in regional EFL teachers' identity construction, while Johnson (2009) and Day (2011) both put emphasis on the interaction of individual and society. Pennington (2014) concludes TESOL teachers' identity as dynamic and evolving within layers of contextual frames. Taken together, the sociocultural perspective (Zittoun, 2012; Day, 2018) is widely applied to explore and understand language and ESP teachers' professional identity. With this conceptual perspective, Xun et al. (2014) develop an inventory for quantitative measurement of EFL teachers' identity and Yan et al. (2020) revise it for university EFL teachers. Pennington

(2014) creates a model for qualitative analysis of TESOL teachers' identity.

In Chinese Business English development, publications in the past two decades show that the main areas of Business English research are discourse analysis, Business English pedagogy, Business English talents cultivation and training, Business English course design and textbooks, Business English testing, and Business English meta-research (Wang & Jiang, 2019). Up to 2019, there are only 10 empirical studies of Chinese Business English teachers' professional development. This reveals the lack of Business English teachers' professional development and its lack of priority given to Business English teachers' identity.

The current challenges for Chinese Business English teachers can be characterized as insufficiency in knowledge structure, under-confidence in Business English discipline, low autonomy in classroom teaching and weak research capacity (Guo & Niu, 2016; Bao, 2017). To deal with these setbacks and obstacles, a positive professional identity may help encourage Business English teachers' social participation, and eventually enhance their active construction and generation of disciplinary knowledge (Day, 2018). That is to say, identity construction of Business English teachers is crucial to their professional development. With a strong and positive identity, Business English teachers may produce stronger agency, efficacy and commitment individually and collectively. Otherwise, teachers may be less motivated and unlikely to recover from emotional frustration with a weak and ambiguous identity.

However, the identity of Chinese Business English teachers is under-researched with the consideration of their Chinese living and working environment. This problem has been existing in a wider scope that research in ESP are usually small-scale and context-specific, most of which are case

studies with teachers in one setting (Woodrow, 2022). With the family-valued tradition, Chinese see society as an extended family and prefer integration into collectivism to being unique (Barkema et al., 2015). Strongly influenced by Confucius, it is more likely that Chinese value group interests more than westerners (Zhou et al., 2018). They respect authority and value harmony over individualism in their working community. Moreover, regarding the role of culture, Asians see themselves as part of a complex system influenced by their surroundings from the philosophical perspective of *feng shui* (Nisbett, 2003). These features of the particular context and culture may have a plausible impact on Chinese teachers' perception of their roles and obligations, their relationship within community, their sense of belonging, and their ways of narratives. Therefore, it is necessary and meaningful to gain an authentic and in-depth understanding of Business English teachers' identity in Chinese context and culture.

1.3 Context of Study

The concept of teacher professional identity refers to "the way that teachers, both individually and collectively, view and understand themselves as teachers" (Mockler, 2011: 519). In the context of language teaching, Yuan and Zhang (2019) define teacher identity as "the ways teachers make sense of themselves and the images they present to others in their situated institutional and sociocultural context" (ibid: 3). This definition stresses the concepts which matter in language teacher identity. How teachers cope with identity crisis is an issue interwoven with fragmented elements which interplay with each other over time. The issue is in connection with the teaching content and context (Beijaard, 2004). It is a composition of self-conscious images of teachers individually and collectively, "characteristics and traits which others perceive in or ascribe to" (Pennington, 2014: 69) teachers, and the coping strategies with influencing factors within the working context.

1.3.1 Teacher identity: efficacy, agency, emotions, and resilience

In teacher identity research, major foci include efficacy, agency, emotions and resilience. Day (2018) describes identity as “an amalgam of the personal and professional selves” (ibid: 61) collectively influenced by three strands: agency, emotions and resilience.

As Bandura (2000) elaborates the dynamics of identity, efficacy and agency, teachers’ individual sense of efficacy is influenced by social factors and strengthened by perseverance (see Figure 1-1 below). It is also influenced by teachers’ sense of collective efficacy in the form of school strength, which usually lies in operative cultures and goals of institutions or organizations (Goddard et al., 2004). As high personal efficacy results in strong sense of agency, positive professional identity is more likely to be set up. With a strong belief in professionalism and capability, teachers are reported to “redouble their effort to master the challenges” (ibid: 120)

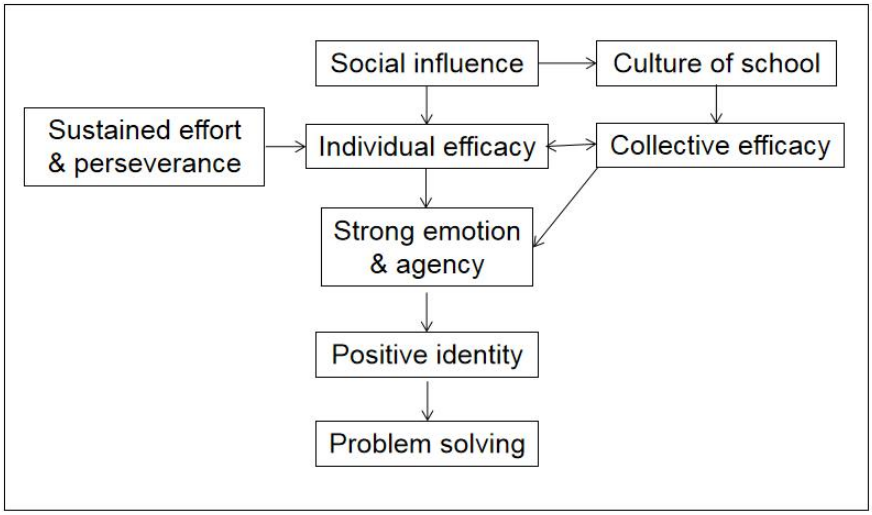

Figure 1-1: Dynamic interrelationship of identity construction (Bandura, 2000)

Emotion is regarded as “integral to the work of teachers and their teaching” (Grossberg, 1992: 82). Teachers “perform emotional labor” (Wróbel, 2013: 581)

because they draw upon reserves of emotional energy (Pyhalto et al., 2011) by showing enthusiasm and empathy in and out of classrooms. Sometimes they have to hide fatigue and annoyance. In a long and active interaction with students and colleagues, it is very difficult for teachers to self-deceive by surface acting (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015) a professional face.

Resilience is regarded as a capacity to regain the willingness, commitment and ability of teaching (Day & Gu, 2014). It “rests on assumptions of agency” (Downes, 2017: 100) when changes or challenges are posed on the “stability of teachers’ sense of identity” (Day, 2018: 68).

Understanding of these three strands may help to benefit a variety of stakeholders such as individual teachers, teacher educators, school administrators and policy makers. It may also provide suggestions in pre-service training for novice teachers, recruitment and sustainment of teaching force, and in-service programmes (Day, 2018).

In China, teachers’ lack of belief in Business English discipline has been a long-existing problem (Liu, 2011; Guo, 2015). Very few Chinese Business English teachers are reported to take the initiative to execute their personal efficacy (Peng & Hu, 2019). Some transform their career to Business English discipline under the coercion of institutional-level adjustment. Especially in the digital age when learning modes change, the lack of individual and collective efficacy leads to an identity crisis in Chinese Business English teachers (Wang, 2016). It remains vague whether a positive environment-efficacy-agency -identity-action chain has been established. How links work and interplay with each other is not investigated for Business English teachers in China.

1.3.2 Inter-discipline and knowledge structure

Educational changes, such as integration of disciplines, lead to temporary uncertainty or negative effects in teachers' identity (Berjaard, 1995). The nature of Business English as an inter-discipline determines challenges to Chinese Business English teachers. Firstly, the uncertainty of Business English is well reflected in the quick expansion and contraction of the its scale. In its peak, there are over 540 Chinese universities providing Business English programme but the cancellation and downsizing is also very common according to the annual admission plans of these universities (MOE). Secondly, such uncertainty is partly due to the delayed release of Business English national disciplinary standards. Business English teachers feel distrust in the future of Business English discipline, ambiguity of their academic position and uncertainty in teaching practices. Thirdly, Chinese Business English being an officially recognized discipline with a short history of two decades, the knowledge base and philosophy of Business English discipline are still under discussion and not officially agreed on (Wang & Zhang, 2011; Hu et al., 2016).

Learning is "individuals' active construction and generation of knowledge" and identity construction in "socioculturally determined knowledge communities" (Eteläpelto et al., 2013: 46) In order to acquire knowledge, teachers should have to understand the "knowledge structure they should have" (Zhao, 2011: 4). Researchers propose varied teacher knowledge structure models. Some put emphasis on layers of knowledge structures (Gilbert et al., 1987), some stress the importance of learners' needs and education aims (Shulman, 1987), and others point out that practical knowledge should not be neglected in teachers' knowledge structure (Chen, 2003).

Language teachers' identity does not simply mean teachers' perspectives about their state of professional development. Their teaching beliefs and competence plays an important role in identity perception (Basturkmen, 2025;

Xun et al., 2014). Yan et al. (2020) add research competence as a necessary ability for university language teachers.

In Business English context, Zhang (2007) raises the question whether Business English teachers have to be both language experts and subject specialists. How much business knowledge and hands-on business experience is “desirable or as a compulsory part of a qualified Business English teacher” (ibid: 401)? Necessity of ontological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and instrumental knowledge (Bao, 2017) are raised and emphasized for Chinese Business English teachers. However, the perception of their development state and their research competence are not systematically evaluated.

1.3.3 Sociocultural perspective

Identity is regarded as the social orientation of self and others on multiple levels (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). From sociocultural perspective, identity, as a sociocultural phenomenon, is constructed through social activities and changes in light of particular stands and roles (Zittoun, 2012; Day, 2018). Identity is formed and negotiated intentionally (Vygotsky, 1997).

Chinese Business English teachers’ identity dilemma is affected by factors from different levels (Hu, 2011). National policies (Ai et al., 2019), local economy structures (Shen & Feng, 2017), culture of schools (Ai et al., 2019), resources allocation within schools (Zou, 2016), relationship with students and colleagues (Xu & Li, 2020), family support (Tao & Gao, 2017), and teachers’ prior experiences and educational background (Tao & Gao, 2018) all play a part in identity construction and negotiation through agency and efficacy.

Previous research provides Business English researchers with models to explore the inner dynamics (Bandura, 2000; Pennington, 2014) and the

influencing factors (Xun et al., 2014; Yan et al., 2020) of identity construction. Pennington (2014) explores identity construction dynamics of TESOL teachers from practice-centered frame and contextual frame (see Figure 1-2 below). This teacher identity frame sees identity and its construction as a comprehensive process within multiple layers of contexts. It is suitable for explaining Business English teacher identity for the reason that Business English is constructed inter-disciplinarily and market-orientedly with the emphasis on school-society cooperation.

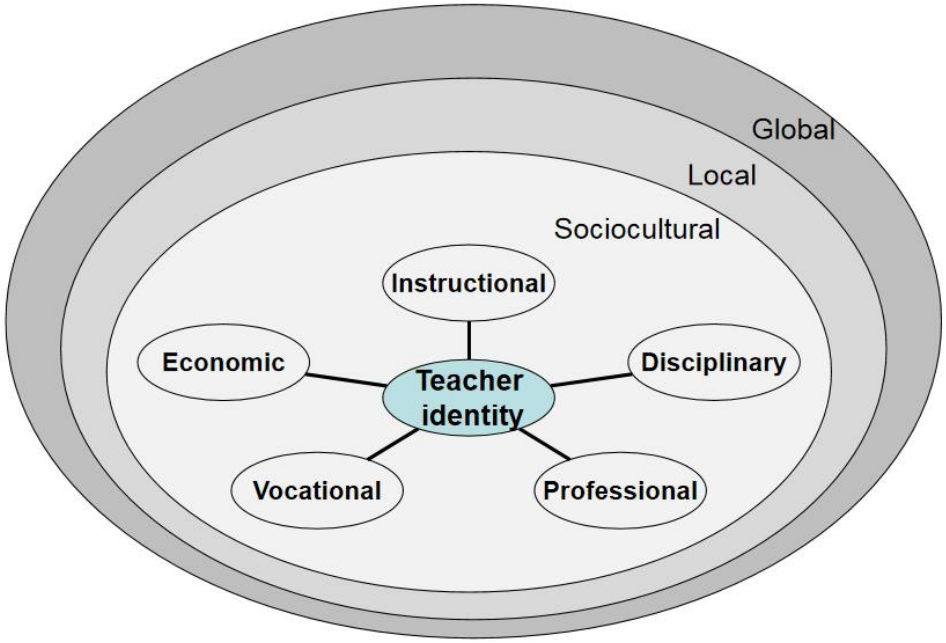

Figure 1-2: Practical-centered/Contextual Frames of Teacher Identity in TESOL (Pennington, 2014: 73)

In Yan et al.'s (2020) study with Chinese female mid-career EFL teacher educators at regional universities, an identity structure was produced by emphasizing the combined action of personal and contextual factors on identity construction (see Figure 1-3 below). It focuses on EFL teachers by putting the context in non-elite universities. It is also pointed out that there are conflicts not only between teachers' belief and competence, but also between institutional and family expectations for female mid-career teachers. This

teacher identity structure applied to Chinese Business English teachers because it include institutional and family context into consideration, which is suitable for Chinese family-valued conditions.

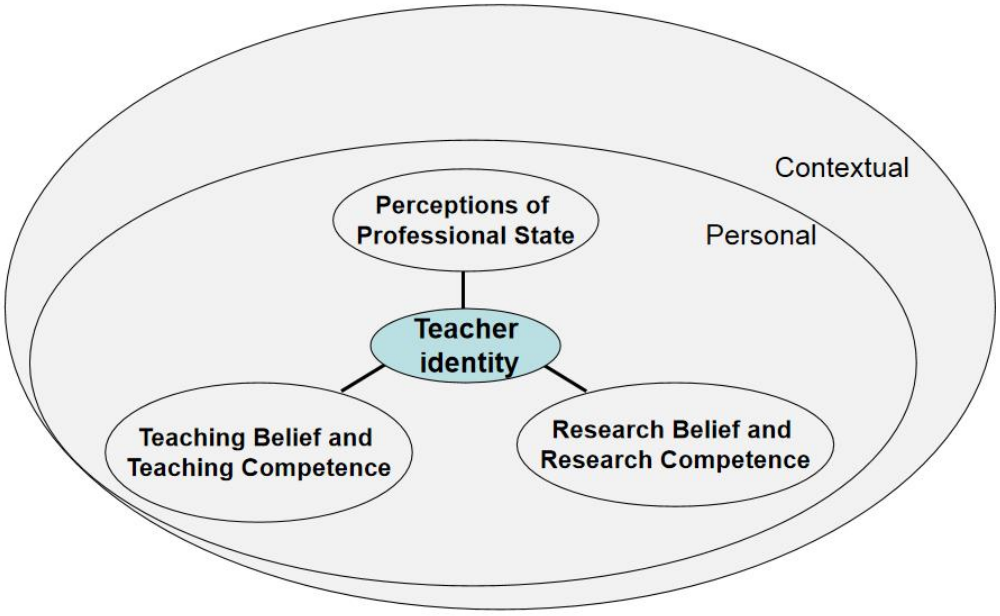

Figure 1-3: University EFL Teacher Identity Structure (Yan et al., 2020)

The above two models echo sociocultural theory and prove that factors "interact, interconnect and impact on each other" (Xun et al., 2014: 66). They also emphasize the "complex nature and multiple facets" (ibid: 72) of identity and help to explore identity in scope and depth.

Taken together, the three models (Bandura's (2000) in Figure 1-1, Pennington's (2014) in Figure 1-2, and Yan et al's. (2020) in Figure 1-3) offer different dimensions of Business English teachers' career, both individually and collectively within the community and globally. They also offer a system with a clear classification of different orientations to the practices in the context of Business English teaching. ESP/EFL teacher identity is structured multi-dimensionally with personal and contextual factors. As a sub-field of TESOL and ESP, Business English teaching shares similar features in that

Business English learners (1) are faced with “specific cognitive and sociocultural difficulties” (Pennington, 2014: 74-75); (2) have real-life and definite purposes driving their learning; and (3) will come across specific teaching approaches and orientations.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this research (Figure 1-4 below) is based on the three models of Bandura’s (2000) “Dynamic interrelationship of identity construction”, Pennington’s (2014) “Practical-centered/ Contextual Frames of Teacher Identity in TESOL”, and Yan et al’s. (2020) “University EFL Teacher Identity Structure”. This framework echoes sociocultural theory by putting teachers into multifaceted orientations.

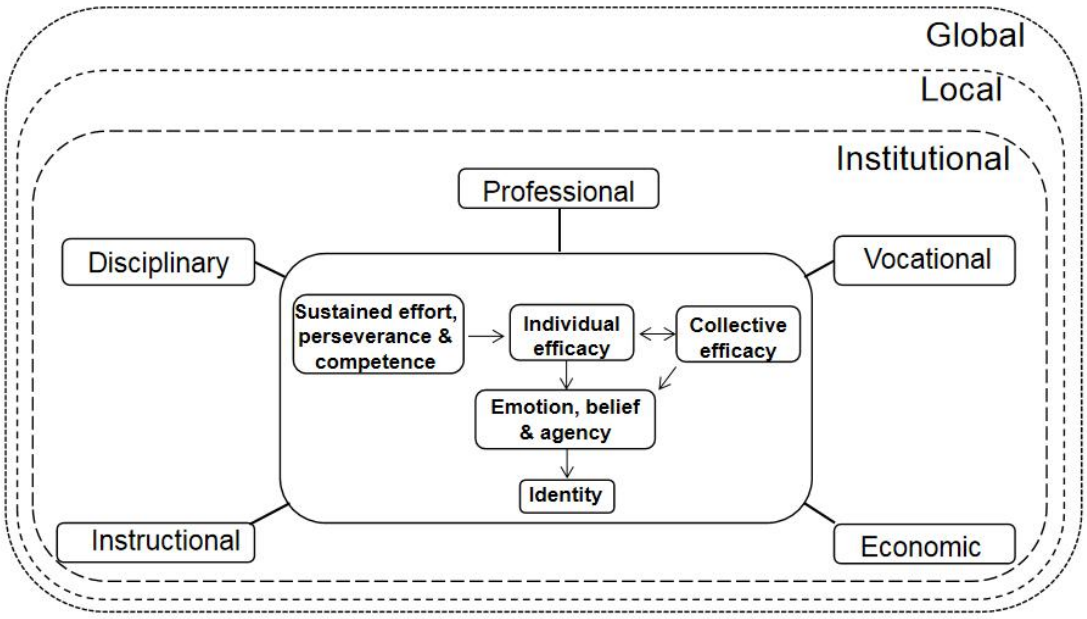

Figure 1-4: Conceptual framework for the research

Contextually, as shown in Figure 1-4, teachers’ identity are explored from institutional, local and global frames. The global frame refers to global trends, such as the impact of English as the lingua franca, the constructional changes of ESP curricula worldwide. The local frame refers to the regional context, such

as regional economic structures. The institutional frame refers to the community in which Business English teachers work, communicate and live. The layers of contextual conditions mediate teachers' identity construction because "institutions are embedded in the societal context and certain institutional practices accommodate emerging societal needs" (Tao & Gao, 2018: 11). Global economic situations, local policies, and teachers' experiences in relevant industries all impose influence on Business English teachers' identity.

Practically, teachers' identity is investigated from instructional, disciplinary, professional, vocational and economic frames. The instructional frame reflects teachers' "classroom persona and the roles" (Pennington, 2014: 74). The disciplinary frame connects teachers to "a specific field and its areas of knowledge and research (ibid: 75). The professional frame refers to teachers' characteristics related to disciplinary knowledge. The vocational frame refers to teachers' "commitment and attachment to teaching work" (ibid: 80). The economic frame refers to teachers' academic capital and economic position.

The institutional frame puts emphasis on the notion that teachers' identity positioning and construction "should not be confined to the classroom" (Tao & Gao, 2018: 10), but expanded to the sociocultural characteristics of teachers within the community, the school they work in, and even the wider professional communities (Johnson, 2006). Teacher identity is the result of concurrent effects of various factors and mechanisms. For example, the nature of school may influence the aim of its design of programs and disciplines, which largely constrains teachers' commitment and identity development (Flores & Day, 2006). The physical and social environment of the school may also undermine the growth of a disciplinary community, which may have an impact on teachers' knowledge structure, their research performance and promotion (Tao & Gao, 2018). Thus, teachers' professional and economic identity may be influenced

by the evaluation system of the school (Lee, 2014).

The interrelationship between competence and beliefs, agency and actions, individual and collective efficacy shows the possible variables and dynamic strategies teachers apply in their identity construction. In the studies of Yan et al. (2020) and Xun et al. (2014) with the above frames, questionnaires prove, with solid data, that EFL teacher identity is multi-dimensionally structured with factors that “interact, interconnect and impact on each other” (ibid: 66). Influencing factors of identity construction are also explored under such frames such as school environment, teachers’ emotions, their self confidence in teaching and researching competence (Yan et al., 2020).

1.5 Problem Statement

The main issues of this study include how Business English teachers see themselves, how they are seen by others, who they want to be, what they want, and how they are affected when they try to meet their needs professionally. Business English Teachers’ competence or incompetence can no longer be fully explained “why certain attitudes and procedures are counter-productive” (Yang, 2011: 17). When they make decisions to participate into or withdraw from Business English teaching, their motives and voices are not heard. Their struggles between agency and action, and their coping strategies are under-represented. Besides, this study included company teachers as a very important part of Business English teachers. They contribute to Business English teaching with their practical knowledge, but their status is ignored in the research of Business English teachers to date.

Therefore, this study investigates the identity perception of Chinese Business English teachers and how they constructed their professional identity.

1.6 Aims and Objectives

This study aims to investigate the identity and its construction of Business English teachers in Chinese universities. More specifically, the objectives, which arise from these aims are as follows:

- to explore the professional identity of Business English teachers in universities in Ningbo area;
- to distinguish the influencing factors that facilitate and hinder the Business English teachers' identity construction;
- to find out the measures taken by Business English teachers to address the challenges in the construction of their identity.

The intention of this study is not to make generalizations, but to capture and highlight the identity and the construction of Business English teachers within the selected universities.

1.7 Research Questions

In order to fulfill the aims of this study, three main questions have been formulated. One question has sub-questions which relate to the research problems identified earlier in this study. These include the need to clarify in understanding the notion of Business English teachers' identity. The research questions also seek to establish the extent to which identity construction is collectively influenced by agency, emotions and resilience.

Research Question One: What are the professional identity of Business English teachers in Chinese universities in Ningbo?

Research Question Two: What are the factors that facilitate/hinder the process of their identity construction?

Sub-Research Question 2a: what are the factors that facilitate their identity construction?

Sub-Research Question 2b: What are the factors that hinder their identity construction?

Research Question Three: How do Business English teachers address the challenges in identity construction?

1.8 Overview and Structure of the Thesis

This thesis contains six chapters. This first chapter has highlighted the background to this study, given an overview of the development and status of Business English as an inter-discipline overseas and in China and introduced the aims and research questions. The following chapters can be summarized as follows:

Chapter 2: Literature Review contains a review of the literature on Teacher identity theories and models, as well as previous research on Business English teachers' professional development and their dilemmas in Chinese higher education. Current literature allows a research gap in the study of Business English teachers' identity both theoretically and methodologically.

Chapter 3: Methodology provides a discussion of the methodology and methods used to address the research questions. This chapter also explains the rationale underpinning the choice of a mixed methods approach for this study.

Chapter 4: Quantitative Findings and Analysis - Phase 1 is a detailed presentation of research findings based on quantitative data, including participants' personal profiles and documents, and their answers to two questionnaires. In this chapter, in order to answer Research Question One and Two, the two questionnaires were applied to measure Business English teachers' efficacy and teacher identity. Findings were reported with the analysis of participants' profiles and these two themes, and helped to raise

issues and topics for qualitative interviews and follow-up interviews.

Chapter 5: Qualitative Findings and Analysis - Phase 2 is a detailed presentation of research findings based on qualitative data from interview questions. In this chapter, the interviews questions provided in-depth answers by probing into teachers' status of Business English identity, the influencing factors in their identity construction, and the strategies teachers applied in dealing with identity issues. The findings were reported with four themes arising from qualitative data analysis.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion is a chapter of discussion with three themes arising from the Chapter of Findings. The foci are on the differed dimensions of Business English teachers' professional identity in the two universities, which are reflected not only in pedagogical identity and academic identity, but also in individual identity and collective identity.

Chapter 7: Conclusion draws a conclusion on the basis of the findings and discussion points of this research. Research questions are answers with major implications. Issues for further research are raised and suggested, and significance and limitations of the study are also presented.

References are listed. Appendixes include a detailed table of research objectives, research questions and research procedures, a profile of participants of the questionnaires, a sample of participant information sheet and participant consent form. Appendixes also include the samples of two questionnaires being carried out in this research, the two versions of interview questions after quantitative data and before the pilot study, the interview protocol being applied in the two universities and an interview script with one volunteer participant interviewee.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of literature on teachers' professional identity and construction, studies of Business English teachers' professional development in China, and current dilemma Chinese Business English teachers are faced with.

The concept of teachers' professional identity is related to a variety of topics (Beijaard et al., 2004). Major foci are the characteristics of teachers' identity, their identity formation, and their stories about identity (ibid). Teachers' concepts of self are reported to strongly determine how they teach, how they develop as teachers, and their attitudes towards educational changes (Knowles, 1992; Beijaard et al., 2000). Another important issue is what to teach, which has been long discussed in ESP context. How much weight should language and business knowledge have in curriculum is debated. On one side, equal importance should be attached to both language and business in Business English teachers' knowledge structure (Wang & Zhang, 2011), while on the other, English-mediated instruction (EMI) teaching approach is suggested by focusing on subject matter and takes language as the medium of instruction (Airey, 2016). Other issues include teachers' roles (Volkmann & Anderson, 1998), their reflection and self-evaluation (Cooper & Olson, 1996), the influence of conceptions and expectations from teachers and other stakeholders (Tickle, 2000).

In Chinese Business English teacher identity research, 80 published articles (including two master theses) are searched on two biggest databases in China: CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) and UCDRS (Union of China Digital Reference Service) with key words of "Business English",

“undergraduate/university” and “teacher identity” in the first place. However, the searching results turn out to be fewer than ten publications. The key word “teacher identity” is replaced by “teacher development” and “professional development” for broader scope.

After careful reading, 16 articles are excluded for the reason that 13 are not focused on undergraduate Business English teachers and three are identical ones from different journals. Snowballing technique is applied in checking their references and 15 more relevant papers (including two more master theses) are found. Therefore, there are altogether 79 articles on the topic of undergraduate Business English teacher professional development in Chinese universities (including four master theses). Altogether there are 10 empirical studies (seven journal articles and three master theses), 20 research reports (19 journal articles and 1 master thesis), 39 non-empirical studies and 10 meta-researches.

With an increasing trend of research on undergraduate Business English teachers’ professional development, the research focus has a shift from general theoretic concepts and status quo to specific quality requirements, developing models and construction approaches. Studies of Business English teachers professional development account for a very low percentage (7%) in Business English research, with no national-level research projects and an imbalanced proportion (14.7%) of empirical studies (Zhang et al., 2019). Although the number of publications is growing, the number of articles on quality journals is decreasing (Guo & Zhu, 2018). Business English teachers professional identity is not in the hot spot ranking of Business English research. In 10 empirical studies on Chinese disciplinary Business English teachers’ professional development, only one empirical research (Ai et al., 2019) is focused on the identity construction and negotiation of Business English teachers.

2.2 Theories of Teacher Identity and Its Formation

2.2.1 Concepts of teacher identity

Researchers define teachers' professional identity from various perspectives. There is a growing agreement that professional identity is not stable, fixed or unitary (Coldron & Smith, 1999; Beijaard et al., 2004). Instead, it is ongoing, multifaceted and dynamic (Day, 2018) as Mockler's framework of formation and mediation of teacher professional identity also provides an understanding of professional identity as "ongoing, dynamic and shifting" (2011: 526). Identity answers "Who am I?" as well as "Who do I want to be?" (Conway, 2001). Sugrue (1997) sees professional identity as a continuous redefinition which changes along with teachers' theories of teaching. Similarly, Volkmann and Anderson (1998) describe professional identity as a complex and dynamic equilibrium where teachers negotiate between their roles and personal self-image. Mishler (1999) points out the existence of plurality of sub-identities, and the relationship between these sub-identities in different social settings has an effect on teachers' professional identity (McCarthey, 2001).

Teacher identity also refers to "the ways teachers make sense of themselves and the images they present to others in their situated institutional and sociocultural contexts" (Yuan & Zhang, 2019: 3). In these contexts, efficacy, agency, emotions and resilience are key concepts of teachers' professional identity (Day, 2018). These components interplay in phases of teachers' "lives, careers, and changing work contexts" so that identity is constructed as "an amalgam of the personal and professional selves" (Day, 2018: 61). The action mediation by institutional contexts and cultures are stressed because it can help diminish teachers' sense of frustration, disengagement and alienation (Bandura, 2000).

Among the key strands of identity, agency and efficacy are the two core concepts. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' level of confidence in their ability to use the skills they possess to complete a specific task. A high personal efficacy can directly affect individuals' level of commitment to tasks and willingness to tackle challenges (Goddard et al., 2004). Agency is "the power to originate action" (Bandura, 2001: 3) and has the feature of intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2001; 2006). It refers to the ability of consciously plan actions, predict potential outcomes before acting, modify actions based on the experiences or external input, evaluate past choices and adjust future behaviors (ibid).

In addition, in the Chordal Triad Theory of Agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), the "iterational, projective and practical-evaluative" (ibid: 971) dimensions of agency is elaborated to analyze agency and action in structure-agency relationship. Agency is seen as being "informed by the past", "directive toward the future" and "evaluative of the present" (ibid: 1012) under the influence of "social-structural, cultural and social-psychological contexts" (ibid: 1005). The theory elaborates that identity is constructed through how teachers schematize their past and present social experiences, how patterns of expectations affect teachers' degree of freedom and maneuverability in the teaching and researching practices, how historical conditions in and out of institutions influence interaction patterns, and how choices being made between alternatives when teachers' choices and values contradict each other. That is, a perspective is provided to observe how teachers utilize their experience, carry out problematization and characterization, convert into deliberation and decision, and finally implement execution in their working and living contexts.

2.2.2 Identity formation and influencing factors

Influencing factors exist in historical, sociological, psychological and cultural dimensions (Cooper & Olson, 1996). Goodson and Cole (1994) emphasize the

ongoing integration of personal and professional factors of professional identity "inside and outside the classroom and school" (ibid: 88). Coldron and Smith (1999) stress the relationship among teachers' self, others and contexts by defining identity as socially legitimated with the tension between teachers' agency and socially-given structure. They propose that identity is active, unique and reflects the belonging of teachers. It is manifested in classroom and threatened by uniformity and conformity. As Varghese et al. point out, "who teachers are and what they bring with them, individually and collectively, matters in what and how they teach and thus, to students, families, communities, and institutions" (2016: 548).

How teachers perceive and understand their identity is also influenced by other stakeholders in their working contexts. Business English teachers feel pressure from university administration, teachers from other disciplines, peer teachers, and their students. That is to say, the conceptual identity includes how teachers perceive themselves and how teachers think others perceive them (Edwards & Burns, 2016: 736).

Contextual factors, such as teachers' workplace environment, may play a crucial part in identity formation (Reynolds, 1996; Cooper & Olson, 1996). A supportive institutional context is suggested to facilitate the realization of teachers' potential (Goodson & Cole, 1994). Teachers' voice and narrative are important because "a discursive notion of the teaching 'self'" (Dillabough, 1999: 378) is ignored when teachers are required to be instrumentally competent. Samuel and Stephens (2000) notice the tension between teachers' hope, ambition and actual achievement. In identity negotiation, there are competing and even contradictory influences from their life experiences. Mockler emphasizes that identity is influenced by "personal, professional and political dimensions of teachers' lives and work which interplay in an overlapping and active way" (2011: 526).

Storytelling is widely used as a research method in exploring teachers' identity. How teachers tell and live out particular stories is helpful to see how identity is constructed from a narrative perspective (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002), especially when identity is interwoven in a particular space and time (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Stories help to amplify the relationship between beliefs and practices and produce hidden data such as what teachers care about most, what motivates them and what dilemmas they live with (ibid). On the other hand, identity is found to be "formed and reformed" (Beijaard et al., 2004: 123) by stories.

2.2.3 Chinese Business English teachers' perception of identity

Business English teachers in Chinese higher education find themselves disadvantaged when competing for university resources and developing opportunities both pedagogically and academically (Tang, 2010). They feel an inferior academic status compared to teachers of more matured disciplines (Tao & Gao, 2018). They also feel not competitive against students in practical training programs (Zou, 2016). Yang (2011) discovers Business English teachers have a relatively low self-evaluation. They feel self-distrust in themselves for not having business-related experience or practical skills. However, from learners' perspective, students show great tolerance and understanding as long as they feel teachers' devotion. Also, Business English teachers feel "a sense of achievement" (Ai et al., 2019: 190) when they realize their students are capable talents who can serve the country. In summary, Business English teachers are greatly affected by others in self-perception. School leaders, teachers of other departments, students and even companies recruitment strategies can influence Business English teachers' emotions.

Business English teachers' individual identity differs according to a variety of factors. Education background, social relationship and students' need are

proved to affect Business English teachers' identity (Xue, 2013b; Guo & Li, 2015). Psychological factors such as agency, perception of autonomy (Siraj-Blatchford, 1993) and job burnout levels (Gaziel, 1995) also play a role in teachers' identity. What is more, teachers' identity changes depending on their subject area (Beijaard et al., 2000). Their knowledge structure well reflects their identity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). With degrees in different subjects, language teachers and business teachers put different priority when considering their professional development (Hu et al., 2019). Similarly, Business English teachers choose to take advantages of their respective resources with different social relationship. Being faced with students of different learning aims, Business English teachers change their teaching roles in classes accordingly (Jiang et al., 2008).

