

Teacher Identity as Pedagogy: Towards a Field-Internal Conceptualisation in Bilingual and Second Language Education

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This article explores the transformative potential of a teacher's identity in the context of bilingual and second language education (SLE) programmes. The first section examines several theoretical options by which this potential might be conceptualised. Drawing on post-structural notions of discourse, subjectivity and performativity, the author emphasises the contingent and relational processes through which teachers and students come to understand themselves and negotiate their varying roles in language classrooms. Simon's (1995) notion of an 'image-text' further develops this dynamic, co-constructed understanding and shifts it more specifically towards pedagogical applications: the strategic performance of a teacher's identity in ways that counteract stereotypes held by a particular group of students.

These post-structural ideas on teachers' identities are then evaluated in reference to the knowledge base of bilingual and SLE. The author then proposes a 'field-internal' conceptualisation by which such theories might be rooted in the types of practices characteristic of language education programmes. The next section of the article describes the author's personal efforts to realise these concepts in practice. 'Gong Li – Brian's Imaginary Lover' is a story of how the author's identity became a classroom resource, a text to be performed in ways that challenged group assumptions around culture, gender, and family roles in a community, adult ESL programme serving mostly Chinese seniors in Toronto.

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Introduction

As noted by Varghese (2001), teacher identity in bilingual and second language education has only recently emerged as a subtopic within the field of language teacher education. Several key issues, to date, have defined a growing research agenda in this area. One of importance, given the complex status of World English (e.g. Brutt-Griffler, 2002), has been the colonial legacy of a 'native speaker fallacy' (see Canagarajah, 1999; McKay, 2002; Phillipson, 1992), a vague cluster of linguistic and pragmatic norms by which the bilingual and intercultural skills of Non-Native Speaker (NNS) teachers have been marginalised (see e.g. Braine, 1999; Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Kramsch, 1998; Lin *et al.*, 2002; Liu, 1999).

A second line of inquiry looks closely at the concept of identity itself, not as a fixed and coherent set of traits, but as something complex, often contradictory, and subject to change across time and place. Inspired, in large part, by Norton's (2000) feminist poststructural investigation of *subjectivity*,¹ a number of researchers have examined how a teacher's experiences of identity – gender,

race, class, culture, or sexual orientation, as examples – both shape and are shaped by the processes of instruction and interaction that evolve within specific sites of bilingual and second/foreign language education (see e.g. Amin, 1999; Duff & Uchida, 1997; James, 2002; Johnston, 1999; Varghese, 2001, in press). Both a professional and a personal identity, in this perspective, co-develop as instantiations of discourses, systems of *power/knowledge* (cf. Foucault, 1980, 1982; Pennycook, 1994) that regulate and ascribe social values to all forms of human activity – oral and written texts, gestures, images, and spaces – within particular institutions, academic disciplines, and larger social formations.

An expanded understanding of discourse is important here in that it sets certain parameters regarding the declarative and procedural knowledge to be conveyed in language teacher education programmes. In poststructural theory, discourses *constitute* rather than *determine* a teacher's identity, the latter concept inferring a (neo)Marxist notion of 'false consciousness', in which teachers are relatively passive vis-à-vis the reproduction of dominant class interests through schooling. 'Constitution', on the other hand, is intentionally distanced from a humanist, modernist perspective – a fully autonomous, self-aware subject, who is able to freely choose which aspects of his or her identity are of pedagogical value or to know in advance how his or her identity matches up with a particular group of students (see e.g. Belsley, 1980; Butler, 1992; Norton, 2000; Pennycook, 2001; Weedon, 1987).

Poststructural theory seeks to articulate a metaphorical space 'in between'. Acts of conformity are never identical to the subject positions offered in discourse. Cross-cutting experiences (i.e. other discourses and other subject positions) create dissonance between role expectations and actual 'performance' (cf. Butler, 1990; Nelson, 1999).² Simply put, in class I may act *like* a teacher – or *like* a white, male teacher – seeking approval from a particular group of students and fulfilling my professional 'responsibilities'. But by repeatedly *doing*, rather than just being, I become more aware of the degree to which it is an act or 'im-personation' (Gallop, 1995), a *text* of myself that I have, in part, unknowingly scripted. With each performance and the responses it engenders from students, I become aware of *other* ways to re-script myself; that is, I gain insights into ways of subverting or transforming the 'rules' (e.g. educational practices) to which I have been 'subjected'. In this perspective, conformity to discourse is a precondition for agency or resistance.

