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Facing the Mirror: Dilemmas and Issues Encountered on A TESOL Programme in An International University Environment

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Abstract: This paper investigates the experiences of three Chinese postgraduate students studying on an MA TESOL and Applied Linguistics course in a British university context. It demonstrates how subtle discourses of 'ownership' of English (Holliday, 2014; Pennycook, 1994, 2001; Kumaravadevelu, 2003) persist in such training contexts, despite the general shift towards internationalizing higher education environments in the UK. The paper will discuss how the participants negotiated the teaching practice components of the course, and the issues they faced through being 'non-native' speakers of English. It further examines the impact this had on their professional development and self-perceptions of 'legitimacy' as teachers of English. The different constructs of a TESOL teacher are discussed and the need for a heightened awareness of training needs for teachers across diverse contexts.

Keywords: teacher identity, teacher training, L2 English speaker teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

The internationalisation of higher education is defined as 'the growing border-crossing activities between national systems of higher education' (Teichler, 2004:5). Increased overseas recruitment by British universities has expanded international student numbers, with a notable proportion of these being from China and India (UKCISA, 2012/13). This desire to study in English speaking countries reflects the growing status of English as an international language or Lingua Franca (Jenkins, 2012) and the associated spread of English as a global communication tool. For instance, Ross (1992, cited in Hu, 2002) explains how Chinese students view English as a key towards social and economic progress, and Pennycook (1994) discusses how success in academia increasingly requires the ability to write and present competently in English. Consequently, courses in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) are in demand from international as well as home students aspiring to become TESOL practitioners. English language teaching (ELT) has therefore become a field of specialization and professionalism (Richards, 2008:160), but with a code of membership largely governed by Western practice and belief. Hence, Western knowledge dominates 'other' knowledge, and infiltrates the profession through materials, teaching methods and teacher education (Kumaravadivelu, 2006:20). Thus, TESOL teacher education in British university environments, tends to be tailored towards a particular teacher model, and does not necessarily accommodate the diverse contexts of TESOL, nor the needs of the associated teachers and learners.

2. BACKGROUND

This study investigates the experiences of three Chinese students on an MA TESOL and Applied Linguistics course, on two specific modules, the 'Teaching Practicum' and 'The analysis of language and practice for the TESOL classroom' both of which integrate the syllabus of the Trinity Cert TESOL.
These modules aim to:
'Review and extend theoretical and practical knowledge in relation to second language teaching and learning' and 'build basic teaching skills', together illustrating how 'language awareness, theory and practice interrelate' [*extracts from module information*].

The MA TESOL and Applied Linguistics is delivered to both home and international students, the latter requiring an IELTS score of 7 (or equivalent) to enrol on the course. In 2013-2014, there were a number of applicants who had not had prior teaching experience.

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In order to ensure that graduates have knowledge of theory and practice, these applicants had to study on the 2 modules linked to teaching practice, with the option of taking the Trinity Cert TESOL at the end of semester 2. During teaching practice, the students work as a small team to provide 'free' English classes to multi-lingual groups of university students and adult members of the community, who attend on a voluntary basis. The students teach on average 6 hours (this is the required minimum for the Trinity Certificate), and are otherwise 'observers' of their peers' lessons. The 3 participants in this study had studied English at university in China, but had not had teaching experience, and hence were required to complete the above modules. The participants were all female, in their twenties and from different parts of China.

The study investigates the engagement of the participants with the above modules by examining how the construct of a TESOL teacher, as defined through a Western perspective conflicts with that of a TESOL teacher in a Chinese context. It also explores how underlying discourses of Western TESOL impact on L2 users of English and their performance as a TESOL teacher.

The questions posed were:

1. **Which specific pedagogical and developmental needs of these teachers are not currently being met?**

2. **How does the experience of the MA TESOL teaching practicum related modules impact on the professional development of trainee teachers with English as an L2?**

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

TESOL teacher education was traditionally based on a 'process-product' approach of general education through which teachers were given input on popular theories and methods, generally considered appropriate for any teaching context (Freeman and Johnson, 1998). Drawing on theories of applied linguistics, these programmes followed a demonstration and delivery pattern (Richards, 2008), which reduced teaching to a set of discrete behaviours and routines rather than something live, dynamic and context specific. It thus placed TESOL teacher education within a positivist paradigm through which evolved a teaching practicum incorporating, as described by Richards and Edge (1998), a 'best practice' of teaching methods, approaches and techniques, but which failed to recognise the subjectivity of educational contexts and their participants.