Moreover, Chinese Business English teachers' collective identity differs geographically (Wu, 2014). Pillar industries of certain areas and advanced disciplines in local universities help to strengthen some Business English teachers' collective industry. For example, Business English teachers in provinces such as Guangdong and Zhejiang enjoy a more positive position for the reason that these areas are economically advanced and more demanding for Business English talents (Shen & Feng, 2017). Business English teachers in areas such as Chongqing and Heilongjiang are relatively powerful academically because of the leading position of the universities they belong to. As Mitchell (1997) points out, a shared identity within a community is very necessary for collaboration. In such environments, teachers of shared teaching and research areas cooperate so that they can learn from and compete against each other in a benign way, and have more chances to have their voices heard.

2.3 Studies of Business English Teachers in China

2.3.1 Theoretical perspectives of Business English teacher study in China

Theoretically, a variety of theories are applied in empirical studies of Chinese Business English teachers. The theoretical perspectives include language learning and teaching theories (e.g. Tan, 2010), ESP needs theory (e.g. Guo & Li, 2015; Shen & Feng, 2017), Maslow's hierarchy of needs (e.g. Xue, 2013a), social constructivism (e.g. Liu, 2011; Yang, 2011) and grounded theory (e.g. Hu et al., 2019). These theories involve disciplines of education, sociology, psychology, literature and economy.

Although guided by a diversity of theories, Business English teachers' professional development is regarded as comprehensive and dynamic in their findings. Yang (2011) sees from a humanistic and constructivist perspective that Business English teachers' inner world is of great importance. Teachers' senses of the world, feelings, thoughts and emotions at different life stages offer a "'life-span' view" (ibid: 13) of their psychology. Ai et al. (2019) explore the process of Business English teachers' identity negotiation by interviewing about their personal experiences, professional working contexts and external political environment. They produce very optimistic data that Business English teachers feel proud of their professional identity as long as they realize that their future is closely connected to the future development of their schools, their cities and the country. They have "a sense of achievement" (ibid: 190) instead of frustration when they see goals achievable, that is, their students are welcome by the employment market.

Such studies look at Business English teachers as independent individuals in an authentic and ongoing environment. They try to answer how identities are negotiated and constructed, how and why teachers' feelings change, what affects their agency, how policies motivate teachers, etc. These gratifying

progresses do offer a glimpse of the complexity of Chinese Business English teachers' career trajectories.

Besides, some theoretical underpinnings are borrowed from other disciplines in Chinese Business English teacher research. Li (2015) borrows Herzberg's "Two-factor theory" from Human Resources Management that satisfaction and dissatisfaction should be viewed from the perspectives of pleasant and unpleasant feelings. In other words, the opposite of satisfaction/dissatisfaction is no satisfaction/dissatisfaction. So if teachers do not complain about their working, it does not mean they are satisfied. This bipolar life satisfaction scale proposes a new angle for assessing and motivating Business English teachers. With empirical studies, such studies may provide us with new perspectives and findings in Chinese Business English research.

2.3.2 Knowledge structure and competence construction of Chinese Business English teachers

As Business English is regarded as an inter-discipline, knowledge structure and competence construction of Chinese Business English teachers is one of the basic research topics. Surveying with 898 Business English teachers, students and employees, Wang and Zhang (2011) conclude four elements of Business English teachers' competence construction, namely educational background, teaching ability, language and business knowledge, and research capacity. These elements are crucial to cultivating compound, applicative and innovative Business English talents. Also, these elements echo Yan et al.'s (2020) identity structure, and at the same time raise unique features of Business English teachers. Besides, morality education (Guo et al., 2011), innovation and entrepreneurship teaching competence (Liang, 2016) are recommended for Business English teachers' compound ability for the first time. In particular, collective competence construction (collective compound) is emphasized for the feature that linguistic professionals closely work together

with business and cross-cultural communication talents in Business English discipline (Wang & Zhang, 2011).

High standards and requirements are established top-down without taking the real practice of front-line Business English teachers into consideration (Anthony, 2008). The requirements for Business English teachers are not a simple combination of multiple knowledge, but a more complicated and interwoven demand of ESP teaching, business training, cooperation with enterprises, academic researching, resource reallocation and teamwork skills. Business English teachers should absorb knowledge from different fields, such as ESP, L2 learning, business management and communication competence development (Qing, 2016). Zhang questions the transferability/portability of ESP classroom from learners' perspective by pointing out that this topical issue is "under-researched or under-reported" (2017: 2).

Amid debates on knowledge structure, Chinese Business English teachers' difficulties and challenges are repeatedly mentioned in empirical studies of their professional development. With questionnaires with 67 teachers and 139 students, Tan (2010) concludes that Business English teachers are poor in disciplinary knowledge, business-related experience and professional training. Besides these three qualities, Business English teachers' poor autonomy is emphasized by Guo and Niu (2016). In their study with 120 Business English teachers, a high percentage of teachers express insufficient autonomy in their profession. Pedagogically, low autonomy in designing syllabus in accordance with the National Standards (65%) tops the list. Besides, Business English teachers find difficulties in analyzing students' needs (57%), selecting textbooks and teaching materials (62.5%), constructing online course groups (60%) and dealing with teaching evaluation and examination (40%). Practically, Business English teachers are faced with duties which are new to them. They express vulnerability in organizing students to make on-the-spot investigations

(65%), inviting entrepreneurs into classrooms (60%), winning side projects (62%), taking temporary posts (66%), receiving training from companies (50%), and obtaining business-related certificates (63%). These aspects reflect obstacles in teachers' "process of specialization, disciplinary freedom, and self-directed learning and teaching" (ibid: 67).

Such findings are strongly supported by many research reports on status quo of Business English teachers across China, e.g. Henan Province (Wang, 2012), Guangxi Province (Wu, 2014), Shandong Province (Pan, 2015), Fujian Province (Yang, 2015), Jilin Province (Dong, 2018), Yunnan Province (Li, 2018). These studies reveal similar and supplementary results that Business English teachers' poor disciplinary background and weak research capacity are well-reflected by students' low satisfaction rate. The situation seems no significant improvement in the past decade since Yan and Feng (2007) report that over half of the Business English teachers have no business-related experience, short teaching years and low academic ranks in a survey with 227 teachers and 897 students of 23 universities. It is urgent for large quantities of novice teachers to learn disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge. These teachers are faced with a challenge of adjusting themselves to their new position. How they negotiate their identity is not sufficiently in the consideration and attention of researchers.

2.3.3 Teachers' needs and influencing factors

While needs analysis, mostly on learners, helps to establish the "what" and the "how" of an ESP course (Flowerdew, 2025), the analysis of teachers' needs should be considered of equal importance because teachers are the ones who carriy out "course development, followed by curriculum design, materials selection, methodology, assessment, and evaluation" (Hyland, 2006: 73). Chinese Business English teachers' needs are analyzed from perspectives of employment market, students and teachers. With the analysis of students'

employment survey report, there is an inconsistency between real demands from employment market and disciplinary requirements of Business English teachers qualities (Guo & Li, 2015). Therefore, chances are that there might be misleading standards of teachers' disciplinary qualities. With questionnaires with both teachers and students, Business English teachers' demands for professional training are confirmed (Liu, 2011; Yang, 2011). Yang (2011) argues that from students' perspective there is no notable difference between teachers with business-related experience and those without, but she finds that despite students' tolerance to those teachers lacking practical skills, their evaluation of Business English teachers is lower than teachers' self-evaluation.

Liu (2011) discovers a gap between teachers' needs and belief. For example, there is a delay in teachers' classroom actions in spite of their learner-centered belief in pedagogy. Business English teachers do not rank pedagogy training as their priority even when they recognize pedagogy knowledge as a significant factor to effective teaching (ibid: 60-61).

Such gap is also mentioned by some of the research reports on status quo of Chinese Business English teachers. Tang's survey (2010) with 112 teachers emphasizes the gap between Business English teachers' needs and the administrative guarantee mechanism considering the obvious imbalance between teaching input and academic input in university resources. Zou (2016) provides solid data from questionnaires with 112 teachers and 198 students. Compared with a large number of opportunities given to students (78.51%), Business English teachers receive not a single chance (0%) to have themselves trained. However, it is not fair if the blame is on universities. Her survey shows that 42.18% of companies refuse to train teachers, but does not explore the reason why. Interviews with company employers or Human Resources managers may reveal the hidden reasons.

Teachers' needs differ individually and geographically in China. Personal factors such as age, gender, education and previous experience are proved to be major influences (Xue, 2013b; Hu et al., 2019). According to demands analysis, when current (students) situation and target (market) situation change, teachers' needs change accordingly (Guo & Li, 2015). A survey by Jiang et al. (2008) looks at needs of teachers by investigating demands of different levels of students. She finds that students from vocational training class require more language skills from Business English teachers, while undergraduate and graduate students ask for more business-related knowledge and practice. That is to say, students' needs are very important factors that teachers should take into consideration when they plan their career development.

Other personal factors to teachers' identity are explored in Liu's survey (2017). By order of importance, salary (100%) and academic titles (93.7%) are the most influential factors to Business English teachers' professional development personally. Individual pursuit ranks the third (75%), while platform of academics (46%) comes last.

Contextually, regional economy is an indispensable contextual factor to teachers' needs. The huge demand for Business English talents in the Pearl River Delta cities triggers challenges for teachers to meet as well as opportunities for teachers to receive business-related training from companies (Shen & Feng, 2017). Industries and areas are no longer limited in traditional export trade in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. More talents who are professional in advanced manufacturing industries and have international communication skills are welcome in newly formed city clusters such as Guangzhou, Foshan and Huizhou. Modern service industries propose higher and diversified challenges for Business English graduates and teachers.

The relationship between regional economy and Business English teachers' needs is also mentioned by several research reports. For example, in Wu's survey (2014) in Guangxi Province (part of China-ASEAN Free Trade Area), industrial structures of regions may influence the local universities to offer different course modules and accordingly raise different requirements of teachers (e.g. textile industry in Shaoxing, logistics and manufacturing industry in Ningbo). Therefore, teachers teaching different module courses have different recognition of construction of their knowledge structure (Hu et al. 2019). So it is inadvisable that fixed requirements and evaluation criteria be imposed on Business English teachers.

Also, at school level, a well-operated guarantee system of universities can be a positive promoter of Business English teachers' improvement (Liang, 2016). But, there is very little study and practice on the joint action of individual and administrative levels in China.

2.3.4 Identity construction strategies

In the discussion of professional development, the importance of Chinese Business English teachers' identity is emphasized with a variety of strategies being suggested. School-based training, cooperation with companies, self-learning, expatriate training are the most frequently mentioned developing models (e.g. Yuan, 2009; Chen, 2010; Bao, 2019). Since the status quo of Business English teachers are disastrous, Zou (2016) suggests a hierarchical construction strategy of "double professional" teachers[1]. In her study, 99.3% of Business English teachers show a sense of incapability and 94.1% lack business-related certificates. The need for professional development of Business English teachers is so urgent and large that measures have to be

[1] "Double-professional" teachers: teachers who possess both teaching and professional qualifications, usually with working experience in industry enterprises. According the requirements of Chinese Ministry of Education, such teachers are expected to be equipped with the teaching ability of theoretical knowledge and practical skills (MOE).

taken step by step.

Similarly, Shi (2015) stratifies the developing model into three layers considering different levels of Chinese Business English teachers: (1) autonomous learning for basic teachers, (2) school-based training for advance teachers, and (3) school-enterprise cooperation and industry-university-research cooperation for senior teachers. But as Zou (2016) points out, companies are mildly interested in helping train teachers. Therefore the supposed “double-professional” teachers training is criticized as largely formality (Wu, 2014). So a certified quality system of “double-professional” is suggested to recognize and clarify its basic requirements (Zhang & Jing, 2019).

2.3.5 Limitations of Business English teacher study in China

The weaknesses and limitations of these empirical studies are worth noticing: (1) Vague theoretical frameworks. In some studies, the claimed theoretical frameworks do not work as guiding theories in data analysis. For example, in Guo and Niu’s study (2016) of Business English teachers’ autonomy, there is no clear elaboration on how teachers’ autonomy is related to components of their capabilities. Similarly, analysis of Business English teachers’ qualities is not well guided by humanism and constructivism in Yang’s study (2011).

(2) Low reliability in research designs. Firstly, improper research methods produce poor data. For example, Likert-scale questions are imbalanced in the designs of Yang (2011) and Li (2017). Loaded questions constrain participants’ answers and sometimes mislead them with preconceived choices in Liu’s (2011) design of multiple-choice questions. With more scientific designs in research methods, the data produced by these research reports may tell more convincing stories.

Secondly, unqualified sampling produces distorted findings. In Xue's study (2013b), the effective responsive rate is lower than 80%. The percentage of valid questionnaires is as low as 57.5% (Guo et al., 2011). Some of the researches even do not clarify their sampling procedures (Wang, 2012; Sun & Kang, 2013; Wu, 2014; Pan, 2015; Zou, 2016; Liu, 2017; Dong, 2018). In Hu et al.'s study (2016), eight participants are interviewed but the data for analysis are from only four of them. The criterion of selecting samples is not mentioned at all. In Ai et al.'s study (2019), the authors claim critical narrative without a clear definition of either "critical" or "narrative". In fact, narrative is applied in only one of three research participants, while data from the other two participants are collected via semi-structured interviews. Without a theory to guide the critical process, the study is more a reflective evaluation than a critical one.

2.4 Dilemmas of Business English teachers in China

The top-down requirements for Business English teachers in China are set in accordance with the national standards of Business English discipline. However, the reality in practice is far more prosaic. Teachers find themselves faced with dilemmas in teaching and researching.

2.4.1 Heavy workload vs. Teaching incompetence

The first survey of the status quo of Chinese Business English teachers' professional development is carried out with over 1000 participants in 23 universities (Yan & Feng, 2007). Their findings show that Business English teachers are burdened with heavy workload, low professional ranks and little teaching experience. "Heavy teaching workload" top the list of Business English teachers' difficulties in professional development (Li, 2017: 31). Data from 65 universities show that Business English teachers work under the circumstance of high faculty-student ratio (18:1) (Li, 2017). Over half of Business English teachers do not have any business-related experience (Yan

& Feng, 2007; Zou, 2016).

Knowledge structure is closely related to teachers' disciplinary identity because it demonstrates the extent to which teachers are able to negotiate the discourses and practices of a discipline in order to better position themselves in this discipline (Hyland 2012). The "becoming", as Dressen-Hammouda (2008) describes, in their disciplinary communities is achieved on the basis of their capable knowledge structure.

The conflicts and imbalances between language knowledge and business knowledge of Chinese Business English teachers are emphasized by many researchers in the past decade (Tang, 2010; Tan, 2010; Yang, 2015; Dong, 2018). Supplementary research shows low students' satisfaction evaluation of Business English teachers' teaching competence (Wang, 2012; Wang, 2017). Xu and Li (2020) point out that students complain about Business English teachers' poor practical knowledge and inappropriate teaching approaches. "Teaching off a blackboard" with out-of-date materials might work in grammar class but is strongly criticized by Business English learners. To solve this problem, Wang (2009) suggests Business English teachers adjust their roles to learn with students by being facilitators and coordinators in classroom tasks and projects. However, the project-based approach requires high autonomy in syllabus design, material selection and evaluation. Such autonomy, as Guo and Niu (2016) discover in their survey, is very low in Business English teachers from deciding teaching content to self-directed learning and teaching.

This conflict between heavy teaching workload and teaching incompetence is related to teachers' instructional and disciplinary identity. Business English teachers' incompetence in disciplinary knowledge prevents them from choosing among teaching contents, materials, and methods. Their poor autonomy in teaching and developing process affects their authority and

control in class, produces negative effects on teacher-student relationship, and may eventually influence their roles as Business English teachers.

2.4.2 Limited access to professional training vs. Inactivity in self-development

Strong external requirements and weak internal motivation of Business English teachers are emphasized. Limited access to professional training is repeatedly pointed out by studies on Business English teachers' professional development (Tang, 2010; Li, 2011). Externally, university administrators' ignorance and industrial communities' reluctance to cooperate are the main reasons. Universities focus on the daily teaching task and ignore the welfare of the Business English teachers (Zou, 2016). Industrial communities would rather train students because teachers are not their recruiting targets. When Business English teachers try to look for help, they find very limited access to professional training, especially academically (Li, 2011).

Internally, lack of the access to training catalyzes teachers' reluctance to transform from former disciplines to Business English (Li, 2011; Peng & Hu, 2019). On the one hand, with poor disciplinary competence, teachers show low confidence in classroom teaching (Wu, 2014). On the other, Business English teachers' lack of motivation may result from the decline and lost in Business English classroom authority, which is closely related to the crisis of individual and collective identity of Business English teachers (Wang, 2016).

Therefore, passive transformation accounts for the majority of Business English teachers' development, while very few teachers choose to take the initiative to transform actively (Peng & Hu, 2019). There exists a vicious circle between external pressure and internal lack of faith in Business English discipline.

There are teachers who express their willingness to do research in Business English discipline (Li, 2011; Peng & Hu, 2019), but such studies fail to reveal the gap between teachers' agency and action. It is pointed out that there are difficulties in arranging academic activities among Business English teachers for the reasons that they enjoy curricular and academic independence but lack communication and cooperation within their academic community. The gap between Business English teachers' belief and needs is noticed by some researchers (Tang, 2010; Liu, 2011; Zou, 2016) but most of them explore the reasons from the perspective of university administration and school-based support. Little research is carried out to explore the internal mechanism of Business English teachers' agency and motives. It remains unresolved why Business English teachers are reluctant in self-development even when they realize their incompetence in disciplinary teaching and researching.

Such problems exist especially in second-career teachers from companies in Hongkong (Trent & Gao, 2009). In Business English, the contribution, position and challenges of companies teachers are neglected for the reason that they are not regarded as permanent and accountable teaching staff (Anthony, 2008). Why do these teachers accept their teaching position but not involve themselves in community activities? What motivates them to teach Business English students for a unsatisfactory salary? The reasons are worth exploring.

This conflict between limited access and unwillingness to professional development is related to teachers' identity in their working context. Further research is needed to explore the covert obstacles to Chinese Business English teachers' actions against school-based supporting systems. For example, the supposed "double-professional" teachers training is criticized as largely a formality (Wu, 2014).

2.4.3 Academically marginalized status vs. Popularity in national education policy

Published articles by Chinese Business English teachers are low in quality and small in quantity (Wang & Jiang, 2019; Zhang et al., 2019). The reasons are two-sided. From the perspective of Business English teachers, heavy workload in daily teaching deprives them from devoting extra time for research (Yan & Feng, 2007). Without enough academic training (Liu, 2011), Business English teachers are criticized as not qualified in data processing techniques (Guo & Li, 2015). From the perspective of academic environment, there are very few quality journals in China for Business English teachers to choose to get their articles published (Guo & Zhu, 2018). On international journals, the publications by Chinese Business English teachers and researchers are limited probably because of the late start of ESP in Chinese higher education. There are some case studies on Chinese Business English/ESP teacher professional development with relatively small scale (e.g. Tao & Gao, 2018 with eight Chinese ESP teachers; Yan et al., 2020 with 18 Chinese EFL teachers). Even worse, it is pointed out that many gatekeepers of journals are not experts in Business English discipline and not familiar with the reality of teaching contexts of Business English (Tao & Gao, 2018). Therefore, there are chances that Business English teachers' articles are valued and judged with inappropriate criteria.

However, Chinese Business English teachers believe their career as promising when they see their positions accord with national educational reforms and policies (Ai et al., 2019). Teachers express their pride and satisfaction when they realize the importance of Business English discipline in China's national policy. They believe Business English is more applicable and can make more contribution to national economy than traditional humanities. Their students are equipped with compound knowledge and technical skills with which they are likely to out-compete those pure language/business graduates in

job-hunting. Social demands also prove that Business English students and teachers are popular in job market.

This conflict of status academically and practically puts Business English teachers in a wider context of national education trend when Business English discipline is situated in practical orientation. Business English teachers' identity is not only decided by daily teaching practices and the recognition of academia, but also facilitated by a wider environment. Their positions and contributions meet and serve national and global needs, which in turn helps strengthen their agency, support their positive emotion, and ultimately facilitate their professional identity.

2.5 Summary

Current studies of Chinese Business English teacher identity have focused on the status quo of Business English teachers, personal and contextual factors in identity construction, and strategies of professional development. Their methodology features a trend from quantitative questionnaires to qualitative narrative approach. There is only one empirical study with mixed method with a very small sample size of three teachers.

However these previous studies have not fully addressed Chinese Business English teachers' identity perception and construction from a sociocultural perspective. Part-time teachers from companies are neglected in these studies even when they serve as an additional but indispensable category of Business English teachers. How influencing factors interweave remains vague from personal and contextual dimensions. Model of identity perception and construction within a Chinese contextual and cultural situation is not empirically investigated.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and the methods for this research. With pragmatism as the underpinning paradigm, this study used a mixed methods approach. This study used the explanatory sequential approach, where two phases of data collection was involved. Phase 1 was the quantitative stage with the use of two questionnaires. Phase 2 was the qualitative stage with the use of interviews to obtain more information from the results of the quantitative phase. This chapter also includes the detailed information on sampling techniques, instrument, pilot test, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical consideration.

3.2 Overview of Research Design and Methods

With the aim of investigating the identity and its construction of Business English teachers in Chinese universities, the research design and methods were developed based on the practical stance of ontology with a social-cultural paradigm. The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was applied for the purpose of answering the following three research questions.

As shown in Appendix 1, in order to answer RQ 1 (What are the professional identity of Business English teachers in Chinese universities in Ningbo?) and RQ 2 (What are the factors that facilitate/hinder the process of their identity construction?), questionnaires were used to reveal Business English teachers' perception of their identity and the influencing factors. Questionnaire 1 "*Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers*" focused on Business English teachers' personal teaching efficacy and their teaching outcome expectancy, and Questionnaire 2 "*Business English Teachers' Identity*" focused on Business English teachers' perspectives about their state of professional development, their teaching beliefs and competence, and their

research competence. Descriptive statistics including percentage, mean, standard deviation and aggregate mean by *IBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions* (SPSS) was applied in the quantitative data analysis.

To answer RQ 3 (How do Business English teachers address the challenges in identity construction?), documentary profiles and semi-structured interviews were used to further explore and explain how Business English teachers address the obstacles and challenges in their career choices. Thematic analysis was applied in the data analysis of qualitative phase.

3.3 Research Approach

As discussed in Chapter 2, the knowledge of Business English teachers' identity is socially and culturally constructed with its factors being complex and interwoven. As Johnson (2018) states, in the knowledge of teachers' identity there is subjective (e.g. teachers' experiences, beliefs, emotions), intersubjective (e.g. social and cultural interaction in teachers' professional community) and objective reality (e.g. status quo of Business English and its teachers).

The pragmatic worldview is a suitable underpinning paradigm for this study because pragmatism puts emphasis on the situations, actions and consequences. Pragmatism will provide possible approaches to address the identity and its construction of Business English teachers in this research. Business English teachers can be looked at both individually and collectively in a particular context. As an interdependent part of ESP teachers, Business English teachers have a culture of their own in their community, that is, their department of discipline (Sun, 2017). By looking into 'what" and "how" to the research (Creswell, 2014: 11), a pragmatic lens is suitable for exploring what are the situations of individuals and their community, and how the individual identity and the community are constructed and affected either within or from

outside in such particular context.

The mixed methods approach was applied because pragmatism seeks "multiple methods...as well as different forms of data collection and analysis" (Creswell, 2014: 11). The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches can provide a "more complete understanding" (ibid: 4) by expanding the scope and depth of study by answering different research questions (Chaumba, 2013).

In an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, two questionnaires were used and this was followed by semi-structured interviews which aimed to interpret and enhance the findings of the questionnaire (Creswell, 2014). In Phase 1, a quantitative approach with Questionnaire 1 "*Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers*" (see Appendix 3) and Questionnaire 2 "*Business English Teachers' Identity*" (see Appendix 4) was suitable for teachers' perception of their identity (Creswell et al., 2003) and "the identification of factors" (Creswell, 2014: 20). In Phase 2, semi-structured interviews were applied to explain the findings of quantitative questionnaires and further provided in-depth data for the exploration of how Business English teachers address the obstacles and challenges in their career choices. Besides, semi-structured interviews were in accordance with the nature of Business English teachers' identity construction and provided uniqueness and rich details when looking into participants' point of view (Cohen et al., 2018) in their identity positioning and construction. The integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches helped to create and enhance a "more holistic understanding than achieved by either alone" (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2017).

3.4 Research Design

The intention of this study is to capture and highlight the identity and the construction of Business English teachers within the selected universities.

Therefore, this research was designed as a two-phase project. (See Figure 3-1 below)

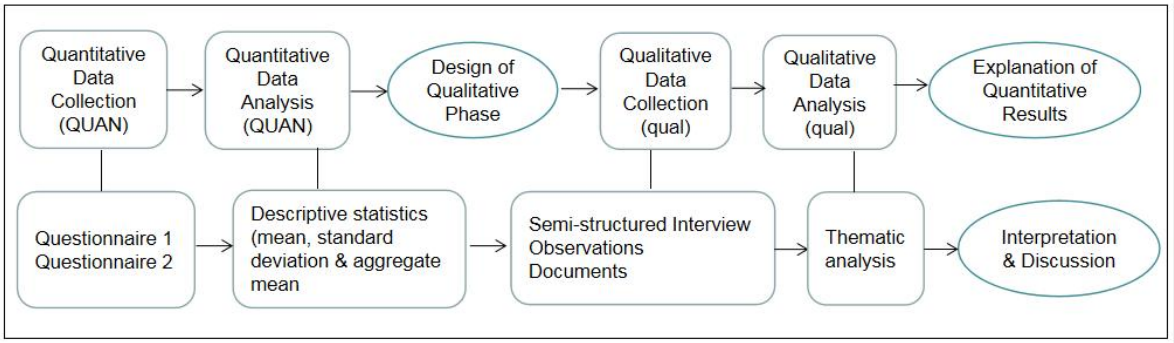

Figure 3-1: Design of explanatory sequential mixed methods (adopted and revised based on Creswell, 2014: 220)

3.4.1 Quantitative phase

Phase 1 was the collection of quantitative data by using two questionnaires. Questionnaire 1 *"Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers*" (see Appendix 3) was developed and adapted from Enochs & Riggs' (1990) "*Personal Science Teaching Efficacy Scale*" for measuring participants' efficacy and professional identity. Questionnaire 2 "*Business English Teachers' Identity"* (see Appendix 4) was revised and adapted from Yan et al.'s (2020) "*University EFL Teacher Identity Structure*" for measuring Business English teachers' identity because Business English teachers were considered part of EFL teachers in Chinese higher education. Phase 1 was carried out prior to Phase 2 because the quantitative data results from questionnaires would be followed and explained further by the qualitative data (Creswell, 2014).

3.4.2 Qualitative phase

Phase 2 was the qualitative phase which followed after the analysis of the quantitative data. This qualitative phase was carried out to enhance the quantitative results by collecting data from interviews for more in-depth information and understanding, and integrate two phases to answer the three

research questions (Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were used to further explain the quantitative results obtained in Phase 1 by exploring participants' insights, attitudes, opinions and emotions (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.5 Sampling Techniques

There were three levels of sampling in this study: sampling of two universities, sampling of participants for the questionnaires, and sampling for participants of the interviews. Purposive sampling was applied for all the three levels of sampling because the researcher aimed to "target a particular group" (Cohen et al., 2018: 217) of Business English teachers who had in-depth knowledge and experience (Ball, 1990) in Business English discipline.

3.5.1 Sampling level 1: Sampling of two universities

For the sampling of universities in Ningbo, the two universities shared similar school levels, histories and scales. They also had "the particular characteristics" (Cohen et al., 2018: 218) of Business English teachers because of their university natures and locations. Both universities were non-elite second-tier universities. They had similar admission score lines for college entrance examination (MOE). Although University A specialized in science and technology while University B was a comprehensive university, they were both considered as eminent universities in second tier universities. University A was selected as a member of China's national project of "Building a Powerful Country of Higher Education" in 2021 (ibid). According to the latest ranking by CUAA[2] (2025), University B ranks the third in "independent universities" in China and the 11th in "Private Higher Education".

[2] CUAA: Chinese University Alumni Association, one of the most influential and credible university ranking third-party organization. It has published national university ranking for 23 consecutive years.

Both universities provided Business English as BA programme. They were the first two universities providing Business English as BA programme since 2014 (MOE) in Ningbo. Having offered Business English programme for ten years, the two universities had a stable teaching staff.

Although all attempts were made to make sure that these two universities were homogeneous, there were a few unique features. University A is state-owned and relies on government financial allocation. University B is an independent university, which means state-owned but self-funded. It holds responsibility for its own profits and losses because the operation depends solely on tuition fees. While University A is located in a higher-education zone in an urban area with easy access. University B is situated in a satellite city of Ningbo with developed agriculture and manufacturing industry. It is situated among rural enterprises and manufacturing plants.

3.5.2 Sampling level 2: Participants of the questionnaires

For the second level of sampling, 30 Business English teachers (15 for each university) were purposively chosen for “their typicality” (Cohen et al., 2018: 218) to participate in the questionnaires (see Appendix 2 for the detailed profile of participants of the questionnaires).

These teachers included all types of Business English teachers as Bao (2019) defined teachers of language modules, teachers of business modules, and part-time business mentors from companies. Also, the sampling of participants included both experienced and novice teachers, among whom there were front-line teachers as well as teachers who took administrative duties. Participants for the quantitative phase were teachers who had been teaching in the Business English Department for at least two years, which means they had undergone a relatively complete cycle of teaching. In order to include all categories of Business English teachers (Gorard, 2003), some teachers were

experienced language teachers who shifted their career to teaching Business English, some of them were both strong in language and business skills, and some of them were middle-level managers of companies who took up teaching as their part-time job. Part-time teachers from companies were included in the sample because they were, as discussed in Chapter 2, under-represented and had been excluded from previous research on Business English teacher identity (ibid).

3.5.3 Sampling level 3: Participants for the interviews

In the interview phase, 10 teachers (five from each university) participated in the interviews. They were purposively selected for the inclusion of three different categories of Business English teachers according to the modules of subjects they taught, namely language module teachers, Business English module teachers and part-time business mentors from companies. With different education background, teaching and working experience, their general information was shown as in Table 3-3 below.

Table 3-3: Sampling Profile of interview participants (n=10)

University	Participant	Gender	Age	Year of Teaching BE	Educational Qualification	Education Background	Teaching Content	Academic Title	Business Experience	Administrative Position
A	**T4**	F	30	2	Master	English + Business	English & BE	Lecturer*	No	No
	T5	M	54	21	Master	English + Business	English & BE	Associate professor	No	Yes
	T9	F	42	6	Master	English + Business	English	Lecturer	No	No
	T14	M	39	4	Master	English/English education	English	Lecturer	Yes	No
	T15	M	43	3	Bachelor	Chinese + Business	Business skills	Business mentor	Yes	No
B	**T16**	F	32	2	Master	English/English education	BE	Assistant professor	No	No
	T20	F	42	10	Master	English/English education	BE	Lecturer	Yes	No
	T22	M	55	5	Doctor	English/English education	English	Associate professor	No	Yes
	T23	F	43	7	Master	English/English education	English & BE	Lecturer	No	Yes
	T30	M	28	2	Bachelor	Business	Business skills	Business mentor	Yes	No

*Lecturer in the Chinese higher education system is an academic title between associate professor and assistant professor.

Table 3-3 shows the interviewees' age ranged from 28 to 55 with their teaching experience from 2 to 21 years. They were representatives of teachers covering all educational levels and academic titles. Their educational qualifications were diverse but only one of them had doctoral degree. Two of them were associate professors, which were the highest academic title among the participants. Due to their education background and business-related experience, they worked as teachers for different course modules, namely language module teachers, Business English module teachers and business skills module. Besides, Business English teachers who took administrative tasks were invited for the

purpose that they might provide a perspective from administrative dimension (e.g. T5 from University A who was vice deputy of his faculty, T22 from University B who was vice deputy of his faculty, and T23 from University B who was dean of Business English Department). Thus, the participants might show a diversified variety of educational background, working experiences and teaching contents. With their own strengths and personalities, they might have their own individuality because of different courses they taught. But at the same time, they might share similar characteristics by working in the same department.

3.6 Instrument

3.6.1 Questionnaires

In the quantitative phase, Questionnaire 1 "*Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers*" was composed of Part 1 (a general profile of participants) and Part 2 (a questionnaire containing 25 items and scored with 5-Likert-scale). In Part 1, the general profile provided participants' personal information with a focus on their teaching and working experiences, educational qualifications and backgrounds, academic ranks of position, and teaching and researching areas. The collection of participants' background information helped the researcher comprehend the status quo of Business English teachers, capture and enhance the understanding of their answers and accounts (Johnson & Golombek, 2002).

Part 2 contained 25 items scored by using the 5-Likert-scale (14 of them were positively-written and 11 negatively-written) focused on Business English teachers' personal teaching efficacy and their teaching outcome expectancy respectively. Each item was a "declarative statement" (Carifio & Perla, 2007: 343) followed by a symmetric 5-point scale. Table 3-4 below is a sample of questions in Questionnaire 1. These items were categorized into two dimensions: Business English teachers' personal teaching efficacy belief (17

items: Item 2, 3, 5-8, 11, 12, 17-25) and their teaching outcome expectancy (8 items: Item 1, 4, 9, 10, 13-16). (Appendix 3 for Questionnaire 1)

Table 3-4 Sample of Questions in Questionnaire 1

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
5	I know the steps necessary to teach Business concepts effectively.					
21	Given a choice, I will not invite the principal to evaluate my Business English teaching.					