Simon's (1995) notion of an 'image-text' serves as an example. In graduate programmes, Simon (1995) has observed the tendency of students to 'produce a series of overdetermined and affect-laden *image-texts*' (1995: 98) of faculty, which 'become important resources for identification and the focus of student desires within the intimate pedagogy of doctoral education' (1995: 99). Within this setting, Simon *performs* (cf. Butler, 1990) his own identity – 'to teach as a Jew' – in ways that resist the institutional discourses that position Jewish scholars in the academy. Simon's agency, however, has broader intentions. By challenging the stereotypes students may have of Jewish academics, Simon seeks to undermine the tendency of both students and colleagues to essentialise 'others' in demeaning and sometimes oppressive categories (see e.g. Kubota, 1999).

A key point to draw from Simon is that a teacher's identity, his or her image-text, is a pedagogical resource for bilingual and second language education. An image-text, however, is unlike other teaching resources in that its outward appearance and application cannot be formalised in a pre-determined way. Moreover, an image-text is co-created, its authorship belonging to both teacher and students. Thus, an image-text must be discovered contingently and relationally if it is to be utilised. Although I have focused primarily on describing teacher identity in this section, student identity formation is an inseparable dimension of this process. In a later section, 'teacher identity as pedagogy', I will offer a more concrete, narrative-based perspective on how this performative model was realised within a particular setting, a community-based ESL programme located in downtown Toronto's Chinatown.

As we theorise teacher identity, however, it would be misleading to attribute innovation entirely to concepts loosely defined as postmodern or post-structural. Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on situated learning and cognition,³ and Vygotskian-based sociocultural theories (Lantolf, 2000), for example, offer complementary perspectives on the participatory aspects of learning and the continuous (re)organisation of self and collective understanding that takes place within bilingual and ESL/EFL classrooms.

In sum, teachers' identities, following these conceptual frames, are always implicated in the types of social futures imagined and produced through schooling. But the abstract perspectives of these frames, or their fine-tuned differences, potentially leave both teachers and teacher educators in a kind of theoretical vertigo. A research agenda on teacher identity in bilingual and second language education would need to explore the degree to which theories from other disciplines can be 'imported', as Freeman (2000) cautions, and the types of local 'translations' they require if they are to inform pedagogical concerns – in other words, a *field-internal*⁴ conceptualisation. A field-internal perspective recognises the need to expand the knowledge base and interdisciplinary scope of our profession – but in an *intra-disciplinary* way, grounded in familiar contexts of language research and practice.

Still, as we work through and compare concepts or experiences from the field, it is important to remember that poststructural theory is particularly vigorous and insightful in this respect. Any theory, whether about identity or pedagogy or their conflation, cannot be viewed in isolation, not as a timeless 'thing-in-itself'. Poststructuralism urges us to look, simultaneously, at the human activity that takes place *around* a theory, and at the conflicts that have preceded it and are now concealed – 'subjugated knowledges', according to Foucault (1980), 'those blocks of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematising theory' (1980: 82). Butler (1992) extends similar criteria to theorists, through whom power/knowledge operates at an often-imperceptible level:

The subject who theorises is constituted as a 'theorising subject' by a set of exclusionary and selective procedures. ... My position is mine to the extent that 'I' – and I do not shirk from the pronoun – replay and resignify the theoretical positions that have constituted me, working the

possibilities of their convergence, and trying to take account of the possibilities that they systematically exclude. (Butler, 1992: 8–9)

A field-internal approach to teacher identity, if we make use of Foucault and Butler, requires us to look inward as we look outward in our attempts to expand or reinvigorate the knowledge base of bilingual and second language teacher education. It entails a watchful, critical reflexivity in our responses to a theory's insights and 'exclusions' as they emerge in local sites of practice (see e.g. Auerbach, 2000; Benesch, 2001; Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Morgan, 2002; Pennycook, 2001). And following Foucault, it requires that we investigate local forms of language learning 'subjugated' by the rules governing theory formation in our profession.

Of equal importance, such field-internal activities hold out the potential of bilingual and second language professionals becoming *contributors* rather than just *borrowers* in the formation of identity theories across the social sciences. In many ways, we underestimate the relative uniqueness of our field of expertise – the metacognitive and experiential diversity of our students and classrooms, and the specific types of language activities and language awareness through which this 'diversity' is understood. More will be said around these ideas in the sections to follow.

Defining a Course of Action: Cummins' Framework

As to the various conceptual frames above, the complex, inter-causal features of discourse, language and identity have been richly theorised, whereas concrete pedagogical recommendations for bilingual and second language education have been less forthcoming (see, however, Baker, 1996; Freeman, 1998; Kumaravadivelu, 2001; Nieto, 1996; Valdés, 1996; Wong, 2000). The work of Cummins is particularly important in that it is perhaps the most detailed elaboration of how identity negotiation and language learning co-relate through pedagogy. It is to his framework that I now turn.