However, there has recently been increased recognition of the significance of social context in teacher education, hence an acknowledgement of learning being locally situated in social and professional environments (Johnson, 2006). Johnson describes teachers as both users and creators of knowledge, who respond to social and cultural influences, which therefore influence the pedagogical decisions they make (ibid). 'Prior experiences, personal values and beliefs' of trainees should be considered key components of training programmes (Freeman and Johnson, 1998: 401), so that, as Faez and Valeo (2012: 452) propose, how teachers 'draw on what they know' is valued 'as opposed to just what they are taught'.

The proportion of teachers with English as their L2 has grown considerably (Graddol, 1997) and despite their populations being 'immense' (Hayes 2009: 2), their skills are frequently deemed inferior to those of L1 English teachers. As Hayes points out in his study in Thailand, those teachers who were not 'native' in terms of English, were 'native in terms of their situational teaching competence' which he argues to be a valuable part of their professional competence. This construct of native v non-native, or 'native speaker fallacy' as described by Phillipson (1992), creates a hierarchy used to diminish the strengths and innovations of L2 English speaker teachers. Moreover, as Watson Todd and Pojanapunya (2009:24) state, even pre-service teacher training books may assume the 'native speaker model' as the ideal target for trainees.

There has been considerable research into this construct of native and non-native, in which Medyges (1999) shows how each distinct group has its own strengths and challenges. Medyges also argues that L2 English teachers are good learner models, as learning the language themselves equips them with deeper language awareness. However, this language knowledge may not be valued by learners, as shown by Ma (2012: 282) who notes in a study in Hong Kong, that although L1 English speakers may rely on 'native intuition' to decide what is grammatically correct, learners consider their proficiency to be greater.

In an investigation of prejudice against L2 speaker teachers, Watson Todd and Pojanapunya (2009) find a complexity of implicit and explicit attitudes, and conclude that 'a change in social attitude over time would make explicit statements of preference for white NESTs or even any NESTs become socially unacceptable' (2009:31). Pavlenko (2003) shows how this native v non- native dichotomy can be resisted in teacher education programmes through the use of narratives such as multi-competent, bilingual and multilingual, which promote professional identities as legitimate L2 users of English.

The growth of English as an international language has, according to Richards (2008), influenced the knowledge base of teacher education, and elevated

English language teaching to a 'field of educational specialization' and promoted the 'professionalism' of the field. This has increased the demand for higher- level TESOL qualifications, as teachers invest in MA TESOL programmes to gain greater status and recognition. While many TESOL programmes now offer a blend of seminars, observations and teaching practice, the degree to which they match the reality students face in the 'real' world is open to question. Tarone and Allwright (2005) argue there is a clear 'gap' between the two, and suggest teacher learning situations should be in accordance with the target teaching situations, Similarly, Faez and Valeo (2012) emphasise the need for a clearer integration of the teaching practicum with theory, in order to aid the adjustment to 'real' teaching situations, and Murray (2009) calls for more flexibility in teacher education and a move towards creating situation specific rather than generic programmes. Indeed, Ramananthan (2005:122) describes west- based TESOL as remaining 'remarkably insular', and it has been criticised for being a vessel for Western practice and belief (Holliday 2007). As discussed by Kumaravedivelu (2003), the ELT industry has greatly enhanced the prosperity of English speaking countries largely through strategies of control. He refers to the 'colonial concept of method' (2003: 541), as a 'construct of marginality', which disregards local practice and beliefs in order to promote Western knowledge. This marketing of a colonial construct of 'method', he argues, cannot fulfil the needs of all teachers and contexts. As 'pedagogy like politics is local' (Kumaravedivelu, 2001: 539), a 'particularity' which recognises 'context specific pedagogic knowledge' is required.

This evidently emphasises the need for 'transformative practitioners', (Morgan 2009) who are able to work reflexively with theory and practice in accordance to local requirements. Praxis has been defined as 'that continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire and action' (Simon, 1992:49, cited in Pennycook, 1997), which involves a reflective construction or reconstruction of a social environment. Praxis does not 'dichotomise theory and practice' but considers them to be interdependent (Pennycook, 1999:342). Therefore, by bringing elements of praxis into course design, the needs of teachers and learners in a particular social context can be more effectively addressed.

There have been some studies conducted on international student experiences on MA TESOL programmes, mainly based in the US. In an attempt to raise awareness of L2 English speaking teachers, Brut-Griffler and Samimy (1999) used a seminar based on 'critical praxis' to address issues of marginalization, and discuss how participants found empowerment through realising their own agency in forming 'new relationships with their contexts' (p429). Golombek and Rehn Jordan (2005) focus on pronunciation and accent, and show how the concept of 'native like intelligibility' causes two L2 English speaking students to question their legitimacy as teachers. Through their research, it is suggested that by privileging multi-competences rather than native intelligibility, more equitable practices may be promoted (2005:530).