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree

There were several reasons for adopting Questionnaire 1 "*Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers*". Questionnaire 1 was adopted to measure participants' teacher efficacy from the "*Personal Science Teaching Efficacy Scale*" developed by Enochs & Riggs (1990). The "*Personal Science Teaching Efficacy Scale*", composed of 23 items, has been applied to measure science teachers in America (ibid)from the dimensions of personal teaching efficacy belief and teaching outcome expectancy. Zhang (2007) adapted and revised the instrument by removing three items which he claimed to be biased and leading for Chinese context in a research project on Chinese subject teachers' efficacy. Chen (2018) revised this instrument into a questionnaire of 27 items by focusing the subject on Business English, which was validated through a study with valuable data of Business English teacher efficacy with 102 Business English teachers in China.

In this study, this instrument was revised into a questionnaire of 25 items. Subject-related items were separated into specific items focusing on English, business and practices respectively considering that these three aspects were major elements of Business English programme and should be measured separately. Also, an item relating to parents' comment was replaced by students' due to the very limited contact between parents and Business

English teachers of higher education in this study.

Questionnaire 2 "*Business English Teachers' Identity*" was composed of 43 items of declarative statement with a symmetric 5-Likert scale (see Table 3-5 below). Questionnaire 2 was adapted to measure teacher efficacy in a detailed and further scope. Compare with Questionnaire 1 which measures teacher efficacy on a general purpose, the items of Questionnaire 2 are categorized into three major orientations of teachers' identity perception: Business English teachers' perception of their identity (Item 1-17), their teaching beliefs and competence (Item 18-34), and their research engagement and competence (Item 35-43). It also consists of teachers' self-identification and possible influencing factors so that it provides answers for RQ 1 and RQ 2 and may provide some pre-ordinate codes for data analysis. Table 3-5 below is a sample of questions in Questionnaire 2. (Appendix 4 for Questionnaire 2)

Table 3-5 Sample of Questions in Questionnaire 2

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Part 1 - Participants' perspectives about professional development state						
10	I am positive about the prospects of my school's Business English orientation.					
Part 2 - Participants' teaching beliefs and competence						
21	I can design learning objectives and activities according to students' current needs.					
Part 3 - Participants' research competence						
41	I am familiar with research methods and I do not need mentoring.					

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree

Questionnaire 2, designed to assess Business English teachers' professional identity, utilized Yan et al.'s (2020) "*University EFL Teacher Identity Structure*". This model has been adapted and revised in many research projects on subject teachers' efficacy and identity in China and measured with

Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency reliability (e.g. Xun et al., 2014 in Shandong Province with 502 high school English teachers; Yan et al., 2020 in Hubei Province with 18 Chinese female mid-career EFL teacher educators).

3.6.2 Interview protocol

For explanation of quantitative findings and further exploration of identity construction and influencing factors, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 10 Business English teachers. The interview questions were created based on the findings and analysis of the quantitative data because the quantitative results typically inform the types of participants to be selected and the types of questions to be asked of them for the qualitative phase (Creswell, 2014: 224). From questionnaire findings, semi-structured interview questions and probing questions were created to get further insights into the issues arising from the analysis of quantitative results (Appendix 5 for Interview Questions).

3.6.3 Document Analysis

Documents that were analysed for this research included national and local policies, school policies, curriculum information, and workload of participants. National and local official documents helped to provide information about Business English teachers' "professional development policies and requirements in the micro-, meso- and macro- contexts" (Yan et al., 2020: 3). That is to say, macro economic policies from the government decided the demands for graduates and financial appropriations for local universities. In accordance with government's direction, local universities made adjustment to the major management and curriculum designation, which eventually had an impact on Business English discipline and its teachers' daily work.

For Business English discipline, national and local policies involved government policies both in education and economy. School policies included

teaching, researching and administrative policies concerning Business English discipline and Business English teachers. Documents of curriculum referred to the courses teachers teach, teachers' academic publications and the research topics of the students they supervised. Such information could explain teachers' knowledge structure and their research areas. Table 3-6 below shows the documents and policies being analyzed in this research.

Government policies and university regulations were available on either official website of Ningbo government or those of the two universities. Documents of teachers' workload were obtained with the approval of two universities and participating teachers. Information of these documents was analyzed interwoven with the qualitative data as background information for better understanding of teachers' situations and choices in their career decisions.

Table 3-6: Documents and Policies for Document Analysis

	Documents and Policies	Source
1	Outline of the 13th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of Ningbo	Ningbo Development and Reform Commission
2	Outline of the 14th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and Long Range Objectives by 2035 of Ningbo	Ningbo Development and Reform Commission
3	Educational Program and Curriculum Designation of Business English	Official website of two universities
4	Implementation Measures for Evaluation and Appointment of Professional and Technical Positions	Official website of two universities
5	Management Measures for Teaching and Research Awards	Official website of two universities
6	Teacher workload and teaching courses (2016-present)	Administrative Documents
7	Supervising workload and topics (2018-present)	National System for Graduation Thesis (Design) of College Students

3.6.4 Observation

Besides questionnaires and interviews, the researcher observed participating teachers' silence, pauses, signs, and other body language during the interviews. These were also valuable data presenting teachers' attitudes and emotions (Cohen et al., 2018), and were included in reporting of the interview transcripts to further enhance the findings. These non-verbal behaviours were useful because they provided the researcher with an opportunity to record "'live' data from...social situations" (ibid: 542), that is, what happened *in situ* when interviews were taking place. Observation was also valuable in the Chinese traditional settings that people were more conservative in expressing negative opinions and emotions. For example, when interviewees smiled a significant smile and chose to keep silent, it might be a hint for the researcher that there should be follow-up questions. Thus, observation in this study served as a reality check as well as a chance for discovering things that participants might not feel free to talk about.

3.7 Pilot Test

A pilot study involving three Business English teachers from the two universities was conducted to enhance the practicality and ensure clarity (Dillman et al., 2014) of both the questionnaire items and interview questions. This step was critical to identify issues where participants might "have difficulty with particular questions, or interpret them very differently and perhaps irrelevantly" (Cohen et al., 2018: 509). The three teachers were from the research sample and they were volunteers in the pilot tests. Two of them took part in pilot test for the questionnaires while the third teacher took part in the pilot test for the interview. The two questionnaires were carried out on 30th August, 2021. It took the two teachers about 20 minutes to answer all the items on the questionnaires and provided their feedback. In the "educational background" part of demographic section, one teacher from University B suggested "educational and business background" so that he could add his

business-related working experience in his answers. He also suggested to add clarification of “levels” in Item 7 of Questionnaire 2. Table 3-7 below shows the changes made after the pilot test of two questionnaires.

Table 3-7: Changes after the Pilot Test of Questionnaires

	Draft	Final version
General information of Questionnaire 1	Educational background (Please list any background in language or business field)	Educational or working background (Please list any background in language or business field)
Item 7 of Questionnaire 2	I am concerned with Business English discipline development at different levels.	I am concerned with Business English discipline development at different levels (teachers’, institutional and regional).

Thus, a revised version of questionnaire protocol was produced after considering the feedback of the pilot test (see Appendix 3 for Questionnaire 1 and Appendix 4 for Questionnaire 2). It increased the practicability and readability (Dillman et al., 2014) after revision of the wording (e.g. “level” in Table 3-7 above). It also helped to confirm a major issue for follow up interviews by adding “working background” to teachers’ general information.

A pilot test was carried out for the interview protocol with a Business English teacher of University A. She was one of the sample. In the pilot interview,. The pilot test helped further improved on the interview questions and gave hints to the type of themes during the coding process. It also helped to reduce some irrelevant or difficult-to-answer questions and helped to rearrange the sequence of questions and adjust interviewing techniques for natural and authentic answers. This helped to add new questions in interview protocol (see Appendix 6 for Interview Protocol).

3.8 Data Collection

3.8.1 Data collection for questionnaires

Questionnaires data collection was carried out after ethical approval was obtained. The researcher went to the two universities with the Participant Information Sheets (see Appendix 7) and Participant Consent Forms (see Appendix 8). The researcher gave a general introduction of the research to all participants as per the Participant Information Sheet. The objectives and procedures of the study were explained to participants for their information. Participants could choose to answer questions either in the meeting room or in their own offices. It took each participant half an hour to finish the two questionnaires. The researcher was available in case teachers had problems in understanding and answering the questions.

3.8.2 Data collection for interviews

Interviews were conducted in quiet places for uninterrupted time and prevented distraction. Each Interview lasted between 40 and 70 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Interview data were transcribed verbatim immediately after the interviews in order to prevent any information loss or misinterpretation. (see Appendix 9 & 10 for samples of interview transcripts)

Due to restrictions placed by the government as a safety measure against the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers' offices were often used for conducting the interviews because they needed to follow their universities' regulation of *dian dui dian* (Point to Point), which means minimal travelling between office and home. There were times due to tightening of safety measures to prevent the spread of the pandemic, the researcher was not allowed access to participants' universities. During such a time, cafes became the venues for the interviews. Often follow up meetings were arranged in the events of collecting additional information. Such meetings were inconvenient due to restrictions to

public places. Thus, two participants from University A preferred to answer the questions via telephone for the purpose of abiding the safety measures.

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Data analysis for questionnaires

The quantitative data from the two questionnaires were analysed by using descriptive statistics, which focused on describing the main features of data from the two questionnaires into digestible insights, patterns or notable trends (Cohen et al., 2018).

Questionnaire items were clustered around the identity-related factors when these items were designed in the first place. In Questionnaire 1 "*Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers*" (25 items totally), 17 items (Item 2, 3, 5-8, 11, 12, 17-25) were clustered to measure the subtheme "Personal teaching efficacy belief" and 8 items (Item 1, 4, 9, 10, 13-16) were grouped to measure the subtheme "Teaching outcome expectancy". In Questionnaire 2 "*Business English Teachers' Identity*" (43 items totally), Item 1-17 were designed to measure Business English teachers' perception of their identity, Item 18-34 were grouped to measure their teaching beliefs and competence, and Item 35-43 were clustered to measure their research engagement and competence.

Data were calculated by using the *IBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions* (SPSS) and presented by percentage, mean, standard deviation and aggregate mean to show ranking based on the Likert Scale.

3.9.2 Data analysis for interviews

The researcher read and re-read interview transcripts, looking for events, actions and opinions, which were phenomena or reflections of teachers' identity. After careful reading and re-reading (Creswell, 2012), codes, whether

deductive and pre-ordinate from the previous literature of Business English teacher identity, were assigned for documents and transcripts after the interviews. Inductive codes emerged from the data (Cohen et al., 2018) were also coded. Similarities and differences were sought in open coding therefore similar events, actions and opinions were grouped into codes and sub-themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

On the basis of open coding, axial coding explored the relationships between different encodings and aggregate similar encodings into higher-level concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Issues to follow up were produced including high instructional identity, knowledge structure, identity of inter-discipline, teacher-admin relationship, economic identity and economic capital. Sub-themes were further related to themes by looking for conditions, context, strategies and consequences of dimensions of teachers' identity, the influencing factors and their coping strategies to identity construction. Also, in axial coding, sub-themes were further related to themes by looking for teachers' personal working and educational backgrounds, the university regulations shaping teachers' working context (Smit et al., 2010), teachers' actions to administrative decisions and consequences. This process reflected the emphasis on contextual and institutional factors in identity research in teacher agency and structural constraints (Barkhuizen, 2016).

The use of constant comparative method was applied in data analysis to make sure that "relevant data were coded consistently" (Cohen et al., 2018: 670). For a similar identity or action, factors from different dimensions were explored for encodings. If new issues arose, they were spotted and marked and similar evidence were sought in follow up interviews for possible new themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Figure 3-2 below shows the procedures of coding in layers of stages.

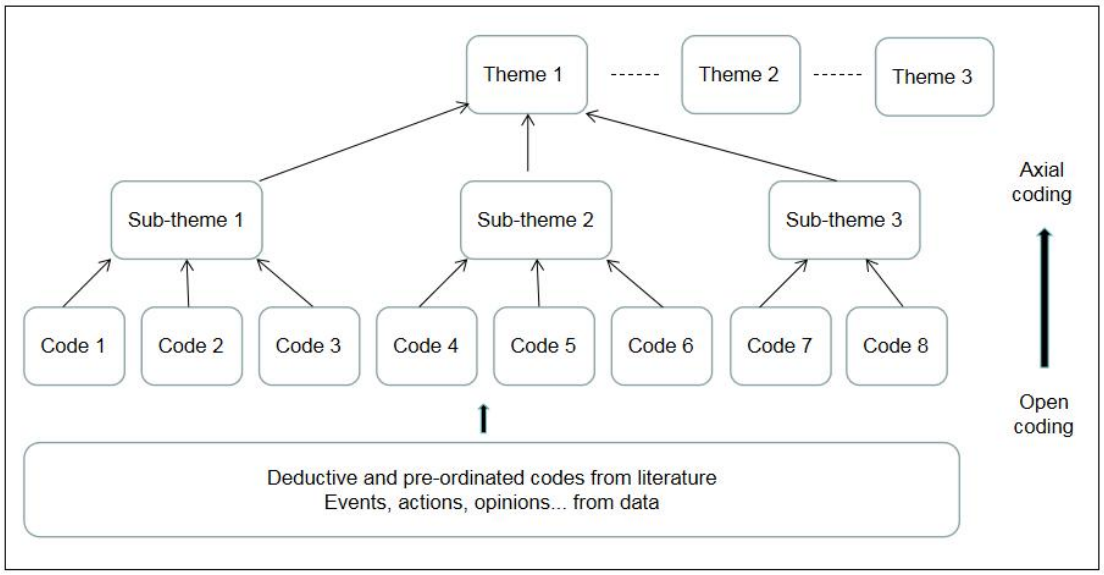

Figure 3-2: Stages of coding

3.10 Trustworthiness, Validity and Reliability

3.10.1 Validity and reliability for quantitative data

The two questionnaires were chosen with ensured reliability. Questionnaire 1 was revised based on Riggs & Enochs' (1990) instrument which was reported with high reliability (Cronbach's alpha $\approx$ 0.90) in their original research. This instrument was also reported with high reliability (Cronbach's alpha $>$ 0.88) in Bleicher's (2004) study with science teachers. Questionnaire 2 has been proven in Xun et al.'s (2014) study with 502 high school English teachers in Shandong Province, the instrument was reported with high reliability (Cronbach's alpha=0.920).

To ensure validity, Questionnaire 2 has been proven in Xun et al.'s (2014) study with high validity (KMO=0.828). Also, the questionnaires were translated into Chinese and presented in bilingual, both Chinese and English to avoid misunderstanding due to language barriers in communication.

3.10.2 Trustworthiness for qualitative data

One-to-one face-to-face interviews were conducted in Chinese Mandarin, which was the participants' first language. Participants would be better able to

communicate their views in Chinese than in English. Speaking in Chinese Mandarin would put them in a more comfortable situation and that would provide them the confidence to convey their thoughts. Chinese Mandarin was used in interviews in case there were expressions or terminologies that participants could not find the suitable equivalent words in English. To further ensure validity, participants' own opinions in interviews were greatly encouraged by minimizing bias, tendency and misperceptions from the researcher.

In member checking, the researcher provided the participants with the transcribed interview scripts and her explanation of participants' viewpoints for their confirmation (Cohen et al., 2018). The verbatim transcripts and translations were double checked by the participants by being returned to them to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences (Creswell, 2012) in case any information or nonverbal data be lost or misinterpreted by the researcher (Fowler, 2009).

In back translation, although interview data were analyzed in Chinese, interview questions and answers presented in this thesis were back translated and were returned to participants to ensure that the scripts were clear and accurate in the translated form.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

This study received ethical approval from UNNC following the researcher's application. Then, the researcher gained access to the two universities by asking for permission from the Director of Faculty of Foreign Languages of University A and Dean of Business English Department of University B. The *Participant Information Sheet* contains the details of the study so that participants might have an understanding of the research. Participants' privacy was guaranteed in a formal way via the cover page of *Participant Information*

Sheet. The *Participant Consent Form* was used to obtain participants' consent and kept as evidence of their voluntary involvement with the study.

Confidentiality involved non-traceability, which is to "protect participants' right to privacy" (Cohen et al., 2018: 130). All questionnaires and interview answers and files were kept by the researcher in a safe and password-protected computer that no one was allowed to get access. There was no discussion of any participant with anybody else. Neither was there any information passing on to any administrative leaders of the two universities in any possible form that any participant could be identified.

Anonymity means that "information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity" (Cohen et al., 2018: 129). Questionnaires and interview scripts only contained numbers instead of participants' names to make sure there were no identifying marks. Participants were disorderly labeled as T1 to T30 (T1-T15 belonged to University A and T16-T30 belonged to University B).

Non-coercion and non-maleficence means the participants had every right to withdraw or stop at any time or stage of the study (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study, participants were informed that they could decide to stop or withdraw whenever they felt the need (BERA, 2018). No coercion was involved in any phase of research. Participants were also informed that the study was not affected by their university leaders (CSE, 2020), and neither could their leaders get access to participants' personal/family information or research data.

The researcher adopted the role of a participant-observer to prioritize building trust and minimizing potential harm to participants. The researcher tried to listen to participants' point of view with rapport and patience, showing interest, and avoiding signs of approval/disapproval (Arksey & Knight, 1999: 53). The

researcher was familiar with participants' working content and context. This helped her to better detect and understand participants' opinions, feelings, emotions and concerns for in-depth and highly detailed data.

As an insider in this study and to avoid insider researcher bias, putting distance with the participants was practiced to prevent the researcher from her own fixed thinking pattern (Blaikie, 2010) or attitude toward a familiar context. That is, although the researcher was familiar with Business English discipline and the participants' daily teaching and researching activities, she did not impose her judgement or evaluation in the research procedures, which prevented the researcher from being too obtrusive. The researcher did not get involved in participants' daily work and research activities by positioning herself as an "insider in the industry" and "outsider in the context and power relationship" (Jacob, 1988: 16).

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS - PHASE 1

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings from the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaires. The two research questions guided the report on the findings from the participants' perception of their identity in their role as Business English teachers and the factors that facilitate/hinder the process of their identity construction. The profiles of the teachers from the two universities are presented followed by an interpretation of the quantitative findings.

4.2 Profiles of Participants

30 participants took part in the survey, with 15 of them from University A and 15 from University B. As shown in Table 4-1 below, there were 8 male and 22 female Business English teachers.

Table 4-1: Personal information of participants (n=30)

	Range of Age						**Years of Teaching BE**		
	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51-55	Before 2007*	2007-2014*	2015-Now
Male	1	-	2	2	-	3	1	2	5
Female	1	1	-	17	2	1	2	11	9
Total	**2**	**1**	**2**	**19**	**2**	**4**	**3**	**13**	**14**
%	**6.7%**	**3%**	**6.7%**	**63.3%**	**6.7%**	**13.3%**	**10%**	**43.3%**	**46.7%**

*BE was approved as a BA degree in China (2007) and in Ningbo (2014).

The 30 teachers ranged in age from 28 (minimum) to 55 (maximum) with their average age as 43. Majority of the teachers (63.3%) were in the age group 41-45. In years of teaching Business English, 27 out of 30 teachers (90%) started their career as Business English teachers, as of 2007, when Business English was approved as a BA degree programme in China. About half of the 30 teachers (46.7%) were involved with Business English teaching after the

year of 2015, when the degree programme was approved in Ningbo higher education.

The distribution of teachers' teaching experience in Figure 4-1 below displays the length of their teaching experience ranged from 2 to 31 years with the average length as 18.2 years. The length of their years of teaching Business English ranged from 2 to 21 with the average length as 7.23 years.

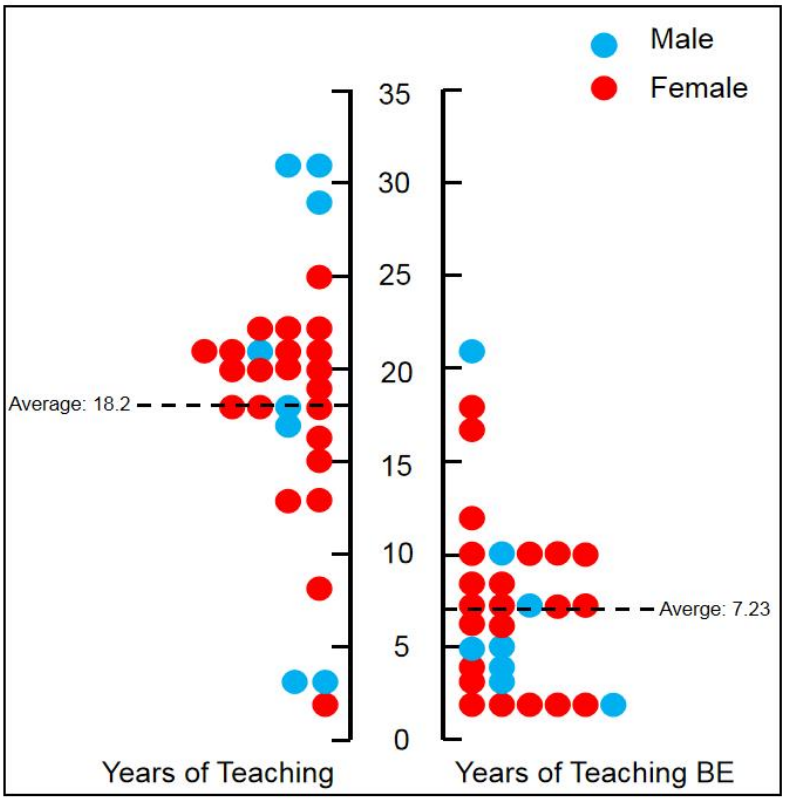

Figure 4-1 Distribution of Participants in Years of Teaching and Years of Teaching Business English

Table 4-2 below shows that out of the total of 30 participants, only 2 teachers had doctoral degrees. Majority (86.7%) of the teachers held master degrees and the other 2 (business mentors from companies) held bachelor degrees. Among the 28 teachers, 20 (67.7%) of them majored in Applied English or TESOL, and 8 (26.7%) teachers majored in both language and business (including 3 teachers who took business-related subject courses). These

participants had professional certificates to show their English proficiency and teaching ability. They had certified degrees during their undergraduate or postgraduate studies, which guaranteed that they reached the level of TEM-4[3] according to the degree requirements of the Chinese Bureau of Education. The other two teachers were business mentors from companies who majored in Chinese and International Business respectively.

Table 4-2: Professional information of participants (n=30)

	Educational Qualification			**Education Background**			**Academic Title**				**Business-related Working Experience**
	Bachelor	Master	Doctor	Applied English or TESOL	Both Applied English and Business	Business	Associate professor	Lecturer*	Assistant professor	Business mentor	
Male	2	5	1	4	2	2	3	3	-	2	3
Female	-	21**	1	16	6	-	2	18	2	-	4
Total	**2**	**26**	**2**	**20**	**8**	**2**	**5**	**21**	**2**	**2**	**7**
%	**6.7**	**86.7**	**6.7**	**67.7**	**26.7**	**6.7**	**16.7**	**70**	**6.7**	**6.7**	**23.3**

*Lecturer in the Chinese higher education system is an academic title as associate professor and assistant professor.
**Three PhD candidates in calculated in master level

For full-time teaching fellows, there were 5 associate professors (senior professional title), 21 lecturers (middle-rank professional title) and 2 assistant professors (primary professional title). The teaching and researching loads of these full-time teachers were based on their professional titles. In both universities, teachers with higher professional titles (e.g. professor and associate professor) were supposed to undertake fewer classes but more research tasks according to their contracts, while teachers with lower titles (lecturer and assistant professor) needed to teach more classes and produce

[3]TEM-4 (Test for English Majors - Band 4) is an internal teaching evaluation test of English majors in colleges and universities in China. It has been carried out since 1990 under the guidance of the National Advisory Committee on Teaching English Languages to Majors in Higher Education under the Ministry of Education. TEM-4 refers to the basic stage examination of English Majors indicating a comprehensive ability of language skills.

less research output.

Practical experience was not compulsory but highly encouraged for Business English teachers in both universities because of the practical session in the curriculum requirements of Business English degree. In terms of business-related experience, only 10 participants (33.4%) had business-related education or training while 7 teachers (23.3%) had hands-on experience with business companies with the male teachers showing higher level of business experience. The proportion of teachers of business-related experience was far from sufficient due to the “double professional” requirement for establishing a Business English Department. These 10 teachers with practical experience were more likely to be assigned with business-related courses and collaborative projects with companies and industries.

Although 50% of the participants were equipped with business-related knowledge, 90% of them took the task to teach business-related courses (Table 4-3 below). However, as teachers’ autonomy increased, there was a decline in involvement of the Business English teachers. 22 teachers (73.3%) supervised students’ essays in Business English, but only 9 of them (30%) had carried out research projects in Business English areas.

Table 4-3: Distribution of participants in categories of working areas (n=30)

Range of Age (n)	Teaching Contents			Supervising Areas			Research Areas		
	English Language	Business English	Business skills	Applied English or TESOL	Business English	Business	Applied English or TESOL	Business English	Business
51-55 (4)	2	3	1	2	3	-	4	1	-
46-50 (2)	-	2	2	1	1	-	2	1	-
41-45 (19)	9	18	10	10	16	3	14	7	3
36-40 (2)	-	2	1	1	1	-	1	-	1
31-35 (1)	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
26-30 (2)	1	1	2	1	1	-	1	-	1
Total (30)	**12**	**27**	**16**	**16**	**22**	**3**	**23**	**9**	**5**
%	**40%**	**90%**	**53%**	**53%**	**73%**	**10%**	**77%**	**30%**	**17%**

Younger teachers were especially weak in research in Business English. Among the 5 teachers under 40 years old, none of them did any research projects in Business English areas during 2014 (the establishment of Business English Department and 2021 (the time of collecting participants' personal profiles). Of the 14 teachers with shorter teaching experience (under 7 years), only 1 teacher carried out research projects in Business English.

4.3 Analysis of Quantitative Data from Questionnaires

30 Business English teachers in two universities answered two questionnaires measuring their efficacy and professional identity. Questionnaire 1 "*Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers*" (25 items totally) (Appendix 3 for Questionnaire 1) was designed to measure "Business English Teacher Efficacy", which consisted of two subthemes "Personal teaching efficacy belief" (17 items: Item 2, 3, 5-8, 11, 12, 17-25) and "Teaching outcome expectancy" (8 items: Item 1, 4, 9, 10, 13-16). Questionnaire 2 "*Business English Teachers' Identity*" (Appendix 4 for Questionnaire 2) was composed of

43 items which were categorized into three major subthemes, namely Business English teachers' perception of their identity (Item 1-17), their teaching beliefs and competence (Item 18-34), and their research engagement and competence (Item 35-43).

This section of interpretation of quantitative data was based on the findings of two questionnaires. Theme 1 "Business English teacher efficacy" reported the results of Questionnaire 1 and Theme 2 "Business English teacher identity" reported the results of Questionnaire 2.

4.3.1 Business English Teacher Efficacy

Based on Questionnaire 1, Business English teacher efficacy was composed of teachers' personal teaching efficacy belief and their teaching outcome expectancy. The teachers rated themselves high on Business English teacher efficacy (M=3.91, SD=.352) as shown in Table 4-4. Within this perception of teacher efficacy, the following two sub-themes, the teachers believed that their personal teaching efficacy was higher (M=4.12, SD=.419) than their expectant teaching outcome (M=3.46, SD=.616) although both were ranked high.

Table 4-4: Means, SDs and Ranks of Dimensions of BE Teacher Efficacy (n=30)

Dimensions	**Personal Teaching Efficacy Belief**	**Teaching Outcome Expectancy**
Mean	4.12	3.46
SD	.419	.616
Rank*	High	High
Dimensions	**BE Teacher Efficacy**	
Mean	3.91	
SD	.352	
Rank	High	

*Aggregate mean ranking is to calculate the overall ranking of items based on individual rankings assigned on a 1-5 scale. The ranks in this study are: Very high (M=4.2-5), High (M=3.4-4.2), Medium (M=2.6-3.4), Low (M=1.8-2.6) and Very low (M=1-1.8).

4.3.1.1 Personal teaching efficacy belief

The subtheme "Personal teaching efficacy belief" covered data from 17 items (Item 2, 3, 5-8, 11, 12, 17-25). Overall, in personal teaching efficacy belief, participants showed very high commitment to Business English teaching (M=4.12, SD=.419 in Table 4-4 above).

Table 4-5 below showed their high efficacy belief in teaching business concepts and English language points respectively. They were very confident in their teaching methods and effectiveness (M=3.93, SD=.680 in business concepts in Item 5; M=4.20, SD=.653 in English language points in Item 6). They were very familiar with their teaching contents both in business concepts (M=3.80, SD=.833 in Item 11) and English language points (M=4.00, SD=.816 in Item 12) and were confident in explaining both business concepts (M=4.10, SD=.831 in Item 17) and English language points (M=4.60, SD=.490 in Item 18). They welcomed questions from students and were very confident in answering them (M=4.43, SD=.761 in business concepts in Item 22; M=4.63, SD=.482 in English language points in Item 23).

Table 4-5: Teachers' Efficacy Belief (Part 1: Perceptions of Teaching Business Concepts and English Language Points)

Dimensions		Item	Mean	SD	Rank
Belief in teaching approaches	Business	Item 5	3.93	.680	High
	English	Item 6	4.20	.653	Very High
Understanding of teaching contents	Business	Item 11	3.80	.833	High
	English	Item 12	4.00	.816	High
Confidence in explanation	Business	Item 17	4.10	.831	High
	English	Item 18	4.60	.490	Very High
Ability in helping students' questions	Business	Item 22	4.43	.761	Very High
	English	Item 23	4.63	.482	Very High

Besides business concepts and English language points (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, discourse, and pragmatics), teachers showed high/very

high efficacy in all the other items except for administrative evaluation (Item 21). As Table 4-6 below showed, “willingness to seek teaching approaches” (M=4.73, SD=.442 in Item 2) topped the list in participants’ efficacy belief, followed by “willingness for questions from students” (M=4.57, SD=.844 in Item 24), “confidence in teaching effectiveness” (M=4.47, SD=.618 in Item 8) and “efficacy in encouraging students’ interest” (M=4.20, SD=.833 in Item 25). These four items showed participants had very high self-evaluation and confidence in their teaching ability.

Table 4-6: Teachers’ efficacy belief (Part 2)

Item		Mean	SD	Rank
Willingness to seek better teaching approaches	Item 2	4.73	.442	Very High
Willingness for questions from students	Item 24	4.57	.844	Very High
Confidence in teaching effectiveness	Item 8	4.47	.618	Very High
Efficacy in encouraging students’ interest in Business English learning	Item 25	4.20	.833	Very High
Confidence in Business English teaching skills	Item 20	4.07	1.031	High
Belief in teachers’ personal efforts	Item 3	3.97	1.080	High
Confidence in ability in answering students’ questions	Item 19	3.93	.854	High
Understanding in approaches in monitoring students’ practices	Item 7	3.83	1.067	High
Willingness to invite evaluation from leaders	Item 21	2.50	1.147	Low

Similarly, Business English teachers displayed high belief in confidence in their Business English teaching skills (M=4.07, SD=1.031 in Item 20), their personal efforts (M=3.97, SD=1.080 in Item 3), ability in answering students’ questions (M=3.93, SD=.854) and in students’ practices monitoring (M=3.83, SD=1.067 in Item 7). However participants showed strong unwillingness in inviting principals to evaluate their Business English teaching (M=2.50, SD=1.147 in Item 21). Such low efficacy might raise an issue of evaluation system for further exploration in the following interviews.

However, teachers' expertise in different areas, their past experience, and other differences in personal profiles made differences between different categories of teachers. First, it was worth noticing that teachers of different modules showed different levels of efficacy belief in Business English teaching and researching (see Table 4-7 below).

Table 4-7: Differences in efficacy belief between language module teachers (n=13) and Business English module teachers (n=15)

Item		Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Item 7	Understanding in approaches in monitoring students' practices	Language module teachers	3.39	1.003	Medium
		Business English module teachers	4.13	1.024	High
Item 12	Understanding of teaching contents in English language	Language module teachers	3.77	1.049	High
		Business English module teachers	4.20	.542	Very High
Item 17	Confidence in explanation of business-related concepts	Language module teachers	3.77	.973	High
		Business English module teachers	4.33	.596	Very High
Item 20	Confidence in Business English teaching skills	Language module teachers	3.62	1.211	High
		Business English module teachers	4.40	.712	Very High
Item 25	Efficacy in encouraging students' interest in Business English learning	Language module teachers	3.92	.997	High
		Business English module teachers	4.40	.611	Very High

The differences in the above five items of Questionnaire 1 showed that Business English module teachers displayed higher efficacy belief than language module teachers. Teachers with business-related experience and knowledge had more confidence in guiding students' workplace practices (M=4.13, SD=1.024 in Item 7), in teaching skills and teaching contents (ranked very high in Item 12, 17 & 20), and in motivating students (M=4.40, SD=.611 in Item 25).

Similarly, teaching experience was also a factor which might influence teachers' efficacy belief, as shown in Table 4-8 below. Novice teachers (who

started Business English teaching after 2014 when Business English was approved as a BA programme in Ningbo) and experienced teachers (who started before 2014) displayed different levels of efficacy belief.