In *Negotiating Identities: Education for Empowerment in a Diverse Society* (2001), and *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire* (2000), Cummins passionately and persuasively establishes a central role for teacher identity in bilingual and second language education. In Cummins' framework, cognitive development and academic achievement are inseparable from teacher-student identity negotiation (see e.g. a framework for academic language learning; 2001, Ch. 5). Choices in methodologies (e.g. collaborative critical inquiry *vs.* teacher-centred transmission), or the structure of bilingual programmes (e.g. two-way bilingual programmes that promote *additive* bilingualism *vs.* compensatory/transitional programmes, 2001, pp. 164–168), highlight particular identity options for students, which in turn have lifelong *social* consequences: 'An image of the society that students will graduate into and the kinds of contributions they can make to that society is embedded implicitly in the interactions between educators and students' (2001: 18).

Teaching, learning, and identity negotiation are thus ultimately caught up with power relations. Cummins sketches out a view of classrooms as semi-autonomous, 'sites of resistance' in which the micro-interactions and interper-

sonal spaces negotiated between teachers and students have the potential of either challenging or reproducing dominant power structures in society.

Micro-interactions between educators, students and communities are never neutral; in varying degrees, they either reinforce coercive relations of power or collaborative relations of power. In the former case, they contribute to the disempowerment of culturally diverse students and communities; in the latter the micro-interactions constitute a process of empowerment that enables educators, students and communities to challenge the operation of coercive power structures. (Cummins, 2000: 44–45)

Cummins' perspective here resonates with the work of Foucault (1980, 1982) and Bourdieu (1991), and even more explicitly with the social justice concerns of Corson (2001). There are no neutral spaces in schooling, no ways to insulate oneself from the social consequences of one's activities. Standardised tests, psychometric models, reading methodologies, constructs of language proficiency, 'scientific' research on bilingualism – all are interconnected, in some key way, with power relations. To apply these technologies or instruments uncritically or without regard to the prior learning experiences of a particular group of students is to hasten the likelihood of academic underachievement and social marginalisation for minority students.

Cummins' work is also important in that it offers a field-internal set of pedagogical priorities for teacher identity in bilingual and second language education. Moreover, it bridges the fragmentation of language that underpins much applied linguistics research. By fragmentation, I mean a way of thinking about language as if it were an *end* in itself – realised by the reproduction of discrete forms/texts, or by the performance of closely-specified tasks – rather than a *means* towards enriched social capacities and human creativities. Nonetheless, in spite of the strengths of Cummins' framework, such perspectives on teacher identity are mostly positioned as outside the core content offered in language teacher education programmes (see e.g. Grabe *et al.*, 2000). I will briefly outline two discourses responsible for this positioning.

First, the scope of teacher identity that I have outlined above lacks 'currency', both in a metaphoric and literal sense, at a time when governments increasingly view 'human beings [as] inhabit[ing] a market place where the quality of something is decided according to the price it can fetch, rather than any intrinsic qualities it might have' (Corson, 2002: 6). Such a world-view, as Corson (2002) trenchantly observes, gives rise to the 'evaluative state' in which high-stakes, standardised testing comes to both define and delimit knowledge in schools.

Identity negotiation, against this backdrop, is not easily isolated or measured and is thus an unlikely foundation for 'teaching and learning for marketplace utility' (Corson, 2002). To date, there are no 'identity benchmarks' or task descriptors in bilingual or second language education that adequately capture its holistic features. Similarly, it is a notion that eludes standardisation. Teacher–student interactions can have direct and immediate effects on identity, but indirect and long-term influences need to be considered as well. Seating arrangements, classroom materials, peer relations, extra-curricular activities, in addition to home and community language practices, family relations

and personal experiences all potentially influence the interpersonal meanings given and received in class (see e.g. James, 2002; Toohey, 2000). Such complexities problematise the scope and place for identity negotiation in curricula organised increasingly to service the 'knowledge' needs of global markets and multinational corporations (e.g. Gabbard, 2000; Spring, 1998).

The second 'obstacle' is substantial, and in a sense, constrains the pedagogical possibilities of Cummins' framework at a foundational level. If we are to make teachers aware of identity as having pedagogical implications, then we should attempt to convey that information in ways closely related to teacher's own pedagogical experiences and ways of knowing. As several researchers in language teacher education indicate (e.g. Borg, 1998; Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Varghese, 2001, this issue), such an approach remains unrealised in most programmes.

Johnston and Goettsch (2000), for example, note that the knowledge base of most teacher education programmes tend to be organised around facts and propositions and taught to novice teachers in the form of distinct modules such as methodology, SLA, language structure, etc. They argue, in contrast, that the complexities of teaching require greater integration of these sub-fields. Teaching is more of a process-oriented, context-embedded activity: strategies and explanations about language are often improvised and refined through ongoing dialogue with students and emergent conditions in classrooms. Moreover, teachers' own ways of theorising about their practice tend to be narrative in form, anchored in 'stories and specific, concrete professional experiences' (2000: 462), which are undervalued in academic settings.

