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**Intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English:  
An exploration in China and the Netherlands**

Dadi Chen

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**Intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English:  
An exploration in China and the Netherlands**

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

## 1.1 A new challenge for teachers of English

English is taught worldwide as a lingua franca and has greatly promoted communication and understanding among people across different cultures (Crystal, 2003; Lurda, 2004). Nowadays, promoting understanding between people from different cultures is seen as an important element in English language teaching worldwide (e.g., Council of Europe, 2001; European Commission, 2012; Ministry of Education of China, 2001). An approach to teaching of competence for communication across cultures has been developed in recent decades, in which cultural diversity, exchange of meaning in interpersonal communication, and intercultural mediation are considered important in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Kramsch, 2014). In this approach, EFL teachers are expected to encourage their students to develop not only competence to use the language, but also intercultural competence, i.e., their ‘ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality’ (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002, p. 10). Guidelines for foreign language teaching that include the teaching of intercultural competence are being developed, such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages in Europe (Council of Europe, 2001) and the latest syllabus and curriculum standard for secondary school English courses in China (Ministry of Education of China, 2001). The CEFR integrates cultural content (e.g. music, film, family, hobbies, work, travel and current social events) in the descriptions of the measurement of language scales and provides specific instructions for developing language learners’ competence to meet the challenge of communication across language and cultural boundaries. Likewise, the Chinese syllabus for secondary school English includes enhancing the students’ understanding of foreign cultures, especially the cultures of English-speaking countries, as one of the teaching objectives. In the new trend of EFL teaching, an ideal EFL teacher today, whether a native or non-native speaker, is not only a language expert, but also the teacher who is capable of helping students to cope with the relationship between their own and other cultures, to learn to be interested in cultural differences, and to be aware of their own cultures seen from the perspective of people from other cultures (Byram et al., 2002).

These new guidelines and demands pose challenges to EFL teachers worldwide. EFL teachers who are native speakers of English need to be aware of the sociocultural

backgrounds of their non-native-English-speaking students when helping them to cross cultural boundaries and understand cultures associated with the English language from the perspective of the native speakers of English. In this thesis, we refer to cultures associated with the English language, such as the British and American cultures, as ‘ES cultures’. EFL teachers for whom English is a foreign language (indicated hereafter as non-native EFL teachers or non-native teachers of English) and who teach in a non-English-speaking country are likely to have learned a lot about the English language in their teaching careers in their own countries, and also about ES cultures. Since they were once English-language learners themselves from the same country as their students and may have had the same experience of English learning, non-native EFL teachers may be more aware than their native English-speaking colleagues of the particular pitfalls and difficulties that their students may encounter with regard to the English language and ES cultures; for this reason, they can play an important role in the teaching of ‘intercultural competence’ (Moran, 2001). Non-native EFL teachers comprise more than 80% of the professionals who teach English as a foreign or second language in the world (Braine, 2010), and they face the challenge of being conscious of their own attitudes towards the cultures they teach, while at the same time having to encourage their students to develop critical perspectives towards different cultures (Byram et al., 2002). In the process of teaching, these teachers need to become acquainted with sufficient knowledge about the culturally appropriate norms of behaviour of ES cultures (Moussu & Llurda, 2008), and at the same time they need to maintain multicultural and critical perspectives (Llurda, 2004).

This dissertation focuses on how non-native EFL teachers face the challenges of culture teaching. More specifically, we would like to know how non-native teachers of English regard themselves in relation to ES cultures. Non-native EFL teachers in different countries may unconsciously have developed their own opinions and attitudes towards ES cultures while referring to these cultures in their lessons (Byram et al., 2002). Besides, teachers in different cultural contexts can have different ideas about why, how and what they should teach about ES cultures (Karabinar & Guler, 2013; Sercu et al., 2005). Thus, they may have different notions of themselves as teachers in relation to ES cultures (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Menard-Warwick, 2008). The way in which EFL teachers see themselves and perceive their roles in relation to ES cultures is referred to in the literature as *teachers’ intercultural identities* (cf. Menard-Warwick, 2008). To explore how EFL teachers worldwide respond to the present-day

challenges of teaching intercultural competence, it is important to acquire a better understanding of how non-native EFL teachers in different countries perceive themselves as teachers in relation to ES cultures, or, what characterizes their intercultural identities.

In this dissertation, we use the term *non-native teachers of English* or *non-native EFL teachers* to refer to non-native English-speaking professionals with English as a second or foreign language, who are responsible for the teaching of English to native speakers of languages other than English. We are aware of the long debate on the use of the term ‘non-native’ in connection with EFL teachers (Selvi, 2011). In using this term, we do not doubt the ownership of English language or linguistic competence of the non-native teachers of English, nor ignore the linguistic and cultural diversities among the non-native teachers in different sociocultural contexts but, rather, we use the word to focus on our target group of study.

Various studies have observed the advantages of non-native teachers, such as their ability to understand students’ language and culture, having sufficient awareness of students’ learning difficulties and experience of culture shock, and being regarded by students as successful role models in intercultural communication (Braine, 1999, 2005, 2010; Moussu & Llorca, 2008; Samimy & Kurihara, 2006).

In our research we focused on non-native EFL teachers from two countries: China and the Netherlands. The two countries differ not only in their geographic and cultural distance from ES cultures, but are also very different from each other with respect to prominent cultural values (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Schwartz, 2006, 2014). China is a mostly Confucian-influenced region where cultural values such as hierarchy and mastery (meaning encouraging active self-assertion in order to master, direct, and change the environment to attain goals) are emphasised. In contrast, the Netherlands and the UK, are Western European countries in which intellectual autonomy, egalitarianism, and harmony (meaning fitting into the world as it is) are emphasised, while American culture, moreover, emphasises more affective autonomy and mastery (Schwartz, 2006, 2014). The two countries also differ to a large extent with regards to ways of communicating. In Chinese culture, communication is more dependent on the context, often with many things unsaid but to be understood (high-context culture). In Dutch and ES cultures, communication is more explicit and with much less needing to be understood in the context (low-context cultures) (E. T. Hall, 1976). Chinese culture is

more distant from ES cultures than is Dutch culture.

Considering identity as an ‘analytic lens’ through which interactions in and beyond the classroom can be understood (Gee, 2001), we hope the knowledge about non-native EFL teachers’ identities can promote our understanding of teachers’ roles in intercultural teaching. This is necessary since the existing studies with regard to the perceived identities of non-native teachers of English do not offer a sufficient understanding of non-native teachers’ identities, especially when it comes to teaching about foreign cultures.

## **1.2 Theoretical background**

### *1.2.1 Cultures in EFL teaching and teachers’ intercultural identity*

Culture is generally defined as the shared practices, perspectives, and products of people (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Moran, 2001), and the ‘customs, behaviours and beliefs that frame people’s lives’ (Driscoll, Earl, & Cable, 2013, p. 147). It is defined by theorists in modern language teaching as a co-constructed ‘membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings’ (Kramsch, 2014, p. 31). Though for the convenience of research terminology, culture is often labelled by nations, e.g., Chinese culture or Dutch culture, it is by no means static, or confined only to national boundaries, especially in this highly globalized era (Holliday, 2009).

When defining ‘culture’ in the context of English teaching, it is important to consider both the particular cultural resources, and the universal features of all cultures as social systems, global circumstances and cultural politics, so as to avoid stereotypes and bias (Holliday, 2009, 2011). EFL teachers deal with different cultures when teaching English to students. Those cultures are part of the teaching context and become parts of teachers’ professional lives. It would be too simplistic and biased to consider only teachers’ home cultures in defining their identities.

Culture in our study therefore refers to both the target cultures in EFL teaching and the sociocultural backgrounds of the EFL teachers in their own cultures. There are two reasons for considering both kinds of cultures. In the first place, regarding culture as a

reference to target cultures in EFL teaching, language learning and teaching is inevitably bound up in an EFL classroom with both target (usually British or American) and local cultures (cf. Crystal, 2003; Holliday, 2009; Moran, 2001). Conflicts may arise from collisions between different cultural norms, values and behaviours in EFL teaching and learning. Non-native EFL teachers need, on the one hand, to help students to understand and appreciate other cultures without losing their own norms and values and, on the other hand, to find a way to negotiate and develop their own identities in relation to the cultures they teach.

In the second place, with respect to the sociocultural backgrounds of the EFL teachers, in a non-English-speaking country these teachers may have ideas and values that are different from people in ES cultures, and EFL teachers from different countries may have different opinions about their relationship to ES cultures in teaching. For example, Jahan and Roger (2006) found that Asian EFL teachers see more difference between ES cultures and their own than do African EFL teachers. A possible explanation is that some of the African countries (i.e., Kenya and Mauritius) used to be British colonies. The geographic and cultural distance between ES cultures and Asian cultures is relatively greater than between ES and European cultures. In China, for example, ES cultures are contrasted with Chinese culture in the school English curriculum (Pan & Seargeant, 2012). In the Netherlands, however, English language and culture often appear in the media and daily life, which helps learners to become familiar with ES cultures at a very young age (Wilton & De Houwer, 2011). These early experiences may make it easier for Dutch EFL teachers and students to understand and accept ES cultures than it is for Chinese teachers and students.

### *1.2.2 Theories related to intercultural identity of non-native EFL teachers*

From a sociocultural perspective, identity is regarded in terms of being responsive to a specific situation (J. K. Hall, 2005). While developing their teaching repertoires, non-native EFL teachers also develop their identities as teachers as they gain experience with teaching about ES cultures. The development of identity can be seen as a partly unconscious process that is influenced by gaining competence in language teaching (e.g., Sercu, 2002, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005), the command of two or more languages (e.g., Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; Menard-Warwick, 2011; Pavlenko, 2003), and/or the familiarity with two or more cultures (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2008; Weisman, 2001). In

such a specific context of teaching, intercultural identity could be considered as a sub-identity of their professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). Such identity is described as dynamic, hybrid, and situated (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Holliday, 2010; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

*Intercultural identity* has previously been defined as an identity which can transcend the boundary between different cultures, by understanding and appreciating cultural diversity while at the same time not losing one's own norms and values (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984). The concept of intercultural identity has been characterized as showing a person's attachment to two or more cultural groups. This can sometimes be related to the fact that people have transnational experiences (e.g., they have worked or lived in different countries) (Kim, 1994), but the concept can also be applied to people who can get access to other cultures, e.g., EFL teachers (Y. Gao, 1999; Menard-Warwick, 2011). In any case, it means that people view themselves in relation to more than one culture (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984; Byram et al., 2002; Y. Gao, 1999; Sercu et al., 2005).

Given that teachers negotiate their identities in the context of teaching and social life, it is reasonable to assume that their contact with foreign cultures in and beyond classrooms can shape their intercultural identities (Modiano, 2006). Phan (2008), for example, found that English language teaching and ES cultures changed not only the performance of Vietnamese EFL teachers in terms of teaching methods, but also their ideas about, for example, the relationship with their students. The influence was 'deeper and more serious than it appeared on the surface' (Phan, 2008, p. 127).

Besides teachers' perceptions of themselves in relation to ES cultures, what is of particular importance for studying the intercultural identities of EFL teachers is their *intercultural sensitivity*, or their 'ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences' (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003, p. 422). Intercultural sensitivity is generally seen as a prerequisite for competent intercultural communication (Dong, Day, & Collaço, 2008), and can be considered as a part of teachers' intercultural identity. The progressive stages of cultural understanding required for sufficient intercultural sensitivity have been identified in the literature, and linked to particular attitudes and behaviours (Hammer et al., 2003). Hammer et al. (2003) identified six stages of intercultural sensitivity, defining the first three stages as ethnocentric (i.e., the individual's own culture is central), and the last three stages as ethnorelative (i.e.,

people realize that their own culture represents only one of many possible cultures and equally valid world views) (Hammer et al., 2003). The more ethnorelative a person is, the greater potential he or she has for being 'intercultural' (cf. Dong et al., 2008).

The examples mentioned above show that foreign languages and cultures are not simple subjects to be taught; they involve teachers' considerations of their own identities in relation to ES cultures. Teachers' attitudes towards the cultures they teach can be a salient aspect of their intercultural identities. In previous research, for example, EFL teachers were found to show their identity in class as a source of information about ES cultures (Duff & Uchida, 1997). Some teachers considered themselves representative of ES cultures in class even though they had never been abroad (Y. Gao, 1999), while others saw themselves as maintaining the value of their own culture even when they had travelled and studied abroad (Phan & Phan, 2006).

To summarize, we have discussed the literature pertaining to four prominent ways in which teachers' intercultural identity can manifest itself: (a) their feeling of connection with ES cultures, (b) influence of ES cultures on their personal or professional identity, (c) their intercultural sensitivity, and (d) their attitude towards ES cultures in teaching.

### *1.2.3 Cultural values and teachers' intercultural identity*

In the literature, teachers who are regarded as competent in an intercultural teaching context have been described as being able to adopt multiple roles and outlooks in teaching, to empathize with students and to share with them their own experience as cultural learners (Moran, 2001). Such characteristics of teaching and interpersonal interactions are very likely to be related to well-researched and more general cultural values, like openness and flexibility to different cultures and ideas (Schwartz, 2006).

A value can be defined as 'an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence' (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5). Members of a culture may generally prefer one value to another. The set of values they prefer is relatively stable at a certain point in time, and can be very different from the set of values preferred by members of other cultures. Particularly when individuals run into conflicts between values, the priority attached to a specific value or set of values can enter their

awareness and become a guiding principle (Schwartz, 1996). We know from sociocultural and psychological studies that cultural values are connected to people's attitudes, beliefs, traits and norms (Bain, Kashima, & Haslam, 2006; Schwartz, 2012) and can forge teachers' identities as well (Johnston, 2003).

By using instruments such as the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) in different countries, Schwartz was able to uncover the common structure of cultural values. The ten values he found in this way can be organized along two orthogonal dimensions, namely: (a) Openness to Change versus Conservation, and (b) Self-Enhancement versus Self-Transcendence. Earlier research using Schwartz's cultural value theory and questionnaire has shown that some of people's cultural values predict how they view themselves in relation to another cultural group (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 2006). In general, people who emphasise openness to change and/or self-transcendence tend to be more flexible and show greater intercultural communication competence than people who emphasise conservation and/or self-enhancement (Schwartz, 2006). In addition, previous studies have shown that the correlation between people's values and their identities can be different among groups emphasizing different values (Roccas, Schwartz, & Amit, 2010). Considering the difference between cultures, it is reasonable to assume that EFL teachers in different countries may vary not only in their cultural values and intercultural identities but also in the way those values and intercultural identities are interconnected.

### **1.3 Context of the study**

The study was conducted in two EFL countries, China and the Netherlands. As mentioned at the end of 1.1, the cultures of the two countries not only differ from each other, they also differ from ES cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006, 2014). Such differences can be reflected in the teachers' perceptions of themselves. Previous research has shown that the Confucian belief that teachers should be a moral model and authority of knowledge in class appears to be popular among Chinese EFL teachers (Scollon, 1999; Zhang & Liu, 2014). In contrast, in Western cultures, epitomized by Socrates in the Greek tradition, the ideal teachers' role is to lead the youth to the truth by means of questioning (Scollon, 1999). The different beliefs about teachers' roles can be related to different philosophical assumptions concerning communication, teaching,

and learning, represented by Confucius in Chinese culture and Socrates in Western cultures (Scollon, 1999).

As stated earlier, the social and teaching contexts are quite different in China and the Netherlands, and this may result in the teachers in the two countries having different perceptions about their intercultural identities. Although English is compulsory in both Chinese and Dutch secondary schools, a much smaller proportion of the Chinese population speaks and uses English (Wei & Su, 2012), whereas 90% of Dutch people can speak at least some English (European Commission, 2012). In recent decades, China has been regarded as a new ‘powerhouse’ of English language teaching (Braine, 2005). With the open-door policy that started in the late 1970s, China has become more and more involved in international cooperation. English is seen as a utilitarian tool for science, technology, national development and modernization, and the growth of English language teaching is being propelled dramatically by the great demand for English proficiency in business (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; He, 2005). Most of the secondary school teachers of English have a bachelor’s degree or equivalent education (X. Yang, 2008). Western theories of teaching and learning are being introduced into English teaching at various school levels (Zhang & Liu, 2014), and knowledge about ES cultures is listed in the national syllabus as content of EFL learning in secondary schools (Ministry of Education of China, 2004).

Nevertheless, although English songs, films and TV series are available online and there are some Chinese media in the English language (e.g., CCTV 9, China Daily), English is rarely used in daily communication among Chinese people. There are periodical concerns that too much emphasis on learning English would affect Chinese identity, leading to ‘spiritual pollution’ and Westernization (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Pan & Seargeant, 2012). Teachers have been found to attach more importance to moving upward in the social hierarchy than to commitment to the teaching profession or interest in the subject they teach, while, moreover, their desire for professional development is often constrained by the traditional hierarchic context in both society and schools (X. Gao & Xu, 2014).

Chinese secondary education usually lasts for 6 years. After the first 3 years of compulsory junior secondary school, students may choose to continue a three-year education in pre-university high schools, which will eventually lead to the national entrance exam to university, or to prepare for future work in vocational high schools.

English is the only compulsory foreign language taught in most secondary schools. National exams, the Confucian tradition of teaching, and many other factors in the teaching context constrain the development of more interactive teaching in secondary schools (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Zhang & Liu, 2014). The national college entrance examination plays a very important role in deciding what is taught in Chinese high schools and how (Lo Bianco, Orton, & Gao, 2009). Mismatches have been observed between the aims of cultivating intercultural communicative competence in the national syllabus and teaching methods in practice, because traditional Chinese views of teaching and learning still exist in EFL classes (Braine, 2005; Zhou & Li, 2015). Large classes and heavy teaching loads also make it difficult for teachers to encourage speaking and writing practice in class and to enhance interaction among students (Braine, 2005). Teachers have been found to select teaching methods from both Western and Chinese resources that best fit best their teaching context (Zhang & Liu, 2014).