Table 4-8: Differences in efficacy belief between novice teachers (n=14) and experienced teachers (n=16)

Item		Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Item 6	Belief in English teaching approaches	Novice teachers	4.21	.674	Very High
		Experienced teachers	4.19	.634	High
Item 7	Understanding in approaches in monitoring students' practices	Novice teachers	3.21	1.145	Medium
		Experienced teachers	4.38	.599	Very High
Item 17	Confidence in explanation of business-related concepts	Novice teachers	3.86	.915	High
		Experienced teachers	4.31	.682	Very High
Item 20	Confidence in Business English teaching skills	Novice teachers	3.71	1.161	High
		Experienced teachers	4.38	.781	Very High
Item 22	Ability in helping students' questions	Novice teachers	4.14	.915	High
		Experienced teachers	4.69	.464	Very High

Except Item 6, experienced Business English teachers ranked higher in four items of practices teaching, confidence in teaching business-related knowledge and skills, and ability in dealing with students' questions (M=4.69, SD=.464 in Item 22). Particularly, experienced teachers showed very high efficacy in guiding students' industry practices (M=4.38, SD=.599 in Item 7).

4.3.1.2 Teaching outcome expectancy

The subtheme "Teaching outcome expectancy" covered 8 items of Questionnaire 2 (Item 1, 4, 9, 10, 13-16) with an overall high expectancy (M=3.46, SD=.616 in Table 4-4 above).

Under this subtheme, participants strongly agreed with the significance of teachers' efforts in helping students' performance (see Table 4-9 below). They believed that the improvement of student's performance was closely related to teachers' devotion of efforts (M=3.93, SD=.854 in Item 1). Good selection of teaching approaches (M=3.87, SD=.718 in Item 15) was also believed to have

a direct and positive impact on students' performance because teaching approaches helped to enhance students' interests in Business English learning (M=3.77, SD=.844 in Item 16).

Table 4-9: Attribution of students' learning outcome to teaching efforts and approaches (n=30)

Item		Mean	SD	Rank
Improvement of students' performance	Item1	3.93	.854	High
Relevance to students' scores	Item 15	3.87	.718	High
Enhancement of students' interest	Item 16	3.77	.844	High
Improvement of student's grades	Item 4	3.67	.869	High
Overcome of students' inadequacy in business background	Item 9	3.63	1.169	High
Overcome of students' inadequacy in English language ability	Item 10	3.37	1.110	Medium
Responsibility for students' scores	Item 14	2.80	1.108	Medium
Impact on students' scores	Item 13	2.63	1.048	Medium

However, when it came to the relationship between teachers' endeavors and students' scores, participants were less likely to attribute students' test results to their teaching methods (M=2.63, SD=1.048 in Item 13). Business English teachers also expressed medium attitude towards their responsibility for students' scores (M=2.80, SD=1.108 in Item 14).

Differences also existed between novice teachers and experienced teachers. As shown in Table 4-10 below, experienced teachers were more likely to expect positive outcome from students (M=3.44, SD=1.116 in Item 10 & M=2.69, SD=1.102 in Item 13), while novice teachers were more susceptible to pressure of their responsibility for students' performance (M=3.07, SD=1.100 in Item 14).

Table 4-10: Differences in teaching outcome expectancy between novice teachers (n=14) and experienced teachers (n=16)

Item		Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Item 10	Overcome of students' inadequacy in business background	Novice teachers	3.29	1.097	Medium
		Experienced teachers	3.44	1.116	High
Item 13	Impact on students' scores	Novice teachers	2.57	.979	Low
		Experienced teachers	2.69	1.102	Medium
Item 14	Responsibility for students' scores	Novice teachers	3.07	1.100	Medium
		Experienced teachers	2.56	1.059	Low

In summary, the findings in Questionnaire 1 showed that in measuring Business English teachers' efficacy belief, participants had a high personal teaching efficacy belief and a high teaching outcome expectancy. Their confidence and belief in their teaching ability and approaches was very high, and their high belief in personal efforts was also notable while they held conservative attitude to students' scores. Differences existed between teachers of different modules, and teaching experience also played an important role in their teaching efficacy belief. These differences might be further explored and explained in the qualitative findings from interviews.

4.3.2 Business English Teacher Identity

Based on Questionnaire 2, Table 4-11 below showed the overall identity of teachers with three subthemes, namely Business English teachers' perception of their identity (data from Item 1-17), their teaching beliefs and competence (data from Item 18-34), and their research engagement and competence (data from Item 35-43). The three subthemes were analyzed in this section one by one.

Table 4-11: Means, SDs and Ranks of Dimensions of Business English Teacher Identity

Dimensions	State of Professional Development	Teaching Beliefs & Competence	Research Competence
Mean	3.89	4.42	2.57
SD	.501	.353	.717
Rank	High	Very High	Low
Dimensions	**BE Teacher Identity**		
Mean	3.82		
SD	.393		
Rank	High		

Participants ranked high for overall teacher identity (M=3.82, SD=.393). Among the three dimensions of teacher identity, dimension on teaching belief and competence ranked very high (M=4.42, SD=.353) followed by high for dimension on professional development (M=3.89, SD=.501) with low for dimension on research competence (M=2.57, SD=.717).

4.3.2.1 State of Professional development

The subtheme "state of professional development" covered Items 1-17 of Questionnaire 2 with an overall high expectancy (M=3.89, SD=.501 in Table 4-11 above), which was composed of three dimensions, namely belief in Business English discipline, commitment to Business English and its teaching, and satisfaction level with university (see Table 4-12 below).

Table 4-12: Dimensions of participants' state of professional development (n=30)

Item			Mean	SD	Rank
Belief in BE discipline	Importance of BE teacher professional development	Item 5	4.73	.442	Very High
	Need for reform BE teaching	Item 6	4.47	.670	Very High
	Necessity of BE discipline	Item 4	4.37	.795	Very High
	Optimism in personal development in BE discipline	Item 8	4.10	.821	High
	Optimism in BE prospect	Item 10	3.83	.820	High
	Optimism in BE development	Item 9	3.80	.980	High
Commitment to BE and BE teaching	Commitment to BE teaching	Item 1	4.57	.559	Very High
	Enthusiasm about work	Item 2	4.50	.563	Very High
	Delight in commitment to work	Item 3	4.30	.737	Very High
	Concern with BE discipline	Item 7	4.30	.823	Very High
	Devotion to BE	Item 15	3.97	.752	High
	Reasonable use of personal development opportunities	Item 11	3.90	.790	High
Satisfaction level with university	Praise/reward from school	Item 12	3.72	1.063	High
	Support from university	Item 13	3.28	1.145	Medium
	Workload	Item 16	3.20	1.194	Medium
	Communication with university leaders	Item 17	3.00	1.125	Medium
	Income	Item 14	2.33	1.075	Low

Participants had very high belief in Business English discipline. This high belief was reflected by teachers' perception of the importance of their professional development (M=4.73, SD=.442), the necessity (M=4.47, SD=.670) and need (M=4.37, SD=.795) for discipline development. These three items topped the dimension of belief in Business English discipline. Also, participants were highly optimistic about their professional development about their personal development (M=4.10, SD=.821) as well as the development of Business English (M=3.80, SD=.980) and its prospect (M=3.83, SD=.820).

Participants were also highly committed to Business English teaching (M=4.57, SD=.559) and enthusiastic about (M=4.50, SD=.563) their work with very strong belief and delight in their commitment (M=4.30, SD=.737). They were

not only highly concerned with Business English (M=4.30, SD=.823) but also fully devoted to it (M=3.97, SD=.752) with close focus on their professional development (M=3.90, SD=.790).

Despite participants' very high belief and commitment in Business English, their satisfaction level with their universities was moderate. Although the praise and reward from their universities was satisfactory, support from university (M=3.28, SD=1.145), workload (M=3.20, SD=1.194) and communication with leaders (M=3.00, SD=1.125) were the three aspects teachers ranked medium. Another point that was brought up unanimously was the dissatisfaction with their income (M=2.33, SD=1.075). How these issues affected their professional development would be explored from the qualitative data through interviews where in-depth information was obtained.

Item 8 in Table 4-13 below was worth noticing that teachers of Business English modules showed very high optimism in their career development in Business English discipline (M=4.20, SD=.909). Whether deep involvement in Business English would impact on teachers' self-perceived state of professional development would also be further explored in the interviews afterwards.

Table 4-13: Differences in belief in Business English discipline between language module teachers (n=13) and Business English module teachers (n=15)

Item 8	Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Optimism in personal development in BE discipline	Language module teachers	3.85	.662	High
	Business English module teachers	4.20	.909	Very High

Similarly, experienced teachers showed more concern (M=4.63, SD=.484) and optimism (M=4.31, SD=.682) in Business English discipline as shown in Table 4-14 below. However, they were more likely to sense the lack of support from

their universities (M=2.81, SD=1.130).

Table 4-14: Differences in belief in Business English discipline between novice teachers (n=14) and experienced teachers (n=16)

Item		Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Item 7	Concern with BE discipline	Novice teachers	3.93	.961	High
		Experienced teachers	4.63	.484	Very High
Item 8	Optimism in personal development in BE discipline	Novice teachers	3.86	.915	High
		Experienced teachers	4.31	.682	Very High
Item 13	Support from university	Novice teachers	3.43	.979	High
		Experienced teachers	2.81	1.130	Medium

4.3.2.2 Teaching belief and competence

The subtheme "teaching belief and competence" covered Items 18-34 of Questionnaire 2 with a very high rank (M=4.43, SD=.353 in Table 4-11 in 4.3.2), which was composed of disciplinary dimension and instructional dimension (see Table 4-15 below). Both dimensions were at a very high rank in teachers' answers.

Table 4-15: Dimensions of participants' teaching belief and competence (1)

	Disciplinary	Instructional
Mean	4.28	4.49
SD	.599	.609
Rank	Very High	Very High

In terms of discipline, teachers were supportive of Business English teaching reforms (Item 18 in Table 4-16 below) and had very good understanding of Business English teaching aims and objectives (Item 19), and the needs of their students (Items 21 & 22). They were also very confident in their knowledge structure (Items 26 & 28) and skills needed in Business English teaching (Items 29-32).

Table 4-16: Dimensions of participants' teaching belief and competence (2)

Dimensions & Items			Mean	SD	Rank
Disciplinary dimension	Confidence in knowledge structure	Item 26	4.77	.423	Very High
		Item 28	4.60	.554	Very High
	Support of Business English teaching reforms	Item 18	4.50	.619	Very High
	Good understanding of Business English teaching aims and objectives	Item 21	4.47	.562	Very High
		Item 19	4.47	.618	Very High
		Item 22	4.30	.781	Very High
	Confidence in Business English teaching skills	Item 29	4.50	.500	Very High
		Item 31	4.27	.573	Very High
		Item 32	4.17	.637	High
		Item 30	4.07	.629	High
Instructional dimension	Familiarity with teaching methods	Item 25	4.60	.554	Very High
	Confidence in accomplishment of teaching tasks	Item 20	4.53	.562	Very High
	Confidence in establishment of good teacher-student relationship	Item 27	4.53	.562	Very High
		Item 24	4.47	.499	Very High
		Item 23	4.13	.670	High
	Confidence in English proficiency in classroom teaching	Item 33	4.43	.559	Very High
		Item 34	4.27	.573	Very High

Instructionally, they were familiar with Business English teaching methods (Items 23 & 25). They showed confidence in their accomplishment of teaching tasks (Item 20) and establishment of good teacher-student relationships (Items 23, 24 & 27), and were satisfied with their English proficiency in classroom teaching and business-related discourses (Items 33 & 34).

As Table 4-17 below showed, compared with language module teachers, differences were obvious that Business English module teachers had very high belief and competence in understanding teaching objectives (Item 22), teacher-student rapport establishment (Item 23) and teaching skills application (Item 30-32).

Table 4-17: Differences in teaching belief and competence between language module teachers (n=13) and Business English module teachers (n=15)

Item		Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Item 22	Good understanding of Business English teaching aims and objectives	Language module teachers	4.08	.730	High
		Business English module teachers	4.47	.806	Very High
Item 23	Confidence in establishment of good teacher-student relationship	Language module teachers	3.92	.266	High
		Business English module teachers	4.27	.854	Very High
Item 30	Confidence in Business English teaching skills	Language module teachers	4.00	.555	High
		Business English module teachers	4.20	.653	Very High
Item 31		Language module teachers	4.15	.533	High
		Business English module teachers	4.40	.611	Very High
Item 32		Language module teachers	3.92	.615	High
		Business English module teachers	4.40	.611	Very High

Similar findings emerged to novice teachers and experienced teachers in Item 23 and Item 32 (see Table 4-18 below). Compared with novice teachers, experienced teachers reported very high confidence in teacher-student relationship establishment and teaching skills.

Table 4-18: Differences in teaching belief and competence between novice teachers (n=14) and experienced teachers (n=16)

Item		Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Item 23	Confidence in establishment of good teacher-student relationship	Novice teachers	3.86	.742	High
		Experienced teachers	4.38	.484	Very High
Item 32	Confidence in Business English teaching skills	Novice teachers	4.07	.703	High
		Experienced teachers	4.25	.559	Very High

4.3.2.3 Research competence

The subtheme "research competence" covered Items 35-43 of Questionnaire 2 with a low rank (M=2.57, SD=.717 in Table 4-11 in 4.3.2), which was composed of the following dimensions, namely awareness of research importance, actions taken in research, obstacles in research practices, and academic capital (see Table 4-19 below).

Table 4-19: Dimensions of participants' research competence (n=30)

Item			Mean	SD	Rank
Awareness of research importance		Item 35	3.87	1.056	High
Actions taken in research	Frequent literature reading	Item 38	3.20	1.077	Medium
	Efforts on research	Item 37	2.37	1.016	Low
Obstacles in research practices	Access to research resources	Item 40	3.13	1.231	Medium
	Delight in doing research	Item 36	2.77	.955	Medium
	Familiarity with research methods	Item 41	2.53	1.118	Low
	Time	Item 39	2.13	.991	Low
Academic capital	Publication	Item 43	1.67	.789	Very Low
	Research grants obtainment	Item 42	1.43	.667	Very Low

Unlike their devotion and confidence in teaching, participants were less confident in their research competency. Despite knowing research was crucial and could inform on their practical teaching knowledge (M=3.87, SD=1.056), the teachers showed medium willingness in literature reading (M=3.20, SD=1.077) and invested no enough efforts to carry out research projects and activities (M=2.37, SD=1.016) partly due to their limited access to academic resources (M=3.13, SD=1.231) and them being unfamiliar with research methods (M=2.53, SD=1.118). Also, there was limited effort and time spent on academic research (M=2.13, SD=.991). They could not spare enough time and effort for reading that was needed in research projects. Neither could they find enough motivation in carrying out research (M=2.77, SD=.955). This situation was exacerbated by the difficulty in obtaining publication (M=1.43, SD=.667) and research grants (M=1.67, SD=.789).

Although the overall unsatisfactory scores in the dimension of research competence, Table 4-20 below showed language module teachers attached more attention and were more confident in research. Despite of the high awareness of research importance (M=3.53, SD=1.258), whether Business English module teachers' difficulty in access to research resources (M=2.73, SD=1.389) and methods (M=2.47, SD=1.258) affected their delight in doing research (M=2.53, SD=.884) would be further explored in the interview in qualitative phase.

Table 4-20: Differences in research competence between language module teachers (n=13) and Business English module teachers (n=15)

Item		Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Item 35	Awareness of research importance	Language module teachers	4.23	.697	Very High
		Business English module teachers	3.53	1.258	High
Item 36	Delight in doing research	Language module teachers	2.85	.948	Medium
		Business English module teachers	2.53	.884	Low
Item 40	Access to research resources	Language module teachers	3.46	.929	High
		Business English module teachers	2.73	1.389	Medium
Item 41	Familiarity with research methods	Language module teachers	2.62	1.003	Medium
		Business English module teachers	2.47	1.258	Low

It was also interesting to notice that novice teachers were more confident in obtaining research resources than their experienced peers (see Table 4-21 below). The reason might be novice teachers were more equipped and updated with research skills and this need to be explored in interviews afterwards if possible.

Table 4-21: Differences in research competence between novice teachers (n=14) and experienced teachers (n=16)

Item 40	Category of teachers	Mean	SD	Rank
Access to research resources	Novice teachers	3.71	.881	High
	Experienced teachers	2.63	1.269	Medium

4.4 Summary

To summarize, participants' biographic information and perception of efficacy and identity revealed that they were optimistic and were serious about their commitment to the Business English discipline. They also showed a teaching-focused identity with research vulnerability and inactivity in Business English area. Personal and contextual factors occur in juxtapose as the possible hindrance to their professional development and identity construction. Differences existed in light of modules of teachers and in teaching experience, which might also lead to personal factors to teachers' identity construction.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS - PHASE 2

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the status, factors and coping strategies in Business English teachers' identity and its construction. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 10 Business English teachers in two universities (5 from each university). Semi-structured interview protocols were created based on the findings of the quantitative data in order to answer three research questions of this study as shown below:

(1) What are the professional identity of Business English teachers in Chinese universities in Ningbo?
(2) What are the factors that facilitate/hinder the process of their identity construction?
   a. What are the factors that facilitate their identity construction?
   b. What are the factors that hinder their identity construction?
(3) How do Business English teachers address the challenges in identity construction?

The findings were interpreted and categorized into sub-themes and finally unified into three themes:

(1) Status of teachers' Business English identity
(2) Influencing factors to identity construction
(3) Teachers' coping strategies to identity construction

5.2 Status of teachers' Business English identity

The status of teachers' Business English identity was composed of five sub-themes: (1) Mixed feelings of teaching Business English, (2) Differed degrees of participation in Business English teaching and researching, (3)

Experienced teachers vs. Novice teachers, (4) Exclusion of business mentors, and (5) Limited collaboration and lack of academic community.

5.2.1 Mixed feelings of teaching Business English

Business English teachers in this study did not start out to be Business English teachers in the first place. Among 10 interviewees, 8 participants' (T4, T5, T9 & T14 from University A, T16, T20, T22 & T23 from University B) initial involvement with Business English was related to taking an assigned task of teaching Business English courses. As T9, who had 6 years of Business English teaching experience, informed how she took it as a task given by her superior to work for Business English Department:

> They (Business English Department) wanted more teachers when more Business English students were enrolled. So I, a language teacher, was given a reading course. (T9)

T20 was regarded as an experienced teachers because she started teaching Business English three years before the establishment of the Business English Department in her university:

> About ten years ago, I took a task of teaching BEC (Business English Certificate) to English majors because I have some business-related experience in a company.... When Business English Department was established (Year of 2014), they (leaders) took me as a cadre teacher. (T20, 10 years' experience in Business English teaching)

The other 2 participants (T15 & T30), both managers from companies, were invited by the universities to work as business mentors to teach business skills.

> I was invited to teach some practical skills because I am in the industry of international e-commerce. This industry develops so fast that the university has to borrow insiders to make up the lack of full-time teachers. (T30, 2 years' experience in Business English teaching)

The reasons of Business English teachers' involvement in Business English teaching were two-fold. On the one hand, with the establishment of Business English departments, both the universities where they worked faced a "shortage of Business English teachers" (T14). On the other, the reduction of English linguistics programs in University A caused "redundancy of pure English language teachers" (T5). Therefore, irrespective of their educational background and expertise, English language teachers were assigned to be Business English teachers as they had to do what was told in the "top-down" setting of their workplace.

Teachers' reactions to their assigned tasks differed from each other and led to their different motivation to Business English teaching. Some language teachers said they "had to accept the tasks of teaching Business English otherwise [they] would have no courses to teach" (T16). They were not given any choice because they "had no advantages in [their] previous discipline (English linguistics) over other teachers" (T9). The feeling of demotivation and vulnerability came from the frustration of being assigned to a new department:

> It feels like I am not qualified for the "game" of English Department and am out of the competition. The university deals with us by transferring us to new posts of a newly-established department. (T16)

Such vulnerability was mixed with a feeling of disappointment especially for young teachers who majored in language-related areas. Without relevant degrees in Business English, they were employed by the university as Business English teachers because there was "vacancy for positions only in Business English Department" (T5). As T4, who majored in translation and interpretation, explained her acceptance of the task of Business English teaching,

> I had no choice but work as a Business English teacher, otherwise I would not get the job in this university. It is a pity that it (Business English) does not match with my major, but considering the fierce competition in job market, it is a good job to teach in university for me, so I do not care too much about what I teach. (T4)

These teachers who shifted from the English Department and who did not take Business English as their top choice of career had to settle with teaching Business English because of the lack of other option. They put priority on the positions of teaching in universities over their specialized teaching content.

However, there were teachers who held a more positive attitude towards their shift to teaching Business English. The teachers saw it as a top-down order but they took it as "an opportunity to address [their] career bottleneck" (T23) and therefore were "happy to take the task of teaching Business English" (T20). Such expectation of and willingness to taking up teaching Business English was reflected by T23:

> I was kind of stuck in my profession. With a low academic rank at this age, I don't see myself accomplishing anything in my future career. I hope this (becoming a Business English teacher) can be a way out for me in my mid-career crisis. (T23)

5.2.2 Different levels of participation in Business English teaching and researching

Considering that the teachers were not specifically trained to teach Business English, and that they needed to prepare their teaching contents, which was not their major, the teachers were given the opportunity to negotiate with their universities on the working content. Their negotiation of tasks consisted of the type of module courses they wanted to teach, the topics they would like to supervise students' thesis writing, the guidance of students' practice and their own research projects.

Some teachers chose to start with language module courses for the reason that they would like to "size up the situation before the decision of fully vesting [themselves] in Business English" (T16). Such hesitation and reservation led to some teachers' partial participation in Business English teaching. They would not spend too much effort in preparing for the business-related courses. This was expressed by T22, a senior teacher who described himself as below:

> I don't really care about whether I am a Business English teacher. I teach language module courses. There is no big difference between teaching Business English and teaching English majors. (T22)

However, Business English identity was stronger in teachers who chose to teach business-related courses. These Business English module teachers claimed a definite Business English identity by stressing that they "taught Business English courses to Business English majors" and used textbooks and materials which were "different from those of English/Business majors" (T9).

Secondly, teachers also showed initiatives in deciding their academic areas through their supervision of students and their individual research. Based on the Mutual Selection Model (a popular tutoring system in Chinese higher education of pairing supervisors and supervisees on a voluntary basis), 7 out of 10 teachers chose Business English topics while the other 3 (T4, T16 & T22) said they "would like to pick language students over Business English students because [they] were more familiar with linguistics topics" (T22).

T23 preferred to supervise on topics of Business English as she felt she could learn as she supervised her students. She stressed that Business English teachers could explore possibilities and obtain benefits during the supervision process, therefore she showed strong willingness in teaching Business English:

> It is a very effective way for me to learn and explore new areas of Business English by supervising. I've personally experienced obvious progress since I intentionally chose to supervise students with different Business English topics. We, both the students and I, learn from deciding research questions, writing and reading drafts, giving feedback and revising. (T23)

However, T16 did not share the same sentiment in deciding her supervision areas. Her insecurity and inexperience of Business English knowledge was reflected in her words below:

> I never supervised students in Business English areas and am not sure whether I can do it. It will be very embarrassing for me if students come to me with questions and I am not able to give them guidance. (T16)

Since it was compulsory for Business English teachers to take the supervision tasks, these teachers would be inclined to "play it safe" (T9) by choosing "convenient and infallible topics such as Business English translation" (T16). They did so because acting conservatively could "prevent potential and uncontrollable troubles and therefore save [their] time and effort in task fulfillment" (T22).

Thirdly, although knowing that practice was an indispensable part of Business English teaching, full-time teachers showed strong unwillingness towards the task of guiding students to carry out Business English practice. Full-time teachers said they "tried to evade taking part in students' field-work practice because it would take [them] tremendous extra work" (T20) and they could not "afford the time and effort" (T9). Only part-time business mentors said they "would like to be active in this task" (T15) simply because this was "what [they] were invited by the universities to do" (T30).

Lastly, when it came to teachers' own research projects, a majority of the teachers preferred to carry out research in their own area of expertise. Only 2 of them (T5 & T23) had carried out research projects in Business English areas. 4 of them said they would like to remain in their previous research areas, namely education (T14), translation (T4 & T16) and linguistics (T22). The following reason given by T22 was very typical that teachers were reluctant to carry out research projects on Business English when they had absolute autonomy in deciding their own research areas.

> It is impossible for me to give up my previous area, which I have been working on for my whole academic life, to Business English. Teaching Business English does not necessarily mean I should do research on Business English. (T22)

To summarize, with the degree of teachers' autonomy in their tasks increased, their preference of participation decreased in Business English teaching and researching activities. Except for business mentors, the more full-time teachers are involved in business-related activities, the higher level of participation they held in Business English teaching and researching. Former language teachers held a relatively conservative attitude during their shift to Business English teaching.

5.2.3 Experienced teachers vs. Novice teachers

How teachers perceived Business English and their experience in teaching Business English courses was crucial in their degree of participation in the teaching of Business English and the research on Business English they carried out. This was clear when it was noted that there was a difference between experienced and novice Business English teachers in terms of their negotiating power.

Although both experienced and novice teachers admitted experiencing a "confusing and struggling state" (T20) at the early stage of teaching Business English, they were currently in different phases of Business English identity. Experienced teachers started out as lonely pioneers. For example, with 21 years' experience of Business English teaching, T5 said that when he started teaching Business English he was "not sure what [he] needed to teach at the very beginning" and "had to figure it out by [him]self". With no national standards for Business English discipline and very limited help from their universities, these experienced teachers survived the confusion and struggles and had established a relatively independent and stable identity as Business English teachers. Experienced teachers, especially those who started before 2014, when Business English was offered to BA program in their universities, showed higher level of confidence and self-efficacy in teaching Business English courses:

> Things become better as I gathered experience. Now I am not as timid as the first few years. Now I know more about Business English students and Business English discourses. I am more confident when I go into the classroom because I know what teaching methods are suitable for what courses. I am very happy that now I get positive feedback from my students. (T23)

For novice teachers who shifted their career from language teaching to Business English, "it was a problem of positioning [themselves]" (T14). As T14 recalled his confusion in his first year of Business English teaching,

> I was at a loss about the (teaching) focus....that puzzled me at that time. I had no idea what should be my teaching priority. (T14, 4 years' experience in Business English teaching)

To overcome such uncertainties, novice teachers were encouraged by the universities to get help and guidance from the more experienced teachers. It was common that both experienced and novice teachers worked within a same

jiaoyanzu (course/module group) in a master-apprentice mode where senior teachers informed novice teachers about “the teaching aims, curriculum design and arrangement, choices of textbooks and reference materials, and the characteristics of Business English students” (T9). Sometimes, novice teachers’ classrooms were observed and evaluated by senior supervisors to “make sure that the classes were carried out properly” (T16). Thus, novice teachers’ construction of Business English identity relied partly on senior teachers’ previous practices and experience.

Secondly, some teachers perceived Business English as of lower in status. They regarded Business English as “not disciplinarily matured enough” (T5) to bear a recognized independent academic status. A senior teacher pointed out that Business English was “a sub-field of ESP, or it [was] more like a compound major” (T22) when he questioned the knowledge base of Business English discipline.

With uncertainty of Business English discipline, some novice teachers showed hesitation of being affiliated to a Business English identity. They held the belief that they were “teachers of foreign languages ” with the reason that Business English was “part of ESP” (T4). Therefore, they would not confine themselves to Business English Department alone. For example, T14 considered himself as “more of an English teacher” because he taught for both Business English Department and English Department. T16, who worked full-time for Business English Department, said she “would not reject work from English Department” because she used to be an English teacher and would be “very happy to maintain (it)” in case she “would pick up (teaching English) someday” if Business English would no longer be a popular major.

However, experienced teachers who had established themselves firmly as Business English teachers had no hesitation that they belonged to Business

English Department. Unlike those who regarded themselves as foreign language teachers, these Business English teachers, with a strong sense of belonging, were more willing to seek opportunities in Business English as a compound discipline. The new opportunities, as T23 summarized, were two-fold: a more focused professional area and a more promising professional trajectory.

> Firstly, I believe a sub-field means a more focused area, which to a certain extent is good for my research. Secondly, there is a trend that disciplines merge with each other, for the purpose of keeping up with the development of employment market. Employers prefer graduates with compound knowledge structures and skills. (T23)

In summary, attitudes differed in experienced and novice teachers towards Business English although Business English was regarded as not a matured discipline. Senior teachers were more optimistic since they survived their early pioneering stage and were able to provide help to novice teachers.

5.2.4 Exclusion of business mentors

As a very important category of Business English teachers, business mentors from companies were invited by the universities to teach what university teachers did not have (usually business skills and entrepreneurship). They could be managers, human resources, and other cadre employees (such as key salespersons and technicians) from companies. Unfortunately, the participation of business mentors in Business English discipline remained very limited and they were excluded from many Business English teaching and researching activities.

The exclusion of business mentors went both ways. On the one hand, the universities did not regard business mentors as permanent teaching staff therefore did not invite them to regular community activities on teaching and

researching. Business mentors' participation was limited in only one or two courses. Some of them were "invited as judges in several competitions or training projects on campus" (T22). T5 who was the vice deputy of his faculty and former dean of Business English Department, said it was "not appropriate" to invite business managers to take part in academic activities in universities. He provided the reasons:

> The foci of jobs are different. For us (full-time teachers), academic projects are very important. For them (business mentors), it is doing business and making money. They are not interested [in university activities]. (T5)

On the other hand, business mentors from companies did not see themselves a part of Business English Department. Actually, business mentors did not regard themselves as university teachers, therefore they "[did] not belong to any departments" (T15). T30, a company boss who taught e-commerce skills in University B, said he did not care about which major students he taught. When asked why he took the task of teaching Business English majors, he answered:

> I think I was invited by the school because they need someone who has real experience in the industry, who knows real practical operations, to make up for the shortcomings of school teachers. They (school teachers) lack practical experience, and this is what I have.

No full-time Business English teachers said they would invite business mentors to participate in their research projects, nor would business mentors troubled themselves to get involved in academics. These mentors from companies remained detached as outsiders in university activities and established no presence or visibility in Business English teaching and academic communities. As T15 explained, he did not feel that he was a member of Business English Department, neither did he feel peer recognition

from full-time teachers. He expressed neither indignation nor unhappiness with the disconnected state in academic detachment to Business English discipline. Instead, he expressed understanding as he said, “businessmen and teachers are different kinds of occupations”. As the boss of his company, he was clear about his aims:

> I am not going to be a scholar. I teach Business English courses for the simple reason that it may be a good chance for me to recruit potential employees. (T15)

This phenomenon was confirmed by T23 as “an informal but open secret” because “the access to the potential employees is the key point that companies value” (T23). She described such collaboration between universities and companies as “complex and tricky” but with common interests in the tripartite game among the university, the students and the bosses. T5 who was responsible for identifying, accessing and evaluating external partners for suitable business mentors for their university pointed out the negotiation between his university and companies:

> We invite company managers to be part-time mentors to make up for the shortage of our teaching staff. In exchange, they get priority in coming into contact with students before students go into the job market. (T5)

The involvement of business mentors was to fulfill two goals: to fill the void when there was no capable full-time teachers, and to meet the administrative quota of school-enterprise cooperation requirement. Thus, there arose a competition between full-time teachers and business mentors. Covert complaints from full-time teachers were that they felt their control and authority over classroom “being challenged” (T20) by business mentors from companies.

> They (Business mentors) do teach useful knowledge and skills, but they want instant reward, that is, the suitable students who can work for them. I see it from different perspectives by helping students to look at the many possibilities in their life and career choices. We teach for different purposes and sometimes deliver contradictory information. (T23)

Full-time teachers pointed out that business mentors' "strong sense of purpose in classroom [might] mislead students because students were not matured when making important decisions in their lives" (T22).

> I would always encourage my students if they want to pursue a higher degree. It is good for them in the long run. It is also beneficial for our university because the post-graduate enrollment rate is one of the criteria in evaluation of our teaching quality. (T22)

The above sentiment of full-time teachers' concern about their control over classroom was echoed by T5 with his distrust in business mentors:

> I do detect certain "brainwashing" in classrooms of business mentors. There will be ethical consequences if tycoon companies such as Alibaba and Amazon are involved. (T5)

Therefore full-time teachers held an official and defensive attitude towards business mentors and would not like to take them as "one of [their] own" (T5). Thus in practice, business mentors were excluded from daily Business English teaching and academic activities out of a cautious reason.

5.2.5 Limited collaboration and lack of academic community

Apart from *jiaoyanzu* (module/course groups) which focused on teaching, Business English teachers admitted very limited collaboration within Business English Department. Although experienced teachers provided novice teachers with materials and suggestions of Business English teaching, teamwork was rare. No formal or regular academic community of Business English research

was found in both universities.

> There is no activity in Business English community in our university. Actually, there is no such community. (T16)

This situation was caused by “the small scale of Business English Department” (T22) in University B, which meant that there were “very few parallel classes for teachers to share” (T23) so that “teachers [taught] different courses of different modules” (T20). Therefore teachers in University B had very limited connection within Business English community and had a relatively isolated working and researching status. Although University A had a larger Business English Department, the collaboration of its teachers remained in teaching activities within course groups. In academic projects, teachers said they “seldom cooperated with each other” (T9).