Accumulative social and educational experiences evidently shape teachers' beliefs and hence their identities. If identity is understood as complex and dynamic (Norton 1997), it is subject to change through the social and cultural influences individuals encounter. Identity, therefore, shifts according to personal experience and social and cultural influence, and may be 'constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed' particularly in early years of teaching (Day et al., 2006: 608). Recognising the influx of East Asian students onto MA TESOL programmes in the US, Park (2012) uses a life-history narrative to analyse the multiple-identity construction of a Chinese student during her negotiation of a 'western' based syllabus. Park emphasises the importance of utilising the diverse personal histories of students to 'conceptualize curriculum' and thus lay foundations for training programmes to better serve the needs of participants.

Situated in a British university context, this study builds on previous research by investigating the experiences of three L2 English speakers on an MA TESOL programme. It questions the transferability of the methods, approaches and techniques of a 'British' teaching model to their home contexts, and through their experiences exposes marginalisation of the participants through ideologies of 'Western TESOL' and how these impact on their professional identity and performance.

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Critical studies of TESOL examine social and political relations within a particular context through investigating social constructs and analysing how these are 'linked to questions of power and inequality' (Pennycook, 1999:331). Therefore, it is necessary to examine both the micro relations within a particular learning context with the macro relations of society (Pennycook, 2001a: 5). In this study, I aim to relate classroom experiences to the wider context of Western TESOL as well as considering the 'home' contexts of the participants, drawing on critical social theories as well as poststructuralist theories of subjectivity and performativity.

Sociocultural theory defines learning as a dynamic social activity related to specific social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 2003). Learning is influenced by historical, cultural and social activity, and regulated

through language use in each context (Johnson, 2006). While acknowledging the value of sociocultural theories in education, Lewis and Moje (2003) argue that these do not place adequate emphasis on the political nature of 'institutional, historical and cultural contexts that influence relationships, language and meaning', and, therefore, do not connect the aforementioned macro and micro processes.

Critical social theories, however, address issues of inequality and power while still acknowledging the importance of participation and context to human cognition (Johnson, 2006:238). Social practice involves the construction of identities through which individuals represent their actions and positions (Fairclough, 2010:172). Language plays a central role in this construction, through alternative discourses, which position people and assert power within a social group. Thus, a postulate of critical theory is that by problematizing 'the given' (Dean 1994, cited in Pennycook, 1999), it is possible to question assumptions and norms and examine the various constructs behind them (Pennycook 1999:343). Critical discourse analysis does this by linking linguistic and discursive practices with broader structures of socio-political power (Kress, 1990: 85) Texts are produced under influences of power as the result of actions of 'socially situated speakers and writers' (Kress, 1990: 86). Critical discourse analysis therefore supports the deconstruction of institutional texts [such as curriculum], to open up 'foundational assumptions for scrutiny' (Grierson, 2003:2).

Each learning context is subjective according to its participants and internal and external influences. Subjectivity is the conscious and unconscious thoughts and beliefs, which link the individual to a social situation (Weedon, 1997:3), and which places language as a common factor between the individual and social organisation, meanings and power (Weedon, 1997:21). Language is central to the formation of subjectivity, and rather than being a 'mirror of society', linguistic descriptions are 'not just about the world, but serve to construct it' (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994: 94). In education, language is influential through the discourses under-pinning curriculum, methodology and materials, and 'from a critical perspective, language in course design is, for instance, used to construct discourses on course rationale, create reading lists, indicate teaching methodology and promote certain beliefs of success' (ibid, 1994:94). These beliefs in turn impose a 'preferred' professional identity of an ideal teacher, who 'performs' through a repetition of stylized acts, ignoring any notion of 'prior' identity (Butler, 1990). Subjectivity, thus, implies a multiple and dynamic self, changing through social encounters and positioned by relations of power. The individual can be in a position of power in one context, but may shift to reduced power in another (Norton and Toohey, 2011:417), hence, pedagogical practices and beliefs are influential in how positioning is negotiated and contested.

The voice of the individual is conceptualised as 'the individual's struggle to create and fashion meaning, assert standpoints and negotiate with others.' (Brizman,1991:12, cited in Sharkey, 2004). Through listening to the voices of three Chinese L2 English speakers, this study examines their experiences on a Western TESOL course, and the impact of the discourses it promotes.

5. METHODOLOGY

As the study required listening to the participants as well as observing them, and analysing the underlying principles of these TESOL modules, elements of critical ethnography was drawn on.