Mentioned above, Varghese's (2001, this issue) ethnographic study of a Professional Development Institute (PDI) for bilingual Spanish/English teachers offers a similar perspective. Teachers in the PDI saw their professional identities as rooted in local classroom and district settings. These lived, situated experiences shaped their expectations of the kinds of 'bilingual-specific' knowledge they would need and receive at the PDI (e.g. specific classroom practices, strategies for dual language use). Although the instructors of the PDI believed they could and did meet such expectations, they interpreted and conveyed 'bilingual-specific' knowledge as a component within traditional, academic modules (e.g. SLA, history and models of bilingual education) and in a manner that Varghese characterises as mostly transmission-oriented.

In common, Varghese (2001, this issue) and Johnston and Goettsch (2000) draw attention to a striking contradiction: the ways that language teacher education programmes teach, and the ways that teachers teach (and learn) are in many ways *incompatible pedagogies* – a significant obstacle if we are to convey the kinds of insights on identity negotiation outlined by Cummins. Also, in common, both discourses described in this section objectify the notion of identity in ways that undermine Cummins' micro-contextual framework. In the discourse of 'market-value utility' (Corson, 2002), identity risks being *commoditised*, perceived by new teachers as a 'value-adding' set of socio-pragmatic skills for cross-cultural entrepreneurship. In the dominant discourse of language teacher education, identity risks being *modularised*, perceived by new teachers as an abstract and independent variable of occasional relevance to teaching.

The modularised view, to be fair, facilitates new teachers' awareness of important differences in the profession, such as the marginalisation of NNS teachers raised in the introduction. But following Simon's (1995) notion of 'image-text', the perspective on identity I want to emphasise requires that we move beyond descriptions/explanations of difference and inequality to a sense of 'how that difference will be deployed, rendered, and positioned in regard to both the substance and process of learning' (1995: 90). What Simon suggests here is a move from 'teacher identity *and* pedagogy' – juxtaposed, yet separable variables – to a notion of 'teacher identity *as* pedagogy', a conflation or synthesis more in keeping with the continuous interweaving of identity negotiation and language learning articulated in Cummins' (2000, 2001) framework.

The following personalised account is an effort towards a more field-internal conceptualisation in bilingual and second language teacher education. It is in many ways a constructive dialogue, which can be briefly summarised: Through a poststructural lens, identities – mine in particular – are seen as 'constituted' *within* institutional discourses (a community-based ESL programme, co-sponsored by a board of education and the Chinese community agency where the classes took place). Key features of my 'image-text' are discovered relationally and performatively (cf. Butler, 1990) so that they might be 'deployed, rendered, and positioned' (Simon, 1995: 90) in class. Minority identities (e.g. Chinese ethnicity) are affirmed through teacher–student interactions, but at the same time, it is an affirmation that strategically opens up other 'identity options' (cf. Cummins, 2000, 2001) – other ways of being a man or woman, husband or wife – that have been discursively excluded, following Butler and Foucault.

Through the lens of language teacher education, these 'identity options' or 'interpersonal spaces' (Cummins, 2001) are viewed as uniquely constituted and negotiated through the types of 'linguaging' (e.g. L2 grammar, writing and vocabulary practices, L1/L2 translations, group work, etc.) that have evolved in this particular site and are characteristic of bilingual and second language education. Finally, following the insights of Varghese (2001) and Johnson and Goettsch (2000), knowledge about teaching – about the possibilities for 'identity as pedagogy' – is retained and conveyed, by way of stories, or narratives that attempt to show the dynamic flow between texts and *textualised* identities.

Teacher Identity as Pedagogy: The Setting

Spatial limitations prevent me from giving a more detailed account of the ESL programme and students I taught at the Chinese Community Services Association of Toronto (CSSAT) for 8 years ending in the summer of 2001 (see e.g. Morgan, 2001, 2002). There were anywhere from 10 to 20 students on a given day (classes ran Tuesday to Friday, 9:30 pm to 12:30 pm). Most of the students, about 75%, were women and seniors; all of them spoke Chinese, mostly Cantonese, as the majority of the class came from Hong Kong; a few students from the People's Republic of China and Taiwan attended as well.