In the Netherlands, English has a high status in society and the education system. Dutch people are renowned for their excellent command of English and there seems to be hardly any general fear of Dutch losing out to English (Wilton & De Houwer, 2011). As a consequence of the increased cohesion between European countries, English-language education has developed greatly since the 1980s (Dronkers, 1993). It is the only compulsory foreign language for all the students at primary and secondary levels (Drew, Oostdam, & van Toorenburg, 2007). SLO, the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development, takes the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a basis for defining the targets of English teaching in the five aspects of language proficiency, i.e., listening, communicating, speaking, reading, and writing (Council of Europe, 2001). In line with the CEFR's aim of developing language learners' interculturality and enhanced capacity for greater openness to new cultural experiences (Council of Europe, 2001), SLO lists learning about the role of English in different kinds of international communications as one of its targets (SLO, 2014).

Dutch students enter secondary schools at the age of 12, the same as Chinese students. But they choose different types of schools earlier than Chinese students. Among the choices are VMBO (junior secondary vocational education, 4 years), HAVO (higher general secondary education, 5 years) or VWO (pre-university education, 6 years). Dutch schools have a great deal of freedom in deciding the content, methods, and number of hours in teaching a subject. Standards to guide the teaching profession

are regulated under the Education Professions Act. To become teachers in secondary schools, candidates either follow a higher professional teacher education programme or take a post-graduate programme (within 5 years in service) after completing a subject-based bachelor's or master's degree. The Dutch Education Council, De Onderwijsraad, considers it important for every teaching team to possess some expertise at the master's level (Onderwijsraad, 2016). The 2013 OECD Survey found that a higher proportion of teachers in the Netherlands than the OECD average consider that 'the teaching profession is valued in society' and 'they would choose to work as teachers if they had a second chance to decide on a career' (OECD, 2015, p. 10).

Although CEFR has been in existence since 2001, due to the lack of empirical evidence with respect to its relevance to students' language achievement and detailed guidance in implementation, a majority of about 75% of foreign language teachers reported a low or intermediate level of experience with CEFR in the selection and design of teaching materials and assessment of learner performance (Broek & Van den Ende, 2013; Moonen, Stoutjesdijk, de Graaff, & Corda, 2013).

#### **1.4 Problem definition**

Despite the differences among different countries in cultural distances and contexts of EFL teaching, it is generally agreed in recent studies that EFL teaching should be geared to cultivation of knowledge, skills and attitudes for future intercultural communication (Byram, 1997, 2008; Moran, 2001; Sercu et al., 2005). It is necessary for EFL teachers to be aware of their own intercultural identities in order to consciously promote unbiased understanding between cultures and intercultural competence. In this way teachers can become aware of various possibilities, question their own knowledge and beliefs, and explore alternative perspectives that may be different from their own, in order to find ways of teaching that are appropriate for their teaching context (Johnson, 2006).

This thesis reports on a comparative study between Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers, which looked for similarities and differences in their perceptions of their intercultural identities. This exploratory study enabled us to search for more explicit and coherent features of teachers' intercultural identities, so as to gain a deeper

understanding of these differences and the way they are related to different cultural distances. We also explored whether specific variables in teachers' personal backgrounds, such as their cultural values, were related to their intercultural identities. We focused on the following two general questions:

1. How do non-native EFL teachers in secondary education in different countries perceive their intercultural identities?
2. How are cultural values of these non-native EFL teachers related to their intercultural identities?

### **1.5 Overview of the study**

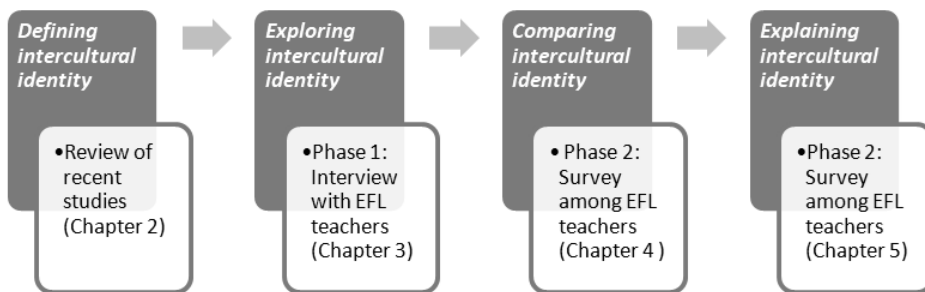
To pave the way for the exploratory study, we systematically reviewed 21 recent studies on the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English. These studies were selected by key words and strict criteria on relevance (e.g., empirical studies, about non-native in-service teachers of English, concerning intercultural identity, et cetera) from 59 articles published between 1997 and 2015 in international peer-reviewed academic journals. The aim of the study was to provide an overview of the recent research on the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English and to provide directions for further research. The research questions in the review study were:

1. How are the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English characterized and defined in recent studies?
2. What do these studies report about the formation of these intercultural identities?

We report on the review in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.

Partly on the basis of this review we designed and conducted a two-phase empirical study using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Phase 1, reported in Chapter 3, entailed semi-structured, individual interviews with a small number of teachers. Phase 2, reported in Chapters 4 and 5, involved collecting data from a larger group of teachers through a questionnaire survey. Chapter 4 reports on the data about the teachers' intercultural identities, while Chapter 5 reports the findings on the relationship between teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities. Figure 1.1 provides an

overview of the study and the chapters of the dissertation.



**Figure 1.1.** Overview of the study and chapters

In Phase 1, we invited EFL teachers from different secondary schools in China and the Netherlands to participate voluntarily in our study. The purpose of the interview was to describe teachers' different perceptions of their intercultural identities. The questions in the interview protocol were designed to elicit the teachers' notions of themselves as teachers in relation to teaching the cultures associated with the English language, and their ideas about the influence of ES cultures on their personal and professional lives. The specific research questions were:

1. How do the Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers interviewed perceive their intercultural identities?
2. What similarities and differences exist between their perceptions of intercultural identities?

We report on the Phase 1 study in Chapter 3.

In Phase 2, we designed a questionnaire based on both the literature study and the analysis of the interviews. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data from a larger group of teachers. To this end we summarized the teachers' characteristic expressions into statements. We also incorporated the Portrait Value Questionnaire developed by Schwartz et al. (2001) into our questionnaire. The first aim of the Phase 2 study was to explore the general tendency and underlying factors of teachers' intercultural identities in China and the Netherlands. The specific research questions were:

1. How do Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers in the questionnaire survey perceive their intercultural identities in relation to ES cultures?

2. What variables in the personal backgrounds of the teachers, apart from nationality, are related to their intercultural identities?

We report on this study in Chapter 4.

The second aim of Phase 2 was to explore how cultural values might be used to predict teachers' intercultural identities. Based on earlier relevant studies, we formulated general expectations about the predictive power of the selected cultural values regarding teachers' intercultural identities. To examine these expectations and explore the relationships between cultural values and intercultural identity of Chinese and Dutch teachers, our specific research questions were:

1. What similarities and differences exist between the cultural values of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers?
2. How do the teachers' cultural values relate to the intercultural identities of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers?

We report on this study in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 6, we go back to our general research questions. We discuss the findings of the studies reported in Chapters 2 to 5, and provide implications for future studies on intercultural identities of teachers in different countries and the relationship between teachers' cultural values and teachers' intercultural identities.



## Chapter 2

# A review study into intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English <sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

Non-native EFL teachers who teach English as a second or foreign language can play an important role in the promotion of intercultural competence and often have an advantage over native English-speaking teachers because they once were language learners of the same foreign language and are more aware than the latter of the particular difficulties that students can encounter. Because of this, a better understanding is needed of non-native teachers of English in language-and-culture teaching. Research on how these teachers perceive themselves in relation to two or more cultural groups (i.e., teachers' intercultural identities) would be useful in this respect, but little such research has been conducted to date. In the present study, we systematically reviewed 21 studies on the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English. Our study provides insight into key characteristics of these teachers' intercultural identities, factors in the formation of these identities, inconsistencies in studies to date, and directions for further research.

## 2.1 Introduction

Teachers who teach English as a second or foreign language play an important role in not only helping learners learn the language but also preparing learners for future intercultural communication (Council of Europe, 2001). Such teachers must, for example, teach their students about ES cultures (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) and unavoidably compare ES cultures with their own cultures. However, teachers are not merely ‘technicians’ who simply adopt right methods to reach the teaching target (Varghese et al., 2005). Considering the sociocultural background of teachers, for example, it is difficult for them to be absolutely impartial when thinking about different cultures (Byram et al., 2002). Starting from the observation that most teachers of English worldwide are *non-native* teachers who do not have English as their first language and are not teaching in English-speaking countries (Braine, 2010), their understanding of ES cultures can be expected to vary widely along with their positions and roles of teaching about ES cultures. The weight that teachers of English give to intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students — often referred to as their ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (or just ‘intercultural competence’, cf. Byram, 1997) — will also vary accordingly (Sercu et al., 2005).

Earlier studies have shown that non-native teachers of English in different countries have different notions of themselves when it comes to teaching ES cultures (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Weisman, 2001; Wette & Barkhuizen, 2009). The teachers also have different ideas about why the relevant methods and contents are used in teaching about these cultures (Moran, 2001; Sercu et al., 2005). To better understand just how they teach cultures in different countries, how they see their roles in teaching about cultures, and how English teaching worldwide helps cultivate intercultural competence, we must gain insight into how teachers of English regard themselves within the language-and-culture teaching context. This means that we need a better understanding of how teachers of English view themselves in relation to the cultures they teach about. As Varghese et al. (2005) commented on language teacher identity in general:

*...in order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them* (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22).

In the literature the concept of teachers' identities, i.e., their perception of themselves as teachers, has been used to help us understand this issue, and when referring to teachers of English in teaching language with an intercultural dimension, the concept of teachers' *intercultural identities*, i.e., teachers' perceptions of themselves in relation to two or more cultural groups, has often been used (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984; Y. Gao, 1999; Menard-Warwick, 2008).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, increasing numbers of studies have been conducted into the self-perceptions of non-native English-speaking teachers of English (shortened in the following to 'non-native teachers of English'). The scope of the studies has expanded from a native/non-native English-speaker comparison to observation of professional behaviour across different sociocultural contexts (Braine, 2005, 2006, 2010; Moussu & Llorca, 2008; Samimy & Kurihara, 2006). The available research has shown that non-native teachers of English, in particular, face the challenge of not only helping students solve problems stemming from conflicts between cultures but also develop their own intercultural identities while doing this (Moran, 2001). Non-native teachers of English can play a particularly important role in the promotion of intercultural competence and often have an advantage over native English-speaking teachers because they once were language learners and are more aware of the typical pitfalls and difficulties that students of the same languages and cultures as theirs can encounter. They may share their experience of culture shock with their students as they might have experienced it themselves once, and they can help their students to prepare for it (Moussu & Llorca, 2008). However, because of the limited amount of relevant research, no clear picture has emerged of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English.

The aim of the present study is to provide an overview of the recent research on the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English and to come up with directions for further research. For this purpose, we conducted a review study. Before presenting our review of studies, however, we must first clarify a few additional concepts, highlight what is known about the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English, and pinpoint what is lacking in the existing literature. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that we will use 'identity' and 'intercultural identity' to refer to the identity or self of the teacher within a language-and-culture teaching context in the remainder of this chapter and we offer a more detailed definition of such identity below.

## 2.2 Conceptualizing intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English

Identity can be defined as the individual's sense of who he or she is during his/her ongoing interaction with the world (Erikson, 1963). The concepts of *identity* and *self* are often blurred (White & Ding, 2009, p. 336). According to Beijaard et al. (2004), a teacher's identity is constantly developing and involves two strongly interwoven sides: the teacher's own ideas accumulated on the basis of personal experience and the ideas or expectations imposed upon the teacher by the social context. In other words, both person and context are implied in this conceptualization of 'teacher identity.' In addition, the notion of teacher identity may involve different sub-identities depending on the context (Beijaard et al., 2004). More integrated, dynamic conceptualizations of language teachers' identity suggest that it clearly depends on the social, cultural, and political context and develops via language and discourse (Faez, 2011; Gee, 2001; Rivers & Ross, 2013; Varghese et al., 2005).

Many studies about language teaching and learning use identity theories as a new perspective through which to view teaching in relation to classroom practice (Gee, 2001; Norton, 2006). This means that the identity of a language teacher is seen as a crucial component not only in 'determining how language teaching is played out' within the classroom, but also in understanding the 'sociocultural and sociopolitical landscape of the language classroom' (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22). Previous studies into intercultural identity have often focused on immigrants (including short-stay teachers or students) or cultural groups and their developing views of themselves in relation to more than one culture (e.g., Flunger & Ziebertz, 2010; Kim, 1994; Menard-Warwick, 2008; Ortaçtepe, 2015). Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) used the term 'intercultural identity' primarily when describing the target of EFL teaching. Recent studies of non-native teachers of English have used the concept of teachers' intercultural identity, investigating how these teachers viewed themselves from a sociocultural and pedagogical perspective (e.g., Duff & Uchida, 1997; Ilieva, 2010; J. Liu, 1999; Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005). The studies just mentioned present very different pictures and expectations of non-native teachers, and a clearer view is needed on what characterizes the intercultural identities of teachers, and how these identities are formed in language-and-culture teaching contexts. In particular, we felt that it was necessary to conduct a review of the available studies into in-service teachers, because their experiences of teaching and intercultural communication could

be expected to shed light on the formation of teachers' intercultural identities.

In the present review, we examined recent studies of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English across different countries. All of the studies were published in peer-reviewed journals with a worldwide circulation. And on the basis of this literature, we hoped to be able to increase our understanding of the characteristics and formation of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English in particular and thus pave the way for future studies of their unique position and roles for the teaching of English and intercultural competence. The following two research questions were addressed in our review.

1. How are the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English characterized and defined in recent studies?
2. What do these studies report about the formation of these intercultural identities?

## **2.3 Method**

### *2.3.1 Data collection*

We searched the following international databases for articles on the identities of non-native teachers of English: ISI (including JSTOR), ERIC, PsycINFO, and Springerlink. In addition, we searched Google Scholar and the references of the selected articles. We limited our search to peer-reviewed articles based on empirical studies published between 1997 and 2015 so as to obtain an overview of acknowledged state-of-the-art achievements in the field and avoid the dangerous 'inflationist repetition of the same ideas in different words' found in the many non-empirical articles that have been written on this topic (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

Considering various alternative labels that might be used for 'non-native English-speaking teachers,' 'English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL),' 'intercultural', and 'identity,' we initially ran a preliminary search in title, keywords, and abstracts of articles by using various combinations of keywords. The combinations included (a) 'non-native teacher' and 'ESL/EFL' and 'intercultural/cross-cultural/cultural' and 'identity/self,' (b) 'non-native teacher' and 'English/TESOL' and 'intercultural/cross-cultural/cultural' and 'identity/self,' and (c) 'non-native teacher' and 'English/TESOL'

and ‘identity/self’ and ‘culture.’ The search with the combinations yielded no hits. We tried to enlarge the scope of search by replacing ‘non-native teacher’ by ‘teacher’ in each of the combinations, or searched in the full text of articles with these combinations.

In the end, we identified 59 articles and then narrowed this down to 21 articles meeting the following inclusion criteria:

- Focus on only in-service non-native teachers of English (43 articles met this criterion; 10 articles were excluded because both non-native English-speaking and native English-speaking teachers of English were included (but not distinguished) or teachers of other subjects were included (but not distinguished); 6 articles were excluded because they studied pre-service teachers).
- Keywords in the title or the article such as *cultural*, or *intercultural identity/awareness/self* or *identity in intercultural/cross-cultural context* (21 articles met this criterion; 22 papers were excluded because the use of the words in the enlarged search led to topics of little or no relevance to the present study (e.g., *transnationalism*, *cultural capital*, *identity status*) or consideration of only the linguistic or pedagogical qualities of non-native teachers of English without attention to cultural issues).

### 2.3.2 Data analysis

In order to answer our research questions, we categorized the 21 selected articles into two groups: (a) those concerned with the characteristics of teacher identities; and (b) those concerned with dynamic processes shaping these teacher identities.

For each article, we gave an overview of the characteristics of the study (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2 for more information). We labelled the studies with the previous (if the teachers were trainees at the time of studies) or present types of teachers of English participating in the studies, i.e., ESL or English as a second language (in English-speaking regions or countries, e.g., the United States, Australia, Hong Kong) and EFL or English as a foreign language (in non-English-speaking countries, e.g., Belgium, Chile, China, Vietnam).

## 2.4 Characteristics of the identities of non-native teachers of English

The identities of non-native teachers of English have only recently been studied (Braine, 2010). The 21 articles published between 1997 and 2015 and thus qualifying for our review were selected from only 59 articles published in peer-reviewed journals. Fourteen of the studies were about non-native EFL teachers from Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China (mainland), Colombia, Greece, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and Vietnam, and seven studies about non-native ESL teachers in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, and the United States (see methodology in Tables 2.1 and 2.2).

The first category of studies provides insight into the characteristics of the identities of non-native teachers of English in language-and-culture teaching contexts where they have to deal with differing cultures, values, and norms (see Table 2.1 for an overview).