Ethnography allows for a holistic view of a situation, yet there are issues of gaining an emic understanding, while maintaining the required degree of observer detachment. Critical ethnography, however, aims to 'find hidden agendas, challenge oppressive assumptions, describe power relations' (O'Reilly, 2009:1) within a particular context, and places importance on the 'histories' and on-going effects of 'differential privilege and social conflict' (Toohey, 1995: 578). Moving from a view of 'what is out there to know' (O'Reilly, 2009:3) critical ethnography requires flexibility in order to uncover rather than predict and pre-determine, hence data collection tools were chosen to facilitate this. In addition, course documentation (module information packs/ Trinity syllabus), was analysed alongside other data to link content to 'wider socio-political structures of power and domination' (Kress, 1990:85).

5.1 DATA COLLECTION

The study was initiated by my own observations of three Chinese students in bi- weekly seminars, and my increasing awareness of a 'gap' between the content and their likely teaching contexts in China. During the initial group meeting with the participants, we talked about their backgrounds in order to better understand their personal connections with TESOL, their learning histories and home contexts. This acknowledgement of past and present recognises 'history' as an integral component of individual subjectivities, and the meeting also confirmed the willingness of the participants to voice their opinions, and established understandings of confidentiality. Confidentiality forms were explained and signed and, subsequently, the identity of the participants protected through the use of pseudonyms (which they chose: Qiqi, Didi and Man), and all data safeguarded by careful

storage and by ensuring only the researcher had access to the files.

As discussed by Pennycook (1999: 345), being 'critical' implies a need for scepticism about knowledge and what it portrays, and also being critical of oneself and one's practices. This reflexivity acts as a constant reminder of the power of researcher positioning, assumptions and beliefs, and awareness of this power should be extended into the analysis and representation of data (Mann, 2011). As Brizman (2000:11) argues, subjects may be the tellers of experience, but experience is shaped through prior and evolving discourses and cannot be seen as a fixed representation of truth.

Various techniques were used to collect data and converge perspectives (Cresswell, 2009: 191). The main body of data was collected through semi-structured interviews (over 5 weeks), and this was supported by asking the participants to keep a 'diary' over the same period. Finally, I made brief observation notes over 10 weeks, from February to mid-April.

5.1.1 Semi- structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were arranged with the participants via email. The first one was carried out in a group (at their request), and the subsequent ones with one individual and a pair (as this suited their schedules). Questions to guide the discussions were emailed to the participants beforehand, which generated 'thinking time', and avoided putting the participants 'on the spot' to answer spontaneously. The formulation of these 'lead off' questions (Carspecken, 1996: 156) required the participants to reflect on and reformulate their experiences. Further questions followed during the interview, as appropriate, embedding flexibility into the process; different follow up questions were asked to different participants, respecting their individual agency in response. However, as interviews are co-constructed by interviewer and participants (Mann, 2011], being the teacher as well as a researcher meant that my position of 'power', although not intentionally manipulated was undoubtedly present

Each interview was transcribed, which enabled me to engage more deeply with the data, and facilitated a 'generative approach' to formulating further questions (O'Connor, 2008: 120). The transcriptions were coded using NVivo10 (Beta for MAC version). However, while NVivo was a useful organisational tool for the large amount of qualitative data, I frequently referred back to the transcripts to keep the data interpretation close to context.

The enthusiasm of the participants resulted in a rich array of data, but coding 'themes' were restricted in accordance with the research questions:

1. ***Which specific pedagogical and developmental needs of these teachers are not currently being met?***

- Different teaching methods/ approaches used in Chinese and UK contexts
- Expectations of teachers and students in Chinese contexts
- Language support needed for L2 English speaker teachers

2. ***How does the experience of the MA TESOL teaching practicum related modules impact on the professional development of trainee teachers with English as an L2?***

- Identity construction of an 'ideal' TESOL teacher in different (Chinese and UK) contexts
- Implications of being a native or non-native speaker teacher
- Impact of (own) language use on professional development

Finally, there was sometimes overlap between the themes, so some extracts were coded under two themes.

5.1.2 Use of diaries

The participants were given notebooks and encouraged to keep a 'diary record' of their experiences over 5 weeks. As Kramsch and Lam (1999, cited in Brutt-Giffler and Saminy, 1999) argue, the 'written self' participates in the construction of an L2 identity, so diaries provided space for them to write about issues not addressed in the interviews, or which they did not wish to express orally. Furthermore, diary studies create a reflection on emerging teacher perceptions of their roles and identities (Bailey, 1990), and 'a documented account' of their experience (Numrech, 1996: 132). The diary entries were transcribed, as written, and analysed with NVivo using the same themes as the interview transcripts.

5.1.3 Observation notes

Brief observation notes, mainly from seminars and teaching practice, were kept over a 10 week period. These were analysed by highlighting relevant sections relating to key issues from the main data (i.e. that generated by the participants), and aided my interpretation of, and reflection on, points raised.