CSSAT has continuous intake, charges a nominal registration fee, and does not test students. Classes are usually multilevel, students choosing a class

based on convenience and friendships rather than objective language criteria. Students often leave for months at a time, and teachers rarely complain because they need to maintain daily attendance numbers (17, as of last year) in order to keep their classes (and jobs) going. While many of the students may respect or even admire their teacher, these same students can easily become distracted or indifferent to the 'latest' pedagogical innovation brought before them. In respect to identity pedagogy, these adult students see their language classroom – and the types of interpersonal spaces shaped within – as temporary places, not as deeply committed, life choices, a point I emphasise in contrast to the postgraduate environment in which theories and pedagogies around identity are usually nurtured.⁵

Another key feature of CCSAT is bilingualism. Students' L1, Chinese, predominates in this setting. Bilingual posters, bilingual ESL courses, Chinese heritage language programmes, and counselling services in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin, help create an environment in which Chinese is perceived as a source of pride, the predominant language of the local community, and an aspect of collective identity validated and potentially mobilised through the dominant discourse of multiculturalism in Canada (Ignatieff, 2000; Taylor, 1994). In my class, the advanced class at CCSAT, I often encouraged students to use their L1, especially to explore ideas that are important but difficult to express in English. On several occasions, students' L1 literacy practices and decompositional strategies for L1 vocabulary became invaluable tools for L2 Critical Language Awareness (e.g. Morgan, 2001, 2002).

In respect to bilingualism and identity at CSSAT, race and gender factors should also be considered. For many ESL students, as Amin (1999) notes, the ideal teacher of English is a White, Anglo Male, who speaks a dominant variety of English. When a non-native speaking, woman of colour comes to teach ESL, her authenticity and expertise is challenged to degree that would never happen to her white, male colleagues.

For me, the privileges of being white, male and 'accentless', in the eyes and ears of many, made me a highly desirable EFL teacher in China (Chongqing, 1987–1988), and certainly helped make my experiences there positive ones. These experiences in China, in turn, enhanced my desirability as an ESL teacher at CCSAT. In class, students loved the fact that I knew a few rudimentary phrases in Mandarin and would often teach me new words. It was a source of pride for them when programme administrators got me to sing Chinese songs at our annual banquet, and they were also proud of the fact that I liked to read Chinese history and had travelled to many parts of China and Hong Kong. In sum, these interwoven and often imperceptible facets of my experience – of race, gender, and language – had a contingent, prestige value that enabled me to present myself in challenging ways that might not have been acceptable from other teachers.

Data collection

The primary source of data collection for the next section was through participant observation field notes made over approximately 5 months, from February to June in 1998. Following Robson (1993) and Lynch (1996), practical considerations required that I quickly jot down abbreviated notes and

observed points during lessons and expand upon descriptions immediately after class or during a break. This included students' comments and examples of their work (e.g. on the blackboard). After class, these expanded descriptions were stored in a teacher's log, with entries dated and space kept on the side for codes and temporary hypotheses to be entered. Other data used are examples of students' writing, included with their permission. Emerging hypotheses from data analyses were shared and discussed with teaching colleagues at CCSAT (cf. peer debriefing, Lynch, 1996) following the validity criteria for naturalistic inquiry established by Lynch (1996).

Gong Li: 'Brian's Imaginary Lover'

Students often came late, some having to travel over an hour on public transport. In the early minutes of a class, I often tried to start up an informal discussion while students were arriving. Early one morning in February 1998, I mentioned seeing Gong Li/Zhang Yi Mou's new movie *Shanghai Triad*. Mei, one of my more outspoken students, then replied 'We don't like Gong Li. We won't go to the movie'. I was surprised by her response as my students often vocalised their pride in the growing international reputations of many Chinese artists. When I asked Mei why, she said 'She stole another woman's husband. Chinese people don't like Gong Li'. The whole class laughed. I countered that I really liked her acting and had seen many of her movies before, including *Raise the Red Lantern*, *Red Sorghum*, *Old Well*, *Yellow Earth*, and *Ju Dou*. The fact that I had seen so many Gong Li movies surprised a few in class and led one older student, Yang, to describe Gong Li as 'Brian's imaginary lover'. Everybody loved this, and Yang revelled in the playful threat of telling my wife about my imagined infidelity.

That day Gong Li was an ongoing theme in our lessons. As it was close to Chinese New Year, we spent a long time looking at a vocabulary list on personal characteristics related to the Chinese zodiac. This is always a fun activity for this group. I pose questions such as 'what qualities make a good politician/artist/teacher/parent/etc.?' for group discussion. Many students use their bilingual dictionaries, comparing L1 translations, and forming semantic maps/lists of various synonyms and antonyms on the list.