**Table 2.1**

*Overview of studies included in the review on characteristics of intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English*

Author, year / type of teachers	Aim of study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
J. Liu (1999) / ESL	To explore the complexities of the labels native/non-native English-speaker and relevant consequences in teaching	<i>Non-native English-speaking TESOL professional or dual identities</i> ; no explicit definition	Native /non-native English-speaker dichotomy; cultural affiliation	Data gathered from e-mail and interviews with 7 non-native English-speaking TESOL professionals in the United States	The participants interpreted the term 'non-native English-speaking professional in TESOL' in various ways. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences revealed complex dimensions of the label, involving the sequence in which the languages were learned, competence in English, cultural affiliation, self-identification, social environment, and political labelling.
Weisman (2001) / ESL	To examine bicultural identities of bilingual teachers and their attitudes	<i>Bicultural identity</i> described in terms of the individual's identification with cultural	Biculturalism	Interviews with 4 Latino teachers in the United States; data examined for expressed attitudes,	Differences between teachers' bicultural identities appear in their ways of coping with pressures in a society that encourages conformity to the dominant culture; there are connections

Author, year / type of teachers	Aim of study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
	towards English and Spanish as well as the relationship between the two languages	groups; no explicit definition		contradictions, and conceptualizations concerning key issues related to language and culture	between: bicultural identity and political consciousness; teachers' bicultural identities and language attitudes; and identification with Latino culture, political consciousness, and recognition of the value of the Spanish language as a means to affirm the cultural identities of Latino students.
Sercu (2002) / EFL	To inquire into how foreign language teachers' current professional self-concepts and teaching practices relate to the envisaged profile of the intercultural foreign language teacher	<i>Teachers' professional self-concept</i> operationalized in terms of knowledge, attitudes, skills needed to develop learners' intercultural competence; no explicit definition	Intercultural communicative competence	Questionnaire survey in Belgium among 78 teachers of English, 45 teachers of French, and 27 teachers of German	Participating teachers were willing to support intercultural objectives. Their teaching practices, however, could not be characterized as directed towards the full attainment of intercultural communicative competence.
Llurda and Huguet (2003) / EFL	To uncover the self-perception of non-native English-speaking EFL teachers	<i>Self-awareness</i> or self-perception as non-native English-speaking teachers with particular attention to language proficiency, teaching views, and the native/non-native English-speaker debate; no explicit definition	Native /non-native English-speaker dichotomy	Questionnaire survey of 101 non-native English-speaking primary and secondary school English language teachers in the city of Lleida, Spain	Compared to primary school teachers, secondary school teachers showed (a) a higher regard for their own language skills, (b) a higher preference for a communicative orientation in teaching, and (c) stronger critical awareness of their situation as non-native English-speaking teachers in teaching English as an international language.
Sercu (2006) /	To investigate whether or	<i>Foreign language and</i>	Professional self-concept;	Teachers' beliefs profiled over 7	Teachers' profiles do not yet meet those of the envisaged 'foreign language and

Author, year / type of teachers	Aim of study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
EFL	not teachers' profiles meet the specifications put forth for a teacher of 'foreign language and intercultural competence'	<i>intercultural competence teachers</i> , referring seemingly to teachers who possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to teach intercultural competence; no explicit definition	intercultural communicative competence	countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain, Sweden) by means of a web-based questionnaire	intercultural competence teacher'; different patterns in teacher thinking and teaching practice found.
Diniz de Figueiredo (2011)/ ESL	To investigate how non-native English-speaking teachers in American K-12 schools perceive their identities in various relationships	<i>Teachers' identities</i> defined as both self-perception and image as observed by others	Native /non-native English speaker dichotomy	Survey with 19 open questions of 15 Brazilian ESL teachers working in elementary and middle schools in the United States	The teachers' language skills were crucial in defining their identities as non-native English-speaking teachers. Native/non-native English speaker dichotomy still affects the ways in which the teachers are perceived.
Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) /EFL	To investigate how dialogues between expert and novice teachers provide them with spaces to activate critical awareness of their global professional identity.	<i>Global professional identity</i> , meaning a globally-minded professional identity, aware that 'any teaching context is situated at both global and local scales simultaneously'	None	Case study based on the thematic analysis of (a) the online dialogue between 14 expert non-native English-speaking English language teachers in Colombia and 12 novice non-native English-speaking teachers in the United States who attended graduate programmes in teacher	(a) Teachers considered different contextual factors, e.g., teaching experience, coursework, in the online dialogue. (b) Expert and novice teachers differed in considering the role of English language teaching (ELT), institutional constraints, whose culture to teach, and linguistic diversity in language teaching. E.g., the expert teachers were sensitive to the dangers of colonialism and they supported a critical perspective between ES cultures and their own. The novice teachers considered American culture as the focus of instruction and their future selves as representatives of American

Author, year / type of teachers	Aim of study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
				education at the same time; and (b) the interviews with those 12 teachers in the United States about the dialogue	culture.

*Note.* \* The terms in *italics* are those concepts used in the studies. ESL = English as a second language; EFL = English as a foreign language; TESOL = Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

### 2.4.1 Aims of the studies

The studies in this group were designed to explore the identities of non-native teachers of English in various pedagogical, institutional, and sociocultural relationships either inside or outside the classroom setting. The aims of the studies varied as the contexts of the teachers were different. The aims of the studies with teachers working, living, or studying in a ES country addressed the identities of the teachers within various *sociocultural* and *institutional* relationships (J. Liu, 1999; Weisman, 2001); they also explored the connections between the identities of the teachers, their attitudes towards sociocultural relationships, languages and cultures, and their teaching expertise (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; Weisman, 2001).

The aims of the studies of non-native teachers of English in their home countries were mainly to define and describe their identities within *institutional* relationships, and thus in relation to native English-speaking colleagues (Llurda & Huguet, 2003), or specifically from the perspective of the need to promote intercultural competence among students (Sercu, 2002, 2006). Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) brought expert and novice non-native EFL teachers together in dialogue with a view to exploring the teachers' critical awareness of professional identity as situated in a teaching context with both global and local scales.

### 2.4.2 Definitions

As shown in Table 2.1, various terms were used to describe the intercultural identities of the non-native teachers of English: cultural affiliation, dual identity (J. Liu, 1999), bicultural identity (Weisman, 2001), or global professional identity (Guerrero Nieto &

Meadows, 2015). Most of the terms were not explicitly defined and could only be interpreted according to their context of use.

The identity concepts varied depending on the focus and perspective of research: identity as a sense of belonging to a certain culture (J. Liu, 1999); identification with a cultural group within society (Weisman, 2001); professional qualification (e.g., language skills, teaching views) within the teaching context (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; Llurda & Huguet, 2003); awareness of professional identity in both global and local teaching context (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015); or ability to teach intercultural competence (Sercu, 2002, 2006). In some of the studies, a native/non-native English-speaking dichotomy was quoted as this was presumably an important aspect of the identities of non-native teachers of English in these contexts (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; J. Liu, 1999; Llurda & Huguet, 2003).

#### *2.4.3 Related concepts*

Related concepts in these articles included the native/non-native English speaker dichotomy and intercultural competence. The attitudes and positions of non-native teachers of English with respect to the native/non-native English speaker debate were considered important for their self-perceptions (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; J. Liu, 1999; Llurda & Huguet, 2003). Intercultural communicative competence, consisting of the intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes relating to both the teacher's native culture and the foreign culture which the teachers is teaching, also helped to define a competent foreign language teacher (Sercu, 2002, 2006).

#### *2.4.4 Methods*

Four out of the 7 empirical studies were conducted as small-scale interviews, classroom observations, or questionnaires with open questions; the other 3 were large-scale surveys. Teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and judgments with respect to their identities, language teaching, and student responses were given much more weight in the studies than their teaching behaviour. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted. Qualitative approaches allowed the researchers to examine teacher identity in depth in a specific context and not to make generalizations beyond the immediate setting (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015). Quantitative approaches, however, enabled the researchers to draw individual results together and consider them as a totality to

show trends and divergence among different countries or groups (Sercu et al., 2005).

#### 2.4.5 Main findings

With regard to the characteristics of the identities of the non-native teachers of English, the teachers often perceived and evaluated themselves in terms of: their language proficiency and ability to teach, their relationships with various parties in the school and society, conflicts they have encountered, and their sociocultural experiences (see the last column of Table 2.1). The specific *pedagogical settings* and *sociocultural backgrounds* of the teachers also appeared to be of major importance for their intercultural identities.

The way in which the teachers label their identities was closely connected to their sociocultural backgrounds and experiences, and they appeared to be aware of the interactions between this labelling and their professional functioning. J. Liu (1999), for example, reports that the environment in which people are exposed to languages plays a crucial role in their definition of the ‘non/native English-speaking TESOL professional’ and their ‘(perceived) competence in English, cultural affiliations, self-identification, social environment, and political labelling’. Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015) found in their study that expert teachers recalled their working experience and teaching context when reflecting on their identities, while novice teachers resorted to their learning experience to imagine their future identities.

The self-perceptions of linguistic proficiency and awareness of the pedagogical advantages of being a non-native teacher of English as opposed to a native English-speaking teacher of English proved important for the identities of the non-native teacher. This is illustrated by the findings of both Llurda and Huguet (2003) and Diniz de Figueiredo (2011). Not only the English-language competence of non-native teachers of English contributed to how they identified themselves in the workplace but also their bilingual or multilingual skills and ability to relate to the cultures of their students and their students’ parents (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011). In addition, the self-concepts of the teachers can develop as they narrow the gap between their actual teaching profiles and their ideal profiles of foreign language teachers who are willing and competent to teach intercultural competence (Sercu, 2002, 2006), or as novice teachers communicate with expert teachers in dialogue (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015).

Further variation in the intercultural identities of the non-native teachers of English

was found to depend on their *self-narratives* and thus relate to their political, linguistic and cultural attitudes. Weisman (2001), for example, found teachers to vary between having only a vague sense of belonging to a certain culture versus a strong sense of belonging. They showed very different cultural orientations that could range from complying with the expectations of the mainstream culture in the ES country (i.e., the United States) to retaining their native cultural identity. A strong connection was also detected by Weisman between the identities of the teachers and their awareness of the status of language and culture within society, on the one hand, and their attitudes towards their mother tongue and the English language, on the other hand. Teachers may consider their roles differently in relation to the cultures they teach. Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015, p. 22) found expert teachers supported critical views of the home and target cultures in class, while novice teachers considered that they would ‘represent for their students authentic American English and culture’.

## **2.5 Formation of the identities of non-native teachers of English**

The second category of studies explored the formation of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English. The factors influencing the formation of teachers’ identities were associated with the teachers’ sociocultural — including intercultural — experiences. These factors were described as constantly developing in conjunction with changing contextual elements that include the family, classroom, school, and society. Most of the factors affecting the teachers’ ongoing identity formation appeared to arise from matters like the discrepancy between language in teaching in the home country and language in use in the ES country (Ortaçtepe, 2015), the teachers problems of socialization in the ES country (Fotovatian, 2010), or a conflict or collision of values from different cultures (Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005) (see Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2**

*Overview of studies included in the review on formation of intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English*

Author and year / type of teachers	Aim of the study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
Duff and Uchida (1997) / EFL	To explore teachers' roles and identities as instructors and purveyors of (American) English language and cultures in Japan	<i>Sociocultural identity</i> (sometimes interchanged with <i>cultural identity</i> ), seemingly referring to how the teachers perceive their role in this sociocultural context; no explicit definition	Professional, social, political, and cultural identities	4 EFL teachers and their classes in Japan as the subject of an ethnographic case study plus data collected via questionnaires, weekly retrospective journal entries, audio/videotaped classroom observations, field notes, interviews, review of instructional materials, and the research journal of teachers	The teachers' perceptions of their sociocultural identities were found to be formed and constantly developed on the basis of their personal histories, past educational, professional, and (cross-) cultural experiences.  Language teachers socialise students in new cultural practices.  Teachers are involved in cultural transmission.
Nugroho Widiyanto (2005) / ESL	To discuss a range of social and cultural influences on his emerging identity as a teacher of English	<i>Identity</i> , always connected to race, religion, and social status in reflection; no explicit definition	None	Self-study of an Indonesian teacher of English via autobiography and critical reflection	He discusses in a self-reflective manner the types of discourses at work to construct his identity in a range of different settings.

Author and year / type of teachers	Aim of the study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
Phan and Phan (2006) /EFL	To analyse the nature of Vietnamese teacher identity construct-ions and the relations between the personal, the professional, and morality of teachers	<i>Identity</i> as ‘being’ and ‘becoming’ (stability within changes); identity as national /cultural entity and sense of belonging	(National) morality	Individual/group interviews and guided reflective writing with 7 Vietnamese teachers of English in Australian TESOL programmes	Despite being teachers of English, teachers’ morality-related identities remained persistent. They negotiated their identities alongside morality and moral values in their cultural and professional practices. They presented a strong sense of self as a teacher in relation to morality and being a cultural model of the moral guide role.
Phan (2007) / EFL	To examine the identity formation of the teachers, with regard to their negotiations of their seemingly conflicting roles and selves	<i>National /cultural identity</i> , noted as constructed, multiple, and dynamic with a sense of belonging in relation to mobility and the construction of national identity; no explicit definition	None	Case study of 7 Vietnamese teachers of English (six females and one male) studying TESOL at different Australian universities; data collected through individual in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, and guided reflective writing	The results show that a strong sense of a Vietnamese national/cultural identity is consistently constructed and confirmed by the teachers, despite their global mobility.
Tsui (2007) / EFL	To understand the processes of identity formation, the interplay between	<i>Identity</i> seems to refer to teachers’ professional identity; no explicit	None	A Chinese teacher’s reflections collected over 6 months; data analysed by	The process of self-identification interacts with the participation in negotiating meanings.  The interplay of identification and the

Author and year / type of teachers	Aim of the study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
	processes and identities as teachers position themselves	definition		sorting and interpretation based on Wenger's framework (1998)	negotiability of meanings could generate identity conflicts.
Menard-Warwick (2008) / ESL	To explore the connections between the development of teachers' intercultural competence and their transnational life experiences; how they define their own (inter)cultural identities; and how they approach cultural issues with their students	<i>Intercultural identity</i> as 'a negotiated investment in seeing the world through multiple cultural lenses' (p.622)	Culture, identity, inter-culturality, teacher identities	Two teachers (one Brazilian, one Chilean), who both emigrated to the United States; classes audiotaped with ethnographic field notes; pre-observational and follow-up interviews	The two female teachers developed their bicultural identity through their past experiences in two cultures. They were observed to differ somewhat in their approaches to the teaching of cultural issues.
S. Yang and Bautista (2008) / EFL	To investigate how a Korean teacher of English (re)shaped her teacher self through reflective and interrelated negotiations with herself and others	<i>Identity and teacher self</i> , connected to a necessary 'self' confrontation in varying forms in and outside the classroom; no explicit definition	None	A Korean English teacher enrolled as a participant, who narrated ideas about her Korean English teacher identity in a letter	Korean teachers of English struggle to establish their own identity against the background of continuous compliance with values, standards, and norms for individual, school, and society; this struggle can result in positive transformations.

Author and year / type of teachers	Aim of the study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
Fotovatian (2010) / EFL	To describe non-native English-speaking EFL teachers' struggle to construct a social and professional identity	<i>Social and professional identity</i> (social identity referring seemingly to a sense of belonging to a community, and professional identity related to native-like proficiency and competence as a teacher of English); no explicit definition	Intercultural interaction strategies	Interview with 2 Iranian teachers of English in an Australian university; audio-recording of team conversation and the participants' electronic journals	Teachers value social interactions as the major channel for integration and networking;  Their isolation resulted from cultural gaps, difficulty in engagement in local discourses, asymmetrical power relationship and legitimacy.
Ilieva (2010) / EFL	To explore and analyse non-native EFL teachers' negotiations of TESOL programme discourses in the process of developing identities	<i>Teaching /professional identities</i> ; understood as critically related to social, cultural, and political contexts, constructed and negotiated through language and discourse; multiple, shifting, and	None	The Bakhtinian analysis of portfolios from 20 Chinese teachers of English in a Canadian TESOL programme	Despite being teachers of English, their morality-related identities persisted.  The process of identity formation consolidates their understanding of identity as dynamic and a sense of belonging.

Author and year / type of teachers	Aim of the study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
		in conflict; no explicit definition			
Menard-Warwick (2011) / EFL	To explore teachers' perspectives on their own bilingual identity development through their appropriation of English language popular culture across five decades	<i>Teacher (bilingual) identity</i> considered to be pedagogical, context-dependent, and constructed through the appropriation of voices from cultures	None.	Interview with 18 Chilean teachers of English at a Chilean University	There are connections between popular culture and bilingual development. Teachers had multiple identities. One identity they all brought to their pedagogy was that of active second language user and discerning popular cultural consumer.
Reis (2011) / ESL	To explore the processes through which non-native ESL teachers can achieve a sense of professional identity legitimacy 'by being empowered to recognize, acknowledge, and contest ideological discourses that position them as second-rate professionals' (p. 141)	<i>Professional /teacher identity/self</i> , used interchangeably with reference to the understanding of oneself in relation to sociocultural context, social relationships, and activity in the world	None	A dialogic journal, videotaped classroom observations, audio-taped interviews, teaching philosophy statements, student surveys about a Chinese teacher of a graduate-level English writing course in the United States	The participant went from being a 'blind believer' in the native-speaker myth to challenging it; worked to empower his own students as expert speakers and users of the language. His beliefs and attitudes toward the native speaker myth remained ambivalent and contradictory.