5.1.4 Course documentation

The module information packs and the syllabus for the Trinity Cert TESOL were drawn on to exemplify the aims of the module, and also referred to in response to some issues raised by the participants (e.g. native-speaker model of a TESOL teacher). This helped, for instance, to identify sources of 'Western TESOL' beliefs underpinning the modules.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section I examine key issues raised by the participants, reflecting their experiences on a TESOL course informed by Western practices and beliefs. It examines how these beliefs and practices aim to construct a TESOL practitioner, whose performance promotes them, and how this construction creates conflict for trainee teachers whose beliefs and prior experiences originate in quite different contexts. In addition, I will discuss the presence of a polarity which positions L1 users of English apart from L2 users, and therefore impacts on the professional development, practice and identity of the participants. The section has been divided according to the research questions and themes of each.

6.1 Which specific pedagogical and developmental needs of these teachers are not currently being met?

6.1.1 Different teaching methods/ approaches used in Chinese and UK contexts

The interviews generated much discussion, which emphasised the differences between two diverse TESOL contexts. However, it is important to note that there was also much enthusiasm about the course overall. In particular, the participants valued the coordination between theory and practice, as it was noted that in China there appears a conflict between '*high level theory'* being followed by '*traditional or original ways'* in practice, hence a '*separation*' between the two (Qiqi). These 'traditional ways' (e.g. reference to grammar translation [Man]) are probably favoured in accordance with the Chinese system, for instance, to accommodate time constraints of the syllabus and larger (mono-lingual) groups (Li and Baldauf, 2011).

Studying in a British university evidently required an adjustment to a multi-lingual environment, not only as students in seminars, but also as trainees in teaching practice, with learners of different backgrounds. Qiqi explained the differences between the two environments as:

' 'Quite a different environment, in a real middle school, not in this kind of experimental one'.

This change to a Western TESOL environment was understandably demanding:

' it is also a challenge for us Chinese students, to try to, you know, try to teach English in English Speaking Countries' (Didi).

'You give me a lot of advice for the lessons, I think it's good because I never taught nor had such kind of lesson in China, so I have no experience.' (Man).

Teaching practice incorporates varied 'contemporary' TESOL methods and approaches, either introduced through seminars (often by loop input), or demonstrated through teaching observations. This exposure aims to encourage trainees to be eclectic and to make decisions according to learner needs. While this encourages flexibility, it proved problematic for the participants when they considered transferring these practices to a Chinese context:

'*It is so different with Chinese teaching lessons. I think we've learned from the class, when we've observed out classmates teaching…yeah, but I don't know if it's helpful for us to teach in China, because the environment is so different'. (Man)*

This teaching practice typically incorporates a 'phonocentric communicative approach' (Pennycook, 1994), which values oral expression and requires the teacher to use methods and techniques to maximise learner participation and interaction in English:

' So, but here I find, I find the methods quite effective, to use the British way to teach students really because you get the student really engaged in the activities.' (Didi)

Therefore, the *ideal* teacher engages learners, (as Didi notes) through implementing 'communicative' techniques and promoting an 'English only' environment. This often means, for instance, having students seated in a horseshoe arrangement, incorporating group and pair work, and choosing materials and tasks to maximise oral participation. However, as Holliday (1995,1997) argues this 'communicative' approach is actually packaged into a 'prescriptive set of techniques' (1997:417), to construct an ideal learning environment, which is in turn controlled by an underlying ideology of how a teacher and learner should perform in class. Issues arise when these techniques are transferred to contexts such as China:

'We've got maybe over 40 students, and the teacher cannot make every activities go smoothly for every student, so it's really strange I have to say, even for me. If I will be a teacher in the future I want to adopt some good things from, like PPP, TTT [lesson frameworks] for my students, but I have to consider, you know the classroom size, and in my university there was never horse shoe in the classroom and students might get strange, like 'Why do we have to do this? We didn't like it' and even I ask them, I force them to make the

horseshoe, they might not enjoy the class and so it's really a challenge for us. If you want to change something, you have to think about all the factors…' (Didi).

This exemplifies how the teacher performance constructed is not easily transferable to learning situations in which both learners and teachers draw on quite different beliefs and practices

6.1.2 Expectations of teachers and students in Chinese contexts

While the potential of the methods and techniques discussed in the previous section were acknowledged by the participants, there was also a strong uncertainty of how to apply them in a firmly established system, without creating rifts with future colleagues:
'When I go back to China, I want to use the methodology, of like the British way, but maybe when I go back I use the same way with Chinese teachers, because if you use another way to teach the students, maybe other teachers will have some ideas about you….'[Man]

As the beliefs of the Chinese educational system and society construct a very different ideal of a teacher, trying to transfer other representations and perform as a 'Western' TESOL teacher could become a threat to the existing system:
'Why do you do this?....'Why do this to your students, we never do this, why you try'…So in China we have to respect the other teachers and if we want to challenge their way they might think 'Oh my God, what's wrong with you?...Are you crazy or something? You didn't teach the students anything' [Didi].