5.3 Facilitators of identity construction

When asked about the facilitators that helped them construct their Business English identity, teachers provided evidence of their perceptions of Business English as a discipline, important events in their Business English teaching and researching practices, difficulties they encountered, and their actions/interactions to these difficulties. By looking for their personal and institutional characteristics, the facilitators of teachers’ identity construction include:

(1) future prospects of Business English as a discipline and of its teachers
(2) teachers’ characteristics
(3) their career satisfaction

5.3.1 Future prospects of Business English as a discipline and of its teachers

Some teachers saw their career trajectory as beyond Business English discipline. These teachers believed that by pursuing an extra identity (the Business English identity) it would enable them to gain more recognition for their expertise because they saw the reform of disciplines that was happening in Chinese institutions of higher education. Having another identity is an opportunity to broaden their expertise and to grow in their future career. For example, T20 who majored in linguistics, believed a decline in demand for teachers for pure linguistics. This change in national education system enabled her to work as a Business English teacher and thus kept her relevant in the industry. She aptly explained the opportunity to diversify below:

> It (Teaching Business English) indicates the possibility that with more training I might jump out from linguistics, become a teacher of compound knowledge and skills, and expand my expertise. With business knowledge and language proficiency, I might out-compete teachers from Business Department by giving bilingual business courses. (T20)

There were some teachers who looked for breakthroughs in research in Business English areas. Although these teachers made failed attempts in their previous research projects and proposals, they took teaching Business English as a probable way out in addressing a highly competitive academic field. Optimistic attitude was found in what was mentioned by different participants below:

> Most Business English teachers in our department are over 40 years old. We are kind of in the bottleneck period of our career, that is, chances are very slim that we can get a higher academic rank....Now a new discipline, or a new major, seems the last chance for us to achieve something in research considering our age. (T16)

T23 shared a similar view of looking for a possible breakthrough of her career bottleneck. She hoped Business English, as a new discipline, meant “less competition and areas not yet studied” (T23) to her. This idea of a “second chance career” was shared by a few language teachers who decided to shift to Business English teaching to reinvent themselves in a new department. A teacher who was in her late career stage said,

> Those established language teachers do not need to worry about their status in universities. But teachers with low academic ranks, like me, feel a sense of urgency with no research achievements when middle-age crisis comes. (T9)

Along with the optimistic prospect of Business English discipline is the awareness of career crisis of being Business English teachers. T23 pointed out that it was “an illusion of employee advantage” that some Business English teachers thought they were in a favorite position because of the nationwide shortage of Business English teachers. Such awareness was evident by what two teachers (T23 and T20) said about their threats and advantages. T23 said about the potential threats she foresaw:

> I do not agree with the blind optimism in Business English. If I can learn to teach Business English, other teachers will too. On the contrary, things may be worse because Business English teachers are threatened by both English teachers and Business teachers. (T23)

While facing threats from peer teachers, T20 expressed her concern that she would lose her bilingual advantage in the near future when novice teachers came:

> Language will no longer be a big problem for novice teachers in the future as the result of international education and bilingual courses. That means my decreasing competitiveness in language proficiency. (T20)

Teachers who were conscious of such negative opinion of working in Business English Department were more likely to transform pressure into motivation. Motivated by their moderate optimistic outlook of Business English discipline and awareness of job crisis, some teachers showed a voluntary pursuit of Business English professional identity by taking active measures in personal professional development.

> I put a lot of effort in learning Business English because I want to stay ahead in Business English in case followers are catching up. Otherwise I will lose my advantages. (T23)

5.3.2 Teachers' characteristics

The ability of the teachers' pursuit of Business English identity could be seen from their personalities such as resilience and self-confidence when going into unknown areas. Although it would be difficult to shift from being language teachers to Business English teachers, they were prepared to put in the effort to acquire new knowledge and skills. They had the resilience to keep going despite the challenges, and in the process they also acquired belief in themselves after overcoming difficulties. As T9 said about her growing sense of confidence:

> At this age, I was timid and reluctant to learn new things, but teaching new courses forced me to do so and I survived. Then I realized I could make it, after I struggled in learning to teach new courses. This gave me huge confidence in myself that I should not be confined to age or any discipline. (T9)

T22, who was the vice deputy of faculty, described that Business English teachers established a unique disposition in his faculty. He believed these characteristics "determined Business English teachers' teaching style and required [him] to adopt different management methods".

> Business English teachers are very different in our Faculty of Foreign Languages. They are more sociable, sensitive to statistics and good at negotiation. They are more practical, realistic and down to earth. (T22)

With such characteristics, Business English teachers' teaching methods and approaches were different from those of teaching English alone. Teachers, especially those who taught advanced modules for Business English for Year-3/4 students, utilized "more task-based and project-based approaches with teamwork in business-related classroom teaching" (T20). Thus, teachers' roles in classrooms changed accordingly. As teachers listed, they experienced being as "facilitators", "coordinators", and even "group members" (T23), which "helped [them] better their teaching strategies and approaches" (T9). Therefore, working as Business English teachers enriched their dimensions of teacher identity.

5.3.3 Career satisfaction

Business English teachers' career satisfaction came from three aspects: (1) moderate income with flexible time, (2) self-actualization teachers gained during self-improvement and (3) job satisfaction from students' achievements.

Firstly, Business English teachers, especially female teachers, held a casual attitude towards their moderate but steady income from their universities. Instead, without pressing financial needs from their families, no need for fixed working hours in the office was regarded as "a major benefit" (T4) of their jobs and was very much valued by teachers. As T9 noted,

> We do not have a high salary, but considering the workload, it is quite good. After all, we do not need to work every working day. It is sensible that one of the couple has more free time and cares about the child and family trifles. Someone calls it sacrifice, or compromise. But you know, Chinese tradition, devoted mother (laughs). (T9)

Secondly, for some teachers, their commitment and attachment to Business English teaching came from the sense of self-actualization they found in the new teaching tasks. The self-actualization was reflected in the self-affirmation they gained from learning new things (T9), the capability for self-improvement (T5), and the adaptability of shifting from language teachers to Business English teachers (T23).

Some teachers “sat for business-related certificates which were related to the courses [they] taught” (T16), and others “learned new skills in e-commerce and got official qualifications” (T14). Some expressed the positive feeling that “[they were] making progresses when learning new things” (T23), and others found contentment in “very sound relationship with students” (T20) which was described as a “virtuous interaction” (T23) and was beneficial to both teachers and students. Teachers also derived “a sense of satisfaction from the change of teaching approaches and teachers’ roles in Business English classroom” (T9). Trial of new pedagogical strategies (such as project-based approach, in which teachers worked as supporters or group members in teamwork) “broadened [their] teaching styles and helped to cultivate [their] career possibilities” (T5). Therefore, in order to become Business English teachers against all odds, teachers’ intrinsic rewards such as satisfaction and enjoyment outweighed the extrinsic motivation such as economic rewards and academic ranks.

Thirdly, Business English teachers’ satisfaction and enjoyment also came from their students’ achievements. Teachers stressed that it was different from being happy with students’ high grades. Business English teachers found meaningfulness in their jobs when they saw their students out-competed other graduates in job market. As T5, who taught both Business English students and language students, found differences between Business English and English majors:

> Business English students are not tamed. They are braver, more goal-oriented, more communicative and productive. These qualities are what employers look for and I am very happy to see it. (T5)

Teachers said about the reasons were two-fold why Business English majors had a very high employment rate when they graduated. On the one hand, employers preferred “graduates with compound skills rather than single-skilled ones” (T30), which made Business English majors out-compete graduates of pure languages or business:

> I used to recruit language graduates over business majors. It is easier for me to teach interns how to do business than to teach them English. Now Business English graduates seem a better choice for me because they are equipped with necessary language skills and basic business skills. (T30)

On the other hand, Business English teachers and students knew their disciplinary position and were goal-oriented in teaching and learning. Both teachers and students had a clear goal in schools, aiming for business-related jobs in industry. Thus, students were trained with a specific purpose that they would be the substitutes of language and business majors. Teachers stressed that Business English teaching was “not a castle in the air” but “teaching with real discourses and contexts” (T20).

> It is not “good grades” kind of achievement. They (Business English students) are not bookworms but really put theory into practice. Although their idea is premature, it is original and creative. You can see their potential in the future employment market. (T23)

In addition, business mentors from companies also felt a partial teaching satisfaction when they talked about their relationship with Business English students. They found differences between teaching students and training new recruits of their companies. As T15 explained, it did not work by “acting bossy”

in classroom teaching. Unlike his employees, students were less likely to be motivated by salary or promotion. Therefore, when some students made up their mind to join in his company after attending his class, T15 was very happy and proud by saying:

> It was a kind of compliment to me that they accepted me, not only my teaching but also my personality and management. (T15)

Business mentors from companies also emphasized that they obtained social capital by teaching in universities, which gave them extra status and contentment. For example, to T15, social capital is composed of two aspects: their titles of mentoring in schools of higher education and the potential employees they may recruit from Business English classrooms.

5.4 Obstacles to identity construction

During Business English teaching and researching practices, teachers encountered difficulties and there were complaints about their job. Open coding showed developing opportunities, their relationship with peer teachers and within different communities, and their communication issues with the administrative level. By looking for their personal and institutional characteristics, codes were further categorized into sub-themes and finally unified in the following three aspects:

(1) limited opportunity for career development
(2) individual obstacles
(3) identity positioning from others: leadership problems and evaluation system

5.4.1 Limited opportunity for career development

With a wider vision and strong motivation in career development, Business English teachers' pursuing strategies included either upgrading their degrees or getting themselves trained in business-related knowledge and skills. However, to their disappointment, these teachers who decided to further their studies ended up finding themselves in a dilemma that there were not many universities offering PhD programs in Business English discipline. The underdevelopment of Business English discipline forced its teachers to look the other way in other disciplines when they intended to develop themselves professionally.

> There are very few PhD programs for me to choose if I want to go further in Business English. Few choices mean fierce competition. So I decide to go back to my previous area (language education). (T23)

Although these teachers were positive and optimistic about Business English and showed strong willingness to be Business English teachers, they found very limited opportunities for advancement in Business English discipline. Considering the unbalanced teacher structure of the two universities that only 2 out of 30 participants held doctoral degrees (See Table 4-2 in Chapter 4), it was urgent both "for [their] universities and for teachers themselves that Business English teachers needed to upgrade their degrees" (T5). The Business English departments in participants' universities were confronted with a difficult dilemma that "it was unable to maintain motivated teachers by providing them with ascending channels" (T23). When teachers made up their mind to pursue a higher degree, some had to go back to their previous areas while others chose to go further to Business.

Academically, some Business English teachers chose to remain in their previous research areas. These teachers have accumulated some academic achievements and "would like to continue" (T22) in their comfort zone. Their

research fields included, but were not limited to, linguistics, translation and education. Although it was mentioned that they "would not say no to a suitable Business English project" (T14), in actual activities they admitted they would still choose their previous research specialties. Business English researchers were regarded by them as "minority therefore disadvantaged" (T4) in academia.

In practice activities, other teachers with strong Business English identity admitted their weaknesses in business-related knowledge and requested urgent demand for practical skills. As shown in Table 4-3, 23 out of 30 teachers (76.6%) were lack of business-related experience. However as these teachers explored, their demand for practical experience was hindered by limited support from their universities and reluctance of cooperative companies. For one reason, the access to real workplace practice was "seldom provided by universities" (T14).

> There may be, I assume, some difficulty (in practicing in companies) because you do not belong to a particular company....Not many people would like to teach you. The access will be very limited....It rarely happens that the training is for teachers only. None, I should say. (T14)

For the other, teachers' request for practice training was very often "tactfully declined by business companies" (T23). Teachers felt "being neglected" (T9) in the carrying out of daily training and practicing activities. As T20 assumed, compared with students, teachers were in a disadvantaged position in training programs.

> I believe companies want students. Teachers are just appendages. Teachers are not the target employees of companies. (T20)

5.4.2 Individual obstacles

Business English teachers admitted that there were some deficiencies due to their individual disadvantages. Firstly, in terms of knowledge structure, practical knowledge was emphasized by all participants as “very important” in Business English. Their awareness of the importance was so strong that practical knowledge was repeatedly mentioned as “indispensable part” of Business English knowledge structure by every interviewee (both full-time teachers and part-time business mentors). However, along with such consensus, they stressed that it was “exactly what Business English teachers lacked” (T5).

> It is more important for teachers (than for students) to take part in business practices.... because the majority of our Business English teaching staff come from the previous pure language teachers. We are very much lack of business theoretical and practical knowledge. (T14)

Deficiency of knowledge structure varied with different types of Business English teachers. For teachers of language modules, business-related knowledge was mostly mentioned as “urgently-needed” (T14). Pedagogical skills needed to be improved for business mentors and novice teachers with insufficient classroom teaching experience (T15 & T16). What is more, the training of new teaching approaches was required by teachers “regardless of their teaching experience or specialties” (T5). T20 pointed out there should be training programs considering the features of Business English:

> Of course teaching Business English is different from teaching English. I need to change and adjust my teaching methods. More teamwork, more task-based, sometimes project-based. (T20)

Secondly, in terms of academic affiliation, poor research capacity and cooperative ability were another major deficiency recognized by Business English teachers. It was pointed out that this mixed problem of individual and

collective deficiency in research was the “exact reflection of the status quo of Business English discipline” (T23).

For one thing, there were still disputed areas in Business English as a new discipline. As senior teachers (T5 & T22) remarked, the disciplinary category, philosophical base and logical fundamentals were “not as clear in Business English as other traditional disciplines”. The immaturity of Business English discipline made it more difficult for its teachers to “decide and go on with their research directions” and therefore “affected their low motivation and limited ability” (T23).

For the other, it was more difficult for Business English teachers to construct a collective disciplinary identity because they were teachers with their respective specialties from various channels. With diverse educational background and teaching aims, Business English teachers of different specialties pay attention to different research areas and would not like to explore new ones, so it was “very difficult for them to work together” (T5) to construct collective competence.

Hence, when these two aspects coincided in the case of Business English teachers, it was far more difficult for them to establish an academic community within a diversified group of teachers. As teachers explained with the examples they encountered,

> It is very rare that a teacher who teaches International Trade collaborates with another language module teacher in a particular research project. Business English is expected to be a compound discipline, but its research is not compounded. (T23)

Mutual help was also difficult because of individual deficiency.

> It's a little difficult to help each other with different expertise, let alone our academic abilities are poor. (T14)

Therefore academically, Business English teachers showed a relatively passive and low sense of identity. A considerable percentage of Business English teachers barely belonged to any specific academic community and "hardly did any research" (T9). The extract below was considered representative of teachers' academic affiliation and competence:

> I have to say I have already given up doing research. When asked about my research focus, I would say I do linguistics and international trade. But actually, I do not do research any more. (T20)

Thirdly, vulnerability was found in terms of Business English teachers' academic capital. Reasons given by these teachers include shortage of time, being not suited to academic, disproportion in academic input and output, difficulty in publication and no pressure from evaluation system. For example, as a middle-level deputy, T22 complained that his time was fully occupied by teaching and management, which was the main obstacle of his low productivity in academic research. T9 and T16 expressed their self-recognition that they were "not research-type teachers" and they could find "no enjoyment in doing research projects".

T23 complained her failed attempts to get her articles published. T22 echoed T23 by saying that as vice deputy he was "vulnerable to help young teachers in publication because [he] was lack of 'relationship' in this new discipline". T5 stressed that academic achievements were not included as the criteria of evaluation system for language teachers in his university. Therefore when they were not faced with the "publish or perish" pressure, Business English teachers would weigh between the input of their time and efforts and the profits of academic output.

To summarize, with deficiency in knowledge structure and attitude towards academic involvement, Business English teachers were very inactive both in getting themselves trained in practices and research methods and in carrying out their own research projects. Their claimed reasons were of a wide variety. Time distribution topped the list because it took Business English teachers "tremendous time and efforts to prepare for new courses" (T23) of a newly-established discipline. Therefore, priority was given to teaching over researching, "let alone sparing any more time in socializing within academic groups" (T9). Secondly, insufficient research capability was admitted by many participants. They questioned their research ability from the fruitless results of their previous working years so that they "felt unable to progress and achieve in academia in the future" (T16).

5.4.3 Identity positioning from others: leadership problems and peer pressure

Business English teachers felt an awkward positioning through communication with faculty leaders and teachers from other departments. As pointed out above, the lower status of Business English as a discipline and its teachers' lack of professional expertise brought consequences to individual teachers when they, with limited capability, attempted to seek and identify their positions within Business English discipline. These consequences developed into the obstacles to teachers' collective confidence and motivation and were especially reflected in the perspectives of leadership problems and peer pressure in their universities.

Firstly, leadership problem was raised by five teachers. Compared with teachers of mature disciplines (e.g. English linguistics), Business English teachers' voices were not heard in resource distribution "simply because there was nobody at the table" (T23). As teachers remarked on the subsidiary and

disadvantaged situation when they felt being marginalized,

> There is no lead researcher in Business English in our university, so it is rather difficult to build and develop a community to hold Business English teachers for warmth. (T5)

With no or very little say in decision-making in academic resource competition in their universities, Business English teachers had to trade off Business English against a “more powerful” (T14) community when applying for academic grants and projects. Especially, when power from management and power from academic communities combined, a criticism of administrative leadership came from T20 below:

> Our leaders (deputies of faculty) specialize in linguistics and literature. I do not think they pay much attention to our Business English Department. You sit at a higher level, then you should arrange things from a wider perspective. If you decide to set up a new department, you should be supportive and balance between powers. (T20)

Therefore, those Business English teachers who overcame difficulties and persevered in their research decided to compromise. As T14 stressed in his explanation of choosing a broader research community against the pressure of competition within universities,

> Business English is still a minority of a small scale....So chances are that when I do research, it is rather difficult to produce some results....Similar things happen when I apply for research grants in the university....It will be easier to apply from the perspective of English, or of pedagogy. I will not emphasize Business English discipline. I take Business English as a part of my research. It will be easier to get grants. (T14)

Secondly, when Business English teachers took part in other research communities, they were faced with peer pressure from teachers of other disciplines. For Business English teachers, little job satisfaction or pleasure

was found in community activities. Teachers complained that they felt “being underestimated” (T9) because teachers from English/Business Department “did not take Business English seriously and regarded it in a lower position” (T23). To make them feel worse, it was very hard for them to “argue and convince those who were with such opinions” because “it was true that Business English was newly established” and they, as its teachers, were “minority in that community” (T14). Such idea of Business English as a disadvantaged discipline was also mentioned by researchers who focused on Business English. Although they have made up their mind to give themselves one more try in their academic career, they had to face the obstacle of "being unfamiliar with Business English areas and topics" (T4) and of “little help from other teachers” (T16).

Meanwhile, from the perspective of management, administrative leaders admitted that it was beyond their ability to provide training projects related to Business English because they themselves were “no experts of Business English” (T22). In response to teachers’ complaint about limited support from universities, T22 explained the deficiency in leaders in their university:

> I myself am not able to help Business English teachers. Neither do I have the social or academic relationship which can help them. For example, if our Business English teachers need suggestions to revise their academic articles, I am not able to. This problem is critical in our university. (T22)

Thirdly, when it came to peer pressure, teachers of University B expressed strong discontent with peer pressure from other disciplines. They regarded it as “unfairness” and said such unfairness affected their emotion. As T20 described what she called “ridiculous overt prejudice”,

> I must say everyone of us (teachers in our Business English Department) experienced belittlement from teachers of English/Business Department. They judge us with their disciplinary criteria and take advantages over us. The point is that they know they are strong enough to do so and we are powerless to resist. (T20)

5.4.4 Institutional evaluation system

In terms of evaluation, the teachers' concern was not on its fairness. Instead, they pointed out that the evaluation criteria for Business English teachers were "not consistent with the national training objectives of Business English discipline" (T23). According to national standards, Business English majors were required to be more practical and more comprehensive in both language and business skills, which meant there were new and higher requirements for Business English teachers. However, teachers discovered the evaluation criteria in their universities "did not catch up with the changing requirements for Business English teachers" (T9). Not only were practice training opportunities rarely provided by universities, but also teachers' changes in pursuing extra development were "not valued on an official basis" (T16). As T20 complained about the hiatus in evaluation system in her university,

> There should be guiding policies, or supporting measures, for us so that we are willing to exert our efforts and time in learning new things. (T20)

The evaluation for daily academic activities was also criticized as an obstacle. Although nominally teachers belonged to one academic community or another, their involvement was low and their attitude was negative. Teachers showed unwillingness towards community activities in their universities. T14 from University A explained that there were basically two kinds of activities in his university. The one was compulsory by university that he had to attend, and the other was seminars or conferences that he could choose by his interest or need. T16 form University B said her university adopted a training credit system which was similar to the curriculum requirement for students. Under

this system, teachers had to obtain an amount of credits on a yearly basis so that they could pass the annual evaluation from administration.

Teachers complained about the uselessness and formality of such evaluation system. They called it a “clock on and off strategy which administration adopted to exert its control over teachers” (T20). Teachers agreed on the opinion that such activities were unhelpful but a mere formality which “deprived them of freedom after class” (T9).

> Forced participation does not work. On the contrary, what we really contribute to our work is not seen or valued. (T16)

Correspondingly, to deal with such administrative requirement, teachers adopted a “present but not participate” strategy because they saw “no chance of significant improvement in participating such communities” (T9).

5.5 Strategies of identity construction

In unfavorable circumstances, Business English teachers tried their utmost to overcome obstacles, utilized their resources and obtained whatever help they could find. Evidence of actions teachers took during teaching Business English and their reasons for doing so were sought and grouped into open codes. By looking for their personal, family and institutional characteristics, codes were further categorized into sub-themes and finally unified in the following two aspects:

(1) Positive and initiative strategies
(2) Compromised resistance and trade-off in career

5.5.1 Positive and initiative strategies

Despite of the obstacles encountered, Business English teachers applied various approaches including seeking help from superiors and senior teachers (T14), carrying out field-research of business companies (T23), and consulting friends in the industry (T9). For T14, his leaders acted as intermediaries to help him obtain information:

> If I take a task of teaching a new course, he (my leader) may help me to contact some senior teachers. The experienced teacher who has taught this course can give me suggestions and (teaching) materials. (T14)

T9 obtained information and materials for her Business English teaching by keeping close contact with local practitioners in the industry:

> I got a lot of help from my friends in foreign trade companies when I prepared myself to teach Logistics. (T9)

T23 emphasized the importance of the trend of Business English development and was aware of the limitations of Ningbo in higher education policy interpretation and implementation. She turned to a company in a first-tier city for latest information:

> When I took the task of teaching Business English, I decided to work as an intern in a company for two months in Shanghai, where I can broaden my horizon and look for the latest development and trends of Business English. (T23)

With very limited help from universities, Business English teachers went out of their way to make the most of their "personal relationship" (T14) for the purpose of familiarizing themselves with the real situation in business workplace. Family members, alumni and even former students provided help to Business English teachers. Some teachers took part-time jobs in companies (T20), and others studied for certificates of business practicing requirements

(T23).

5.5.2 Compromised resistance and trade-off in career

Meanwhile, some Business English teachers showed little interest in furthering their study to upgrade their academic qualifications and degrees. With regular positions of *bianzhi* (which meant official permanent position in Chinese state-owned universities*)*, the Business English teachers in this study were not faced with the pressure of unemployment. This *bianzhi* system was the result of "government authorized manning quotas" since the establishment of National Education Bureau. Unwritten rules have been long accepted that "a teacher with *bianzhi* would be fired only when he/she violated the law and was criminally punished" (T22), which meant chances were very slim that teachers with *bianzhi* lost their jobs simply because they did not teach well or could not produce research publications.

To make the situation worse, 25 out of 30 (83%) of Business English teachers in this study were over 40 years old. Under the current employment system, such majority of middle-aged Business English teachers in this study were "entrenched and would not like to seek changes" (T22). Only 1 teacher (T4) in this study was recruited by the university under the "publish or perish" system, which meant only she was faced with the pressure to produce satisfactory academic results in her first three years in order to obtain *bianzhi* (official permanent position). T5 and T22, vice deputies of faculty in University A and B, both complained that their teachers showed very low motivation in self-development in career and that "rat race in private enterprises did not work in [their] university".

> They are waiting for the time of their retirement, silently and contently. They know for sure that they will not be fired even if they choose to "lie flat"[4]. (T5)

Interestingly, younger teachers who chose to "lie flat" because they took an opposing attitude towards the work culture which was prevailing in highly-competitive enterprises in China:

> I am not born to neijuan[5] in my life. I do not buy such workplace philosophy. (T16)

What is more, as T5 continued, the level of institution gave Business English teachers in this study an excuse to "lie flat". Although the drawbacks of *bianzhi* system had been discussed and some measures of reform had been taken from top-down level, it happened to only elite universities. For non-elite universities in Ningbo (a second-tier city), for example, University A and B in this study, teachers "did not feel threatened and still prayed that their retirement would come before the reform of employment system" (T5).

There was also hope among middle-aged teachers that they took the *bianzhi* system as an escape from their career pressure. The long-existing tradition of "old methods and new methods" (a diversified form of staff employment, which meant old evaluation system for old employees and new evaluation system for new employees) of Chinese state-owned personnel system gave teachers an expectation that even with the abolishment of *bianzhi* system in the near future, there would be "unequal treatment for existing teachers and newcomers" (T20).

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[4] a popular network slang in China, which resonates with people feeling overwhelmed with having to present their best selves, rebelling against the increasingly unattainable aesthetic standards and unsustainable lifestyles exhibited on social media, and having a choice of "goblin mode" in their life

[5] a popular network slang in China, which means involution or internal exhaustion because of fierce competition. In such involution, people get no reward even they tried their utmost.

Therefore Business English teachers seemed “not very interested in upgrading their academic titles” (T22). As revealed in the excerpts below, teachers justified their choices in life and career after weighing all options. T14 believed “life was more important” for him so he needed time to enjoy his own way of life. T16 believed family was her priority,

> I am not the major bread-earner in my family. So it is OK for me to earn a moderate income. I do this job for the reason of a lot of free time so that I can take care of my family. (T16)

As vice deputy, although complaining about his teachers’ low motivation to upgrade their academic ranks, T22 expressed his understanding of the teachers’ choices in his faculty by saying:

> Nobody likes to do research, especially for those female teachers who are more devoted to their families. It would be inadvisable to impose academic pressure on teachers. (T22)

The financial condition of Business English teachers in this study imposed a crucial impact on their choices between life and career. As T23 concluded, the generation of 70s and 80s teachers were “more financially independent and had less economic burden” due to the development of national economy since the Reform and Opening-up Policy which started in their childhood. They grew up with the development of market economy in China, under which the importance of teachers’ academic titles was questioned.

> Under planned economy, everything relied on teachers’ *bianzhi* and academic title: what kind of apartment they get allocated to live in, how much they earn every month, even what kind of schools their children can attend. But now things are different. Academic title is just a very small part of life and no longer determines the living standards. If teachers are well-off enough, they can live without it. (T23)

Business English teachers in this study, although came from different parts of China, said in their modest way that they were financially “beyond average” in Ningbo, which meant “at least two apartments or several millions RMB of savings” (T20) considering the developed economy in the city. Such financial condition acted as the solid base for teachers to choose their way of life. More attention was paid to their families and personal interests. Some teachers took a relaxed and calm attitude to their low academic capital when they weighed the input and output of academic performance.

> I know being an expert in Business English is very attractive, but it needs tremendous efforts and time. I do not see myself with such ability and I do not see its worthiness. (T9)

5.6 Summary

Although being assigned with Business English teaching tasks, teachers in this study negotiated their Business English identity diversely. Hesitation and radicalness coexisted within teachers of Business English Department with business mentors acted as a dissociative group of full-time teachers. Teachers’ perception of Business English over time decided their degrees of participation in Business English teaching and researching. With very limited rising channels, active Business English teachers made the utmost of their personal resources and showed a teaching-focused identity with research vulnerability and inactivity in Business English area. Family financial conditions and non-elite institutional characteristics gave them freedom to trade off between career and life.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the themes arising from the findings of the questionnaires and interviews conducted at the two universities. Linked to the literature, the findings revealed teachers' differed state of Business English identity. With differed levels of participation in Business English teaching and community, teachers in this study also showed inactivity and vulnerability in Business English research. Influencing factors to their identity construction related to the national policies, the institutional environment and teachers' families conditions.

This chapter will start with the key findings of this research, and then followed with detailed discussion of Business English teachers' identity construction from perspective of the layers of personal, institutional, local and global dimensions (Bandura, 2000; Yan et al., 2020). Foci will be on the dynamic interactions how environmental factors from contextual layers influence teacher identity in instructional, disciplinary, professional, vocational and economic frames (Pennington, 2014).

6.2 Key Findings

For status of identity, Business English teachers in this research showed a teaching-focused identity with research vulnerability and inactivity in Business English area. Although some teachers were optimistic and serious about their commitment to the Business English discipline, teachers in this study negotiated their Business English identity diversely. Their identity recognition increased as their experience and level of participation increased into Business English teaching and researching.

It was also worth noting that Business English teachers' professional identity was not fully established as a group of disciplinary community. This community was very loosely organized with the problems of lack of competent leaders, mobile and hesitant members, and exclusion of part-time business mentors.

For influencing factors to identity construction and negotiation, teachers' personal efficacy and personal initiative learning played major roles in helping their identity construction and negotiation. Unlike Liu's survey (2017) in which salary and academic titles were most important, Business English teachers in this research claimed that the uncertain status of Business English as a discipline was their major obstacle to the commitment in their career shift. On the contrary, they were not very concerned about salary and academic titles due to their fairly well-off family conditions and the mild requirements from their non-elite universities. Similar to the results from Zou's questionnaire data (2016), the lack of institutional support was also mentioned by teachers. Peer pressure and communication problems in administrative level were especially raised as new hindrances in University B where competition for academic resources were fiercer between overlapping disciplines.

For coping strategies, most Business English teachers in this study made the most of their personal relationships in looking for professional developing opportunities and resources. School-based training was still insufficient and not effective enough although Bao (2019) emphasized its importance in Business English teachers' construction.

6.3 Business English Teacher Identity Within Institutional Context

Institutional environment was the major and most important contextual dimension in teacher identity construction for the reason that it was the place where professional development activities and engagement with workplace communities were carried out (Tao & Gao, 2018). In this study, Business

English teachers' identity construction was affected largely from the following four aspects:

(1) Institutional tasks vs. Teachers' choices
(2) Institutional aim, evaluation system and support
(3) Underdeveloped Business English community with limited collective identity
(4) Leadership issues and identity from others

6.3.1 Institutional tasks vs. Teachers' choices

Business English teachers held negative attitude towards career shift partly because it was a top-down assigned task from their universities. Embarrassment and frustration was reported along with reluctance when teachers felt they were out-competed in what they called "mainstream disciplines" and were reallocated to Department of Business English. Such passive and negative attitude made their identity negotiation a process of "self-denial, self-correction and self-affirmation" (Ye, 2020: 61) from the deconstruction of the old identity to the reconstitution of Business English identity.

The 30 teachers in this study fell into three major categories according to their psychological affiliation to Department of Business English, namely foreign language teachers, Business English teachers and outsiders (See Figure 6-1 below).

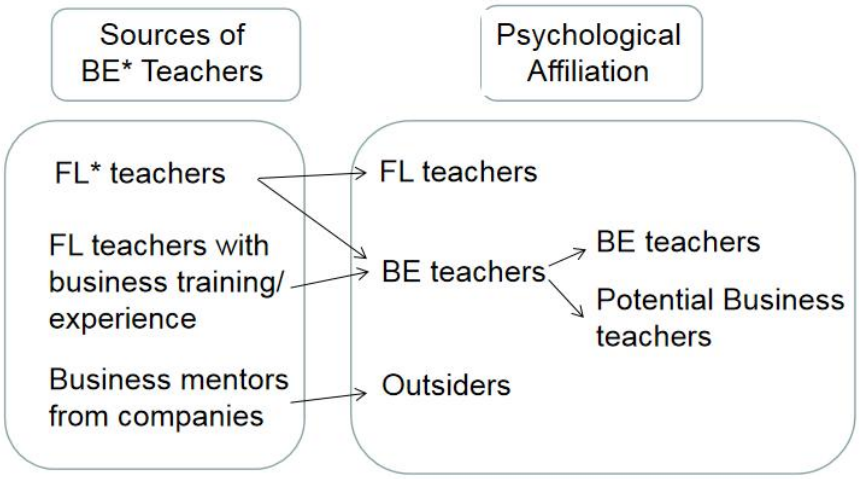

Figure 6-1: Department Affiliation of Business English Teachers

*BE teachers: Business English teachers; FL teachers: foreign language teachers

Teachers self-positioned themselves with the consideration of their perception of Business English discipline and their occupational plans. Quantitative and qualitative findings showed that, whether male for female, the more involved in Business English, the higher identity teachers held. Compared to novice teachers, experienced teachers were more likely to devote themselves to Business English teaching. The reason might be that they had longer years of exposure to Business English contexts and associations which was regarded within the domain of teachers' professional context (Mockler, 2011). However, Research by Friedrichsen et al. (2009) showed that teaching experience alone did not necessarily lead to the development of teachers' capacity to transform content knowledge into pedagogical forms in teaching practices. Within the same Business English department, teachers' designs of their career trajectories varied according to their acceptance levels of Business English identity. Such variation in psychological affiliation was closely related to the conflict between their school's top-down policies and teachers' own choices.

One major obstacle to these language teachers' identity transformation lied in vocational dimension, that is, the high cost of career shift from their former

disciplines. The cost-effectiveness issue was also mentioned in Ye's (2020) study of Business English teachers' identity negotiation path against the context of institutional disciplinary integration. On the one hand, teachers were not willing to give up their prior accumulated achievements in their previous work on both their teaching and research, which was pointed out as "gravitat[ion] to the areas of comfort" (Zhang, 2016: 155) in ESP teachers' negotiating business and language. On the other hand, language teachers encountered a common difficulty for ESP teachers that they were lack of knowledge and expertise in business areas (Wu & Badger, 2009). Their teaching focus was no longer on language points but shifted to business concepts and practices while language was regarded as the medium of instruction (Airey, 2016), which raised challenges for language teachers to adapt themselves to EMI approach.