Author and year / type of teachers	Aim of the study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
Wu and Wurenbilige (2012) / EFL	To investigate the identity of a (Chinese) Mongolian teacher of English at university, her own perceived identity, and factors influencing identity formation in sociocultural contexts	<i>Teacher identity</i> , referring to the knowledge of ‘who I am’ and ‘what kind of person I am’; dynamic; developing over lifetime; reinterpreted and reshaped while interacting with social and cultural community	None	Interview of a (Chinese) Mongolian trilingual teacher of English in a Chinese university	The teacher’s identity is complex: a (Chinese) Mongolian person, a Chinese speaker, and a university teacher of English. Her identity formation was influenced by many factors such as her living environment, family background, and employment context with learning experiences playing a very crucial role.
Trent (2012) / ESL	To explore how the experiences of teaching a language and its sociocultural aspects shape the professional identities of a beginning English language teacher in Hong Kong.	<i>Teacher identity</i> as ‘our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are’ (Danielewicz, cited in Trent, 2012)	None	Three-rounds of interviews with 8 non-native ESL teachers of English in Hong Kong (with results of 2 rounds reported in article)	The participants’ engagement in the practices and activities of teaching, their relations with colleagues, and their positioning within different discourses of teaching and learning by their schools as well as by the wider educational environment shaped their decisions about whether to continue to pursue a teaching career.
Ortaçtepe (2015) / EFL	To explore how 2 EFL teachers’ language socialization	<i>Teachers of intercultural competence</i> seems to refer to ‘language	Intercultural communicative competence; language	Interviews with 2 experienced Turkish EFL teachers coming to the United	The language socialization of the 2 teachers in the United States led to personal transformations in their

Author and year / type of teachers	Aim of the study	Concept and definition adopted*	Related concepts	Methodology	Main findings
	in the United States enable them to (re)construct their identities as teachers of intercultural competence.	teachers who teach the target language with its cultural dimension' (p. 96)	socialization	States for graduate study; the 3-phase interviews comprised the participants' past, present, and future over 9 months	identity as teachers of intercultural competence. And such identity also enabled them to reflect on their current and future language and culture teaching practice. Teacher identities are dynamic, situated, multiple, and even sometimes blurred.

*Note.* \*The terms in *italics* are the concepts used in the studies. ESL = English as a second language; EFL = English as a foreign language; TESOL = Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

### 2.5.1 Aims of the studies

Many of the studies of identity formation focused on how identities were formed and negotiated as part of transnational life (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005), either by discourses with regard to TESOL training or PhD programmes in ES countries (Fotovatian, 2010; Ilieva, 2010; Ortaçtepe, 2015; Phan, 2007), or by teaching experiences in teachers' home countries (Tsui, 2007; Wu & Wurenbilige, 2012; S. Yang & Bautista, 2008).

In other studies on the formation of identities of non-native teachers of English, the stated purpose often included both the observation of identity formation in order to understand it and the search for related factors, including the cultural content of the ESL curricula (Duff & Uchida, 1997), educational morality (Phan & Phan, 2006), popular English-language culture (Menard-Warwick, 2011), and other teaching factors (Trent, 2012) (see the second column of Table 2.2).

### 2.5.2 Definitions

The terms used in the studies of identity formation pointed, implicitly or explicitly, to sociocultural and institutional background as the context for identity formation. Either the sociocultural and institutional contexts (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Menard-Warwick, 2011; Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005; Phan, 2007; Phan & Phan, 2006) or the professionalism of the teachers (Fotovatian, 2010; Ilieva, 2010; Ortaçtepe, 2015; Reis,

2011; Trent, 2012; Tsui, 2007; Wu & Wurenbilige, 2012; S. Yang & Bautista, 2008) were emphasised in the definitions of identities.

Menard-Warwick (2008) was the only author to adopt the term ‘intercultural identity,’ which was then defined in relation to the perspectives teachers formed on the basis of their transnational experiences and ‘negotiated investment in seeing the world through multiple cultural lenses’ (p.622). In the remaining studies, the term ‘identity’ was used more in the sense of teacher/professional identity within a specific intercultural context, such as teaching of English language and culture or studying, working or living in ES cultures.

The identities of the non-native teachers of English were also typically characterized as multidimensional in the definitions (Duff & Uchida, 1997), involving a sense of belonging (e.g., on the basis of race, nation, religion, social status) (Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005), or in terms of the different roles required in the classroom and beyond (Ortaçtepe, 2015; S. Yang & Bautista, 2008). Ortaçtepe (2015), for example, found that the socialization of two Turkish teachers in the United States involved three identities, i.e., an experienced EFL teacher, an L2 user, and a burgeoning scholar, which were often blurred. Several of the definitions included a dynamic element such as ‘being and becoming’ (Phan & Phan, 2006), language socialization (Ortaçtepe, 2015), interacting with mobility (Ilieva, 2010; Phan, 2007), or interacting with the social and cultural community over a lifetime (Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005; Wu & Wurenbilige, 2012).

In some of the studies, identity formation is defined as a reaction to the conflict between the ideas, values, and norms of different cultures (Phan, 2007) or a reaction to gaps between past and present selves, current self-perceptions, or existing social norms (S. Yang & Bautista, 2008). Such conflict is seen to result in stress, confusion, or dilemma in the formation of a teacher’s identity in a multi-cultural context (Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005).

### *2.5.3 Related concepts*

References to such concepts as professional, political, or cultural identities (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Menard-Warwick, 2008) reveal the focus of the relevant studies. The concepts of culture, identity, and interculturality, in particular, appear to provide the

basis for a definition of intercultural identity (Menard-Warwick, 2008).

Other researchers describe the interactions between some related factors and the formation of identity. Phan and Phan (2006) discuss the role of *ideology* in teachers' development of their identities when part of the teachers' identities remained stable because their morality remained unchanged despite their transnational experience, while Fotovatian (2010) examined the *intercultural interaction strategies* of teachers in the formation of their identities in social integration and professional recognition. Ortaçtepe (2015) explored how language teachers negotiated their identities as teachers of *intercultural competence* in the language socialization process in the United States. She considers that language teaching needs a cultural dimension, and the development of teachers' identities of intercultural competence requires a socialization process.

#### 2.5.4 Methods

The research on identity formation was conducted in small-scale or individual case studies involving interviews, journals, portfolios, and observations. These qualitative methods helped teachers to reflect upon their identities and transform implicit ideas into well-constructed stories with sometimes considerable depth.

#### 2.5.5 Main findings

The findings presented in the last column of Table 2.2 can all be summarized as pointing to some common features of the identity formation of non-native teachers of English.

Teachers developed and negotiated their identities through — often conflicting — interactions or discourses in various sociocultural and institutional contexts, which may include family, local community, religion, classroom, school, and (TESOL) training or postgraduate programs.

Various factors in the interaction between teachers and contexts influenced the formation of their identities: their cross-cultural experiences, prior learning or training experiences, relationships with students and colleagues, job demands, and extent of or need for cultural assimilation or socialization.

Various aspects of the identities of non-native teachers of English and their attitudes influenced each other in the development of their identities within an

intercultural context, making ‘intercultural’ crucial for understanding their identity formation. On the one hand, teachers’ social, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, political, and professional identities often merged when responding in a particular context. On the other hand, their attitudes towards language, culture, their profession, and power relationships in society can be influenced by their identity development within an intercultural context.

Even within the same sociocultural context, the identities of non-native teachers of English can develop differently and thus vary (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Ilieva, 2010; Menard-Warwick, 2008; Ortaçtepe, 2015). In the study by Menard-Warwick (2008), for example, both participants had worked as ESL teachers in the United States for some years and defined themselves as bicultural, but their approaches to teaching cultural issues were different. Their different teaching approaches were connected to their intercultural experiences and institutional contexts. One teacher lived with family members of a different cultural background and she taught immigrants by frequently comparing her students’ cultures with the local culture. The other teacher was impressed by the social changes in her home country and often discussed changes brought about by globalization with her students. In this study, Menard-Warwick highlighted the value of the pedagogical resources that the teachers brought into their language-and-culture teaching.

## **2.6 Conclusion and Discussion**

The studies reviewed here provide insights into how the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English manifest themselves. We found three groups of interrelated factors that shape the intercultural identities of the teachers: (a) factors related to traits such as personality characteristics; actual and perceived linguistic, intercultural, and teaching competence; ideas about language and culture; and own experiences with language learning; (b) factors related to the teaching context, including relationships with colleagues; relationships with non-native English-speaking students and their parents; and teaching curricula; and (c) factors related to the more general sociocultural context, which may include influences from family and society, ideas about the dominant culture and their own culture; and the transnational experiences of the teacher.

The conclusions we draw from our review about the definition and characteristics of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English (i.e., research question one) are discussed below.

First, the teachers' intercultural identities were found to be flexible and were constantly adjusted, depending on the challenges and conflicts they were confronted with. Using various means of communication and negotiation, teachers constructed and maintained their identities. We found the conflict between the cultural values of the non-native teachers of English and the local culture of the ES countries to be more manifest among the teachers working abroad than among the teachers in their home countries (i.e., when the teachers were most likely living and working in their own culture). In the ES countries, moreover, the need for the non-native teachers of English to identify with the ES culture was more apparent than in their home countries. In their home countries, the identities of EFL teachers are also influenced by ES cultures (e.g., popular music or public media), and education plays an important role in their identity formation (Menard-Warwick, 2011). These findings could be useful in cultivating intercultural identities among pre-service teachers. The studies we reviewed confirmed the finding of other studies that pre-service EFL teachers found the exposure to the lifestyles and values of Western people was effective in the formation of their identities (Atay & Ece, 2009). Sending teachers abroad to study in ES cultures can be one way to increase their exposure to another culture (Han & Yin, 2016). Conscious reflection on their competence and positioning themselves in the community of language teachers also helps pre-service teachers to form and negotiate their identities in practice (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Pavlenko, 2003). More studies of how teachers in EFL contexts consider their identities in relation to ES cultures are nevertheless needed.

Second, non-native teachers of English are not a homogenous group. They develop differing intercultural identities depending on their sociocultural and institutional backgrounds, which can vary from an ES to a non-ES country, from a lower to a higher level of teaching, from novice to expert types of teachers, and from positive to negative responses to various factors at play in the intercultural context of their teaching.

Third, the teachers' confidence in their language skills and intercultural competence influences their intercultural identities, which may then — in turn — influence their attitudes towards languages, teaching, culture, and so forth within the intercultural context.

These three characteristics of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English point to both personal and contextual sides of teacher identity, as previously observed by Beijaard et al. (2004).

Although the contexts of the studies we reviewed were all specifically about the teaching of English language and ES cultures or intercultural competence, the labels applied to the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English were sometimes vague and or even non-existent. We can expect a teacher's identity, professional identity, bilingual identity, sociocultural identity, and intercultural identity to actually overlap to such an extent that the boundaries between these labels are blurred. However, to understand how the roles or positions of non-native teachers of English are formed in a specific language-and-culture teaching context, and how their roles and positions benefit teaching of ES cultures and intercultural competence, it is advisable to focus on how teachers view themselves in the specific contexts and what those views of themselves can contribute to language-and-culture teaching. The teachers' intercultural identity, as one of the sub-identities of their professional identities (the concept 'sub-identity' was proposed by Beijaard et al., 2004), may be quite a dominant aspect of a non-native teachers' identity, in particular for those who work in language-and-culture teaching contexts. More information on just how the teachers regard themselves within specific language-and-culture teaching contexts is nevertheless needed to provide insight into how to help teachers to reflect and justify their roles and positions in teaching.

Taking a step back, the purpose of the present review was to gain insight into the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English. Knowing about the characteristics of teachers' intercultural identities and the factors that shape them can help teachers reflect on their identities, think about how their identities have been formed, and how their identities influence their teaching. This may be especially useful for in-service teachers who may overlook the importance of such factors for the teaching of intercultural competence and knowledge of ES cultures or for pre-service and practising teachers studying or working in an environment where ES culture is distant. Reflection on one's intercultural identity may positively affect the teachers themselves and allow them to reject the myth of native speakers always being more qualified than non-native English-speakers to teach English, for example (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Reis, 2011). Such reflection may also allow teachers to

respond more effectively to the tensions that can arise in teaching contexts from issues such as race, gender, culture, and class (S. Yang & Bautista, 2008).

Research on the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English in language-and-culture teaching contexts has only recently begun to receive widespread attention from researchers and language-teaching professionals. The small number of relevant studies, the limited number of participants in the studies, the limited variety of the participants, and the inconsistency of terminology used lead us to conclude that only limited insight can currently be gained from the existing research literature into how teachers in general, but also in specific countries, consider their identities in relation to the target language and culture of their teaching (i.e., ES cultures). As sociocultural theories such as that of Vygotsky became more popular in the study of language pedagogy (Ellis, 2013; van Compernelle & Williams, 2013), studies of the intercultural identities of teachers shifted their focus more and more to the interaction between sociocultural factors and teachers' perceptions of themselves in the teaching context. More studies comparing non-native teachers of English across varying sociocultural and teaching contexts are needed. To enable further exploration of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English and to arrive at fruitful approaches for understanding the formation and roles of their intercultural identities, we need more in-depth case studies and large-scale surveys across countries. Only then may we reach agreement on the characteristics of the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English, how they are formed, and how they connect to the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour of teachers in language-and-culture teaching contexts.



## Chapter 3

# A qualitative study into Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' intercultural identities<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Manuscript submitted for publication: Chen, D., Tigelaar, D. E. H., & Verloop, N. (under review). English language teachers and their intercultural identities: Studying Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' self-perceptions in relation to ES cultures.

## **Abstract**

Ideas on teaching about cultures associated with the English language (ES cultures) can be very different among teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL teachers). In this study, we explored how EFL teachers in different countries perceived themselves as teachers in relation to ES cultures: or, what characterizes their intercultural identities. Aiming to learn more about Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' self-perceptions in relation to ES cultures, and to find out whether there are differences between teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities in the two national groups, we conducted an exploratory study by interviewing a small number of Chinese and Dutch secondary school EFL teachers. Our research questions were:

1. How do Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers in the interview perceive their intercultural identities?
2. What similarities and differences exist between their perceptions of intercultural identities?

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 teachers in China and the Netherlands (5 Chinese and 5 Dutch teachers) to elicit the teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities. The results offer a relatively comprehensive picture of how differently the participating Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers saw themselves in relation to ES cultures, and of how these differences were connected to their teaching. Our findings illustrate difficulties as well as challenges that EFL teachers may experience in positioning themselves in relation to ES cultures when teaching. Practical implications are discussed.

### 3.1 Introduction

Teachers who teach English as a foreign language (EFL) nowadays are expected not only to develop students' competences in use of the English language but also their competences in understanding and communicating with people from different cultural backgrounds (Byram et al., 2002). This expectation is based on a development over the last few decades whereby communication across cultures has become more and more important and, as a result, cultural diversity, exchange of meaning in interpersonal communication, and intercultural mediation are currently considered crucial in foreign language teaching (Kramsch, 2014). These new demands of preparing students for future intercultural communication bring challenges to EFL teachers worldwide. Most EFL teachers who teach in a non-English-speaking country are non-native speakers of English (shortened in the following to non-native EFL teachers) (Braine, 2010). They are likely to have learned the English language and learned about the cultures associated with the English language (ES cultures) in their home countries. In this process, they may have acquired stereotypes and biases about ES cultures, which they might not be conscious of, and which may influence their attitudes in culture teaching (Byram et al., 2002). Moreover, EFL teachers in different cultural contexts may have very different ideas about teaching ES cultures (Karabinar & Guler, 2013; Sercu et al., 2005), and they have different notions of themselves as teachers in relation to these cultures (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Menard-Warwick, 2008). Because of these variations in ideas and attitudes among EFL teachers, previous researchers have doubted whether EFL teachers meet the general requirement of teaching intercultural competence (Sercu, 2002, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005).

The current study focuses on the perspectives of EFL teachers themselves, and the ways in which EFL teachers worldwide aim to deal with the present challenges of intercultural language teaching. In particular, this study aims to acquire a better understanding of how EFL teachers in different countries view themselves as teachers in relation to ES cultures, or, how they perceive their *intercultural identities*. Teachers in countries with a smaller geographic and cultural distance from ES cultures normally have more convenient access to ES cultures, more imminent needs for intercultural communication, and gain information about ES cultures more easily than do teachers in countries further away from ES cultures (Kachru, 1990). This means that if we want to explore the phenomenon of teachers' intercultural identities, it is reasonable to consider

cultural distance as an important variable in teachers' intercultural identities. An obvious choice would be to compare the intercultural identities of two groups of teachers from countries that differ substantially in their 'distances' from ES cultures, e.g., China and the Netherlands. As one of the representative cultures in Asia, Chinese culture is very distinct from ES cultures, while in Europe the Dutch culture shares many similarities with British and American cultures, as reflected in previous sociocultural value survey results (Hofstede et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006). Although English is compulsory in both Chinese and Dutch secondary schools, the proportion of people who speak and use English in China is much lower than in the Netherlands (European Commission, 2012; Wei & Su, 2012). It therefore seems reasonable to assume that the differences in distance between teachers' native cultures and ES cultures could enable us to find meaningful differences between teachers' intercultural identities in different countries.