Then an interesting exchange occurred: in describing attributes of those born in the year of the monkey, the work sheet used 'erratic genius'. To explain, I used synonyms such as 'constantly changing' and 'unpredictable'. Then Mei said, 'Just like Elizabeth Taylor'. Everybody howled, and I asked her if she liked Elizabeth Taylor? Her answer was 'I *admire* Elizabeth Taylor'. Then I asked her how she could admire Elizabeth Taylor and yet hate Gong Li. Liz had also stolen other women's husbands along the way (e.g. Eddie Fisher, Richard Burton). Mei just laughed and said it was okay to admire Elizabeth Taylor because 'she isn't Chinese'.

This comment was a real eye-opener. What I saw as a direct contradiction – easily resolved – was actually a purposeful, double standard, one that provided a glimpse of how collective identities around culture and gender are regulated and sometimes contested – especially under contact from external value systems. For me, Mei's response was fundamentally performative in the sense defined by Butler. Not even Mei really believed that 'all Chinese hate

Gong Li'. Her intent was to *do* something with language, bring about or prevent a change in social relations – through the invocation of an exclusionary norm – rather than establish the truth validity of a proposition.

Later that same day, we went out together for dim sum lunch. Near the end as the bill arrived, a student named Yawen reached into her husband's jacket pocket, got out his wallet and counted out their share of the bill. Immediately, Yang grabbed my arm, pointed and said out loud, 'Look, Li Ping [the wife] controls the family finances'. Embarrassed and anxious to refute Yang, the husband quickly responded, 'bu, bu [no, no]'. I saw how embarrassed he was, and I tried to intervene on his behalf in a 'face-saving' effort. I started talking to the group about how my wife makes most of the financial decisions in our marriage. Then I started to talk about credit cards, as the couple's wallet was open revealing their gold card. I told them I had the same card and that my wife, Allison, had got mine for me – a point I emphasised: I couldn't have got one on my own.⁶

These two incidents, especially with the credit card, instigated a lot of thought. Similar to Simon, I started to reflect on the possible 'image-text' that my class constructed of me, the relational privileges inscribed within that text based on my being a white, male, native-speaking teacher, and the symbolic capital (cf. Bourdieu, 1991) gained through my experiences of teaching in China. I thought that I should utilise these privileges – deploy them or resignify them, in the poststructural sense of shifting/rupturing the social referents/meaning students ascribed to my 'image-text'. I wanted to attempt this in a way that was not threatening, but rather thought-provoking, opening up possibilities for other identity options (cf. Cummins, 2000, 2001) around our collective assumptions about gender.

To my surprise, this became a dialogical activity in the performative sense that I have described above. How I viewed myself and presented myself in class changed frequently in response to students' comments and queries. One example revolved around the topic of cooking. I enjoy cooking, and do most of it in our home. This aspect of my life was a shock for many students the first time they found out and something of which I should be ashamed, in the eyes of some. Instead of underplaying it, I started to ask openly for advice on preparing Chinese dishes and soon began bringing students along on shopping trips to local Chinese markets. Other aspects of my domestic life were similarly deployed. I started to talk more about difficulties in childrearing (I have a 7-year-old daughter), house cleaning tips, shopping, and my wife's preminent role in family financial matters.

In the months soon after the Gong Li 'affair', a couple of incidents in class indicated that a re-scripted 'image-text' was being circulated in class. One day in March 1998, Ling mentioned to the class that she would be very busy all weekend cleaning the house and preparing food for her out of town guests. Eileen admonished her and said, 'That's out of date. Ask your son and husband to help you'. Su Ying then commented, 'Brian does house work'.

Another incident occurred on International Women's Day. We were looking at related words such as gender, sexism, male chauvinism, patriarchy, matriarchy. One student from Hong Kong used 'Big Mannism' as a literal Cantonese synonym for male chauvinism. Eileen then started to tease another

student named Wong: 'You're a "big man". I see your wife carrying all the groceries'. Immediately, Joyce looked at me and asked, 'Who's the boss in your marriage?' (everyone in class started howling with laughter). I replied, 'In money matters, my wife makes most of the decisions. I do most of the cooking and grocery shopping, and I don't mind. Most of my male friends cook. If they didn't, they'd have to eat at restaurants all the time'. Then, Eileen said, 'Guai Lo [foreign, non-Chinese] men are good'. Ling added 'Brian is a good husband'.

These types of teacher–student interactions would happen once or twice a week, or lead to discussions that lasted a half an hour, or only a minute. As mentioned earlier, identity negotiation does not conform easily to standardised measurement, so I cannot provide empirical evidence of changes in attitude as a direct effect of my activities. However, classroom interactions and interpersonal relations do articulate with students' memories, beliefs, and perceptions of the dominant society. Together, these aligning factors potentially bring about gradual and cumulative shifts in the identity options students imagine for themselves and their communities. The student composition in Appendix 1, serves as an example. Although it was not an assignment, its controversial content – a challenge to traditional, cultural proscriptions against remarriage for widows – indicates its close intertextuality with the events I have described.