In countries such as China, 'such traditional power hierarchies are not easily disrupted' (Hawkins and Norton, 2009: 8), and the participants' awareness of this resulted in a sense of insecurity about their performance as teachers. This feeling was further intensified when considering the Chinese students who 'have been socialised' into a particular system of educational ideologies (Hawkins and Norton, 2009:8):
'I want to use the methodology of the British way, but maybe when I go back I use the same way with Chinese teachers, because if you use another way to teach the students, maybe other teachers will have some ideas about you, and also the students maybe cannot adjust to your teaching (Man).

Despite this, Man believes they were expected by their parents to transform pedagogy in China:
'My parents sent us here to study and we need to learn some like *advanced technical methods in the UK and we bring it to China……maybe we are the bridge between, but China is not the same so many times, maybe I'll spend like my whole life to do this even without any change…'*. [Man].

These concerns illustrate how the participants need to not only expand knowledge and develop skills, but more importantly to find ways of identifying useful change while using their '*local*' knowledge and understandings to develop an appropriate pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). In other words, not replacing 'traditional' with 'advanced' but productively blending the two, and acknowledging that 'advanced' might not be the most beneficial for learners. This was demonstrated during teaching practice, when Man noted how Chinese learners responded more positively than their peers to an intensive reading task, because they could link some aspect of this to their previous learning experiences:
'*…that is the way they are taught in China….and they can understand what's going on*.' (Man).

Hence, knowledge of local pedagogy is a valuable tool, and when combined with 'new' knowledge and skills, it may enable these teachers to develop an innovative pedagogy that still retains familiar elements to reassure their learners and colleagues. In doing so, the potential to engage and motivate students in their home contexts and contribute to local provision of ELT is significant.

6.1.3 Language support needed for L2 English speaker teachers

As language was affecting the participants' fulfilment of their desired role as a TESOL teacher, we discussed the language awareness and analysis component of the syllabus. It appeared that there was a lack of input targeting their needs as L2 speaker teachers. The sessions, it seemed, focused more on areas of grammar rules and lexis they already knew (but home students did not), and less on helping them become more confident and proficient in their professional discourse:
'*And a way of expressing the instructions…I mean we had that class, but it's so little…and we still didn't know how to express clearly to the students…..also how to encourage, how to praise'* (Qiqi)
'I know it in Chinese, I can explain the rules… but I cannot say this is 'present perfect' ..I only know it in Chinese.' (Man)

Problems with classroom language affect most trainee teachers, but the relatively short time spent in the UK, and their previous experiences of mono-lingual contexts meant the participants had had limited exposure to classroom discourse in English:
..'when they [teachers] are in difficulty they will explain in L1, so they don't have this problem….the teacher in China would be more confident than me now because they never care about the language problems.' (Qiqi).

This concern over language use, therefore, over-shadowed other resources that are important in becoming a proficient teacher. These resources include being bilingual teachers, who have learned English, and constructed their own version of how English works and how one can learn it. Moreover, their 'situational competence' (Hayes, 2009) implies that their knowledge of Chinese learners and language is valuable in transferring their knowledge of 'learning English' to the classroom. Furthermore, the syllabus (Trinity) refers to teaching practice with mono-lingual as well as multi-lingual groups, and it is feasible to provide opportunities for both, particularly in this case as there is a substantial body of Chinese students on campus. This would facilitate some assessment of teaching in a more relevant and authentic mono-lingual context, and allow a greater focus on methods and techniques among a more representational group of learners. Through this, the foundations of developing a more 'appropriate pedagogy', as discussed by Kumaravadivelu (2001), could be laid.

6.2 How does the experience of the MA TESOL teaching practicum related modules impact on the professional development of trainee teachers with English as an L2?

6.2.1 Identity construction of an 'ideal' TESOL teacher in different (Chinese and UK) contexts.

As the participants engaged with this different TESOL context, a new layer of professional identity was emerging to assimilate the changing images of themselves as TESOL teachers. Although this new identity was being traced over their historical beliefs, these remained as a separate layer. While shifting to encompass new discourses into their teaching performance, the difficulty of consolidating these, and thus merging the layers created a state of flux between the two:

'I will change, but I can't like change totally to the British way, I cannot'. (Man)

Performativity describes how we perform repeated social and cultural acts of identity constructing 'regulatory norms' through which coherence is desired, wished for, idealized (Butler, 1990:173). This 'reiteration of a norm or set of norms' (Butler, 1993:12) shows how Western TESOL constructs a particular model of an ideal teacher as a 'regulatory norm' or repeated ideal act. However, as shown above, a more complex identity is formed and re-shaped as new experiences are absorbed, but do not erase prior experience. Therefore, conflicting experiences interfere with the continuity of identity formation and destabilize this to create identities that are performed as alternative subject positions (Weedon, 2004:18).