The second difficulty lied in teachers' lack of confidence in Business English discipline, which was mostly mentioned as a fundamental problem in literature on Business English (e.g. Liu, 2011; Guo, 2015). The uncertainty of Business English development in their universities led to the hesitancy that its teachers were not psychologically prepared or confident to equip themselves with related knowledge and skills. The good news was business module teachers had more faith in their discipline for the reason that they believed Business English to be promising during their deeper involvement in this discipline.

School-based guidance in Business English teachers' identity transformation was necessary and helpful. Self-confidence need to be restored, willingness to teach as Business English teachers need to be gained, and faith in Business English discipline need to be established as belief and efficacy could benefit from each other in a positive way (Bandura, 2000). Personal initiative learning was mostly applied by Business English teachers in this study while school-based training programs did not work as expected although suggested

to be of equal importance in Business English teacher education (Yuan, 2009; Chen, 2010). Teachers' access to the understanding of national and institutional policies was missing in this study, which was the responsibility of both their universities and teacher themselves.

At the same time, although some former foreign language teachers experienced better adjustment in their shift to Business English teaching, it should be noted that the two Business English departments in this study encountered the problem of losing teachers in the construction of their teaching staff. Teachers chose to either play conservative by preserving their previous disciplinary identity or to behave radical by going beyond Business English to be Business teachers, which left a hidden danger in the outflow of teaching staff in the maintenance of Business English teachers.

The chances of looking for breakthroughs in a less congested channel appealed to some teachers who wanted to get rid of the mid-lower status and decided to shift to Business English by trying to be the "first wave" of Business English teachers with compound ability. They expected to get access to groups of a higher level and more resources to be allocated in the new Business English community. When such expectation failed, these teachers might withdraw their efforts in remaining as Business English teachers before their full self-identification in Business English. Other teachers joined Business English as a springboard to a second career. Such transition was viewed as a passport to a career change. For example, When Business English teachers of University B felt that they were at a disadvantage position because their university administrators did not understand their work, some of them decided to turn to new paths in other disciplines (e.g. Business).

Therefore, although with their pedagogical dedication to teaching, Business English teachers' reserved attitude towards working as Business English

teachers was still reflected in their knowledge structure in disciplinary dimension and career planning in vocational dimension. The conflict between passive acceptance of school tasks and personal initiative actions might be a possible reason for the problem of incomplete knowledge structure and competence construction which were raised in many researches in Chinese Business English teachers throughout different areas of China during the past decade (e.g. Tan, 2010; Guo & Niu, 2016; Dong, 2018; Li, 2018).

6.3.2 Institutional aim, evaluation system and support

There was a gap between aim, evaluation system and support when universities in this study built, evaluated and provided support to their Business English teaching staff. This gap featured some major characteristics of institution and support in economic dimension (Pennington, 2014) and caused teachers' dilemma in their instructional and disciplinary identity self-positioning.

According to the market-oriented aim of the two non-elite universities, the focus on teaching over researching led to a separation of Business English teachers' pedagogical identity and academic identity composition. A considerable number of Business English teachers featured themselves as academically attached to their previous disciplinary communities, namely linguistics, translation or education (See Figure 6-2 below). Such separation was reflected in teachers' very high teaching beliefs and teaching competency and their low research competency in this study, which meant the shift of teachers' focus on teaching did not bring a shift in their research work. According to Yan et al.,'s (2020) identity structure, teachers' identity was not well-established because of lack of academic aspect. In instructional frame, Business English teachers were focused on teaching and devoted a large part of their effort and time on classroom teaching. In disciplinary frame, they were academically inactive and unproductive in Business English research, while some former foreign language teachers chose to remain in their previous

academic areas.

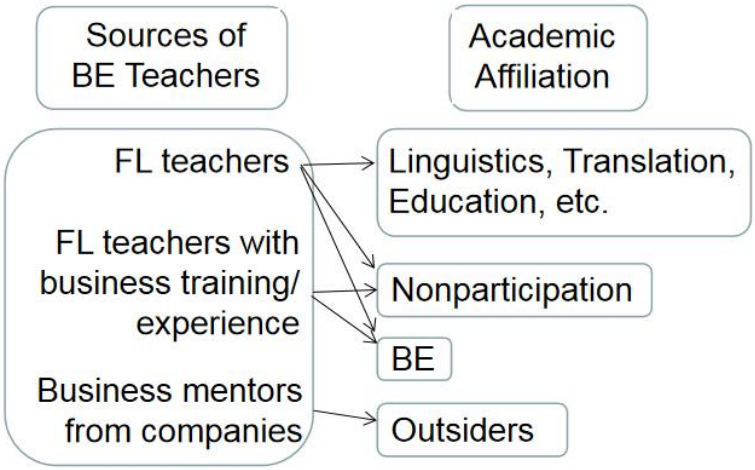

Figure 6-2: Academic Affiliation of Business English Teachers

The disconnection of the instructional and disciplinary practice in Business English was also found in Netherland, Germany and Spain (Nickerson, 2005) in a way that Business English teaching and researching did not benefit from each other. The problem was prominent in this study with language module teachers and novice teachers, who claimed more willingness to research but with their focus on their former disciplines. Thus, Business English teachers were dependent on two workplace communities which to a certain extent overlapped with each other. They received teaching tasks from the unit of Business English Department but sought research resources and support from the unit of their previous departments. Therefore, the Business English teachers were not clustered but divergent when they worked together in a way that the department they belonged to was not consistent with their academic community.

The combination of high instructional identity and low disciplinary identity was confirmed by teachers' answers about their negotiation of Business English identity. The features of being teaching-focused and academically inactive in Business English teachers were consistent with Nickerson's (2005) findings

with Business English teachers in Europe and Yan et al.'s (2020) findings with female mid-career English teachers in Chinese non-elite universities. Business English teachers shared similar characteristics of "conscientiousness" in teaching and "limited optimism" about institutional changes, but with variations in terms of "professional inertia" (ibid: 7).

From teachers' personal perspective, Business English teachers found it difficult to put emphasis on research work. This was perhaps due to their habitual practice of being teaching-focused which had been the norm as it took a large amount of time to learn new content and prepare for new courses. They found it easier to manage teaching and content matters compared to research work. On the other hand, from institutional perspective, this study showed that teachers' low disciplinary identity was closely related to the evaluation system of their universities. In vocational frame, the relaxed institutional culture contributed to reducing teachers' anxiety without "publish or perish" requirement (Bandura, 2000) in their universities. The non-elite position of their universities in a second-tier trade-oriented city featured practical graduates and explained why their universities focused on teachers' teaching-focused identity. Expectations for academic achievements were not high from both their universities and teachers themselves.

In terms of institutional support, limited and untargeted support was provided for Business English teachers by their universities although school-based training was emphasized by many researchers (e.g. Bao, 2019). In professional frame, university administrators' neglect to teachers' training programmes (Zou, 2016; Li, 2011) was confirmed in this study. Also, as Liu (2013) pointed out, there was a separation between the training of language teachers and that of business teachers since the knowledge base of linguistics and business was not related. Accordingly, it took up Business English teachers, especially those who were newly transferred to Business English

teaching, a large amount of time to learn and prepare for new courses, which made them more teaching focused in their instructional identity.

Such separation between instructional identity and disciplinary identity was a disadvantage for Business English teachers because they could not benefit from their teaching tasks. Neither could their teaching activities benefit from their research achievements. The teachers in this study attributed such separation to the evaluation system which did not weigh teachers' teaching and academic achievements equally. Teachers' academic titles relied heavily on their research projects and publications. As a result, after having built up their research work in their former discipline, they were reluctant to leave their former identity. For teachers in this study, a combined system of "full staff induction training" and "personalized training" suggested by Bao (2013: 191-192) was necessary considering their knowledge structure.

6.3.3 Underdeveloped Business English community with limited collective identity

The quantitative and qualitative findings about the construction of Business English community, the problems teachers encountered, and the communication among Business English teachers enabled the exploration of teachers' collective identity in the disciplinary frame. The underdeveloped community and the absence of collective identity was found within an institutional context.

Firstly, Business English teachers found it hard to establish a sound community and cooperate with each other in their universities. By Wenger's (1998) indicators for a community of practice, Business English community in this study hardly met the requirements in domains of "mutual engagement", "shared repertoire" and "joint enterprise" (Li et al., 2009). For example, in the domain of mutual engagement, there was no "shared ways" of engaging

Business English teachers in mutual and collaborative activities, no “rapid flow of information or propagation of innovation”, and no “quick setup of a problem to be discussed” (ibid: 5). Without an experienced leader, there was no template for benign interaction between senior and novice members in a learning context (Li & Qiu, 2016). Accordingly, in shared repertoire, Business English teachers were not equipped with the ability to assess the appropriateness of teaching and researching activities to be carried out in their universities. Therefore, there was no mutually defining identities within Business English community because teachers had problems in “knowing what others [knew], what they [could] do, and how they [could] contribute” (Li et al., 2009: 5) to Business English as a joint community.

As Yu (2021) pointed out, there were no organizational and structural changes corresponding to the innovation of Business English as the national education policies required. The case was true in the two universities that mutual recognition and collaboration was absent among Business English teachers both in Business English teaching and researching. The implementation of university policy changes was not strong enough to encourage, mobilize or win the support of language teachers who were vulnerable and incapable when faced with linguistic/business communities which were stable, prevailing and dominantly powerful.

Teachers’ collective identity in this study was closely related to their level of participation in Business English community within the operative culture of their universities and the surrounding society (Bandura, 2000; Goddard et al., 2004). Such collective identity in returned affected individual identity and was reflected by teachers’ daily teaching and academic activities (Bandura, 2000; Yan et al., 2020). This explained why some former language teachers refused to carry out Business English research/practice projects or supervise students on Business English topics. It was also a possible reason for the absence of

collective identity and academic leaders, which was the main and interwoven problems in Business English community in this study.

Another obstacle mentioned most frequently went to a total lack of an insider who could take leadership responsibility by assembling and coordinating Business English community. For non-elite universities, it was difficult for the two universities in this study to find a resourceful and influential leader who was able to understand the mission of Business English community, organize daily activities for knowledge and experience sharing, and was well connected with community members and potential members (Orr, 1996). It was also noteworthy that different categories of Business English teachers were faced with the dilemma of “putting themselves in” and “being themselves” in knowledge sharing in community activities (Maynard, 2001). The effect of team teaching and collaboration between modules of teachers was not mentioned although it was proven to be effective and recommended in ESP teaching both abroad and in China (Flowerdew, 2010; Guo & Zhu, 2018).

Therefore, due to the lack of collective identity, Business English communities in this study did not act as a tool for their teachers to grow into a group of knowledge workers who could improve their own organizational competitiveness (Wenger et al., 2002) in the institutional context.

6.3.4 Leadership issues and identity from others

Leadership issues and identity from others were the main obstacles for teachers’ attaining full career satisfaction with their universities in this research. It was reflected in the deprofessionalization of Business English discipline from leaders and other peer teachers. It was an illustration of how factors of the professional frame and perceptions of others (Pennington, 2014) affected teachers’ vocational identity.

Firstly, Business English did not strike their leaders as important or significant enough, which led to the “covered value” as Business English teachers complained about their situation. Such indifference also led to school-based insufficient training for Business English teachers and forced them to rely on themselves on a “learning while teaching” (Edwards & Burns, 2016: 57) basis. Business English teachers, as “the other” to their leaders, were excluded out of the “knowledge power” in the construction of a new discipline when institutional leaders/policymakers’ knowledge structure and system was solidified (Zhang, 2021).

Similar to the situation in ESP (Grosse & Voght, 2012; Cheng & Anthony, 2014) and EAP (Fortanet-Gómez & Räisänen, 2008) teachers, although there was market demand for compound disciplines, teachers’ qualification and professionalism was questioned. It was also alarming for teachers to sense the potential danger that their position as Business English teachers was negatively affected by the deprofessionalization of Business English discipline from the administrative level. Thus, teachers’ career satisfaction was battered in a way that their career choices were downplayed through the deprofessionalization of Business English discipline.

Secondly, as ESP teachers, Business English teachers in this study showed their awareness of the disadvantaged position in their universities that they were sandwiched by both language teachers and business teachers. This phenomenon confirmed Ye’s (2020) study with Chinese Business English teachers’ that their identity was constructed via the interaction with others in social contexts. It also echoed similar findings in Europe that sound relationship between Business English teachers and others (Coldron & Smith, 1999) was not well established with the existence of tension and indifference (Edwards & Burns, 2016) in collegial relations within institutional context.

Institutional factors were obvious given the nature of universities. Business English teachers in University B felt what was described in Liu's (2013) study that Business English was either criticized by language teachers for its lack of linguistic purity or dwarfed by business teachers as a tool for carrying out business practices. Covert conflicts were raised that Business English degree was questioned and belittled by their colleagues of other mature disciplines in University B, for whom Business English could not reach the height of a discipline and therefore should be treated as a sideline of other disciplines (ibid: 58).

To summarize, the deprofessionalization of Business English discipline and negative influence from administrative leaders and colleagues had a joint and passive impact upon Business English teachers' emotion in identity construction (Pyhalto et al., 2011). Self proclaimed as disadvantaged minority, Business English teachers felt being marginalized and their voices were not heard, and might suffer from aphasia in policy making and resource distribution in their universities. By dwarfing Business English discipline, the powerful majority, with resource dominant position, might make further marginalization of Business English teachers. It caused a vicious circle in a competitive institutional environment that the fewer resources Business English teachers obtained, the more detached they were to Business English discipline, which forced them to attach themselves to a more powerful and mainstream discipline as Zhou (2019) discovered in his research.

6.4 Local Factors to Business English Teacher Identity

Local factors exerted an important influence upon Business English teachers' identity construction in teacher education and development. Such influence from wider context helped to build identity from the professional frame and was reflected in two aspects:

(1) Insufficient utilization of local resources

(2) Teachers' family condition and family-devoted tradition

6.4.1 Insufficient utilization of local resources

With advantages in logistics, advanced manufacturing and foreign trade, the development and expansion of Business English discipline in Ningbo was rapid in terms of teachers' recruitment quantity but not in quality. Local resources were not developed or utilized to a sufficient degree. In the first place, this problem lied in the student-focused training cooperation between schools and local companies, which was long-existing in Business English teacher practical training in China higher education (Li, 2011; Zou, 2016). Teachers were not the priority in school-society cooperation projects when social resources were invested in universities.

This problem of insufficient utilization of local resources was also reflected mainly in the neglect of part-time business mentors from companies within Business English community. Firstly, the composition of Business English teaching community in this study did not include full-time business teachers who were the fourth category in the source of teachers concluded by Bao (2013) provided that Business English was regarded as compound of Business and English disciplines. Part-time business mentors from companies did not see themselves as part of this community, while the deficiency of professional full-time business teachers reduced the professionalism of Business English in the perspective of Business discipline.

Secondly, lack of mutual recognition and collaboration among Business English community was particularly prominent between full-time teachers and part-time business mentors because the exclusion of business mentors was evident in the daily activities of Business English departments in both universities in this study. Business mentors were not aware of the influence

that full-time teachers might exert on students' career choices in classroom (Liu, 2013). In return, full-time teachers did not see part-time company mentors as a part of Business English community of their universities. As Anthony (2008) discovered, teachers from companies were neglected for not being permanent and accountable teaching staff.

Without recognition between categories of teachers, it was a pity that the contribution, position and challenges of business mentors were under-valued with the neglect of their expertise in industry. The collaboration of full-time Business English teachers and part-time business mentors might be a potential breakthrough to overcome Business English teachers' self-positioning confusion. They might serve as a bridge to help full-time Business English teachers, especially those language teachers, to experience the "reset of the knowledge production scenario" in light of the "dramatic changes in social externalities" (Zhang, 2021: 21). It was also to teachers' benefit to receive business-related training (Shen & Feng, 2017) and training of global and local economy from companies, which was proved helpful in Ye's study (2020) for Business English teachers to adjust their long-term career planning along with the structural changes of programs in their universities. Thus, full-time teachers might surpass the micro and linguistic level of the Business English teaching materials and to realize "meaningful interaction" (Liu, 2013: 58) in target discourse of business activities.

6.4.2 Teachers' family condition and family-devoted tradition

Teachers' family economy and Chinese family-devoted tradition played decisive and determining roles in teachers' attitudes towards their career and personal lives. On the one hand, contrary to the results of Liu's survey (2017), salary and academic titles were no longer what teachers valued most in this study. Living in a second-tier city with advanced economy and equipped with the financial accumulation from their parents, teachers grew up with China's

Reform and Opening up Policy and were well-off with sound and steady economic capacity. Teachers' favorable living conditions offset the pressure from the evaluation system of their universities. On the other hand, traditional family-devoted tradition was still popular in China of 21st century. Priorities were given to work-life balance with a conscious focus on their families, especially for female teachers. With the accumulated wealth from two generations, teachers were able to have more control over their lives and were more relaxed and confident in their life choices.

Besides, diversification of personal values in the younger generation in China has been overtaking traditional collectivism to a large extent. They were entitled to evaluate their value in career, which was not as important or crucial as it was before, against other priorities in their life. Particularly, younger teachers who were economically competent were more serious in thinking about what they really wanted and were less likely to compromise when confronted with pressure from university administration.

Business English teachers in this research also showed a characteristic of self-possession and self-pleasing in their career choices. Instead of being stuck in tangled dilemma of midlife career crisis, they faced the reality and displayed a trade-off strategy after deliberating and careful consideration of what they valued and what they wanted to pursue. Regardless of their age, Business English teachers in this study in their mid-career showed a tendency of putting more value on their families, personal interests and self-fulfillment. Similar as Yan et al.'s (2020) concluded, teachers maintained a balance between their choices in career trajectories and family expectations.

Similar to Tao and Gao's (2017) results with Chinese EFL teachers, individual and family resources were also utilized by Business English teachers in this study when school-based support was absent. Teachers turned to their

personal relationship when they found abundant resources in local industry. Thus, “a major in autonomous learning with a minor in school-based training” was the developing model for Business English teachers in this study. However, this developing strategy might not be applicable to teachers of other areas with different family and regional economic conditions. As Shi (2015) suggested, besides autonomous learning, school-based training and school-enterprise cooperation and industry-university-research cooperation should still be promoted for a wide range of teachers from a variety of regions.

6.5 Global Impact upon Business English Teacher Identity

The global impact upon Business English teacher identity construction lied in the changes in employment demands and was reflected through institutional policies in teacher recruitment. Instead of language talents, China’s export-oriented economy had a pressing need for compound talents who were qualified in both language skills and industry-related knowledge (MyCOS Institute, 2010-2019). Such changes in inter-disciplines and bilingual education worldwide triggered the educational reform in Chinese higher education, which led to universities’ adjustment in discipline management and a boosting demand for the recruitment of Business English teachers, which accordingly changed these teachers’ career trajectories.

Owing to the universities’ reduction in the staff of department of foreign languages, as surplus teachers in their former departments, language teachers were required to teach Business English not because they were major-related to or professionally trained in Business English, but because their universities were faced with a shortage of teaching staff in Business English.

This situation is common when large demands come from emerging industries and changes of national policies considering the huge scale of China economy

and higher education. In the area of ESP teaching, this issue was first emerged in Business English and might be followed by other ESP subareas and EMI classrooms. It could be found in most Business English departments in Chinese universities since 2007 (e.g. Yan & Feng, 2007; Bao, 2019), that is, the supply-demand imbalance in Business English teachers. In order to fill in the gap of teacher shortage, universities had to settle with the recruitment from diverse sources. Temporarily employed Business English teachers had to experience an identity transformation from their former disciplines, which indicated the root of problems in their identity construction.

6.6 Summary

Based on the research findings, the researcher further refined the initial model of teacher identity, particularly for those who experienced career shift in Business English discipline or other cross-disciplinary fields (see Figure 6-3 below).

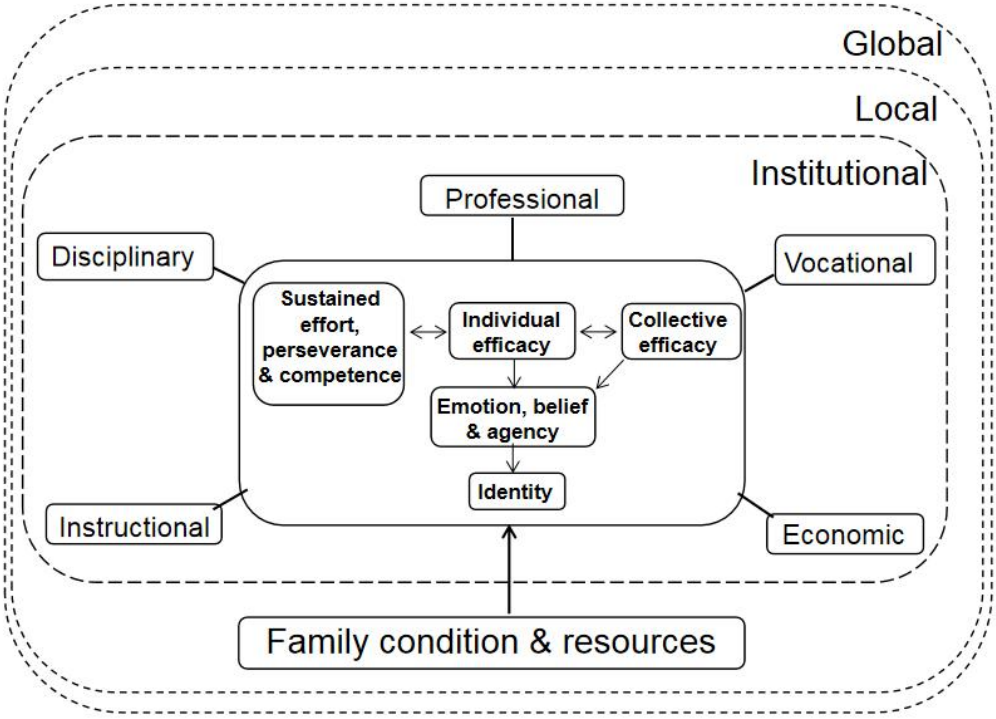

Figure 6-3: A Refined Model of Business English Teacher Identity

In the first place, the identity construction of Business English teachers in this study should be taken as a holistic and dynamic process. Their identity was constructed and negotiated on an institutional basis with multiple dimensions. Also, their identity was constructed by themselves and by the interaction between them and others. From a broader perspective, Business English teachers' identity was influenced by local needs and China's economy policies within global scope.

In the second place, teachers' identity was a result of interrelationship between variables and factors. As in the above figure, individual efficacy was the core of identity construction. It influenced and was influenced by collective efficacy and teachers' sustained effort, perseverance and competence. Such interaction directly affected individuals' level of commitment/belief to tasks and willingness/agency to tackle challenges. With strong sense of agency, a positive identity would be finally constructed and reconstructed on an ongoing basis.

Business English teachers in this study showed a teaching-focused identity with academic inactivity, which was a disconnection of instructional and disciplinary identity. Their Business English identity construction and negotiation was affected by the immature status of Business English discipline, the absence of collective community and lack of collaboration within it, but strengthened by their strong personal initiative. Professionally, institutional support was absent and industry-university cooperation was not developed and fully utilized for the benefits of teachers.

Although some teachers in this study experienced career uncertainties, they placed importance on career satisfaction. This study showed that Business English identity was closely related to the teachers' career satisfaction both at professional and individual perspectives.

Out of institutional context, Business English teachers in this study was particularly influenced by their families. Regardless of their age, teachers who were in their mid-career gained support from their families in terms of financial and resources. Also, they showed a tendency of putting more value on their families and personal life.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The goal of this study is to explore the professional identity of Business English teachers in Ningbo higher education by investigating three issues: (1) the status of teachers' identity, (2) the influencing factors to identity construction, and (3) their coping strategies to identity construction.

This chapter is the conclusion on the basis of the findings and discussion points of this study. Based upon the theoretical framework, research questions are answered. Implications of the study are presented followed by the research significance. Limitations of this study due to regional factors and research scale are suggested followed by the major issues for further research.

7.2 Answers to Research Questions

7.2.1 RQ1: What are the professional identity of Business English teachers in Chinese universities in Ningbo?

Business English teachers in this study had a teaching-focused status of professional identity with research inactivity in academia as a collective group. As dilemmas of career choices still among Business English teachers, their identity status was diverse and differed, which was reflected in the frames of their working practices and contexts.

In Business English teaching practices, teachers' professional identity was embodied from the following frames. In the instructional frame (including teaching content, pedagogical strategies, classroom persona and roles), teachers showed a confident and qualified teaching role in classrooms with positive teacher-student relationship. There was substantial evidence for teachers' high efficacy and competence belief in daily teaching practices, which was a significant improvement compared with the low teaching

competence in Business English teachers in China in Guo and Niu's (2016) study.

In the disciplinary frame (including knowledge structure and professionalism), composed of full-time and part-time teachers from various disciplines in and out of universities with differed degrees of research capacity, Business English teachers featured incomplete knowledge structure and limited and vulnerable research capacity as a community. This problem was a long unresolved issue which existed in other areas in China in the past decade (e.g. Henan Province (Wang, 2012), Guangxi Province (Wu, 2014), Shandong Province (Pan, 2015), Fujian Province (Yang, 2015), Jilin Province (Dong, 2018), Yunnan Province (Li, 2018)).

In the professional frame (including teachers' characteristics related to their working conditions and environments), their workload was heavy due to the characteristics and practical-oriented position of their universities, which confirmed Yan and Feng's (2007) results in 23 universities in China. Heavy workload was still a big challenge for Business English teachers in their professional development as Li (2017) pointed out in his study. However, like Liu (2013) stated in his study, in this study claims were raised by teachers that they were disciplinarily under-estimated and under-valued by other collegial communities of mature disciplines.

In the vocational frame (including recruitment and promotion, commitment and attachment to teaching work), teachers had a strong commitment and attachment to their teaching work. This results were consistent with the teaching-focused identity of European Business English teachers by Nickerson (2005) and that of female mid-career English teachers in Chinese non-elite universities by Yan et al. (2020).

In the economic frame (including academic capital and economic position), their job stability and security outweighed the job income in their career satisfaction for experienced teachers. Part-time business mentors from companies took teaching Business English as a strategy of employee recruitment and a bonus for their social capital. Besides the reasons such as limited access to development (e.g. Tang, 2010; Li, 2011) and lack of administrative support (Zou, 2016), the findings of economic prosperity and social capital added new insights into the explanation of Business English teachers' low motivation and inactivity in self-development in their career trajectories.

In teachers' working and living contexts, Business English teachers' professional identity is reflected from global, local and institutional frames. International economic situations and national policies provide opportunities and possibilities for middle-aged Business English teachers to break through career bottlenecks. However at the same time, such great and rapid changes in social needs and educational policies impose a challenge upon Business English teachers for lifelong learning and training. Locally, the economic structure of Ningbo features the two universities market-oriented and makes it possible for Business English to obtain abundant connection with local companies for first-hand information and materials for classroom teaching, which Bao (2019) stressed as cooperation with companies and expatriate training.

7.2.2 RQ2: What are the factors that facilitate/hinder the process of their identity construction?

Chinese Business English teachers' professional identity was affected by factors in a multi-layered contexts. Its influencing factors came from teachers' personal conditions, institutional environment and support, peer teacher relationship, family condition and local economy, and national and global

changes in economy and politics.

For facilitating factors, although lack of belief in Business English discipline (Liu, 2011; Guo, 2015) and lack of personal efficacy (Peng & Hu, 2019) being long-existing problems, Business English teachers' individual efficacy was proved to play a significant role upon their identity construction in this study. With sustained efforts and perseverance as their personal characteristics, the teachers in this study displayed strong individual efficacy and belief in working. Such strong efficacy, especially of those business module teachers and experienced teachers, helped to motivate teachers' agency and emotions, which also helped their self-motivation and positive attitudes in career transition. In return, their belief in the prospect of themselves and Business English discipline strengthened their investment in efforts and helped maintain their perseverance in overcoming obstacles.

Career satisfaction also played a decisive role upon teachers' shift to Business English. It was worth noticing that teachers in this study derived their job satisfaction from two major aspects. The first intrinsic satisfaction was their affirmation of themselves in self-discovery, self-improvement and self-realization in career transition, which outweighed the frustration they experience in the process of their career shift and the anxiety from peer pressure. This was a good illustration that a strong sense of personal efficacy could have a positive effect on dealing with identity problems (Goddard et al., 2004). The other was the stability of the job within the *bianzhi* system, which made the permanent position a decisive factor for their career fulfillment regardless of the disciplinary identity. This finding also suggested that instead of supporting institutional environment (Goodson & Cole, 1994), a relaxed institutional context might also be beneficial in teachers' career development. Good teaching experiences (e.g. freedom in classroom teaching decisions), students' good performance and sound teacher-student relationships were

minor determinants which they regarded as “the icing of the cake”.

For obstacles, unclear disciplinary future was the major barrier to Business English identity construction and maintenance. The unknown career future was still a big problem in Business English discipline (Wang & Zhang, 2011; Hu et al., 2016) and was proved in this study to breed negative attitudes against full devotion and firm commitment to Business English teaching and researching. Teachers’, especially language module teachers’, extrinsic motivation was to a certain extent dampened by the worry about the unclear prospect of their career choices.

The second obstacle lied in the gap between the popular market-oriented position of Business English and its under-valued reality in their universities. As Business English teachers complained, their discipline was regarded as market-oriented and misconcepted as not academic enough and was supposed to focus on practicality in a low-end quantity situation.

Taking research-oriented evaluation and supporting system into consideration, limited support was provided for Business English teachers in the institutional dimension although school-based training was emphasized by many researchers (e.g. Bao, 2019). Training opportunities increased in quantity while their quality was still low. Together with the neglect in leadership aspect, the competition in academic resources contention and teachers’ inadequate self-ability, Business English teachers in this study found themselves to be unprivileged and marginalized. This meant teachers’ pressure might come not only from students (Wang, 2017; Xu & Li, 2020) and academic superiors (Tao & Gao, 2017), but also from their peer teachers. Situations were worse for part-time business mentors from companies. They were outsiders and had no say even in Business English community.

The third obstacle that hindered the identity construction was the lack of Business English community with regular operation. Without a mature community of practice (Wenger, 1998), it was very difficult for teachers to establish a collective Business English identity within which they could collaborate with and benefit from each other. Worse still, a laissez-faire approach of the university upon the Business mentors from companies made them unattended and finally led to their absence in Business English community activities.

7.2.3 RQ3: How do Business English teachers address the challenges in identity construction?

There were two contradictory strategies Business English teachers applied in their identity construction. On the one hand, self-study and self-training was the major and effective strategy in becoming Business English teachers. Teachers made full use of their personal relationship in order to get access to disciplinary knowledge, to apply for academic resources, to upgrade their degrees, and even to jump out of Business English. However, self/autonomous-learning as the basic level of professional development (Shi, 2015), did not work together with other training strategies such as school-based training, cooperation with companies and expatriate training (Yuan, 2009; Chen, 2010; Bao, 2019). Therefore, social resources and institutional resources were not made full use of in the personal development of Business English teachers in this study.

On the other hand, a phenomenon of confident resistance was discovered in the partial participation in academic activities and the refusal of upgrading academic positions. Such situation was common in middle-aged Business English teachers, whose confidence derived from their job stability and their family wealth. As the first generation born with the national policy of Reform and Opening-up, they were the generation who enjoyed the policy dividends:

(1) the in-system positions which guaranteed their job stability, and (2) the economic security their families caught up with the first wave of the financial bonus of market economy in China. Such financial confidence was especially noticeable due to the local affluence level of Ningbo as one of the first batch of cities undergoing reform and opening-up policy.

7.3 Implications of the study

The study highlighted a complex status of Business English teachers professional identity, which reaffirmed the multi-dimensional nature of teacher identity and its construction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). The findings suggested that teachers' identity was not only affected by their own knowledge structure and competence, but also strongly influenced by their working environment, institutional policies, family condition and their life values.

The findings suggested an unresolved problem for Chinese Business English construction that it was a weakness in its teachers' research capacity. Such academic vulnerability may continue to be a big challenge for under-developed status of Business English discipline in non-elite universities in China.

The findings also stressed the importance of a professional and mature community in teacher identity construction. There was a gap between the market demand for Business English teachers and the recognition of their value in Chinese higher education reforms. The probe into Business English teachers' value will also be an uphill battle as the findings of this study showed that teachers' value was either undiscovered or covered, let alone the phenomenon that the value of part-time business mentors from companies remained unexplored. It will be of practical significance that win-win strategies of training and support be proposed among universities, their teachers and collaborating companies in the industry.

The findings may be useful and be referenced for stakeholders in Business English and other compound disciplines in ESP. Teachers in ESP/CLIL classrooms may also find this study useful by looking at themselves when balancing subject/content and language. Teachers, as real-life practitioners, may look for resonance and strategies for self-improvement. Institutional leaders and policy makers may have a glimpse of compound discipline teachers' situation and mindset so that better relationship between administrators and teachers can be established and maintained. Teacher educators may develop and organize targeted training once they realize teachers' diverse needs in newly-established compound disciplines.

7.4 Significance and Contribution of the Research

The intention of this study is to fill the research gaps in Business English teacher identity by looking into the following contributions in theoretical, contextual, methodological and axiological aspects.

7.4.1 Theoretical significance

The aim of the present study is to fill in the gaps concerning the concept of Business English teacher identity. The first aim is to fill the literature gap by defining the concept of Business English teacher in a Chinese context.

This research contributed to theory by focusing on Business English teachers who are a relatively independent group of ESP in Chinese higher education. It contributed to the adapted model of TESOL teacher identity of Pennington (2014) and the dynamics of identity construction by Bandura (2000). Guided by this model, Business English teachers' professional identities were explored from personal, institutional, local and global frames by looking into how these layers of contextual conditions mediated their identity construction and negotiation. The foci were on how global and local policies exerted impact on institutional and personal decisions, how national and local economic

situations influenced teachers' career and family choices, and how these changes eventually effected their Business English teacher identity.