Recent studies have used identity theories to gain a better understanding of what happens during language teaching in the classroom (Gee, 2001; Norton, 2006). From the perspective of identity theories on EFL teaching, the identity of a language teacher is regarded not only as a determinant in the practice of language teaching, but rather as the key to understanding the sociocultural context of the classroom (Varghese et al., 2005). Earlier reviews of studies about non-native EFL teachers have found that the identities of non-native foreign language teachers are often defined by their native language, and examined in the context of general language teaching, rather than by their experiences with culture teaching (e.g., Braine, 2010; Moussu & Llorca, 2008; Samimy & Kurihara, 2006). Though teaching intercultural competence is becoming an influential approach in EFL teaching nowadays (Kramsch, 2014), there have been few studies about EFL teachers' intercultural identities. Taking into account the findings and approaches in existing research (cf. Chapter 2), we conducted in-depth interviews with Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers, to gain an understanding of possible similarities and differences in their perceptions of their intercultural identities. We expected our findings not only to result in more insight into teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities in different nations, but also to contribute to an understanding of how EFL teachers deal with the challenges they meet as cultural mediators.

### 3.2 Identity of EFL teachers in intercultural teaching

In previous research, teachers' intercultural identities have been studied from mainly linguistic and pedagogical perspectives, and often with a focus on teachers who had intercultural experiences (see Chapter 2). By interviewing teachers working in their own countries, we gained knowledge about how non-native EFL teachers regard themselves in relation to ES cultures, and how such identities are formed and connected to their teaching.

From a sociocultural perspective, language and culture are seen as inseparable in EFL teaching and learning, and culture is not only content but also a context of teaching (Kramsch, 2014). This inseparability of language and culture involves both the personal and professional experiences of teachers (Gandana & Parr, 2013; Varghese et al., 2005). In the context of EFL teaching, teachers are exposed to new cultural ideas and practices in discourse with their students and they constantly negotiate their self-perceptions and roles while teaching (Newton, Yates, Shearn, & Nowitzki, 2010). How EFL teachers see themselves and perceive their roles in relation to ES cultures is also referred to in the literature as their 'intercultural identities' (cf. Menard-Warwick, 2008).

Previous studies have shown that non-native EFL teachers in different sociocultural contexts may have different views on their relationship with ES cultures (see Chapter 2). Non-native EFL teachers who study or work in ES countries may be quite aware of their affiliations to both their own and the ES culture, especially when they face a conflict of beliefs or experience or pressure to socialise (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2008; Ortaçtepe, 2015; Phan, 2007; Phan & Phan, 2006). Non-native EFL teachers who work and live in their home countries often identify with their own culture and see themselves as distinct from their native-English-speaking colleagues (Duff & Uchida, 1997). Their relationships with ES cultures are developed in the context of teaching ES cultures and intercultural competence (Moran, 2001). For example, some teachers became teachers of English because of their interest in British and/or American music or films (Menard-Warwick, 2011). Others adopted ideas from ES cultures to improve their teaching, such as Western communicative teaching methods (Tsui, 2007).

Earlier studies into the identity formation of non-native EFL teachers have shown that teachers' intercultural identities develop based on their sociocultural or intercultural experiences (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Moran, 2001; Ortaçtepe, 2015). For example, a

Japanese EFL teacher (Moran, 2001) reported in a self-reflective article that at the beginning of her teaching career she favoured 'Western ways' when she noticed the differences between Japanese and ES cultures. In the end, however, with her increased knowledge about EFL teaching and her experience in ES cultures, she regarded herself as positioned between the cultures. Li and Guo (2012) compared the values of 14 Chinese EFL teachers and 12 teachers of other subjects in the same college and found, for example, that the prominence of Power Distance between EFL teachers and their students was much lower than that between teachers of other subjects and their students (meaning EFL teachers agreed more with equal distribution of power than teachers of other subjects, cf. Hofstede et al., 2010), which indicates that teachers might change their ideas about the teacher-student relationship due to the influence of ES cultures.

The concept of *intercultural sensitivity*, i.e., the ability to recognize and respect cultural differences, has been used in the literature to define having a successful connection to more than one culture (Hammer et al., 2003). According to Hammer et al. (2003), a person's intercultural sensitivity develops through linear stages, from more ethnocentric (one's own culture is experienced as central to reality) to more ethnorelative (one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures; Hammer et al., 2003). Since intercultural sensitivity can be seen as an individual's ability to cope with intercultural experiences, it can be considered an important aspect of teachers' intercultural identities.

For EFL teachers, their intercultural identity is closely connected not only to their intercultural experiences but also to their teaching practices (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Ortaçtepe, 2015). In some studies of non-native EFL teachers, teachers' intercultural identities have been regarded as a social and pedagogical link to both their own and ES cultures (e.g., Duff & Uchida, 1997; Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Ilieva, 2010). As mediators between 'source' and 'target' cultures (Llurda, 2004), EFL teachers are expected to consciously avoid any cultural stereotypes and bias in their teaching, so as to cultivate students' intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002). However, teachers have different attitudes towards ES cultures and culture teaching. They may adopt a critical perspective when considering ES cultures in relation to their own, or they may consider one of the ES cultures, e.g., American culture, as the focus of their teaching and regard themselves as representatives of that culture. Such differences have been found between novice and expert teachers (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015), and

among teachers from different countries (Sercu et al., 2005). The positions and attitudes that teachers adopt when teaching ES cultures is a manifest aspect of teachers' intercultural identity and closely connected to their teaching practice. However, not much is known about how teachers from countries that differ substantially in their 'distances' from ES cultures perceive their intercultural identities.

### **3.3 The present study and research questions**

We invited Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers to participate in this study, mainly because we considered their distinct geographic and cultural distances from ES cultures as an important variable in determining their intercultural identities. The English language and ES cultures are viewed differently in Chinese and Dutch secondary education (see Chapter 1 for details). There have been a few case studies in peer-reviewed international academic journals about Chinese EFL teachers' inner conflicts and dilemmas in the formation of their identities (e.g., X. Gao & Xu, 2014; Wu & Wurenbilige, 2012). We have not found any research into the intercultural identities of Dutch EFL teachers in international peer-reviewed journals and, to our knowledge, no research has ever been done into differences or similarities between non-native EFL teachers' intercultural identity perceptions in China and the Netherlands, or in other countries with comparable 'distances' from ES cultures.

Aiming to learn more about how Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers perceive themselves in relation to ES cultures, and to find out whether there are differences between teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities in the two national groups, we conducted an exploratory study by interviewing a small number of Chinese and Dutch secondary school EFL teachers. We focused on secondary school teachers because cultural content (in addition to mere language content) is more prominent at the secondary levels of foreign language education (Byram, 1997). Our research questions were:

1. How do Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers in the interview perceive their intercultural identities?
2. What similarities and differences exist between their perceptions of their intercultural identities?

### 3.4 Method

We investigated teachers' intercultural identities by conducting semi-structured, individual interviews with a small number of teachers. By using this qualitative method, we aimed to examine teacher identity in depth and within the specific context of language-and-culture teaching (cf. Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015).

#### 3.4.1 Participants

The purpose of the interviews was to elicit different opinions of teachers, so we wanted as much variation as possible. We invited EFL teachers from different secondary schools in China and the Netherlands to participate voluntarily in our study. We limited our selection to teachers who did not have English as their mother tongue and who taught English to non-native speakers of English.

The participants in the individual interviews were five Chinese and five Dutch EFL teachers. The teachers all came from different secondary schools in China or the Netherlands. Table 3.1 presents a brief overview of their backgrounds; all names are pseudonyms.

**Table 3.1**

*Participants in the interview*

Name	Gender	Native languages	Years of teaching	Overseas travel
Gu	Male	Chinese	5	None
Wu	Female	Chinese	11	None
Sha	Female	Chinese	7	None
Lin	Female	Chinese	4	None
Chang	Female	Chinese	22	None
Willem	Male	Dutch	20	UK
Ria	Female	Dutch	3	UK
Sanne	Female	Dutch	9	UK, US, Ireland
Lotte	Female	Dutch	20	UK, Ireland
Vic	Male	Dutch	27	UK, US

#### 3.4.2 Interview protocol

The questions in the interview protocol were designed to elicit the teachers' notions of themselves as teachers in relation to teaching the cultures associated with the English language, and their ideas about the influence of ES cultures on their personal and professional lives. Based on the literature described in the Introduction and Chapter 2 of

the dissertation, the questions in the interview protocol focused on the following four aspects: (a) teachers' feeling of connection with ES cultures, (b) influence of ES cultures on their personal or professional identity, (c) their intercultural sensitivity, and (d) their attitude towards ES cultures in teaching. The first aspect examined teachers' general ideas about their relationship to ES cultures. The second and third aspects were more specific and focused respectively on the influence of ES cultures on their personal and professional identities and teachers' sensitivity to cultural differences. The last aspect examined teachers' positions and attitude in teaching ES cultures, as a manifestation of the other three aspects of intercultural identity in teaching practice. The questions are listed in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2**

*Themes and questions for teachers' intercultural identities*

Themes	Questions
(a) Feeling of connection with ES cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When teaching culture in class, how do you feel about your connection to English-speaking cultures?</li> <li>● How do you think a teacher of English should maintain an appropriate relationship to English-speaking cultures? Can you describe (and explain) such a relationship?</li> </ul>
(b) Influence of ES cultures on personal or professional identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Has how you see yourself and your students in class, such as your relationship to students, how you talk to students, your teaching style, et cetera, been influenced by English-speaking cultures in any way? If yes, can you describe this influence? If no, can you explain why not?</li> <li>● Have the cultures of English-speaking countries influenced your attitudes towards life and people around you? If yes, can you describe this influence? If no, can you explain why not?</li> </ul>
(c) Intercultural sensitivity <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do you think there are many cultural differences between the cultures of the English-speaking countries and your own? If yes, can you give one or two examples to explain? If not, what do you think might be the reason?</li> <li>● Have you encountered any difficulties or problems in your life associated with cultural differences? What kinds of difficulties or problems?</li> <li>● When it comes down to the bottom-line, is it more important to pay attention to cultural differences or to similarities? (If the respondent emphasises the importance of paying attention to similarities, follow up with: What do you think the similarities are?)</li> <li>● Do you make any specific efforts to find out more about the cultures of the</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> These questions about intercultural sensitivity were adapted from Hammer, et. al., 2003, p. 426 (based on these questions Hammer, et, al. designed a questionnaire to survey intercultural sensitivity of overseas professionals). The questions were arranged from ethnocentric to ethnorelative scales, i.e., denial, defence, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, integration. We used these questions to elicit more from teachers on this aspect.

Themes	Questions
(d) Attitude towards ES cultures in teaching	<p data-bbox="439 274 941 293">English-speaking countries around you? Why, or why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="383 302 1089 420">● Do you try to adapt your communication, life attitudes, et cetera, to people from the English-speaking countries? (If yes, does it mean anything to you to look at the world through the eyes of a person from the English-speaking countries? Do you feel you have two or more cultures in your life?) Why, or why not?</li> <li data-bbox="383 429 1089 493">● Has your adjustment to the cultures of the English-speaking countries led you to question your identity? (If yes, do you feel separated from those cultures that you are involved in?) Why, or why not?</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="383 566 1089 657">● If you talk about cultural matters or comparisons when teaching a topic, what kind of position do you take? For example, do you show your preference for the phenomenon or opinions of your own culture or not? Can you explain why you take such a position?</li> <li data-bbox="383 666 1089 729">● In general, what do you think your position is when comparing the English-speaking cultures with your own? As impartial, or preferring one culture? Why?</li> <li data-bbox="383 738 1089 802">● Generally speaking, what do you think is the most appropriate position for a teacher of English to take between the other culture and his/her own when comparing them? Why?</li> </ul>

### 3.4.3 Analyses of the interviews

For the purpose of data analysis, the interviews were recorded, the answers summarized, and characteristic expressions transcribed verbatim. The first step in the analysis of the interviews was to focus on understanding what the teachers had said during the interviews and to identify ‘themes’ (for example ‘connection to ES culture’) by reading the interview transcripts thoroughly. Themes were considered important if they pertained to how the teachers talked about themselves as teachers in relation to the cultures associated with the English language, and/or about themselves as being influenced by ES cultures during their personal and professional lives. Units of analysis were defined by theme, i.e., a unit ended when a new theme was introduced; the complete answer to an interview question was usually one unit of analysis (e.g., a quotation). The information was first summarized under the four headings (themes) in the interview protocol: (a) feeling of connection with ES cultures, (b) influence of ES cultures on personal and professional identity, (c) intercultural sensitivity and (d) attitude towards ES cultures in teaching. In step two, we quoted key words and phrases from the data related to the themes in the interviews. Regarding the key words and phrases under each theme, words and phrases with similar meanings were combined

into categories. In the third step, the content of each category was defined, and a descriptive label was chosen for the category. For example, within the theme ‘attitude towards cultural comparisons’ categories ranged from ‘favourable’ to ‘impartial’.

### 3.5 Results

In this section, we present the results of the interviews under the four themes of teachers’ intercultural identities. On the basis of our interview analysis, we selected quotations which were characteristic of the most salient differences between the Chinese and Dutch teachers.

#### 3.5.1 Teachers’ feeling of connection with ES cultures

In the individual interviews, the Chinese and Dutch teachers reported different relationships with ES cultures. The Chinese teachers stated that their connections to ES cultures were limited only to their knowledge or profession. As Wu said:

*I don’t think there’s any connection to my real life. ...We are living in different environments.*<sup>4</sup>

Although the Chinese teachers who participated in the interviews had not visited any ES countries, they did talk about aspects of ES cultures that interested them, such as the American dream and cultural diversity (Gu), practical, individualized and life-long education (Sha), or history and culture of Britain (Lin and Chang). However, they kept their distance from those cultures. As Gu said,

*I accept the English-speaking cultures, but I don’t necessarily have the same values.*

The Dutch teachers described their connection to ES cultures in terms of their affiliation to Dutch culture and their emotional bond to ES cultures, as illustrated by Lotte:

*If I stand there talking about England, then I’m still a Dutch woman talking about England. I’m not an English woman. [...] I also respect my own culture. [...] But when I start to talk about England, I just love it.*

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<sup>4</sup> Transcription conventions in the quotations: ...: pause; [...]: overlapping or irrelevant speech omitted; [word]: our insertion or paraphrase (of omitted item in the conversation).

Other Dutch teachers also mentioned such a connection, from being an ‘Anglophile’ (Vic), via having an ‘automatic strong connection’ to ES cultures (Ria) or a historical and current cultural connection (Willem), to ‘feeling closer to ES cultures than other foreign cultures’ (Sanne).

Unlike the Chinese teachers, all the Dutch teachers had been to the UK/England. The Dutch teachers who had been to England, Scotland or Ireland stated that they felt ‘at home’ in British/English or Irish culture. Some of them (Sanne and Vic), who had also been to the United States, saw more differences between the American and Dutch cultures than between the British and Dutch cultures. There were aspects of American culture they were not happy with. Sanne thought this was the reason that she took a ‘critical stand’ towards ES cultures and did not ‘idolize’ them:

*I think people should live in the way they are taught to live. But I don't usually agree. I see good things, I see bad things, especially in America.... I'm critical of English-speaking cultures.*

### 3.5.2 Influence of ES cultures on personal and professional identity

The Chinese teachers seemed to be more aware of the influences of ES cultures in their lives than were the Dutch teachers. Some of the Chinese teachers, i.e., Gu, Wu, and Chang, talked about the influence of ES cultures on their views of life, or on such aspects as their communication style (Gu and Wu) or religious beliefs (Chang). Most teachers noted such influences in their interpersonal relationships. As Sha said:

*I think I've been influenced by British and American classes. I want my students to express their ideas in class as freely as their counterparts do in Britain and America.*

Compared with Dutch teachers, Chinese teachers thought their motivation for becoming a teacher had not been influenced by ES cultures that much. Chinese teachers, for instance Wu and Sha, contended that their choice of becoming a teacher of English was because they followed the job assignment of their university<sup>5</sup> and they considered teaching an ideal job for women because it is devoid of mobility and allows quite a lot

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<sup>5</sup> In the 1990s, Chinese universities assigned jobs to graduates who opted for the teaching profession on admission.

of time to take care of a family.

The Dutch teachers did not mention anything about the influence of ES cultures on teacher-student relationships. However, Willem and Vic thought their communication styles and life style, such as maintaining some distance when talking to people or enjoying English literature and British or American music, might have been influenced by their strong interest in ES cultures. They thought this interest was also connected with their job motivation. As Vic said,

*I think it is good for a teacher to like the country if you teach [the language and culture of] it. ...You have to be thrilled by English-speaking cultures.*

Most teachers in both groups did not see any influence of ES cultures on their teaching style. Lotte was the only teacher who said her method of teaching was influenced by ES cultures:

*I find writing very important. And I think also...it appeals to [the students'] intellect, like [...] they have to do it in American colleges and British universities...*

### 3.5.3 Teachers' intercultural sensitivity

In the interview study, Chinese teachers seemed to feel less easy than did the Dutch teachers in accepting ES cultures. Wu mentioned her lack of confidence in communicating with native speakers of English:

*I guess I won't be able to communicate fluently with foreigners. I'll feel awkward. ...I haven't been abroad before. I'm not sure whether I can fit in [in] that cultural atmosphere or not.*

Due to the distance from ES cultures, Wu said that it was also difficult for her students to use their knowledge about ES cultures.

Another Chinese teacher, Gu, saw ES cultures as contrary to his own:

*Many aspects of the cultures of English-speaking countries are often completely the opposite of what we have in Chinese culture. [...], foreigners often misunderstand China.*

However, Gu also pointed out that he tries to find out more about ES cultures through foreign films, broadcasting, and websites. Other Chinese teachers thought this was

unnecessary in their home country.

In contrast, Dutch teachers did not feel uncomfortable in communicating with ES speakers. They showed interest in specific aspects of ES cultures, such as music and sports, and some of them considered it a matter of course to read English newspapers, magazines, and novels, and watch the news about ES countries, beyond their needs to prepare for classes.