This instability is explained by Brizman (2000:21) as the contradictory meanings behind the word 'teacher', the varied discourses and practices it represents, and how these connect subjects, histories and pedagogies. Thus, the Western ideal of a TESOL teacher the course adopts, conflicts with the alternative beliefs and experiences of these Chinese participants, creating dilemmas in how to perform as TESOL practitioners.

6.2.2 Implications of being a native or non-native speaker teacher

The data also revealed how a discourse of marginalisation impacted on the participants' self-image as teachers. As Pennycook (1998) discusses, discourses of marginalisation and colonialism are embedded into the world of ELT, and examples of these emerged in the study as a polarity of 'native self and non-native other'. The participants voiced their insecurities as L2 speakers of English, particularly their 'legitimacy' as TESOL teachers:

'I'm a second language learner…it's not good enough to be a teacher, to teach here, to teach English…..my God, it's a burden.' (Man)

The 'burden' was furthered by their self- comparison with home students, whom they considered more competent through their L1 English speaker status:

'Yeah, because I know we're not like native students, they're good enough to be a teacher and their language is OK not like us' ..[Man]

This discourse of 'standard language and native speaker-ness' (Pavlenko, 2003) infiltrates ELT by creating 'ideals and images' of the native user, as being the better model as a teacher, and thus being a cause of struggle for those trying to attain some degree of 'native-speaker-ness'. However, placed in the context of a cosmopolitan university environment, with a richness of ethnic origin, this native- speaker-ness was actually blurred, as demonstrated when Man tried to explained her understanding of 'native' and 'non- native':

'..She (a peer) told me her first language is Hindi, but I said: 'No, your first language is definitely English because you use it all the time…' (Man)

Therefore, even though some peers were of mixed ethnic origin, they were considered to have more legitimacy as TESOL teachers through their closer positioning to a 'native' model. Indeed, in the syllabus, it is stated that participants should provide a 'model' of language to their learners, which the participants interpreted as being an L1 English speaker. Consequently, their 'L2 speaker-ness' was considered a disadvantage:

'I am worried much about the speaking because I have to speak in perfect and standard English in a native country…..' (Qiqi)

When asked to explain what 'Standard English' meant, Qiqi explained:

'*So possibly, the person who is born here, brought up here, and err, speaking this language all the time, and not as standard as Queen's English but close to BBC'…[laughs]*

Qiqi also connected native-ness to intelligibility:

'*If I cannot understand them quite well, I will recognise them as non-native speakers.' [Qiqi]*

Here, a clear distinction is created, similar to the imagined communities described by Pavlenko (2003), with the superior 'natives' against the 'non-natives'. Non-natives form a less desirable group through their accents, which seem less intelligible as they are further from a 'standard' norm. This polarity of 'either – or', 'native- non-native', ensures a restricted membership to the elite 'native' group, therefore maintaining power over which accent models are taught and by whom.

6.2.3 Impact of (own) language use on professional development

The participants' insecurity about their intelligibility as Chinese speakers of English meant that they positioned themselves as less desirable than their L1 English speaking peers:

'..we cannot speak native English like correctly, and sometimes we make mistakes and the students they are all sitting around and they learn something wrong from us' [Qiqi]

Jordan and Golombek (2005: 517) refer to Bourdieu's *symbolic domination* to exemplify the power of accent and how '…beliefs and attitudes about accent work(s) as a gatekeeper' for membership to a prestigious group. This illustrates how these teachers felt inferior through underlying, and even unintentional discourses of accent and language superiority.

The participants also voiced issues with the focus on connected speech in language awareness seminars. The syllabus requires input on the use of 'native-like' connected speech, but while familiar with phonetic script, the participants could not identify the use of connected speech in 'standard English'. As Qiqi explained, connected speech does not exist in Chinese:

'*Chinese students speak every word' [in English] (Qiqi)*

Considering this, decoding '*natural native speech'*, as outlined in the syllabus, seems unfair to L2 speakers of English, who have not previously been aware of these features and have not assimilated them into their own speech. This focus on 'natural native speech' seems to further the notion of 'native' superiority, and caused the participants to question their 'credibility' as users and teachers of English.