The Applicant for Husband

The story in Appendix 1, *The Applicant for Husband*, was an unsolicited piece of work written and illustrated by an older man in my class, Leung. He asked me to work with him to revise it, copy it, and hand it out to the whole class. It was submitted a couple of months after the first Gong Li incident. Leung's composition invokes and challenges collective norms regarding culture, age, gender, and family loyalties. The story generated a unit of language activities and compositions. Here are two examples of students' responses:

(1) Times have changed. We can't keep the old ideas to treat the event of the applicant for husband. When you are old, alone, and not capable of doing everything, you have no merits, but only an amount of money left that can support you in old life. You need a man or woman as your intimate friend. I think it is a reasonable choice. So the story of the 'applicant for husband' is common and usual now. I don't see such a case with 'strange eyes'.

(2) This story makes me think that people is greedy and sometimes foolish. First of all, this old woman should not ask for a young man to be her husband while they are unknown to each other. The story said that there were many young men applied because of the sincerity of her notice. I don't think it's true. They applied for only one purpose – that is the money.

These two compositions and the others produced in class were soon placed on our bulletin board with Leung's illustrated text at the centre. They continued to be a 'presence' for many, many months after. These responses are

also representative of the fact that in spite of the apparent homogeneity of the class, students both supported and resisted the identity options being offered them.

Conclusions

Let me return to an idea, speculative to some degree, about the relative uniqueness of our work and our students, and the value of contributing 'field-internal' insights towards theory-formation that is interdisciplinary in scope. I tend to overstate this point, but I do so as a reflection of the collective self-doubt that lingers from our professional origins – linguistics *applied* (see e.g. Pennycook, 2001: 2–3; Widdowson, 1980). Borrowing, rather than creating, sits easier when named in this derivative fashion.

Teachers' identities and their place in bilingual and second language education are a case in point. An intuitive argument could be made that discourses, subjectivity, power relations, or identity negotiation are domain-specific, 'higher order' phenomena – hence, disarticulated from the kinds of form-focused, instrumental tasks that can preoccupy an L2 classroom. For example, in an insightful chapter on identity and second language learning, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) state:

If we transcend the domain of phonology and morphosyntax and move into the domain where meanings and selves are constituted by language...agency and intentionality take centre stage. The individual may feel comfortable being who he or she is and may not wish to 'become' a native of another language and culture. Thus, negotiation of new meanings and construction of new subjectivities may be irrelevant to her/his personal agenda. (2000: 170)

I want to suggest that the points being made here about 'domains' and 'subjectivities' are, in part, 'field-external' when placed against the narrative I have constructed. Based on my experiences at CCSAT, I would counter that there are no linguistic 'domains' in which 'agency', 'intentionality', or 'choice' are unconstituted by discourses. Elsewhere (Morgan, 1997) I have tried to demonstrate that even at the suprasegmental, phonological level, identity negotiation takes place and is interwoven through every facet of L2 instruction. The 'Gong Li' story similarly demonstrates a continuously intertextual, 'multidomain' of practices – some, in retrospect, laboriously morphosyntactic – through which teacher–student identities are negotiated.

For me, the Gong Li story emphasises that intentionality, like the subject who assumes its sole possession, is always 'in process'. The symbols and meanings that anchor one's nativeness are always open to resignification, producing new liminalities that can be profoundly discomfiting, as in the potential validation of Gong Li's 'immorality' or the image-text of a 'domesticated' male teacher. The subject doesn't choose to 'stay' or 'go' so much as he or she is compelled to continuously 'perform' what is required of difference, both within and between categories of identity.

This performative model has great explanatory power in helping me understand my experiences at CCSAT. As I learned new things about my students, I was compelled to learn new things about myself through their responses.

And by experimenting, by presenting an 'image-text' of myself that countered some of their assumptions, I witnessed a newfound interest in exploring identity options around culture, gender, and family life. The *Applicant for Husband* compositions offer some evidence of this development, but they also underscore the strengths of Cummins' framework and the close links between identity and language learning he details. In this respect, a research agenda on teacher-student identities is enriched by poststructural theory, but only to a partial degree. For its potential to be realised, it must be rooted in the field-internal practices that constitute bilingual and second language education.

Finally, as Foucault would remind us, the notion of 'teacher identity as pedagogy' is always potentially 'dangerous', and the myriad forms of power that teachers hold over students should never be forgotten. Therefore, we need to present ourselves – our image-texts – in ways that are unthreatening and respectful, indeed, similar to other 'texts' we bring to class: always open to critical analysis and reinterpretation.