For the Dutch teachers, it was also natural to adapt to local culture when travelling in ES countries, because that was part of Dutch culture and education. Sanne:

*In our culture, ...we always talk about assimilating when you visit a country. [...] Just because of that ... we learn so many languages here.*

In their travels to ES countries, Dutch teachers experienced conflicts between ES cultures and their own, such as the objections to American culture mentioned above. Sometimes such conflicts made them reflect on their own culture. As Lotte compared British and Dutch cultures,

*Dutch people... They don't like strict authority. They are really democratic. But, of course, you need authority. Otherwise things become messy. [...] If you look at the British, they are much more authoritarian. [...] And we don't particularly like that, but [it] may be good, you know, in some respects.*

This reflection can make teachers more impartial and give them the feeling they are between cultures. As Ria said:

*You note the differences. I think it makes you more objective. You're able to step away from your own culture and ...yeah, I think you automatically do that.*

This connection was also recognized by Sanne:

*I think that teachers are expected to make a link between English-speaking and Dutch cultures.*

### 3.5.4 Teachers' attitudes towards ES cultures in teaching

The Chinese and Dutch teachers provided two reasons for remaining impartial in culture teaching and culture comparisons, i.e., the consideration that all cultures are equal, and the belief that teachers should respect students' opinions. Sometimes the two reasons

were combined.

The teachers considered it important that teachers should present different ideas and avoid imposing their ideas on their students. Sanne considered it important for students to put forward their own arguments, even if these contradicted the teacher's opinion:

*When someone says something I don't agree with, [...] I always discuss things. They can say anything they want in my classroom as long as they can provide arguments to support their opinion.*

Similarly, Lotte would like her students to give reasons and facts to support their arguments, instead of simply expressing bias against any culture. Lotte found cultural knowledge, especially knowledge about social behaviour, very useful to students' future development:

*Since people all over the world are doing more business with each other, it's important that they (students) know the others' ways of behaving.*

In addition to the two reasons just mentioned, Chinese teachers Sha and Wu said that they remained neutral because they did not know much about ES cultures. Gu, Lin and Wu thought there was no need for them to be in favour of one culture or the other, because most of the time the focus of their teaching was the English language, not culture, and cultural content is only for students to 'know'. Wu, for example, gave students materials for them to compare and analyse. She did not show preference for any culture. Her purpose of culture teaching was 'to help students understand, accept, and tolerate various languages and cultures.'

Some of the teachers' ideas seemed to contradict their neutral attitude in culture teaching. For example, Sha expected she would appear supportive regarding the issues she considered 'positive'. Vic thought such topics as the American elections were easier for teachers to remain impartial about than others, and it was sometimes difficult for teachers to be impartial because students could 'pick up' teachers' attitudes towards cultures.

### 3.5.5 Comparison between Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers

Some similarities and differences between Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers emerged

from the interviews. For example: both Chinese and Dutch teachers maintained a strong affiliation to their own cultures, while perceiving themselves as also connected to ES cultures by profession or by personal interest: they noticed the influence of ES cultures on certain aspects of their personal and professional lives; they showed some flexibility and tolerance when facing ideas or phenomena in ES cultures that were different from those in their own cultures, and different abilities in experiencing cultural differences (i.e., their intercultural sensitivity). Both groups tried to remain impartial in culture teaching, but felt it was not always necessary to do so because they often focused only on the teaching of language skills, or not easy to do so because their attitudes might be noticed by students. Table 3.3 summarizes some of the typical differences between Chinese and Dutch teachers from the interviews with respect to the four aspects. Illustrative interview quotations for these typical differences can be found in the sections above.

**Table 3.3**

*Summary of typical differences between Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' intercultural identities*

Aspects	Chinese EFL teachers	Dutch EFL teachers
(a) Teachers' feeling of connection with ES cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling connected to ES cultures mainly because of knowledge and profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling connected to ES cultures mainly because of interest or emotion</li> </ul>
(b) Influence of ES cultures on personal or professional identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling influenced by ES cultures mainly in their relationship with students and views of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling influenced by ES cultures mainly in their choice of being an English teacher, interest in English language and ES cultures, and in their life style</li> </ul>
(c) Intercultural sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling comparatively more unconfident or awkward when talking to native speakers of English;</li> <li>• Seeing more differences than similarities between Chinese and ES cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling comparatively more comfortable when talking to native speakers of English;</li> <li>• Seeing many similarities between Dutch and some ES cultures (e.g., British culture) but not necessarily for other ES cultures (e.g., American culture)</li> </ul>
(d) Attitude towards ES cultures in teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling their knowledge about ES cultures is comparatively limited;</li> <li>• Feeling it is not always necessary to be aware of their attitude towards cultures because they often focus on language teaching only;</li> <li>• Feeling it is necessary to highlight comparatively more of the 'positive' aspects of cultures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling some topics are easier than others for teachers to remain impartial about</li> <li>• Feeling it is not always easy because students can pick up teachers' attitudes</li> </ul>

*Note.* EFL = English as a foreign language; ES = English-speaking.

Table 3.3 shows typical differences between Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities. In both the national groups, the opinions of the teachers about the four aspects of intercultural identity were consistent within the group and can be interpreted by their sociocultural contexts and the respective distances from ES cultures. For example, the more distant the home culture of the teachers to ES cultures, the less likely teachers were to regard themselves as connected to ES cultures in their personal lives (i.e., the part of life that is the least relevant to their profession), and the less confident they felt in communication with native speakers of English or about their knowledge of ES cultures.

### **3.6 Conclusions and discussion**

Our findings summarized in 3.5.5 are in line with previous related research, such as the studies of Phan and Phan (2006) and Phan (2007), who illustrated how non-native EFL teachers maintained affiliation to their own culture; Moran (2001) and Menard-Warwick (2011), who described the influence of ES cultures on the identities of EFL teachers; and Byram et al. (2002), who sketched the difficulties teachers may experience if they want to remain neutral in culture teaching. The added value of our findings is that the results offer a relatively comprehensive picture of how differently the participating Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers saw themselves in relation to ES cultures, and of how these differences were connected to their teaching.

Our findings illustrate difficulties as well as challenges that EFL teachers may experience in positioning themselves in relation to ES cultures when teaching. For example, our interviews indicated that some of the Chinese teachers felt awkward when communicating with native speakers of English, and thought their culture was often misunderstood by people from ES cultures, while Dutch EFL teachers referred to difficulties in understanding certain aspects of American culture. In such situations teachers may find it difficult to present and interpret (varying opinions about) cultural phenomena to students in an impartial way, because they respond to cultures as 'human beings subconsciously influenced by their experiences'. EFL teachers need to be aware therefore of 'how their own stereotypes and prejudices may influence their teaching subconsciously,' and 'how they respond to and challenge their learners' prejudices, not only as teachers but also as human beings, subconsciously influenced by their

experience of otherness' (Byram et al., 2002, pp. 28-30).

EFL teachers can gain more critical perspectives when reflecting on their knowledge and experiences with regard to intercultural communication (Byram et al., 2002), as is evidenced by previous studies which found that expert teachers or teachers who have travelled in ES countries tended to develop critical views towards those cultures (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Ortaçtepe, 2015; Phan, 2007, 2008; Phan & Phan, 2006).

It should be noted that teachers' willingness to be impartial in culture teaching can be limited by greater distances or enhanced by smaller distances between cultures. The Chinese teachers in the interview related their 'neutral' position to disabling factors, such as their lack of knowledge about ES cultures, their limited need to engage in intercultural communication, and experiences of separation between English language learning and culture learning. These disabling factors can be attributed to the great distance between Chinese culture and ES cultures (Pan & Seargeant, 2012). Dutch teachers, whose culture is closer to ES cultures, may have more experiences with those cultures, see more need for English-mediated intercultural communication, and regard it as more important to develop critical perspectives among their students towards ES cultures.

Teachers in both cultures reported influences from ES cultures on their views of life and teaching, though as cultural distances vary, the influences can also be different. Teachers from a culture close to ES cultures may feel more connected to the language and cultures and may feel more influenced by ES cultures. A case in point is that almost all the Dutch teachers in our interview were interested in the English language and ES cultures, and they acknowledged the influence of ES cultures on their choice of profession. In contrast, the distance and differences between China and ES countries make it difficult for the Chinese teachers to feel very connected to or influenced by ES cultures. However, teachers from a culture distant from ES cultures may be better able to notice the influences of ES cultures on their worldview and their relationship with students. For example, the Chinese EFL teachers mentioned in the interviews that they were influenced by ES cultures in that they favoured an equal status and relaxed relationship with their students, which was in contrast with general ideas in the Chinese Confucian tradition, where teachers are seen as superior to students (Zhou & Li, 2015). Our findings support the findings of others that teachers' identities are more hybrid than fixed (Varghese et al., 2005) and they can be learners of cultures (Moran, 2001). This is

in line with recent conceptualizations of teachers' intercultural identities, such as those of Akkerman and Meijer (2011).

The research instruments we used in our study and its findings may be useful for inspiring EFL teachers to reflect on the positions and roles they take in teaching about ES cultures, and on how they aim to prepare their students for future intercultural communication. However, our findings should not be treated as new stereotypes of teachers in different nations, as Moussu and Llorca (2008) and Serco et al. (2005) have already warned against. As our interview results show, notwithstanding the differences between the two national groups, there are also important differences and variations among the ideas of individuals within national groups, between schools, or between regions of a country.

On the basis of this study, future research could focus on exploring ways to enhance the roles of EFL teachers in promoting intercultural competence among learners. First, our exploratory study focused on teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities at one moment rather than over a longer period. In future research, it would be interesting to investigate how their intercultural identities develop by means of observations over a period of time (e.g., Ilieva, 2010; Ortaçtepe, 2015).

Second, although our results indicate that sociocultural context plays a major role in differences between teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities, we still do not know how background factors, such as gender and years of teaching experience, could be related to their intercultural identities. Such limitations suggest that a large-scale survey may be necessary to explore the variables related to the group differences. The results of our study could be used in further research to explore the background variables in teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities, such as gender, years of teaching, teachers' beliefs and values, student characteristics or society's expectations of the teaching profession.



## Chapter 4

# A large-scale exploration of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' intercultural identities<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Manuscript submitted for publication: Chen, D., Tigelaar, D. E. H., Smit, B. H. J. & Verloop, N. (under review). Intercultural identities of English language teachers: An exploration.

## **Abstract**

Teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL teachers) have different ideas on teaching about cultures associated with the English language (ES cultures). To understand how EFL teachers worldwide respond to challenges in culture teaching, we explored how EFL teachers in different countries perceived themselves as teachers in relation to ES cultures: or, what characterizes their intercultural identities. We gathered data in two countries that were clearly either very distant from or very close to the cultures of English-speaking countries: China and The Netherlands. We designed a questionnaire to which 114 Chinese and 154 Dutch non-native EFL teachers responded. Underlying factors in teachers' intercultural identities were '*Openness to ES cultures*', '*Connection to ES cultures*', '*Disconnection from ES Cultures*', and '*Impartiality with respect to ES Cultures*'. We found significant differences between Chinese and Dutch teachers' intercultural identities.

## 4.1 Introduction

As communication across cultures becomes increasingly important, cultural diversity, exchange of meaning in interpersonal communication, and intercultural mediation are becoming priorities in foreign language teaching worldwide (Kramsch, 2014). Teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL teachers) are expected to help their students to become world citizens who can not only understand English, and speak and write in English, but are also able to communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds and understand them as human beings with multiple identities and their own individualities (Byram et al., 2002). Such a trend poses new demands on EFL teachers, especially for ‘non-native teachers’ who do not speak English as their home tongue and teach in their own non-English-speaking countries. Non-native teachers of English make up the largest proportion of EFL teachers worldwide (Braine, 2010). These teachers were once language learners themselves and learned about, and now teach, the English language and cultures associated with the English language (ES cultures), in their own countries. While learning and teaching the English language and ES cultures in their home countries, they may unconsciously have formed their own opinions about and attitudes towards ES cultures (Byram et al., 2002). Consequently, EFL teachers in different cultural contexts may have different ideas about why, how, and what they should teach (Karabinar & Guler, 2013; Sercu et al., 2005), and they may have different notions of themselves as teachers in relation to ES cultures (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Menard-Warwick, 2008).

As stated in earlier chapters, the ways in which EFL teachers see themselves and perceive their roles in relation to ES cultures are referred to in the literature as ‘teachers’ intercultural identities’(cf. Menard-Warwick, 2008). To gain a better understanding of how EFL teachers worldwide respond to the challenges in teaching ES cultures, we explored on a larger scale how EFL teachers in two countries that are clearly either very distant from or very close to the cultures of English-speaking countries, i.e., China and the Netherlands, perceive their intercultural identities. As stated in Chapter 3, geographic and cultural distance are important variables in the formation of teachers’ intercultural identities (Drogendijk & Slangen, 2006; Schwartz, 2014). The smaller the distance between two cultures, the more imminent the need for intercultural communication, and the easier it is for teachers and students to get information about the other culture (Kachru, 1990). China is among the countries far from ES cultures,

while the Netherlands is among the countries which are close to ES cultures in terms of geographical distance, history, and culture (see also Chapter 3). We assume that exploration of the differences in distance between teachers' native cultures and ES cultures could enable us to find meaningful differences between teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities and increase our understanding of their perspectives and roles in culture teaching in different countries.

On the basis of the interview findings presented in Chapter 3, we developed a questionnaire survey to investigate the identity perceptions of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers on a larger scale and to explore common factors underlying their intercultural identity perceptions. Apart from nationality, we also explored whether other specific variables in teachers' personal backgrounds, such as gender and years of teaching, were related to their intercultural identities. We expected our findings not only to result in more insight into teachers' intercultural identities in different nations, but also to contribute to a better understanding of the perspectives of EFL teachers and the roles they play as cultural mediators in various cultural contexts.

## **4.2 Intercultural identities of non-native EFL teachers**

In the current study, we focused on non-native EFL teachers' intercultural identities. Non-native teachers play an important role in language-and-culture teaching and, in particular, when facing dilemmas and conflicts in their teaching, these teachers may unconsciously develop very different ideas about the why, how, and what of teaching about ES cultures (e.g., Ortaçtepe, 2015). Language and culture are seen as inseparable in modern language teaching (Kramsch, 2014). In other words, culture is both content and context of EFL teaching, and this involves the various personal and professional experiences of teachers (Bukor, 2015; Gandana & Parr, 2013; Varghese et al., 2005). Teachers form and constantly negotiate their identities in the context of EFL teaching, as they keep receiving new cultural ideas (Newton et al., 2010). In recent studies of language teaching, identity theories have been used as a lens through which to view teachers' classroom practices (Norton, 2006). This means that the identity of a language teacher can be regarded as a crucial component not only in the teaching practice within the classroom, but also in understanding the sociocultural context of the language classroom (Varghese et al., 2005).

Four salient aspects of teachers' intercultural identities emerge from the literature (see also Chapters 2 and 3). First, in different sociocultural contexts, non-native teachers can have very different views of their relationships with ES cultures (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2008; Ortaçtepe, 2015; Phan, 2007; Phan & Phan, 2006). Second, the personal and professional experiences of teachers help to forge teachers' intercultural identities (Moran, 2001; Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005). Third, with regard to having successful connections with more than one culture, the concept of intercultural sensitivity has been used, i.e., 'the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences' (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 422). According to Hammer et al. (2003), a person's intercultural sensitivity develops through linear stages, from more ethnocentric (one's own culture is experienced as central to reality) to more ethnorelative (one's own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures; Hammer et al., 2003). Since intercultural sensitivity can be seen as an individual's ability to cope with intercultural experiences, it can be considered an important aspect of teachers' intercultural identities. Fourth, the attitudes of EFL teachers towards discussing ES cultures in teaching can be considered an important aspect of their intercultural identities (Byram et al., 2002; Menard-Warwick, 2008; Ortaçtepe, 2015).

### **4.3 Problem definition**

Nowadays, integrating language and culture right from the start, fostering explicit comparisons between not only languages but also cultures, and emphasizing intercultural competence rather than just linguistic competence, are proposed as principles of language teaching geared to the new trend of teaching intercultural competence (Newton et al., 2010). Many nations adopt principles or guidelines for EFL teaching which list knowledge, attitudes, and skills in intercultural communication as expected learner competencies (e.g., Council of Europe, 2001; Ministry of Education of China, 2004). EFL teachers are expected to promote students' intercultural competence (Byram et al., 2002). However, no research into Dutch EFL teachers' intercultural identities was found in international peer-reviewed journals, while some case studies of Chinese EFL teachers' formation of their identities appear sporadically (e.g., X. Gao & Xu, 2014; Wu & Wurenbilige, 2012). The existing body of research on teachers' intercultural identities is far from sufficient, there are hardly any comparisons between different nations, though reviews and studies of teachers' identities defined by their

native tongue and general teaching competency are available (e.g., Aneja, 2016; Braine, 2010; Moussu & Llorca, 2008; Samimy & Kurihara, 2006).

Considering the need to examine teacher identity in depth, we aimed to explore how non-native teachers of English perceive their intercultural identities and what the common factors underlying their identity perceptions are. For this purpose, we developed a questionnaire and administered it among a large group of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers. The participants in the survey were all secondary school EFL teachers, mainly because cultural content is more prominent in secondary education (Byram, 1997).

Our main research questions were:

1. How do Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers perceive their intercultural identities in relation to ES cultures?
2. What variables in the personal backgrounds of the teachers, apart from nationality, are related to their intercultural identities?