By seeking the interrelationship of factors of identity construction and negotiation from multi-perspectives and levels of frames, an identity construction model was proposed for further implementation of similar settings. This research reiterated Business English teachers' identity construction as dynamic, interactive and socially created, and explored its working mechanism with a substantiated inquiry into the influencing factors (Day, 2018; Trent, 2012; Bukor, 2015; Tsui, 2007; Smit et al., 2010). The exploration into Business English teachers' identity construction and negotiation revealed that it was complex and dynamic to become a Business English teacher from a sociocultural perspective.

7.4.2 Contextual significance

This study presented an authentic group of Business English teachers in Chinese context and culture. It investigated Business English teachers in the context of higher education in Ningbo, a city in East Coast of China with export-oriented economy. The teachers in this study were representatives of teachers who worked in non-elite institutions after the increasing enrollment of students in Chinese colleges and universities and the marketization policy[6] of Chinese higher education since 1999. Their identity was explored in depth and width and their real life was represented with their own voices be heard. This study provided supportive information for Business English discipline construction and research, especially in Business English teacher education and training. The insights of this study were valuable to Business English teachers, policymakers on Business English discipline, and researchers in

[6] The policy of the enrollment expansion in Chinese universities: the education reform policy of continuously expanding the enrollment of higher education (including undergraduate and graduate students) since 1999. Under such policy, many non-elite colleges and universities were established with the recruitment of a considerable number of teachers. The gross enrolment ratio in higher education rose from 10.5% in 1999 to 60.2% in 2023 with the student-teacher ratio soaring to 18.6:1 in 2023 compared to 11:1 in 1998 (MOE, 2024).

other inter-disciplines in other areas and countries.

Second, this research put into research early and mid-career teachers in Chinese higher education who grew up along with the prosperity of China's economy. It focused on a lucky generation who had relatively less pressure in finance and from workplace. Investigation was into how these well-off Chinese higher education teachers of an advanced city would value their job and make work-life choices in their career trajectories.

Third, this study expanded the research of Business English teachers by including part-time teachers from companies. These part-time teachers have "knowledge of and experience in learners' target situations" (Basturkmen, 2025: 227). They are indispensable in real-life Business English teaching but have been long neglected in research. The motives, self-perception and actions of part-time teachers were explored. Their needs as part-time teachers were discovered. The findings also added to a new perspective of the relationship and interactions among Business English teacher community, in which their dilemmas of being treated as outsiders were noticed. It is claimed in this study that the value of part-time business mentors was under-researched and worthy of further exploration.

7.4.3 Methodological significance

This research applied a mixed-method approach for the purpose of expanding the research scope and depth. By looking at identity and its construction from a holistic perspective, this empirical research produced descriptive and detailed data. It contributed to the very limited literature by integrating various ways of understanding from quantitative and qualitative approaches.

7.4.4 Axiological significance

This research saw Business English teachers' career development in the

reform and opening-up era they experienced and explored their cognition of self-worth. The diversification of social status in this generation provided explanation for Business English teachers' trajectory choices, so did the multi-layered financial status do to these teachers' life-work balance.

This study also explored how the universities valued their Business English teachers as working staff by looking at teachers' description and reflection of institutional support and evaluation regulations. Also, the lack of mutual recognition was investigated between Business English teachers and business practitioners in the industry.

7.5 Limitations of the study

30 teachers (15 from each university) participated in quantitative questionnaires and 10 teachers (5 from each university) took part in qualitative interviews. The small sample size, especially in the quantitative findings limited generalizability of the result. Also, the small sample size of the quantitative data made limited analysis restricting to the use of descriptive statistics involved percentage, mean, standard deviation and aggregate mean, which restricted the depth of the quantitative data.

The findings in this study represented Business English teachers in second-tier universities in Ningbo. The results might not be applicable to top-tier university or vocational and technical colleges because these schools might have different positioning and evaluation systems of teacher development (Fairweather, 2005), enjoy different levels of government support (Marginson, 2016).

7.6 Issues for further study

School policy consistency is the major issue worthy of close attention in teachers' identity construction in inter-disciplines like Business English. Other

issues include training and support for Business English teachers, teachers' roles and value in mutual teaching and learning between teachers and students, and the status of novice teachers who have to live with a "publish and perish" evaluation system.

For school policy consistency, firstly, school policy consistency is by large decided by the national and local adjustment of economic structure, which accordingly leads to the changes in demands in human resources market. Unlike Ningbo, for other universities in other regions of China, their Business English program may be positioned with different considerations according to their regional development. Changes in program orientations may cause corresponding changes in teachers' conceptions of Business English discipline and finally affect their conceptions of Business English identity.

Secondly, school policy consistency is also related to the level and nature of universities. As the adjustments and changes of policies may interfere with teachers' choices in their career trajectories, for key universities (e.g. "985"[7], "211"[8] and "Double First-Class"[9] universities) and some top universities specializing in Business and Economics, their Business English teachers may gain more access to leading authorities who can have their say in top-level design of programs and developing trends of disciplines. Therefore, chances are that Business English teachers in these universities may grasp and enjoy accurate information for resources and career planning.

For teacher training and support, on the one hand, Business English training quality, training content and training effectiveness are being questioned and

[7] "985": national construction projects involving 39 key universities aiming for building first-class universities with world advanced level since May 4th, 1998
[8] "211": national construction projects involving around 100 key universities and a number of key disciplines in the 21st century since November, 1995
[9] "Double First-Class": national construction projects for world-class universities and disciplines since January, 2017

worth further pursuit of investigation. On the other hand, the possibility of diversity of training providers (e.g. school-based training and company-based training) and training subjects (e.g. students, Business English teachers, leaders) is worth discussion. The training for both students and teachers may arise the issue of changes of teachers' roles in classroom.

What is also worth investigating is how novice teachers and incoming teachers cope with job-life balance under new employment system. Although their families are as well-off as those of experienced in-service Business English teachers, teachers of the next generation will not be able to rest on the job stability as the middle-aged teachers do. As key universities take the lead and non-elite ones follow, the so-called "3+3" quasi employment system[10] is currently taking the place of the old *bianzhi* system and may confront probationary teachers with the risk of high elimination rate. It will be another story how teachers' professional identity is constructed and affected as their goals may change by the new evaluation and assessment criteria.

The situation may be even more difficult for Business English teachers under "3+3" quasi employment system by taking two factors into consideration. First, the rapid expansion and contraction, i.e. the uncertain status of the discipline in light of national economic situation may accelerate the competition among teachers. Second, the criticized "lack of professionalism" of Business English as a discipline may make it more difficult for academically vulnerable teachers to pass the assessment of this new evaluation system.

[10] "3+3" quasi employment system: the appointment system for university teaching positions. By given favorable teaching and research resources, sufficient economic security, and a higher academic freedom, newly hired teachers need to produce research and teaching achievements according to their contact agreement. Those who pass the mid-term assessment (the third year) and final assessment (the sixth year) for the probationary period (usually 6 years) can get long-term contacts.

7.7 Summary

To summarize, this research investigated a group of Business English teachers in Ningbo higher education for their professional identity and identity construction. Based on the literature about ESP teacher identity and Business English construction in and out of China, a mixed-method approach was applied for the purpose of answering three research questions. Findings show a teaching-focused identity with academic inactivity and a loose Business English community. Influencing factors and coping strategies of identity construction and negotiation are explored in details.

This research is an attempt to look into Business English teachers in non-elite universities in an economically developed city in China where local economy, social factors and family assets may have an indispensable impact upon the policies of universities and accordingly affect teachers' career choices. It is hoped that this research may contribute to identity research in similar settings for teachers of inter-disciplines.

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Appendix 1: Table 3-1 Research Objectives, Research Questions and Research Procedures

Aim	Objectives	Research question	Phase	Instrument used	Data collected	Data analysis
To investigate the identity and its construction of Business English teachers in Chinese universities	Objective 1: to explore the professional identity of Business English teachers in universities in Ningbo area	RQ 1: What are the professional identity of Business English teachers in Chinese universities in Ningbo?	Phase 1	Questionnaire 1 "Efficacy Belief Instrument for Business English Teachers" Questionnaire 2 "Business English Teachers' Identity"	Questionnaire 1: 25 5-Likert-scale items two dimensions: Business English teachers' personal teaching efficacy belief (17 items) and their teaching outcome expectancy (8 items) Questionnaire 2: 43 5-Likert-scale items 3 dimensions: Business English teachers' perception of their identity (17 items), their teaching beliefs and competence (17 items), and their research engagement and competence (9 items)	Descriptive statistics: percentage, mean, standard deviation and aggregate mean by *IBM Statistical Product and Service Solutions* (SPSS)
	Objective 2: to distinguish the influencing factors that facilitate and hinder the Business English teachers' identity construction	RQ 2: What are the factors that facilitate/hinder the process of their identity construction?				
	Objective 3: to find out the measures taken by Business English teachers to address the challenges in the construction of their identity	RQ 3: How do Business English teachers address the challenges in identity construction?	Phase 2	Semi-structure interviews	Verbatim transcripts and translation Double-check	Thematic analysis
				Documentary analysis	National and local policies, school policies, curriculum information, and workload of participants	

Appendix 2: Table 3-2 Profile of Participants of the Questionnaires

University	Participant	Gender	Age	Year of Teaching	Year of Teaching BE	Research Area	Supervising Area	Education and Working Background	Teaching Courses
University A	T1	F	42	21	10	Applied Linguistics	BE	TESOL	Comprehensive English, Comprehensive BE, Pronunciation
	T2	F	42	15	7	Testing, Discourse analysis	BE	Linguistics	Comprehensive BE, BE listening & speaking
	T3	F	44	21	2	Translation, Interpretation	BE Translation	BE Translation	Advanced BE, BE Communication & Interpretation, Reading
	T4	F	30	2	2	Translation, Interpretation	Interpretation, BE	Management, Translation & Interpretation	Interpretation,Economics
	T5	M	54	31	21	Applied linguistics	BE, Translation	English, MBA	English listening & speaking, Cross-cultural BE
	T6	F	45	22	8	Applied linguistics	Business case study, BE discourse	BE	BE writing, E-commerce, E-commerce English
	T7	F	43	20	2	English Literature	English Literature	Linguistics	Comprehensive English,Comprehensive BE, English literature
	T8	M	53	29	10	BE translation	BE translation	Linguistics, Education	BE translation
	T9	F	42	16	6	Linguistics	BE	BE	BE reading
	T10	F	41	19	3	Applied linguistics	Linguistics, Literature	Education	College English,BE,Pragmatics
	T11	F	41	18	8	Applied linguistics, TESOL	Linguistics, BE	TESOL	Logistics, Reading, Writing
	T12	F	55	13	10	Translation	Translation	Translation	BE interpretation, BE negotiation & Etiquette

	T13	F	41	13	4	Translation, Interpretation	Translation & Interpretation, Cross-cultural communication	Linguistics	BE interpretation,BE translation
	T14	M	39	16	4	TESOL	Education	Linguistics, Business company working experience	Comprehensive BE,BE reading
	T15	M	43	3	3	Marketing, Management	Marketing, Management	BA in Chinese, state-owned (7 yrs) & foreign (3 yrs) company working experience, Entrepreneurship (12 yrs)	Business model innovation, Product innovation, Marketing
University B	T16	F	32	8	2	Translation	Translation	Translation	Cross-cultural communication, Exhibition Interpretation, Secretary English
	T17	M	44	21	5	BE, Translation	BE, Translation	TESOL	Comprehensive BE, BE translation, TEM-4
	T18	F	42	20	7	BE	BE	Linguistics	Reading, Logistics, Communication & Negotiation
	T19	M	40	17	7	International Business	BE	English, International Business, Business Information Technology	Management, BE reading, International Business Fundamentals
	T20	F	42	20	10	BE	BE	Literature, Business company experience	International business, BE writing, BEC
	T21	F	42	18	7	BE	BE	TESOL	Accounting, BE listening, Grammar
	T22	M	55	31	5	Applied linguistics	Applied linguistics	Linguistics, Applied linguistics	Dissertation writing, Writing, Advanced English
	T23	F	43	21	7	Education, ESP	Education, Linguistics & translation in BE	TESOL	E-commerce, Market Research, Writing
	T24	F	46	25	10	Education, BE	BE	TESOL, Business company	BE listening, Economics, International business

								experience	
	T25	F	44	20	17	BE education	Linguistics, BE translation	Linguistics, Management	International business, BE reading, BE listening
	T26	F	44	21	2	Linguistics	Linguistics in BE	Applied linguistics	Comprehensive BE
	T27	F	44	22	12	TESOL, International business, Talent management	ESP	TESOL, International business, consultation experience in company	International marketing, Negotiation, BE reading
	T28	F	46	22	6	Applied linguistics	Applied linguistics, Translation	TESOL, Visiting scholar in Business Communication	Business communication and negotiation, BE introduction
	T29	F	45	18	18	BE teaching, Cross-cultural communication	BE communication	MA in BE & International Trade Theory & Practice	BEC (all levels)
	T30	M	28	3	2	International business	N/A	BA in International Business, Full-time working in business company	International E-commerce

Appendix 3: Questionnaire 1

General information 基本信息

You can choose either Chinese or English as you feel comfortable. （您可以任意选择中英文阅读和答题）

Gender 性别	
Age 年龄	
Year of Teaching 教龄	
Year of Teaching BE 商务英语教龄	
Research Areas 研究方向	
Supervising Areas 指导学生论文方向	
Educational or working background (Please list any background in language or business field) 教育或工作背景背景（请列举是否有语言学或商科背景）	
Teaching courses (Please list three major courses you teach) 讲授科目（请列举三门主要授课科目）	

Questionnaire 1: Efficacy Belief Instrument for BE teachers
问卷 1：商务英语教师效能问卷

Please complete the following by placing a tick (√) in the box you believe appropriate for each statement.
请在您认为适合的答案框打勾 (√)

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree
1=强烈不同意; 2=不同意; 3=不确定; 4=同意; 5=强烈同意

	Statements 题项	1	2	3	4	5
1	When a student does better than usual in Business English, it is often because the teacher exerted a little extra effort. 如果学生在商英课上比以往表现的好，通常是因为老师在教学上花费了更多努力。					
2	I will continually find better ways to teach Business English.					

	我会不断寻找更好的方法去教商英。					
3	Even if I try very hard, I will not teach Business English as well as I will most subjects. 即使我再努力，我感觉商英也不如其他科目好教。					
4	When students' grades of Business English improve, it is often due to their teacher having found a more effective teaching approach. 要是学生在商英课上的学习成绩提高了，通常是因为他们的老师找到了更有效的教学方法。					
5	I know the steps necessary to teach Business concepts effectively. 我知道应采取什么措施，让学生有效理解商务概念。					
6	I know the steps necessary to teach English language effectively. 我知道应采取什么措施，让学生有效理解英语语言点。					
7	I will not be very effective in monitoring Business English practices. 我不能有效组织学生进行商英实践。					
8	I will generally teach Business English ineffectively. 通常我教商英课，教学效果不好。					
9	The inadequacy of a student's Business background can be overcome by good teaching. 只要老师教学方法好，就能克服某些学生商务背景不足的困难，取得好效果。					
10	The inadequacy of a student's English language ability can be overcome by good teaching. 只要老师教学方法好，就能克服某些学生英语语言能力不足的困难，取得好效果。					
11	I understand Business concepts well enough to be effective in teaching Business English. 我非常了解各种商务概念，可以进行有效的商英教学。					
12	I understand English language well enough to be effective in teaching Business English. 我非常了解英语各语言点，可以进行有效的商英教学。					
13	Increased effort in Business English teaching produces little change in some students' Business English achievement. 即使老师更努力教学，有些学生的商英成绩也很难提高。					
14	The teacher is generally responsible for the achievement of students in Business English. 一般情况下，老师要对学生的商英成绩负责。					
15	Students' achievement in Business English is directly related to their teacher's effectiveness in Business English teaching.					

	学生在商英取得的成绩，与老师有效的教学方式直接相关。					
16	If students comment that they are showing more interest in Business English at school, it is probably due to the performance of their teacher. 如果学生说他们对商英越来越感兴趣，那主要归功于老师教学有方。					
17	I will find it difficult to explain to students Business concepts. 我很难向学生解释商务概念。					
18	I will find it difficult to explain to students English language points. 我很难向学生解释英语语言点。					
19	I will typically be able to answer students' Business English questions. 一般来说，我能回答学生提出的有关商英的问题。					
20	I wonder if I will have the necessary skills to teach Business English. 我不知道自己是否能胜任商英教学。					
21	Given a choice, I will not invite the principal to evaluate my Business English teaching. 如果可以选，我不会主动邀请领导来评价我的商英教学。					
22	When a student has difficulty understanding a Business concept, I will usually be at a loss as to how to help the student understand it better. 如果学生对某个商务概念的理解有困难，我常常束手无策，不知道该如何帮助他。					
23	When a student has difficulty understanding a Business concept in the English language, I will usually be at a loss as to how to help the student understand it better. 如果学生对某个英语语言点的理解有困难，我常常束手无策，不知道该如何帮助他。					
24	When teaching Business English, I will usually welcome students' questions. 教商英过程中，我欢迎学生提出问题。					
25	I do not know what to do to encourage students' interest in Business English. 我不知道该怎么做，才能激发学生对商英的兴趣。					

Appendix 4: Questionnaire 2

Questionnaire 2: Questionnaire for BE Teachers' identity
问卷 2：商英教师身份认同

Please complete the following by placing a tick (√) in the box you believe appropriate for each statement:
请在您认为适合的答案框打勾 (√)

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree
1=强烈不同意; 2=不同意; 3=不确定; 4=同意; 5=强烈同意

	Statements 题项	1	2	3	4	5
Part 1 - Participants' perspectives about professional development state 第一部分：职业发展状态						
1	I am very committed when I work. 我工作很投入。					
2	I am enthusiastic about my work. 我对工作富有热情。					
3	I feel very happy about my commitment to my work. 投入工作时，我感到很快乐。					
4	The establishment of BE discipline is necessary. 很有必要建立商英学科。					
5	BE teachers' professional development needs to be strengthened. 需要加强商英教师的职业发展。					
6	The current Business English teaching needs to be reformed. 现有的商英教学需要改革。					
7	I am concerned with Business English discipline development at different levels. (teachers', institutional and regional) 我很关心商英学科在不同层面（教师自身、学校、地区）的发展。					
8	Business English teaching will be conducive to my professional development. 商英教学有利于我的专业发展。					
9	The development of Business English is an irresistible trend at my school level. 在我工作的学校，商英发展是大势所趋。					
10	I am positive about the prospects of my school's Business English orientation.					

	我对学校的商英发展前景持积极乐观态度。					
11	I can make full use of various opportunities for my professional development. 我能充分利用各种机会，进行自己的职业发展。					
12	My school praises or rewards excellent work. 我工作的学校，会表扬或奖励优秀工作。					
13	My school offers support when I encounter difficulties. 我遇到困难时，学校会提供帮助。					
14	I am pleased with my income. 我对收入很满意。					
15	I devote myself to the development of Business English discipline. 我全力投入到商英学科发展中。					
16	My workload assigned by my school is reasonable. 学校分配给我的工作量是合理的。					
17	I can communicate with school leaders equally. 我能与学校领导展开平等对话。					
Part 2 - Participants' teaching beliefs and competence **第二部分：教学信念和能力**						
18	I am very supportive of Business English teaching reforms. 我非常支持商英教学改革。					
19	I actively understand Business English teaching. 我积极主动理解商英教学。					
20	I can effectively accomplish my teaching. 我能有效完成教学工作。					
21	I can design learning objectives and activities according to students' current needs. 我能根据学生当前需求，设计学习目标和学习活动。					
22	I design learning objectives and activities for students' future needs. 我根据学生未来需求，设计学习目标和学习活动。					
23	I am good at managing students. 我善于管理学生。					
24	I keep a good rapport with students. 我能与学生保持良好关系。					
25	I think teaching methods are important to enhance students' learning. 我认为教学方法对加强学生学习非常重要。					
26	I think Business English learning includes both development of language skills and business-related skills. 我认为商英学习应包括语言和商务知识两方面。					
27	I think teachers are important to facilitate students'					

	development. 我认为教师的工作对促进学生发展非常重要。					
28	I think leaning Business English encourages culture leaning of different countries. 我认为要学好商英，就要了解不同国家的文化。					
29	I can communicate with English native speakers smoothly. 我能与英语母语者顺畅交流。					
30	I can understand English films and TV series without subtitles. 我无需字幕，就能看懂英语电影电视剧。					
31	I can read original business-related discourses in English. 我能读懂商务相关的英文篇章。					
32	I can write model compositions for my students. 我能写出模范作文，给学生参考学习。					
33	I can speak good English in class. 课堂教学中，我能提供正确的英语语言示范。					
34	I can speak English fluently in explaining business knowledge in class. 课堂教学中，我能流利使用英语解释商务知识。					
Part 3 - Participants' research competence **第三部分：科研能力**						
35	I feel that research is meaningful to teaching. 我认为科研对教学很有意义。					
36	I like doing research. 我喜欢做科研。					
37	I invest much time and effort on research. 我在科研上花费很多时间和精力。					
38	I often read research literature in Chinese and English. 我经常阅读中英文文献。					
39	I feel that I have much time for research. 我感觉做科研的时间很充裕。					
40	I feel there are sufficient research resources. 我认为研究资源很丰富。					
41	I am familiar with research methods and I do not need mentoring. 我对研究方法很熟悉，不需要额外指导。					
42	I feel it easy to publish papers. 我认为发表文章很容易。					
43	I feel it easy to obtain research grants. 我认为申请研究资助很容易。					

Appendix 5: Interview Questions Based on Issues from Quantitative Findings

Findings from quantitative data	Issues to be followed up	Interview questions to get further insight into the issues
Very high belief in Business English and Business English teaching	High instructional identity	- What are the challenges in teaching Business English courses? - What do you do to deal with the challenges? - What kind of support did you get?
Teaching-focused identity		
Limited field-work experience	Knowledge structure	- What kind of difficulties did you come across when you try to get yourself trained in Business English practices? - Do you get help in getting access to Business English practices? If so, what kind of help do you get?
Differences in beliefs in teaching Business and English	Identity of inter-discipline and knowledge structure	- Which one is more difficult for you to teach? Business or English language? Why?
Unwillingness to be evaluated by their seniors	Teacher-admin relationship	- Do you agree with the evaluating system in your university? If not, what is the problem? - If you come across difficulties, do you ask your leaders for help? In what way can (not) he/she help?
Limited communication with leaders		
Different opinions on workload	Economic identity	- Do you believe you are underpaid with the current workload? - Is the teaching workload too heavy for you so that you do not have time for research?
dissatisfaction with income		
Research inactivity in Business English	Disciplinary identity, knowledge structure and economic capital	- Do you take part in research activities regularly? - What kind of activities do you usually attend? - What makes you unwilling/unable to carry out research activities?
Research incompetence in Business English		- What kind of difficulties did you come across when you try to do research in Business English area? - Do you get help in how to do research? If so, what kind of help do you get?

Appendix 6: Interview Protocol

1. **Objective 1 of Study:** to explore the professional identity of Business English teachers in universities in Ningbo area

Research Question 1: What is the professional identity of Business English teachers in Chinese universities in Ningbo?

Interview questions:

- Do you consider yourself as a Business English teacher or an English/Business teacher?
- Are you a member of any professional body? If so, what organization do you subscribes to?
- In your university, does Business English department have an equal position as other departments? If not, what is different in Business English department?
- Do you take part in research activities regularly? What kind of activities do you usually attend?

Probing questions:

- Why did you become a Business English teacher in the first place? Can you tell me how it began for you?
- Where do you see your priority or role in your work, as a Business teacher or as an English teacher?

2. **Objective 2 of Study:** to distinguish the influencing factors that facilitate and hinder the Business English teachers' identity construction

Research Question 2: What are the factors that facilitate/ hinder the process of their identity construction?

Interview questions:

- What problems do you encounter when you teach Business English in your class / when you do research / when you try to get yourself trained in Business English practices?
- What do you wish the university can do to help you more in your work?
- Do you get any help in how to teach Business English well / in how to do research? If so, what kind of help do you get?
- Is the teaching workload too heavy for you so that you do not have time for research? If not, what are the reasons?

Probing questions:

- Why do you identify yourself more as an English/Business teacher?

- Any personal or environmental difficulty in your work as a Business English teacher?
- How did that difficulty influence your work as a Business English teacher?
- How do you feel when ...?

3. **Objective 3 of Study:** to find out the measures taken by Business English teachers to address the challenges in the construction of their identity

Research Question 3: How do Business English teachers address the challenges in identity construction?

Interview questions:
- How do you feel when you come across challenges in your work?
- What kind of actions did you take to deal with the challenges you face in teaching Business English / in doing research / in carrying out Business English practices?
- Who did you ask for help?
- What kind of support did you get?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?

Probing questions:
- How do you want to develop as a better Business English teacher?

4. **Objective 4 raised from quantitative data:** to identify whether teacher-admin relationship affect teacher identity

Questions raised from quantitative data:
- What is the teacher-admin relationship for Business English teachers?
- How does the relationship affect teacher identity?

Supplementary interview questions:
- Do you agree with the evaluating system in your university? If not, what is the problem?
- If you come across difficulties, do you ask your leaders for help? In what way can (not) he/she help?

5. Objective 5 raised from quantitative data: to identify the economic identity of teachers

Questions raised from quantitative data:
- How does the economic condition affect Business English teacher identity?

Supplementary interview questions:

- Do you believe you are underpaid with the current workload? Why?

6. **Objective 6 raised from pilot interview:** to identify whether leadership affects teacher identity

Questions raised from pilot interview:
- How does leadership influence Business English teacher identity?

Supplementary interview questions:
- Who makes decisions about Business English teaching affairs and daily management in your university?
- Does he/she teach Business English himself/herself?
If not, does his/her background affect your Business English teaching or researching? How?

7. **Objective 7 raised from pilot interview:** to distinguish the environmental factors that facilitate and hinder the Business English teachers' identity construction

Questions raised from pilot interview:
- What are the local and global factors that facilitate/ hinder the process of their identity construction?

Supplementary interview questions:
- Do the international business prospects/national policies/regional policies on business industry affect your decisions and actions of being a Business English teacher? If yes, how?

Appendix 7: Participant Information Sheet

Project Title/Topic:

Identity Construction of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this questionnaire survey in connection with my PhD dissertation at the University of Nottingham Ningbo. The project is a study of *Identity Construction of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities*.

Your participation in the survey is voluntary. You are able to withdraw from the survey at any time and to request that the information you have provided is not used in the project. Any information provided will be confidential. Your identity will not be disclosed in any way nor use the information you have supplied during the survey.

The research project has been reviewed according to the ethical review processes in place in the University of Nottingham Ningbo. These processes are governed by the University's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics. Should you have any question now or in the future, please contact me or my supervisor. Should you have concerns related to my conduct of the survey or research ethics, please contact my supervisor or the University's Ethics Committee.

Yours truly,

Wanli Li

Contact details:

Student Researcher: Wanli Li (Wanli.Li@nottingham.edu.cn)

Supervisor: Ashley Yoon Mooi Ng (Ashley-Yoon-Mooi.Ng@nottingham.edu.cn)

University Research Ethics Committee Coordinator, Ms Joanna Huang

(Joanna.Huang@nottingham.edu.cn)

声明

论文题目：

Identity Construction of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities

尊敬的参与者：

谢谢您参与这次问卷调查。这次问卷调查是我在宁波英国诺丁汉大学博士论文相联系的。研究题目是 *Identity Construction of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities*。

您是自愿参与此次问卷调查的。您可以在任何时候选择放弃这次的问卷调查，并要求您提供的信息不被使用在此次调查中。您提供的所有信息都是保密的。在使用您提供的信息时不会涉及您的身份以及个人信息。

宁波诺丁汉大学已根据研究道德检查程序对这项研究项目进行检查。这一程序是在学校关于研究行为和研究道德的行为标准的指导下进行的。如果您现在或将来有任何疑问，请联系本人或我的导师。如果您对我在问卷中的研究行为或研究道德有任何质疑，请联系我的导师或者英国诺丁汉大学的道德委员会。

李万里

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导师：Ashley Yoon Mooi Ng (Ashley-Yoon-Mooi.Ng@nottingham.edu.cn)

诺丁汉大学研究道德委员会秘书：Ms Joanna Huang
(Joanna.Huang@nottingham.edu.cn)

Appendix 8: Participant Consent Form

Project title Identity Construction of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities

Researcher's name Wanli Li

Supervisor's name: Dr. Ashley Yoon Mooi Ng, Professor Geoff Hall

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that the interview data collection will be recorded.
- I understand that data will be stored in accordance with data protection laws.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require more information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Sub-Committee of the University of Nottingham, Ningbo if I wish to make a complaint related to my involvement in the research.

Signed …… (participant)

Print name …… **Date** ……

Contact details

Researcher: Wanli Li (Wanli.Li@nottingham.edu.cn)
Supervisor: Ashley Yoon Mooi Ng (Ashley-Yoon-Mooi.Ng@nottingham.edu.cn)
UNNC Research Ethics Sub-Committee Coordinator:

Joanna.Huang@nottingham.edu.cn

参与者同意书

项目标题 Identity Construction of Business English Teachers in Chinese Universities

研究者姓名 **李万里**

导师姓名 Dr. Ashley Yoon Mooi Ng, Professor Geoff Hall

- 本人已阅读声明，项目组织者已经我解释了研究项目的性质和宗旨。本人理解并同意参与。
- 本人理解项目的目的和在项目中的参与作用。
- 本人明白可以在研究项目的任何阶段退出，不会因此影响现在以及将来的状况
- 本人明白研究过程中信息可能会被公开，但本人身份不会被确认，个人的调查结果始终是被保密。
- 本人知道面谈数据采集将会被录音
- 本人了解数据会根据数据保护相关法律进行存储
- 本人知道，如果需要进一步有关研究的信息可以联系研究者或者导师，如果需要对参与研究提出投诉则可以联系宁波诺丁汉大学科研伦理小组委员会。

参与者签名.....

日期.....

联系方式

研究者：李万里 (Wanli.Li@nottingham.edu.cn)
导师：Ashley Yoon Mooi Ng (Ashley-Yoon-Mooi.Ng@nottingham.edu.cn)

诺丁汉大学研究道德委员会秘书：Ms Joanna Huang (Joanna.Huang@nottingham.edu.cn)

Appendix 9: Interview Script with T14

Interview protocol project: Identity construction of Business English teachers
Time of interview: 9:30-10:00 for face-to-face interview, 17:00-17:10 for follow-up questions via phone (transcript in red)
Date: 2021-12-15 for face-to-face interview, 2021-12-17 for follow-up questions via phone
Place: a Cafe near interviewee's home for face-to-face interview, follow-up questions via phone
Interviewer: Wanli Li
Interviewee: University A, T14, Male, 39
Position of interviewee: teacher of Comprehensive Business English and Business English reading

The interviewer briefly introduced the purpose of the research and asked for interviewee's consent of audio recording (The interviewee has signed the consent form when he did the questionnaire). The interviewee was informed about the approximate amount of time for the interview.

Questions and answers:
1.
Q: Do you consider yourself as a Business English teacher, an English teacher or a Business teacher?
A: eh...I am more of an English teacher.

2.
Q: Are you a member of any professional body? If so, what organization do you subscribes to?
A: I think I belong to the group of English discipline.

Q: Academically?
A: Academically, I kind of belong to second language acquisition and second language pedagogy.

3.
Q: In your university, does Business English department or discipline have an equal position as other departments?
A: eh...in our university, Business English is a relatively new department. The establishment of Business English is later than English department. So it is developing slowly for the time being. Considering the enrolled students, English department is larger than Business English department.

Q: How about the teaching staff?
A: Right, the number of teachers in English department is also larger than Business English department.

Q: In teachers' quality, any difference between the two groups of teachers?
A: eh...The Business English teachers, relatively speaking, their years of teaching is shorter than that of English teachers. Their academic positions are lower.

4.
Q: Do you take part in research activities regularly?
A: Yes, there is requirement from our university. We are required to take part in such activities.

Q: What kind of activities do you usually attend?
A: Ah, there are basically two kinds of activities. The one is compulsory that we have to attend, required by university. Usually, they are seminars about pedagogy or some teachers' sharing of their teaching experience. The other kind is some online seminars or conferences, for example, by FLTRP (Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press). For now (during pandemic), they are mainly online. We can choose to attend or not.

Q: So when you have right to choose, what activities would you prefer to attend?
A: eh...I would prefer...will focus on pedagogy, such as POA (Production-oriented approach), etc.

Q: What is the purpose of your focus on pedagogy? Who do you aim to teach? Students from English department or Business English department?
A: Both I should say. Because teaching both majors needs pedagogy skills.

5.
Q: Why did you become a Business English teacher in the first place? Can you tell me how it began for you?
A: Short of Business English teachers (laughs).

Q: Be forced to take the task?
A: Yes.

Q: So when you were told by your leader that they needed you to teach Business English because they could not find any teachers, how did you feel?
A: The first idea is I have to prepare for a new course. How to say...I have worked for several years in business companies, so I have some experience related to business. So I need to check with the textbooks and reference

materials. So I looked for some books and felt I could handle this course, or I was able to teach this course. Then I agreed to take the task of teaching Business English.

Q: So there is no unhappy feeling that you took the task of teaching Business English. Was there any negotiation or compromise when you were assigned with this task?
A: No, I am not unhappy. Because I did not agree at first. I said I needed to make sure whether I could handle this course, whether I could make preparation for this course in a very short notice. When I felt sure about it, I agreed to take the task.