Being an L2 English speaker teacher also impacted on the participants' teaching experiences. They expressed concerns over interacting with learners due to 'unfamiliar' learner accents, and considered understanding their learners to be *'their problem'* and would pretend to understand rather than ask for repetition:

'if I ask them to repeat will they think I don't understand them enough, will they feel frustrated?' [Qiqi].

This was perhaps because the participants felt that the learners judged their legitimacy as teachers of English:

''Oh I don't like this person …she is another international student' ..I had that kind of feeling that they expect more like native speakers rather than like Chinese teachers.' (Qiqi)

'I ask them to errm if you got any questions, you can ask me…and I'll be there to help you, but they checked before just I mean privately ' (Didi).

Whether this was due to sensitivity when facing the classes is not clear, but it could indicate a belief of 'ownership' of English, which has infiltrated through the diverse learning experiences of the students. This implies a preference of being taught by 'native speakers' who 'own', and, therefore, are the 'best' teachers of the language.

It was apparent that the participants also experienced considerable stress before teaching; stress originating not only from the teaching process, but also from their L2 speaker-ness.

'I just go through the lesson, you know what language will be used in my lesson. I just faced the mirror to talk.' [Man]

'I tried to rehearse the whole process, and I also wrote down some instructions and it took me another like two hours.' [Qiqi]

Because of this fear of making mistakes, they apologised profusely in lessons for any error or slip made, (e.g. on slides, in pronunciation), despite it being pointed out by a home student that: '*everyone makes these mistakes, so apologise- but not so much*' (observation notes). This not only further emphasises their need for language support (as discussed on p17), but also the impact of being positioned as a 'non-native' speaker teacher on their professional development.

7. SUMMARY

By giving the participants a voice, this study revealed how a polarity of native and non-native speaker-ness emerged through a Western TESOL discourse, which does not fully accommodate the realities of the rest of the TESOL world (Ramanathan, 2005:120). The divide was further illustrated (possibly unintentionally) in teaching practice by L1 English speaking peers, who

used expressions such as '…well a native speaker would say', and ' As a native speaker, I would say X…'. This 'othering' fails to acknowledge the linguistic and local knowledge of L2 teachers of English. Indeed, as highlighted in previous research, instead of bemoaning a lack of 'native-speakerness', L2 English speaker teachers should be empowered to utilise their skills as learners of English and as bilinguals.

The participants have also exposed issues that I must address as a TESOL teacher trainer. These certainly include providing more language support and discussions on language use from an L2 speaker perspective, subject to individual needs and backgrounds. In addition, it also involves recognising diverse experiences and contexts, and using these more sensitively to inform content and support different approaches to pedagogy. Equally importantly, I have a greater awareness of the 'hidden' discourses of Western TESOL, and how, as Holliday (2007) suggests, 'professional discourse hides ideology by projecting technical superiority through constructing its beliefs as neutral'.

This brings me to a final, perhaps ironic, quote from Qiqi's diary:

'*Sometimes, I do have a feeling that some native speakers didn't give lessons as well as I imagined what they should be. Actually, it might just be a way of building up my confidence rather than a comparison between native speakers and L2. Anyway, how can we expect that L2 speakers can give better lessons than L1s?*

8. LIMITATIONS

This study is based on the experiences of a small group of participants at a particular stage of education, and is therefore subject to context. It was conducted over a relatively short period of 3 months, which restricted data collection and exploration. Extending this would enable other views to be explored (e.g. L1 peers and teaching practice students), which would further develop an understanding of the issues raised. Finally, due to the timescale, it was not possible to make any direct modifications to the TESOL modules discussed. Such modifications could be investigated in future research.

9. CONCLUSION

The differing constructs of a TESOL teacher, according to British and Chinese ideals, created instability in the professional identity of the participants, and dilemmas regarding the transferability of knowledge and practice to their local contexts. Moreover, the presence of a Western TESOL ideology prevented their pedagogical needs of adapting techniques and methods to mono-lingual, often large classes, from being adequately addressed. Indeed, drawing on their knowledge of local contexts, and experiences as Chinese learners of English, would lay foundations of an appropriate pedagogy, which would better enable them to become 'the bridge' that Man describes. Furthermore, through their comments and subsequent reference to course documentation, a discourse of marginalisation was revealed, pervading from ideology under-pinning TESOL. This marginalisation impacted both on their professional development and their developmental needs. Being positioned as 'non-native' speakers, caused them to question their legitimacy as teachers of English and placed language as a barrier to their development as practitioners. The presence of accent ideology permeated through their interactions with peers and students, and through the underlying discourse of the models of TESOL promoted on the course. As a teacher trainer, this has alerted me to the persistence of these discourses in teacher training programmes, and the need to replace them in order to empower L2 English speaker participants, and recognise the diversity of TESOL contexts.

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