## **4.4 Method**

### *4.4.1 Context of the study*

To reiterate, we focused on Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers in secondary schools. The cultural distance between China (Confucian cultures) and ES countries is much greater than that between the Netherlands (West European cultures) and ES countries (Schwartz, 2014). Chinese EFL teachers have fewer opportunities than Dutch teachers to go to ES countries. Only a small portion of Chinese students have the opportunity to contact foreigners or travel to ES countries when at university or after graduation (CCTV, 2015); Dutch students have more opportunities to go on school trips in ES countries or study there after graduation from secondary school (OECD, 2016). Most Chinese people seldom use English to communicate (Wei & Su, 2012). In the latest EF ranking of countries by adult English proficiency, the Netherlands ranks first among 72 non-English-speaking countries and regions, while China ranks 39<sup>th</sup> (EF EPI, 2016). The English language, rather than the cultures associated with it, is seen in China as a utilitarian tool for science, technology, national development, and modernization; the idea that Chinese traditional ideology and values should take centre stage has long

dominated in EFL education; sometimes there are worries about Westernization: Chinese identity might be affected by too much emphasis on learning English (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Pan & Seargeant, 2012). In addition, the content and methods of English teaching in secondary schools are to a large extent decided by the focuses of college entrance examinations (Lo Bianco et al., 2009). Although the current national syllabus for EFL teaching and learning in Chinese secondary schools aims not only to develop students' knowledge about ES cultures, but also their communicative competence and their sensitivity to other cultures (Ministry of Education of China, 2004), mismatches have been observed between teaching aims in the syllabus and teaching methods in practice. The traditional Chinese views on teaching and learning still persist in EFL classes and sometimes coexist with modern student-centred teaching (Braine, 2005; Zhang & Liu, 2014).

In the Netherlands, cultural values and English education are very different from those in China. Values such as intellectual autonomy, egalitarianism, and harmony (meaning 'fitting into the world as it is') are appreciated in Dutch culture (Schwartz, 2006). In line with these values, Dutch schools and teachers enjoy a high degree of autonomy, and they are to a large extent free to determine the content and methods of their teaching: educational goals are only broadly defined and the Dutch education system allows these common goals to be achieved in various ways (Nusche, Deborah, & al, 2014). English has a high status in society and the education system in the Netherlands. As a consequence of the increased interrelations between European countries, English-language education has developed hugely since the 1980s (Dronkers, 1993), and has become the only compulsory foreign language for all students at primary and secondary levels (Drew et al., 2007). The Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (shortened in Dutch to SLO) currently lists learning about the role of English in different kinds of international communications as one of its targets (SLO, 2014).

#### *4.4.2 Development of the instrument*

We designed a questionnaire to measure the intercultural identities of the EFL teachers. The items were formulated using the findings reported in Chapter 3, based on semi-structured interviews about teachers' intercultural identities, in which five Chinese and five Dutch secondary school EFL teachers took part, all non-native speakers of English (see Chapter 3 for the interview protocol and the results). We used key words and key

phrases from the interview data to develop our questionnaire. Key words and phrases with similar meanings were combined into categories and a descriptive label was chosen for each. Based on our findings, we chose the following labels for the main categories: (a) feeling of connection with ES cultures, (b) influence of ES cultures on personal or professional identity, (c) intercultural sensitivity, and (d) attitude towards ES cultures in teaching. For each category, we summarized the teachers' expressions into statements, in which the teachers were described in the third person. For example, in the category 'Feeling of Connection', the item '*He is fascinated by the English language and the cultures of English-speaking countries*' describes a teacher who feels connected to ES cultures out of personal interest. We designed 19 questionnaire items in this way. Full details on the items are provided in Appendix 1. Each item was followed by six choices: *very much like me, like me, somewhat like me, a little like me, not like me, and not at all like me*. The statements were discussed within the team of authors and with a group of colleague researchers. We also asked native speakers of English to check the statements, and we consulted Chinese and Dutch native speakers to check if there was any misunderstanding to be clarified. When we considered the questionnaire to be finished, before gathering data on a larger scale, we first asked the interview participants to fill it in and comment on the plausibility, exhaustiveness, and readability of the items. This resulted in some minor rephrasing.

#### 4.4.3 Participants

We invited teachers in both countries to participate in our survey. Of the 456 invited teachers, 268 (58.7%) fully completed the questionnaire: 114 Chinese and 154 Dutch EFL teachers (including the ten teachers previously involved in the interview study). All questionnaires were administered anonymously. Table 4.1 gives an overview of the general characteristics of the respondents.

The most striking difference between the two national groups is the extent of travel experience to ES countries. Only 11.4% of the Chinese teachers had been to ES countries, compared with 99.4% of the Dutch teachers. Another difference is that a larger proportion of the Chinese teachers had a bachelor's degree (which in China generally qualifies a person for teaching in secondary schools), while more than half of the Dutch teachers had a master's degree (which in the Netherlands is often required for teaching in the higher levels of secondary education). The distributions of gender and age groups within the national groups were comparable. As Table 4.1 shows, the typical

teacher in the Chinese group was female, with more than 10 years of teaching experience and without travel experience to ES countries; the typical teacher in the Dutch group was female, with more than 15 years of teaching experience and travel experience to ES countries.

**Table 4.1**

*General characteristics of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers who responded to the questionnaire*

Characteristics	Categories	CN (n = 114)	NL (n = 154)	Total (N = 268)
Gender	Male	32 (28.1)	48 (31.2)	80 (29.9)
	Female	82 (71.9)	106 (68.8)	188 (70.1)
Nationality	Chinese (in CN)/ Dutch (in NL)	114 (100.0)	134 (87.0)	248 (92.5)
	Dutch and another nationality (in NL)	n/a	11 (7.1)	11 (4.1)
			9	9
	Other nationalities (in NL)	n/a	(5.8)	(3.4)
Final level of Education	Bachelor	106 (93.0)	69 (44.2)	174 (64.9)
		8 (7.0)	83 (54.5)	92 (34.3)
	Master	0	2	2
	PhD	(0)	(1.3)	(0.7)
Years of teaching experience	<5	33 (28.9)	31 (20.1)	64 (23.9)
	5-9	26 (22.8)	36 (23.4)	62 (23.1)
	10-14	20 (17.5)	27 (17.5)	47 (17.5)
	15 or more	35 (30.7)	60 (39.0)	95 (35.4)
Travel to ES- countries	Yes	13 (11.4)	153 (99.4)	166 (61.9)
	No	101 (88.6)	1 (0.6)	102 (38.1)

*Note.* Percentages in parentheses after the numbers of participants.

CN = Chinese EFL teachers; NL = Dutch EFL teachers. By Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers we mean non-native teachers of English in China and Netherlands.

#### 4.4.4 Analyses

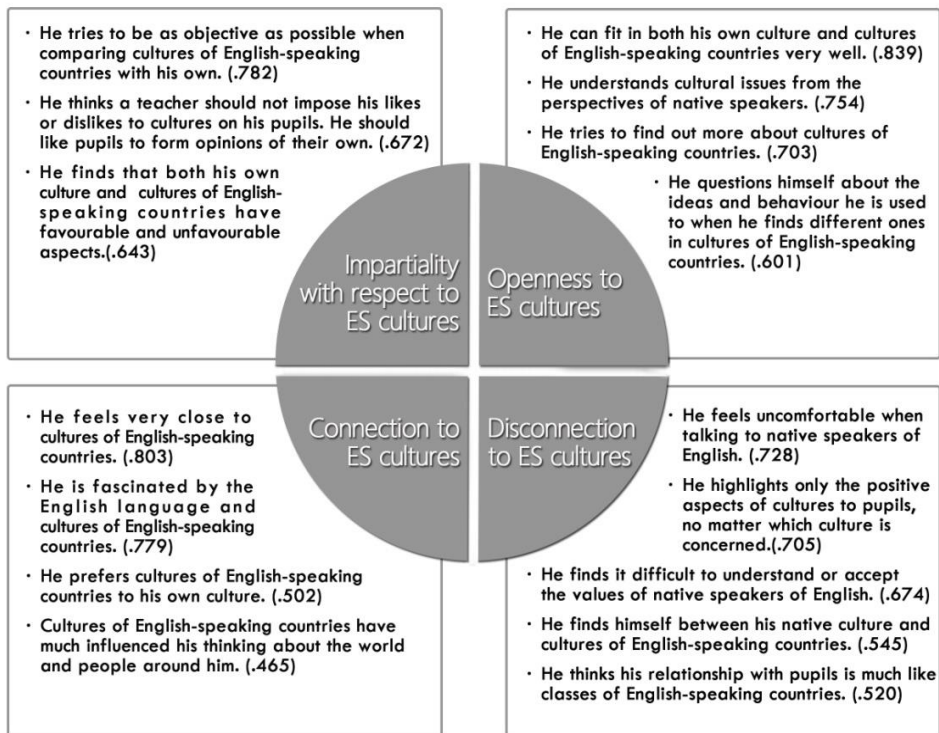
After collecting the questionnaire data, we ran a principal components analysis (PCA)

to search for factors underlying the items in the questionnaire. The factorability of the 19 items was examined first. We used PCA because one of our major aims was to identify factors underlying the teachers' intercultural identities as measured using the questionnaire. Three items were removed because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure in meaning and failed to meet the minimum criterion of having no cross-loading of .4 or above. The three items were:

- He looks at cultures of English-speaking countries from the perspective of his own culture.
- The reason why he became a teacher of English has nothing to do with cultures of English-speaking countries.
- He feels his teaching style is the same as that of his colleagues teaching other subjects in his school.

We ran PCA again with the remaining 16 items and found four factors. Initial eigenvalues indicated that the four factors thus obtained explained 56% of the variance (24%, 17%, 8%, and 7%, respectively). After varimax rotation, all items in this analysis had primary loadings over .45. We gave labels to the factors on the basis of a semantic analysis of the items in the factors, which were discussed by the team of authors. The factor loading matrix for the final solution with the four factors is presented in Figure 4.1 More details on the factors are presented in the results section.

Composite scores were created for each factor, based on the means of the items which had their primary loadings on that factor. Higher scores indicated greater agreement among the teachers in describing their intercultural identities. An approximately normal distribution was evident for the composite scores, thus the data were well suited for parametric analysis. Scales were composed, and internal consistency for each of the scales in the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The alphas were mostly moderate, and varied from: .59 to .76. For most of the scales, no increases in alpha would have been achieved by eliminating more items, except for one scale, where elimination of one item would have given an increase of



**Figure 4.1.** Factor loadings based on a principal components analysis with varimax rotation for 16 items from the questionnaire survey ( $N = 268$ )

*Note.* Factor loadings (in parentheses after each item)  $< .45$  are suppressed.

about .01 in alpha. However, considering the connection in meaning between this item and the others in the scale, we kept it there. Independent-samples  $t$  tests were run on the composite scores of the factors to explore the differences in identity perceptions between the Chinese and Dutch teachers who had completed the questionnaire. We also used  $t$ -tests (for the gender variable) and one-way between-subjects ANOVA (for the teaching experience variable) to see if there were any differences in teachers' ideas related to these two personal background variables. Because amount of travel to ES countries and final level of education apparently differed between the two national groups, we consider and discuss them here as combined in the contextual variables for the two national groups. When comparing the questionnaire data for the two groups, we focused on the items that differed significantly ( $p < .05$ ) between the groups.

## 4.5 Results

### 4.5.1 Teachers' intercultural identities: Descriptive statistics and underlying factors

Using PCA, we found that four factors underlie the teachers' intercultural identities as measured using the questionnaire. After a semantic analysis of the items in the factors, we chose the following labels for the four underlying factors: *Openness to ES cultures*, *Disconnection from ES cultures*, *Connection to ES cultures*, and *Impartiality with respect to ES Cultures*. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2**

*Descriptive statistics for the four factors of teachers' intercultural identities (N = 268)*

	No. of items	M (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha
Openness to ES cultures	4	4.45 (.82)	.76
Disconnection from ES cultures	5	2.82 (.89)	.67
Connection to ES cultures	4	4.06 (.87)	.67
Impartiality with respect to ES cultures	3	4.87 (.76)	.59

*Note.* M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

The two factors *Disconnection from ES Cultures* and *Connection to ES Cultures*, which embedded 9 out of the 16 items, reveal how teachers regard their connections with ES cultures. Connection, on the one hand, reveals how close the teachers feel to the cultures of English-speaking countries, how fascinated they are by the language and cultures of English-speaking countries, and how much they appreciate the cultures of English-speaking countries (compared with their own native culture). The factor 'Connection' also concerns teachers' thoughts on influences from the cultures of English-speaking countries on their own thinking about the world and people around them. Disconnection, on the other hand, reveals whether teachers feel uncomfortable when talking to native speakers of English, experience a tendency within themselves to highlight only the positive aspects of all cultures to pupils, or have difficulties in understanding or accepting the values of native speakers of English. This factor also reveals whether the teachers regard themselves as being positioned between their own native culture and the

cultures of English-speaking countries, or think their relationship with pupils is much like it would be in an English-speaking country.

The factor of *Openness to ES cultures* reveals the extent to which teachers are sensitive to or aware of cultural differences and how they would cope with such differences. This factor contains items that concern the extent to which the teachers see themselves as being able to fit in both in the home culture and the cultures of English-speaking countries, the extent to which they are able to understand cultural issues from the perspectives of native speakers, try to find out more about the cultures of English-speaking countries, and question their own ideas and behaviours when confronted with different ones in the cultures of English-speaking countries.

The factor of *Impartiality with respect to ES cultures* reveals teachers' attitudes towards ES cultures when comparing them with their own cultures. This factor reveals whether the teachers see themselves as trying to be as objective as possible when comparing the cultures of English-speaking countries with their own native culture, finding that their own culture and the cultures of English-speaking countries have favourable and unfavourable aspects, and believing that teachers should not impose their likes or dislikes on their pupils, because as teachers, they would like pupils to form opinions of their own.

As Table 4.3 shows, among both Chinese and Dutch teachers, *Impartiality with respect to ES Cultures* and *Openness to ES cultures* scored highest, while *Disconnection from ES cultures* scored lowest.

#### 4.5.2 *Similarities and differences in Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' identities*

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare Chinese and Dutch teachers' scores on each of the scales. The results in Table 4.3 show that the two groups were significantly different in three of the four scales: *Openness to ES cultures*, *Disconnection from ES cultures*, and *Impartiality with respect to ES Cultures*. The difference in the scores for *Connection to ES cultures* was not significant. Table 4.3 shows that teachers in both China and the Netherlands considered themselves open to ES cultures, more connected to ES cultures than disconnected from them, and impartial while teaching about ES cultures. The differences in means suggest that when

considering their intercultural identities, Dutch teachers emphasised Openness to ES cultures and Impartiality with respect to ES Cultures more than Chinese teachers, and agreed less than Chinese teachers on Disconnection from ES Cultures.

**Table 4.3**

*T-Test results comparing Chinese and Dutch teachers' intercultural identities (N = 268)*

Item	CN	NL	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
	( <i>n</i> = 114)	( <i>n</i> = 154)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>		
	( <i>SD</i> )	( <i>SD</i> )		
Openness to ES cultures	4.25	4.59	266	-3.46**
	(.88)	(.74)		
Disconnection from ES cultures	3.44	2.36	196	11.73***
	(.83)	(.60)		
Connection to ES cultures	3.97	4.12	266	-1.43
	(.92)	(.82)		
Impartiality with respect to ES cultures	4.65	5.04	201	-4.18***
	(.88)	(.64)		

*Note.* M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, *df* = degrees of freedom, *t* = *t* value. Standard deviations are in parentheses below the means. CN = Chinese EFL teachers; NL = Dutch EFL teachers. Scores for the items range from 1 (not at all like me) to 6 (very much like me).

\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed. \*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , two-tailed.

#### 4.5.3 Related Variables

In addition to the 'national group' variable, we also explored whether two other specific variables in teachers' personal backgrounds, gender and years of teaching, were related to their intercultural identities. We found that male teachers emphasised Openness to ES cultures and Connection to ES cultures more than female teachers. This difference was more apparent among Dutch teachers. In the Chinese group, no significant differences between male and female teachers were found. The results for the total group and the Dutch group are reported in Appendix 3. We did not find any significant differences in the means of the four factors related to the teachers' years of teaching experience.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

The aim of our study was to explore how non-native teachers of English perceive their intercultural identities and what common factors underlie their identity perceptions. We

were looking for similarities or differences between Chinese and Dutch teachers' intercultural identities. We developed a questionnaire which was administered among a large group of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers. Our results show four factors underlying the teachers' intercultural identities: 'Openness to ES cultures', 'Connection to ES cultures', 'Disconnection from ES Cultures', and 'Impartiality with respect to ES Cultures'. We found significant differences between Chinese and Dutch teachers' intercultural identities, which enriched our findings from the interview study. In the interview study, we found that Chinese and Dutch teachers saw their connection to ES cultures differently, and that their needs and purposes in culture teaching were different. It was apparent from the questionnaire survey that Chinese teachers felt more disconnected from ES cultures and agreed less than Dutch teachers on openness and impartiality with respect to ES cultures. Furthermore, Chinese teachers perceived more difficulties than Dutch teachers in communicating with English speakers and in understanding or accepting ES cultures. Some of our findings in the two phases of the study are in line with previous studies, such as: Phan and Phan (2006) and Phan (2007), who found that EFL teachers maintained affiliation to their own culture; the international surveys by Sercu et al. (2005) which showed various opinions of EFL teachers among different countries; and Byram et al. (2002), who sketched the difficulties that teachers may experience if they want to remain impartial in culture teaching.