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Notes

1. In this article, the terms *subject* and *subjectivity* are used interchangeably with *identity* and conceptualised primarily by way of poststructural ideas. This conflation does not negate other ways of theorising human experience but reflects, instead, my preference for the sharp insights on language, power, and identity that I see poststructuralism offering classroom-based research.
2. Identity as 'performance' originates with Austin's (1975) distinction between *constative* and *performative* utterances. The former are statements that refer to prior or existing 'realities' and can therefore be evaluated in terms of their truth or falsity. In contrast, the latter are statements that create or bring into being that which is named by language (e.g. 'Let the games begin'). In a famous passage, Butler (1990) adopts the performative to describe *gender* as 'the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being' (p. 33). A performative model illuminates the creative and contingent means by which individuals employ language to *differentiate* themselves, and 'shifts the focus away from a simple cataloging of differences' (Cameron, 1997: 49; Ehrlich, 1997) based on static, homogeneous group boundaries.
3. Varghese (in this issue), for example, uses a 'community of practice' frame (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in her ethnographic study of a professional development programme for bilingual teachers. Structured around forms of academic 'expert' knowledge, the programme, through both its conventional content and delivery, brought about participants' awareness of its underlying limitations and biases. The dominant discourse of the programme – the assumption of a unified knowledge base in bilingual education – subsequently became 'a locale for the articulation and contestation of bilingual teachers' roles'.
4. I am indebted to Atkinson (in press) for introducing me to this term, which he develops in his forthcoming book, *TESOL and Culture: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Beyond*.
5. I refer here again to Simon's (1995) description of the 'intimate pedagogy of doctoral education' (1995: 99). The 'intimacy' he discusses is an inseparable aspect of both

theory-formation and pedagogy in such settings, and unparalleled in adult ESL programmes. Almost all doctoral students desire to be professors and live academic lives; hence their identities are strongly invested in the social prestige of the university and in acquiring the textual strategies of their professors. Such intimacies, I believe, are not unrelated to the kinds of practices/techniques associated with post-structural thought (i.e. critical introspection, textual deconstruction). What can often take place in such doctoral settings is an excessively self-conscious form of dialogue – aware, troubled and skeptical of the ‘deep’ consent that underpins it.

6. Some might wonder why I refer to Allison as my ‘wife’ rather than ‘partner’ – which I sometimes do in other settings. In this class of mostly Chinese seniors, the lexical term ‘partner’ is not easily substituted for the traditional status accorded the word ‘wife’ and could, in the eyes of some, imply a lower social ranking, thus making the purported equality of such a relationship seem irrelevant to *married* life. While lexical change can be an important strategy for gender-based language reform (e.g. Ehrlich & King, 1998), within particular speech communities, re-articulations that attach new meanings/referents to ‘old’ signifiers can be more effective.

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Appendix 1: *The Applicant for Husband*

The Applicant for Husband

In the spring of 1990, I spent a few days in my hometown of Taishan, a famous overseas village in South China. I stayed at a hotel that was established under the open-door policy and for the needs of foreign travelers. It was a beautiful morning. My cousin, Mr. Tan, and I enjoyed some drinks at the garden cafe.

"Did you know that more and more overseas Chinese have returned to our country to find their ideal spouse recently?" my cousin asked me in an interested tone.

"No, I didn't know anything about that. Please tell me what has happened," I answered with the curiosity of distant lands.

"It happened last month. The people in our village were attracted by a notice on the board of this hotel."

"What did the notice say?"

"Wanted. Applicant for husband.," Mr. Tan said slowly.

"Who wanted a husband so eagerly?"

"Oh. That notice was presented by an old widow who returned from the USA and was seventy years of age. But the condition in her notice was that the applicant must be a young man who will look after her every need."

"Did the old lady offer an amount of money for her future young husband, or you could say as bait?" I said with an ironical voice.

"Of course, she did. People knew that the old lady brought a large fortune from the estate of her late husband. And she has a house and a maid to take care her daily life."

"So, that's enough. Why did she want a young husband?"

"She wants somebody to be her companion. If the spouse is old and weak, that means an extra burden for her."

"I agree with you," I said. "Did she find the ideal one?"

"Many young men joined the line of applicants based on the sincerity of her notice. At last she chose one of them after many interviews. Then they registered for marriage at the government office."

"Are they living happily together?"

"Some early morning, you will find a well-dressed old lady sitting on the back seat of a bicycle, as she is being peddled by a strong young man to the hospital where she has her routine check-up. Both of them have sunshine smiles on their faces."

"What a clever old woman!" I drank my coffee with a smile on my face.

God bless you, my lady. You ignored the strange eyes of your countrymen and broke the generation gap in the old village full of feudalistic ideas: The women never have the right to choose their spouses as the men do.

You will have a joyful and golden evening in your old age. Held in strong arms, you will walk through the last journey in your life.