6.
Q: What problems do you encounter when you teach Business English in your class?
A: mm...mainly I teach English majors. Now I teach both majors. I think it is a problem of positioning myself. When I shift my teaching focus, the problem lies in the positioning, that is, should I be language-focused or business knowledge-focused. I was at a loss about the focus at that time. Right. When you look at the textbooks, you will find that there are obvious differences. Some Business English textbooks still focus on language. Other textbooks are more like teaching business in English. So that was what puzzled me at that time. I had no idea what should be my teaching priority.

Q: Now what is your teaching priority?
A: I think probably I will be more business-focused.

Q: Why do you believe Business English should be more business-focused? Is it because it is your advantage that you have business-related experience?
A: Based on my acknowledge, Business English, maybe, emphasizes its practicality. So from perspective of practicality, in business real practices, I think, the requirements for language skills are not very high. So I feel in real practices, the higher requirements should be in business knowledge, processes and standards for them. So that is, I think, in classroom teaching, for Business English students...the biggest difference lies in that they should enhance their business background. More (emphasis) should be on this.

Q: Considering your own knowledge structure or skills, do you regard business as your advantage?
A: eh...I feel, for me, it cannot be called a major advantage. After all, although I did some business jobs, I haven been teaching language afterwards. For me, I do not take it as a very big advantage. You can say that compared with other language teachers, I have some experience.

Q: Since you have more experience than others, do you feel more tendency to develop yourself in this direction?
A: Yes, right.

Q: Do you hope that Business English discipline will develop in the some direction as your advantage so that you can expand your advantageous position?
A: eh...Yes, it is true.

7.
Q: What area do you do research in Business English? What problems do you encounter when you do research?
A: eh...Pedagogy can also be applied in teaching Business English. .....What kind of problem do you mean?

Q: For example, it is difficult for you to get research grants? Or methodology problem? Or cannot get your papers published?
A: But in Business English area, I feel the access to publication, as far as I know, is more difficult than that (of language or language teaching). Business English is still a minority of a small scale. As I told you, the number of our Business English teachers and students, as well as the number of courses, are not very large. So chances are that when I do research, it is rather difficult to produce some results.

Similar things happen when I apply for research grants in the university. For example, formative assessment, it will be easier to apply from the perspective of English, or of teaching itself. I will not emphasize Business English discipline. I take Business English as a part of my research. It will be easier to get grants.

8.
Q: Since you have business-related experience, what problems do you encounter when you try to get yourself trained or updated in Business English practices?
A: I think the biggest problem is there is a gap between what we learn in textbooks and what we do in real business practices. Another problem is that we do arrange business practices or training sessions for students, or internship for senior students. But it will not take a long time. Usually, three or five days for them, a week probably. So the effect is not as you expected, as I feel personally.

What is more, what students are trained is different from what they learn in textbooks. So the puzzle also happens to students as we discover in students' field-training in companies: there is systematic or standard knowledge or skills in textbooks. But in real practices,for example, in some companies we

cooperate with, our students go there for training or internship. They do not always abide by the standards in textbooks. This is sometimes students feel.... What we suggest students is that you abide by the real practices for the final purpose of finding a job. We will not restrict them to the knowledge of textbooks.

Q: Is it important for teachers to have real-experience?
A: Definitely. It is very important. Otherwise, teachers teach off a blackboard. Right? Also, there is a lag time when the textbooks are published. I feel we teach a concept based on textbooks, a framework. For real details, there are differences in real practices, let alone there are so many walks of life in business. So I believe real practices should be the focus.

Q: Do the Business English teachers in your university have field-experience?
A: eh.....Not very much, as far as I know, except for those senior teachers who used to work in business companies. Some of them (senior teachers) took part-time jobs in companies when they taught. Some took a temporary position in companies. These teachers do have real practices experience, but other teachers, that is the majority of Business English teachers who are young and novice, they teach from the pure pedagogic perspective. They do not have much real practices.

9.
Q: What do you wish the university can do to help you more in your work?
A: To be frank, in teaching, considering the level of our university, it (what the university did for us) is ok for our students. I think it is more important for teachers to take part in business practices. Such practices may include updating relative theories, especially in Business. Because the majority of our Business English teaching staff come from the previous pure language teachers. They are relatively lack of business theoretical knowledge.

Q: So do you mean the university should try to provide the teachers with opportunities to real practices?
A: Right. One is the opportunities to practices. The other is the updating of disciplinary knowledge.

Q: Did you get any help from university in this part? Did your university provide such opportunities?
A: eh...not many. Many times students go for training, and the teacher goes with them, for only a couple of days. It rarely happens that the training is for teachers only. None, I should say.

10.
Q: Is the teaching workload too heavy for you?

A: mm...moderate in my university.

Q: Does the workload affects your academic research activities?
A: No, I do not think so.

Q: Then what will influence your research?
A: eh.....research...I think...eh...One is my research ability, plus, eh...how to say... your motivation. Right. You do research for the purpose of upgrading your academic position, or for the purpose of professional development. If it is not very urgent for you to get higher position or a big leap in your professional development, the motivation will not be very strong.

Q: So academic position is not the most important for you.
A: Right.

Q: Do you mean teaching is more important?
A: Life is more important.

11.
Q: As we talked about the university, now for yourself, any personal or environmental problems that affect your teaching Business English?
A: problem.....(thinking)

Q: problem to hinder, or things that help your teaching... For example, as you mentioned, your previous working experience in companies helps you a lot with field knowledge.
A: I prefer not calling it a hindrance. I did have business experience, but I became a teacher many years ago. I no longer come into contact with real practices. So now if I start to teach Business English, I believe I should keep learning...and try to learn...because business is a large category. The development of many walks, their detailed operation process... Such stuff needs to be learned out of classroom. There may be, I assume, some difficulty because you do not belong to a particular company. If you want to learn something, not many people would like to teach you. The access will be very limited.

Q: So do you mean you need to use your own personal relationship to get access to it?
A: Yes, right, right.

Q: Did the university provide you with such opportunity?
A: Very rarely.

Q: How about economic environment? The city you live, the economic

situation?
A: I do not think it will be big influence. After all, we teach. We do not do business. It is enough, I think, if there are relevant information or chances for us to learn.

Q: So as you talked, you think it is important to keep learning, to keep pace with the development of business.
A: Yes, right.

Q: For you, if you need to keep this status, you need to make use of your own social relationship.
A: Yes, right.

Q: Does similar situation happens to your research? What is your biggest problem, since you said your do not have a very high motive?
A: Yes, not very high motivation firstly. Secondly, I feel, in Business English, mm...how to say...Maybe I have the experience of teaching English. Now I start to teach Business English. Its research foci, I do not pay close attention to many of them. I feel there are relatively fewer points in Business English for me to research, compared with linguistics, translation, literature of English discipline.

Q: So when you noticed the problem in research, who did you ask for help? Did you ever ask for help from anyone?
A: For now, for Business English research, none. If I do research, I prefer easier areas because it is easy for me to set about a research task. I will not choose to do a Business English project deliberately. We are foreign language teachers. It is ok as long as our research is about foreign language. Business English is part of ESP. I do not find many points to research on, so I will not purposefully start a Business English project.

Q: what do you mean by saying there are not many points?
A: Personally, in this area, I do not feel many research directions. So I would prefer other directions and areas.

Q: Is there any possibility that you are not aware of the “points”?
A: Yes, very likely.

Q: Then did the university give any...?
A: That is true. Systematic knowledge, how many research directions, I am not clear. In English discipline, it is very clear that there are several research areas and directions. In Business English, there must be some similarities. For example, teaching. It takes time for me to get to know. Now I understand, Business English teaching, Business English translation can be areas that we

can research on. But I relatively know fewer research points about other areas .

Q: Do you mean this discipline is too new for researchers to research? Not many scholars in this area?
A: I believe there must be scholars. I just do not spend time in getting relevant information.

12.
Q: Where do you see yourself in five years? Will you be closer to Business English?
A: Yes, I believe I will be “more Business English”, considering the background of our university. It is a business-focused university. It must pay more attention to Business English development. But as I said, this discipline has a short history and the teachers are mainly young. It needs a process of development, for the whole group.

Q: With such an idea of being more Business English, how do you want to develop as a better Business English teacher?
A: mm...I believe I would...mm...On the one hand, I need to pay more attention to business information. On the other, I will probably try to take more tasks of teaching Business English courses. Because usually when you need to teach a Business English course, it gives you motives to learn more. If you do not need to teach Business English, it is you interest that keeps you reading Business English information, from mobile phone, for example. Things are different when you have to teach it. You prepare for the lessons, and you will be more attentive in learning.

Q: So can I say teaching comes before researching for you?
A: Yes, right, I think so. For me, it is.

Q: Then what about supervising students’ dissertation? Is it part of teaching or researching?
A: It belongs more to researching, I believe.

Q: Do you supervise Business English or English majors?
A: This year I supervise several Business English majors. Before that, I supervised English majors.

13.
Q: Do you agree with the evaluating system in your university?
A: mm...it’s ok generally. It is comprised of teaching, researching, supervising students in various competitions.

Q: Do you believe you are fairly paid with the current workload?
A: (thinking)...Same difference.

Q: If you come across difficulties, do you ask your leaders for help? In what way can (not) he/she help?
A: It depends on what difficulties. If it is about teaching, for example, the arrangement of curriculum, I will go for them. If I take a task of teaching a new course, he (my leader) may help me to contact some senior teachers. The experienced teacher who has taught this course can give me suggestions and materials.

For other problem...mm...there are not very big problems for me.

Q: Is it possible for you to raise questions or challenges? Either to this evaluation system or to the assignment of workload.
A: The system should be relatively fixed. It will not change depending on individual's request. As for the arrangement of curriculum, or who teaches what courses, it is negotiable.

Q: Do you mean you can play a role in decision making?
A: mm...If it is related to me, I can play a part sometimes.

14.
Q: Is there anything else that you think important or special in your teaching Business English? Either to you or to your university?
A: mm...I think for Business English students, they are somewhat confused, about their future job. In real cases, many English graduates do business-related jobs. Business English graduates also go in for language education. Even some Business English graduates do dissertations on language teaching. That makes low relevance to their major. So how to say...the difference between Business English and English, in our university, is not big as we imagine.

Q: Who do you think should take the responsibility to solve or explain this puzzle? Teachers, university, or from higher level, such as policy makers?
A: eh...I think it is mostly the university's job. Because there must be a guide for every discipline, a general outline, or national standards. But when it comes to application in a particular university, its orientation, including students' dissertation, students' internship...will change something.

Q: So that particular leader, the decision maker is important, who can exert influence on orientation of the discipline development in your university, with his thoughts, his vision.
A: Yes, definitely.

Q: For this issue, what is the situation in your university? I mean that particular person...is he/she keeping up with Business English development?
A: mm...how to say, it depends on the vice deputy who are in charge of teaching activities. It depends on his/her education background. For example, if he is business-related, he will put more emphasis on it. In my university in Faculty of Foreign Languages, on that position is a linguistic-related leader. He does not teach Business English courses in person. So it seems he is not...say...from the perspective of management, he himself is not sure about what should be taught in Business English, how to teach Business English and what is the direction of Business English development.

Q: It seems that ordinary teachers learn more than he does.
A: Yes, he does not know much about this part.

Q: Is it about capability or willingness?
A: I do not question his ability. It should be the problem of lack in energy.

Q: So if the leader knows less than ordinary Business English teachers, what is the result? Can you show me an example?
A: (thinking) It is very hard to say results. But when we design the standards of BA training programs, curricula, etc, he will depend more on the opinions of Business English Dean or Business English teachers. It happens very often, but it is very hard to say results. It seems there is no serious consequences, up to now.

Q: How about in resources distribution? As you said before, when you apply for research grants, it is easier for you to be more linguistic-focused or pedagogical focused.
A: Ah, in this case, we have small research communities in every faculty. Teachers are in groups. For example, our vice deputy, in charge of teaching activities, he is the leader of his community, mainly on linguistics.

Q: Right, so that community...
A: Yes, stronger than other communities.

Q: Then in school-enterprise cooperation, we know Business English discipline puts more emphasis on school-enterprise cooperation, is the vice deputy relatively weak in this area?
A: Right, yes. In this school-enterprise cooperation, he is ...is....I think he rarely participates in such cooperation.

Q: Em...does it influence Business English discipline?
A: eh...I think there are influences. Maybe the focus (of faculty development) is

different.

Q: Do you mean there needs someone who can guide young Business English teachers, and there is none in your university?
A: Mm...for now, right, basically, overall, our Business English teachers are relatively young. So there are no leading person. Some experienced teachers are external teachers. They basically teach courses. They do not care about Business English disciplinary construction of the faculty. Right?

Q: So the job of external teachers is teaching?
A: Yes, teaching.

Q: Teaching the courses related to business?
A: Right, right, business courses. But they do not participate discipline construction in our faculty, including school-enterprise cooperation.

Q: Not involved in discipline construction, or school-enterprise cooperation.
A: Right, only teaching.

Q: Not participate in your academic community?
A: Right, that is true.

Q: Do they supervise students' dissertation?
A: eh, no.

Q: What kind of teachers do you think should the university enroll for the betterment of Business English?
A: eh...How to say, the management team, in charge of teaching activities. There should be relevant disciplinary background and knowledge in the team. I think, relatively, if he is both equipped with language skills and business knowledge, relatively speaking, it is more beneficial to the development of a discipline and the curriculum development. Right. But now, the situation in our university, is, maybe, relatively weak.

Q: Thank you very much for sharing your teaching life with me. I will keep it confidential of all your responses. If anything reminds you of any new idea, please do not hesitate to tell me. I really appreciate it.

Appendix 10: Interview Script with T23

Interview protocol project: Identity construction of BE teachers
Time of interview: 9:30-10:30 for face-to-face interview
Date: 2022-01-05 for face-to-face interview
Place: a Cafe near interviewee's home for face-to-face interview
Interviewer: Wanli Li
Interviewee: University B, T23, Female, 43
Position of interviewee: teacher of E-commerce and Writing

The interviewer briefly introduced the purpose of the research and asked for interviewee's consent of audio recording (The interviewee has signed the consent form when he did the questionnaire). The interviewee was informed about the approximate amount of time for the interview.

Questions and answers:

Q: Do you consider yourself as a BE teacher, an English teacher or a Business teacher?
A: I think I am a BE teacher. Or, I should say I try to be a BE teacher.

Q: What do you mean by saying "try to be"?
A: em...I mean I try to be a qualified BE teacher, that is, a teacher who can combine Business and English in teaching, to reach balance.

Q: Is it difficult for you to reach such balance? In what way?
A: ah...yes, quite difficult. It depends on what course I teach. For basic courses, for example, Basic English Writing for Year-1 students, it is very difficult to combine business concepts or knowledge with language. For advanced courses, such as E-commerce for Year-4 students, it is the other way. It is not easy to combine language with business concepts.

Q: So is it a problem of teaching priority?
A: Sort of. Most times it is about teaching objectives. In writing classes, the aim is to write a decent piece of writing. So the emphasis is on grammar, structure, topic sentences and supporting sentences, coherence and cohesion, etc. There is no need to add business-related knowledge before the students can handle basic writing skills. It is too early for business concepts.

But other times, it is constrained by something else. In the E-commerce class, the objective of this course is to understand and grasp E-commerce marketing skills. There come the problems. For one thing, the most advanced area of E-commerce is China. That means there are very limited teaching materials available in English. Secondly, E-commerce develops so fast that rules and

cases pop up every month, even every week. Even if there are textbooks in English, usually written by Chinese businessmen or E-commerce teachers, the moment the textbooks are finished, not even printed or published, they are out of date. So the materials I use for teaching are mostly in Chinese. There are some English news and reports, but they are very superficial. When we do group discussion in class, the cases and examples students find are also in Chinese. This situation makes us, me and the students, a very bad habit, or makes us lazy, I should say. We teach and learn in Chinese context. We think in Chinese, I mean, we do analysis and marketing plans in Chinese, subconsciously, and finally produce an English version by translating Chinese into English.

Q: So it is because you are short of teaching materials?
A: It is something about teaching materials. But it is also about myself. I get information in Chinese, pass it on in Chinese, mostly, and finally the students produce knowledge in Chinese. I do it partly because of the shortage of teaching materials, partly because I feel it is convenient and energy-saving to explain business concepts in Chinese. I don't want to trouble the trouble if I can get my students learn the knowledge. When they produce a Chinese version, then we work on an English one. I know it is not appropriate. That is why I say at the beginning that I try to be a qualified BE teacher because I know I am not doing good enough.

2.
Q: Since you say you are aware that you are not doing good enough, what do you think are your obstacles?
A: em...in teaching, I think it is the new courses. It is different to teach BE courses, especially the business part. I myself do not do business, neither do I major in business. It takes me a lot of time and energy to prepare for the lessons. And because the course I teach, I mean, E-commerce, it is very special, as I told you. I must keep adding new information. It seems every year I teach a new course, which makes me crazy sometimes. It's totally different from teaching writing or grammar. It is not "once and forever". It is always new. I have to keep learning, otherwise I dare not go into the classroom.

Q: The pressure of keeping learning, is it a big problem for you? or it stimulates you in a positive way?
A: ah...yes. It is painful, but at the same time, it is rewarding.

Q: Rewarding? In which way?
A: It gives me a feeling of obtaining new knowledge, updating myself. There is inertia when you teach English language points for ten or twenty years. Being familiar with the grammar and linguistic skills, and nothing is new in my teaching life, except for the new students. But although the students are new

every year, essentially, they are much similar. Now things change. I know I learn something new. I expand my knowledge range. That's Point 1. For Point 2, there is possibility that I see language be applied in real practices in classroom. When students produce a marketing plan, they feel a sense of achievement. So do I. It's like...language is alive...and of some use in real life.

Q: Does this feeling of achievement help overcome the challenges in your teaching BE?
A: Yes, definitely. I believe this is the major reason why I want to be a BE teacher.
3.
Q: Since you mentioned the reason why you want to be a BE teacher? Can you tell me how you became a BE teacher in the first place? How it began for you?
A: ah...(laughs) that is a very interesting story. I did not start as a BE teacher. Instead, I started as dean of BE Department. I was told by my leader that he needed someone to be the dean of a new department, and he thought I was the right person.

Q: How did you feel? How come it was you?
A: ah yes, this is the first idea that pops up in my mind: How come it's me? I did ask him this question. I listed my questions: First, I never taught BE courses before. You know, usually a university needs to prepare for many years before they apply for a new degree program. So that means there are several teachers who have been teaching BE courses for the past several years. And I was not one of them. Second, I have no experience in business, neither do I have experience in administration. So I was totally new in this area. I thought he must mistook me for someone else (laughs). (pause) I believe he had his criterion, balancing or something, maybe. Then it took a second for me to make the decision. I think deep in my heart, I am tired of teaching English.

Q: So do you mean you took it as an opportunity to change your career away from an English teacher?
A: em...kind of. I know I, kind of, will end up a very ordinary English teacher, achieving very little in my career, partly because I do not find very strong enjoyment in teaching College English, partly because I know I am not an academic guy. When teaching BE, I feel better. I feel what I teach is useful. It is close to real life, and I myself also learn in teaching.

4.
Q: Now are you a member of any professional body? What organization do you subscribes to?
A: I belong to the BE department.

Q: Academically?
A: Academically, mm...there is no clear classification of academic groups in my university. There are one or two groups in which teachers share similar researching interests. But I do not belong to them. They are linguistics or translation. I used to be a member of education, but the group leader retired, so....

5.
Q: In your university, does BE department or discipline have an equal position as other departments?
A: eh... It depends on who is the leader of the faculty. I have experienced three sessions of leaders since I became a BE teacher. BE is a new department and it takes time to develop a new discipline. That's why I say the orientation of the faculty leaders is very important, including their horizon, their understanding of policies, and their management ability.

Q: Can you give an example?
A: Ok. The teachers in our department are faced with more challenges than those in other departments. They have to teach new courses, and they are relatively weak in academic research. And because everything was new at the beginning, opinions differ. So in such condition, the support from the leaders is very important.

Q: How about the teaching staff?
A: Right, the number of teachers in English department is also larger than BE department.

Q: In teachers' quality, any difference between the two groups of teachers?
A: eh...The BE teachers, relatively speaking, their years of teaching is shorter than that of English teachers. Their academic positions are lower.

Q: Do you take part in research activities regularly?
A: Yes, there is requirement from our university. We are required to take part in such activities.

Q: What kind of activities do you usually attend?
A: Ah, there are basically two kinds of activities. The one is compulsory that we have to attend, required by university. Usually, they are seminars about pedagogy or some teachers' sharing of their teaching experience. The other kind is some online seminars or conferences, for example, by FLTRP (Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press). For now (during pandemic), they are mainly online. We can choose to attend or not.

Q: So when you have right to choose, what activities would you prefer to attend?
A: eh...I would prefer...will focus on pedagogy, such as POA (Production-oriented approach), etc.

Q: What is the purpose of your focus on pedagogy? Who do you aim to teach? Students from English department or BE department?
A: Both I should say. Because teaching both majors needs pedagogy skills.

Q: What problems do you encounter when you teach BE in your class?
A: mm...mainly I teach English majors. Now I teach both majors. I think it is a problem of positioning myself. When I shift my teaching focus, the problem lies in the positioning, that is, should I be language-focused or business knowledge-focused. I was at a loss about the focus at that time. Right. When you look at the textbooks, you will find that there are obvious differences. Some BE textbooks still focus on language. Other textbooks are more like teaching business in English. So that was what puzzled me at that time. I had no idea what should be my teaching priority.

Q: Now what is your teaching priority?
A: I think probably I will be more business-focused.

Q: Why do you believe BE should be more business-focused? Is it because it is your advantage that you have business-related experience?
A: Based on my acknowledge, BE, maybe, emphasizes its practicality. So from perspective of practicality, in business real practices, I think, the requirements for language skills are not very high. So I feel in real practices, the higher requirements should be in business knowledge, processes and standards for them. So that is, I think, in classroom teaching, for BE students...the biggest difference lies in that they should enhance their business background. More (emphasis) should be on this.

Q: Considering your own knowledge structure or skills, do you regard business as your advantage?
A: eh...I feel, for me, it cannot be called a major advantage. After all, although I did some business jobs, I haven been teaching language afterwards. For me, I do not take it as a very big advantage. You can say that compared with other language teachers, I have some experience.

Q: Since you have more experience than others, do you feel more tendency to develop yourself in this direction?

A: Yes, right.

Q: Do you hope that BE discipline will develop in the some direction as your advantage so that you can expand your advantageous position?
A: eh...Yes, it is true.

Q: What area do you do research in BE? What problems do you encounter when you do research?
A: eh...Pedagogy can also be applied in teaching BE. .....What kind of problem do you mean?

Q: For example, it is difficult for you to get research grants? Or methodology problem? Or cannot get your papers published?
A: But in BE area, I feel the access to publication, as far as I know, is more difficult than that (of language or language teaching). BE is still a minority of a small scale. As I told you, the number of our BE teachers and students, as well as the number of courses, are not very large. So chances are that when I do research, it is rather difficult to produce some results.

Similar things happen when I apply for research grants in the university. For example, formative assessment, it will be easier to apply from the perspective of English, or of teaching itself. I will not emphasize BE discipline. I take BE as a part of my research. It will be easier to get grants.

Q: Since you have business-related experience, what problems do you encounter when you try to get yourself trained or updated in BE practices?
A: I think the biggest problem is there is a gap between what we learn in textbooks and what we do in real business practices. Another problem is that we do arrange business practices or training sessions for students, or internship for senior students. But it will not take a long time. Usually, three or five days for them, a week probably. So the effect is not as you expected, as I feel personally.

What is more, what students are trained is different from what they learn in textbooks. So the puzzle also happens to students as we discover in students' field-training in companies: there is systematic or standard knowledge or skills in textbooks. But in real practices,for example, in some companies we cooperate with, our students go there for training or internship. They do not always abide by the standards in textbooks. This is sometimes students feel.... What we suggest students is that you abide by the real practices for the final purpose of finding a job. We will not restrict them to the knowledge of textbooks.

Q: Is it important for teachers to have real-experience?
A: Definitely. It is very important. Otherwise, teachers teach off a blackboard. Right? Also, there is a lag time when the textbooks are published. I feel we teach a concept based on textbooks, a framework. For real details, there are differences in real practices, let alone there are so many walks of life in business. So I believe real practices should be the focus.

Q: Do the BE teachers in your university have field-experience?
A: eh.....Not very much, as far as I know, except for those senior teachers who used to work in business companies. Some of them (senior teachers) took part-time jobs in companies when they taught. Some took a temporary position in companies. These teachers do have real practices experience, but other teachers, that is the majority of BE teachers who are young and novice, they teach from the pure pedagogic perspective. They do not have much real practices.

Q: What do you wish the university can do to help you more in your work?
A: To be frank, in teaching, considering the level of our university, it (what the university did for us) is ok for our students. I think it is more important for teachers to take part in business practices. Such practices may include updating relative theories, especially in Business. Because the majority of our BE teaching staff come from the previous pure language teachers. They are relatively lack of business theoretical knowledge.

Q: So do you mean the university should try to provide the teachers with opportunities to real practices?
A: Right. One is the opportunities to practices. The other is the updating of disciplinary knowledge.

Q: Did you get any help from university in this part? Did your university provide such opportunities?
A: eh...not many. Many times students go for training, and the teacher goes with them, for only a couple of days. It rarely happens that the training is for teachers only. None, I should say.

Q: Is the teaching workload too heavy for you?
A: mm...moderate in my university.

Q: Does the workload affects your academic research activities?
A: No, I do not think so.

Q: Then what will influence your research?
A: eh.....research...I think...eh...One is my research ability, plus, eh...how to say... your motivation. Right. You do research for the purpose of upgrading your academic position, or for the purpose of professional development. If it is not very urgent for you to get higher position or a big leap in your professional development, the motivation will not be very strong.

Q: So academic position is not the most important for you.
A: Right.

Q: Do you mean teaching is more important?
A: Life is more important.

Q: As we talked about the university, now for yourself, any personal or environmental problems that affect your teaching BE?
A: problem.....(thinking)

Q: problem to hinder, or things that help your teaching... For example, as you mentioned, your previous working experience in companies helps you a lot with field knowledge.
A: I prefer not calling it a hindrance. I did have business experience, but I became a teacher many years ago. I no longer come into contact with real practices. So now if I start to teach BE, I believe I should keep learning...and try to learn...because business is a large category. The development of many walks, their detailed operation process... Such stuff needs to be learned out of classroom. There may be, I assume, some difficulty because you do not belong to a particular company. If you want to learn something, not many people would like to teach you. The access will be very limited.

Q: So do you mean you need to use your own personal relationship to get access to it?
A: Yes, right, right.

Q: Did the university provide you with such opportunity?
A: Very rarely.

Q: How about economic environment? The city you live, the economic situation?
A: I do not think it will be big influence. After all, we teach. We do not do business. It is enough, I think, if there are relevant information or chances for us to learn.

Q: So as you talked, you think it is important to keep learning, to keep pace

with the development of business.
A: Yes, right.

Q: For you, if you need to keep this status, you need to make use of your own social relationship.
A: Yes, right.

Q: Does similar situation happens to your research? What is your biggest problem, since you said your do not have a very high motive?
A: Yes, not very high motivation firstly. Secondly, I feel, in BE, mm...how to say...Maybe I have the experience of teaching English. Now I start to teach BE. Its research foci, I do not pay close attention to many of them. I feel there are relatively fewer points in BE for me to research, compared with linguistics, translation, literature of English discipline.

Q: So when you noticed the problem in research, who did you ask for help? Did you ever ask for help from anyone?
A: For now, for BE research, none. If I do research, I prefer easier areas because it is easy for me to set about a research task. I will not choose to do a BE project deliberately. We are foreign language teachers. It is ok as long as our research is about foreign language. BE is part of ESP. I do not find many points to research on, so I will not purposefully start a BE project.

Q: what do you mean by saying there are not many points?
A: Personally, in this area, I do not feel many research directions. So I would prefer other directions and areas.

Q: Is there any possibility that you are not aware of the “points”?
A: Yes, very likely.

Q: Then did the university give any...?
A: That is true. Systematic knowledge, how many research directions, I am not clear. In English discipline, it is very clear that there are several research areas and directions. In BE, there must be some similarities. For example, teaching. It takes time for me to get to know. Now I understand, BE teaching, BE translation can be areas that we can research on. But I relatively know fewer research points about other areas .

Q: Do you mean this discipline is too new for researchers to research? Not many scholars in this area?
A: I believe there must be scholars. I just do not spend time in getting relevant information.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years? Will you be closer to BE?
A: Yes, I believe I will be “more BE”, considering the background of our university. It is a business-focused university. It must pay more attention to BE development. But as I said, this discipline has a short history and the teachers are mainly young. It needs a process of development, for the whole group.

Q: With such an idea of being more BE, how do you want to develop as a better BE teacher?
A: mm...I believe I would...mm...On the one hand, I need to pay more attention to business information. On the other, I will probably try to take more tasks of teaching BE courses. Because usually when you need to teach a BE course, it gives you motives to learn more. If you do not need to teach BE, it is you interest that keeps you reading BE information, from mobile phone, for example. Things are different when you have to teach it. You prepare for the lessons, and you will be more attentive in learning.

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A: This year I supervise several BE majors. Before that, I supervised English majors.

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Q: Do you believe you are fairly paid with the current workload?
A: (thinking)...Same difference.

Q: If you come across difficulties, do you ask your leaders for help? In what way can (not) he/she help?
A: It depends on what difficulties. If it is about teaching, for example, the arrangement of curriculum, I will go for them. If I take a task of teaching a new course, he (my leader) may help me to contact some senior teachers. The experienced teacher who has taught this course can give me suggestions and materials.

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A: The system should be relatively fixed. It will not change depending on individual's request. As for the arrangement of curriculum, or who teaches what courses, it is negotiable.

Q: Do you mean you can play a role in decision making?
A: mm...If it is related to me, I can play a part sometimes.

Q: Is there anything else that you think important or special in your teaching BE? Either to you or to your university?
A: mm...I think for BE students, they are somewhat confused, about their future job. In real cases, many English graduates do business-related jobs. BE graduates also go in for language education. Even some BE graduates do dissertations on language teaching. That makes low relevance to their major. So how to say...the difference between BE and English, in our university, is not big as we imagine.

Q: Who do you think should take the responsibility to solve or explain this puzzle? Teachers, university, or from higher level, such as policy makers?
A: eh...I think it is mostly the university's job. Because there must be a guide for every discipline, a general outline, or national standards. But when it comes to application in a particular university, its orientation, including students' dissertation, students' internship...will change something.

Q: So that particular leader, the decision maker is important, who can exert influence on orientation of the discipline development in your university, with his thoughts, his vision.
A: Yes, definitely.

Q: For this issue, what is the situation in your university? I mean that particular person...is he/she keeping up with BE development?
A: mm...how to say, it depends on the vice deputy who are in charge of teaching activities. It depends on his/her education background. For example, if he is business-related, he will put more emphasis on it. In my university in Faculty of Foreign Languages, on that position is a linguistic-related leader. He does not teach BE courses in person. So it seems he is not...say...from the perspective of management, he himself is not sure about what should be taught in BE, how to teach BE and what is the direction of BE development.

Q: It seems that ordinary teachers learn more than he does.
A: Yes, he does not know much about this part.

Q: Is it about capability or willingness?
A: I do not question his ability. It should be the problem of lack in energy.

Q: So if the leader knows less than ordinary BE teachers, what is the result? Can you show me an example?
A: (thinking) It is very hard to say results. But when we design the standards of BA training programs, curricula, etc, he will depend more on the opinions of BE Dean or BE teachers. It happens very often, but it is very hard to say results. It seems there is no serious consequences, up to now.

Q: How about in resources distribution? As you said before, when you apply for research grants, it is easier for you to be more linguistic-focused or pedagogical focused.
A: Ah, in this case, we have small research communities in every faculty. Teachers are in groups. For example, our vice deputy, in charge of teaching activities, he is the leader of his community, mainly on linguistics.

Q: Right, so that community...
A: Yes, stronger than other communities.

Q: Then in school-enterprise cooperation, we know BE discipline puts more emphasis on school-enterprise cooperation, is the vice deputy relatively weak in this area?
A: Right, yes. In this school-enterprise cooperation, he is ...is....I think he rarely participates in such cooperation.

Q: Em...does it influence BE discipline?
A: eh...I think there are influences. Maybe the focus (of faculty development) is different.

Q: Do you mean there needs someone who can guide young BE teachers, and there is none in your university?
A: Mm...for now, right, basically, overall, our BE teachers are relatively young. So there are no leading person. Some experienced teachers are external teachers. They basically teach courses. They do not care about BE disciplinary construction of the faculty. Right?

Q: So the job of external teachers is teaching?
A: Yes, teaching.

Q: Teaching the courses related to business?
A: Right, right, business courses. But they do not participate discipline construction in our faculty, including school-enterprise cooperation.

Q: Not involved in discipline construction, or school-enterprise cooperation.
A: Right, only teaching.

Q: Not participate in your academic community?
A: Right, that is true.

Q: Do they supervise students' dissertation?
A: eh, no.

Q: What kind of teachers do you think should the university enroll for the betterment of BE?
A: eh...How to say, the management team, in charge of teaching activities. There should be relevant disciplinary background and knowledge in the team. I think, relatively, if he is both equipped with language skills and business knowledge, relatively speaking, it is more beneficial to the development of a discipline and the curriculum development. Right. But now, the situation in our university, is, maybe, relatively weak.

Q: Thank you very much for sharing your teaching life with me. I will keep it confidential of all your responses. If anything reminds you of any new idea, please do not hesitate to tell me. I really appreciate it.