An implication of our study may be that more ways need to be explored to enhance the roles of EFL teachers in promoting intercultural competence among learners. First, EFL teachers who teach about ES cultures from a 'non-native' perspective may find it difficult to present facts and opinions about cultural phenomena to students; they might need to be reassured that they do not need to know every aspect of ES cultures before being able to teach. Teachers could also give students more opportunities to explore or experience ES cultures for themselves, such as through doing peer interviews or making portfolios to promote intercultural understanding and reduce stereotyping (Su, 2008, 2011). Second, our findings might encourage EFL teachers and other practitioners in language teaching to reflect on their own intercultural identity and their own practice with regard to teaching about culture. The questionnaire that we developed to measure the four aspects of intercultural identity could easily be adapted for use in teacher education or in teacher professional development programs.

Although our findings have provided a better understanding of the perspectives of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers and the roles they played in culture teaching, we have to acknowledge that our study has limitations. First, our exploratory study focused on teachers' intercultural identities at one moment rather than over a longer period. In future research, it would be interesting to use the instrument developed in our study to investigate how EFL teachers' intercultural identities develop over a period of time, especially when curricular innovations are underway that are aimed at promoting culture teaching and intercultural competence (e.g., Ilieva, 2010; Ortaçtepe, 2015). Second, the number of variables in our study was limited. In future research, in addition to gender and years of teaching experience, other variables such as teachers' beliefs and values, student characteristics, or society's expectations of the teaching profession could also be taken into account.

We could explore in future research how native and non-native EFL teachers can inform each other in this respect. Teachers who do not speak English as their mother tongue may acquire the language and develop their linguistic competence towards the level of native speakers. However, it is unlikely that non-native teachers will have the same feeling of connection to ES cultures as native speakers, due to their own cultural background. Speaking about the differences between Chinese and Dutch teachers in this respect, we should avoid deriving new stereotypes of Chinese or Dutch teachers from our findings, a danger also warned against in previous reviews and studies (e.g., Moussu & Llorca, 2008; Sercu et al., 2005). Teachers' identities keep developing along with their experiences, and within a national group there can be differences and variations among individuals, schools, regions, et cetera. In the future, therefore, we would welcome studies that use the approach developed in this study for further in-depth explorations of how non-native and native teachers in various cultures respond to questions about their intercultural identities and their opinions on culture teaching, and how these teachers can learn from each other.

## Chapter 5

# Exploring the relationship between non-native EFL teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Manuscript submitted for publication: Chen, D., Tigelaar, D. E. H., Smit, B. H. J. & Verloop, N. (under review). Cultural values of English-language teachers and their intercultural identities: Comparing China and the Netherlands.

## Abstract

This study explored the relationship between the cultural values of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) and their awareness of themselves within an intercultural teaching context. A teacher's perception of self in relation to two or more cultural groups has been referred to as *intercultural identity*. EFL teachers of different cultural origins can attach differing importance to cultural values, which can influence their identity perceptions. To improve our understanding of teachers' roles and self-awareness with regard to teaching about culture, we explored how cultural values can be used to predict teachers' intercultural identities. We gathered data in two countries that were clearly either very distant from or very close to the cultures of English-speaking countries, i.e., China and the Netherlands. Participants in our questionnaire were Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers (114 in China; 154 in the Netherlands). For the total group and the Dutch group, benevolence, tradition, and power were found to be strong predictors of three underlying factors in teachers' intercultural identity perceptions, i.e., 'Openness to ES cultures', 'Disconnection from ES Cultures', and 'Impartiality with regard to ES Cultures'. Implications for pedagogies and training in language teaching are discussed.

## 5.1 Introduction

This study explored the relationship between the cultural values of teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and their awareness of themselves within an intercultural teaching context. Against the background of increasing communication across world cultures, the integration of culture and language in teaching and preparing students for future intercultural communication is seen as an important principle of foreign language teaching (Newton et al., 2010). According to that principle, an ideal EFL teacher is a teacher who is not only capable of training the students in speaking the foreign language, but who can also teach students to understand both their own and other cultures, to be interested in other cultures, and to see their own cultures from other cultural perspectives (Byram et al., 2002). It is therefore crucial for EFL teachers to be aware of their roles in teaching about cultures associated with the English language ('ES cultures', such as British and American cultures) (Aneja, 2016; Byram et al., 2002).

The concept of *intercultural identity*, i.e., a person's perception of self in relation to two or more cultural groups, has been used in the literature to improve our understanding of teachers' roles in teaching about cultural issues (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984; Y. Gao, 1999; Menard-Warwick, 2008). As mentioned in earlier chapters, the ways in which EFL teachers see themselves and perceive their roles in relation to ES cultures are referred to in the literature as 'teachers' intercultural identities' (c.f. Menard-Warwick, 2008). Earlier studies of EFL teachers have found that teachers formed and negotiated their intercultural identities as a result of personal experiences of ES cultures (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2008; Moran, 2001; Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005; Phan, 2008). The literature reveals that teachers' identity perceptions are shaped by their knowledge, beliefs, and values, their actual and perceived linguistic, intercultural, and teaching competence, their teaching contexts, and their sociocultural backgrounds.

Cultural values, which express shared beliefs and conceptions of what is good and desirable in a particular society, can be seen as central features of a culture (Hofstede et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006, 2014). On the basis of earlier research about the relationship between people's cultural values and their ideas about contact with other cultural groups (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 2006), we may assume that teachers' cultural values influence how they view themselves in relation to both their own cultures and the cultures they teach about, i.e., their intercultural identities.

In class, teachers are expected to act as cultural mediators between their cultures and ES cultures, which requires negotiation of their own particular cultural values and those of other cultures (Moran, 2001). To understand how teachers teach cultural issues in class, it is necessary to comprehend how they perceive themselves in relation to the cultures they teach (i.e., what their intercultural identities are) and how such perceptions are influenced by their cultural values. However, research into how teachers perceive their intercultural identity is a relatively new field and few studies have been conducted. Knowing more about how teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities are connected could contribute to inspiring pedagogies and training in language teaching. By comparing two countries that were clearly either very distant from or very close to the cultures of English-speaking countries (China and the Netherlands), we explored how cultural values might be used to predict EFL teachers' perceptions of themselves in relation to the cultures they teach about. In the next section, we first elaborate on the literature about cultural values and intercultural identity to provide a theoretical basis for the study.

### *5.1.1 Cultures and cultural values*

Culture is generally regarded as the co-constructed customs, behaviours, and beliefs that serve as the framework of a community (Driscoll et al., 2013; Kramsch, 2014). Cultural values can be considered as central features of a culture, which convey shared beliefs and common conceptions of the desirable things in life (Hofstede et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006). The set of values a group of people prefer can differ greatly from those preferred by members of another culture (Schwartz, 2006). Particularly if individuals run into conflicts between values, they can become aware of the priority they attach to a specific value or set of values, which can then become a guiding principle (Schwartz, 1996). We know from sociocultural and psychological studies that cultural values are connected to people's attitudes, beliefs, and norms (Bain et al., 2006; Schwartz, 2012), and that they can also forge teachers' identities (Johnston, 2003). On the basis of empirical studies from all over the world, Schwartz (1992, 1996) distinguished ten basic cultural values: conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, and security (see Table 5.1 for the descriptions of these values). By analysing large amounts of data accumulated in different countries using instruments like the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ), Schwartz described a common structure of cultural value orientations. The ten values can be organized along two orthogonal

dimensions: (a) Openness-to-Change versus Conservation and (b) Self-Enhancement versus Self-Transcendence (see Figure 5.1).

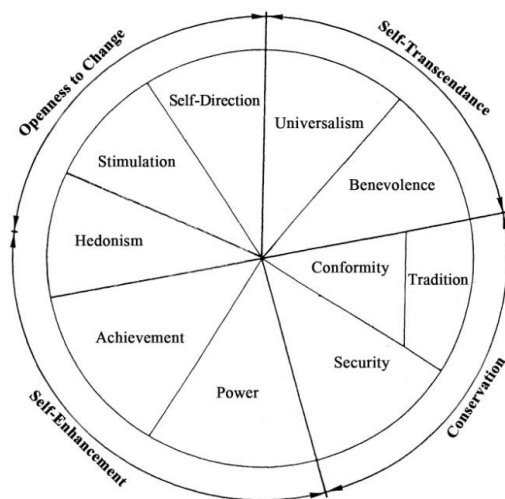
**Table 5.1**

*Brief description of ten cultural values*

Values	Descriptions
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms
Tradition	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide
Benevolence	Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature
Self-Direction	Independent thought and choosing of action, creation, exploration
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life
Hedonism	Pleasure and gratification
Achievement	Personal success through demonstration of competence according to social standards
Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources
Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self

*Note:* Adapted from Schwartz and Sagiv (1995, p. 95). For more detailed descriptions of the value types and categories of value types, see Sagiv and Schwartz (1995); Schwartz (1992, 1996, 2006, 2012, 2014); Schwartz and Bilsky (1990); Schwartz and Sagiv (1995).

Earlier research using Schwartz’s cultural value theory and questionnaire has shown that people’s cultural value orientations can predict how they view themselves in relation to a different cultural group (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 2006). In addition, it was found that people who emphasise openness-to-change (stimulation and self-direction) and/or self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence) tend to be more flexible, and show greater intercultural communication competence, than people who emphasise conservation (conformity, tradition, and security) and/or self-enhancement (power and achievement) (Schwartz, 2006). For example, people’s motivation to emigrate (i.e., flexibility) and eagerness for out-group contacts have been found to correlate positively with cultural values related to openness-to-change and self-transcendence, and negatively with the values related to conservation (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Tartakovsky & Schwartz, 2001). In sum, previous research shows that the connections between values and identities can be different among various groups emphasizing



**Figure 5.1.** Structure of value types and dimensions (adapted from Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995, p. 96).<sup>8</sup>

different values, and those connections are dependent on the expectations of the dominant group in a society (Roccas et al., 2010). According to Schwartz (2012), openness-to-change and self-transcendence values express ‘anxiety-free’ motivations, tending to expand social relationships; these values are more likely to be connected to interest in other cultures, impartiality in comparing cultures, and flexibility in intercultural communication. Conservation and self-enhancement values are connected to avoidance of conflict and maintenance of the current order or control, which can restrain people’s acceptance of other cultures and their influences or communication with people of other cultures. As research has shown that people’s cultural value orientations can predict how they view themselves in relation to another cultural group, it is reasonable to assume that EFL teachers’ cultural values influence how they see themselves in relation to both their own cultures and the cultures they teach about.

### 5.1.2 Conceptualizing intercultural identities of EFL teachers

According to Beijaard et al. (2004), a teacher’s professional identity consists of different sub-identities for different contexts. In an extension of this, intercultural identity can be

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<sup>8</sup> The present figure slightly differs from the original one in that the margin between Hedonism and the neighbouring values were originally dots which suggests that Hedonism is related to both Openness-to-Change and Self-Enhancement. This relationship is not a matter of concern in this dissertation.

regarded as a sub-identity of EFL teachers' professional identity, because it focuses on the identity of teachers in the specific context of teaching about cultures instead of the general teaching context. Intercultural identity was previously defined by Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) as an identity which may cross the boundary between different cultures, through people understanding and appreciating cultural diversity while not losing their own norms and values. Various definitions and related concepts can be found in the available literature related to intercultural identities. In the current study, based on our findings described in Chapter 4 in section 4.5.1, we distinguish four factors underlying teachers' intercultural identity perceptions: namely, '*Openness to ES cultures*', '*Connection to ES cultures*', '*Disconnection from ES Cultures*', and '*Impartiality with respect to ES Cultures*'. The factor 'Connection to ES cultures' shows teachers' general perceptions of themselves in relation to ES cultures. The factors 'Openness to ES cultures' and 'Disconnection from ES Cultures' illustrate from different perspectives how well teachers are able to notice and experience cultural differences, i.e., their *intercultural sensitivity* (Hammer et al., 2003). The factor 'Impartiality with respect to ES cultures' reveals teachers' attitudes towards ES cultures in their teaching practice. As mentioned in Chapter 4, in different sociocultural contexts, teachers may have different perceptions of themselves in relation to ES cultures with respect to these four factors. EFL teachers of different cultural origins may also attach differing importance to cultural values, and this can influence their identity perceptions. As outlined earlier in this chapter, we assume that EFL teachers' cultural values influence their perceptions of themselves as teachers in relation to both their own cultures and the cultures they teach about, i.e., their intercultural identities.

### 5.1.3 *The current study*

In this study, we aimed to contribute to the knowledge base for inspiring pedagogies and training in foreign language teaching, in particular with regard to teaching about culture in an intercultural context. To understand how EFL teachers teach cultural issues in class, we need to know more about how their cultural values and their intercultural identity perceptions are connected. To that end, we explored how cultural values might be used to predict teachers' intercultural identities.

We focused on non-native EFL teachers in China and the Netherlands in this study; this enabled a comparison between two countries that were clearly either very distant

from or very close to the cultures of English-speaking countries. China is more distant from ES cultures than the Netherlands. Moreover, because of the different geographic distances, only a small proportion of Chinese EFL teachers have opportunities to go to ES countries each year. Though the number of Chinese students who study abroad has increased dramatically in recent years, considering the large population, the proportion of overseas Chinese students is still quite small and opportunities to contact foreigners or travel to ES cultures are limited (CCTV, 2015). Compared with Chinese students, Dutch students have more opportunities to go on holiday or on school trips in ES countries, or to study there after graduation from secondary school (OECD, 2016).

Because of the differences between ES and non-ES cultures, it is generally a challenge for EFL teachers who work in non-English-speaking countries to help students to ‘understand and appreciate cultural diversity’ while ‘not losing sight of native norms and values’ (Alptekin & Alptekin, 1984, p. 19). We expected to find significant differences between the intercultural identities of EFL teachers from these different national groups, presumably as a result of their different emphases on cultural values. We assumed some cultural values, such as tradition, benevolence, universalism, stimulation, power, and security, might be connected to teachers’ intercultural identities, while conformity, self-direction, hedonism, and achievement were not likely to be relevant. Our expectations were based on earlier research into people’s cultural values in relation to their attitudes towards intercultural communication (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 1996; Tartakovsky & Schwartz, 2001), and on studies of teachers’ intercultural identities (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Newton et al., 2010; Sercu et al., 2005). We also considered the descriptions of the values (see Table 5.1) measured in the Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ) of Schwartz et al. (2001), our own concept of intercultural identity, and the situation of non-native EFL teachers who work in their own countries.

In the current study, we focused on non-native EFL teachers, because they are the largest group of EFL teachers, and they are faced with big intercultural challenges in their teaching. To explore the relationships between the cultural values and the intercultural identity perceptions of Chinese and Dutch teachers, our specific research questions were:

1. What similarities and differences exist between the cultural values of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers?

2. How do the teachers' cultural values relate to the intercultural identities of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers?

## **5.2 Method**

### *5.2.1 Context of the research*

Our research focused on Chinese and Dutch non-native EFL teachers from various secondary schools in both China and the Netherlands. The cultures of the two countries differ not only from each other, but also from ES cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006, 2014). China, as we know from the research of Schwartz (2006, 2014), is a mostly Confucian-influenced region that combines an emphasis on security, power, and achievement with an emphasis on a hierarchical structure in society. The Netherlands, in contrast, is a Western European country which encourages individuals to pursue their own ideas and intellectual directions independently, to recognize each other as equals, and to aim to fit into the world as it is.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, China and the Netherlands differ in distance from and convenience of access to ES cultures and education systems. The status of the English language and ES cultures in society and school education also differs between the two countries. Such differences may cause Chinese and Dutch teachers to have different perceptions of their connection to ES cultures, and the need for and purposes of culture teaching.

### *5.2.2 Participants*

We invited Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers from various secondary schools to participate in our questionnaire, limiting our selection to teachers whose mother tongue was not English. Participation was voluntary. Of the 456 teachers we approached, 268 (58.8%) completed the questionnaire. The final sample was composed of 114 Chinese and 154 Dutch teachers of English. The questionnaires were completed anonymously. An overview of the general characteristics of the respondents is presented in Table 4.1 and Chapter 4.

### 5.2.3 Instruments

To measure EFL teachers' cultural values in both China and the Netherlands, we adopted the English version of the 40-item Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) of Schwartz et al. (2001) (see the first section of Appendix 2). The PVQ has both more general and more context-free items to measure cultural values than the other available instruments and the language is more suited to the level of non-native speakers of English. Because items are phrased in the form of the characteristics of a third person and respondents are asked to indicate how much they perceive this person as similar to themselves, the items are less confronting than self-portrait statements with first-person pronouns. For example, items such as *'He thinks it's important to be interested in things'* and *'He likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things'* describe a person who emphasises self-direction values. In the PVQ statements as well as in other parts of the questionnaire, we used 'he' to mean both 'he' and 'she.' The question for each item is 'How much like you is this person?' Each item is followed by six response options: (a) very much like me, (b) like me, (c) somewhat like me, (d) a little like me, (e) not like me, or (f) not at all like me. To measure teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities, we used the questionnaire described in Chapter 4. The items are listed in Appendix 1. For the factors underlying the relevant items in the questionnaire, see Figure 4.1, which presents the factor loading matrix for the final solution. As stated in Chapter 4, Cronbach's alphas for each of the scales were mostly moderate. Independent-samples *t*-tests were run on the composite scores of the factors to explore the differences in perceptions between the Chinese and Dutch teachers who completed the questionnaire. We also used *t*-tests (for the gender variable) and one-way between-subjects ANOVA (for the teaching experience variable) to see if there were any differences in teachers' ideas related to these two variables in their personal backgrounds. The findings can be found in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, and are summarized in the results section of that chapter.

### 5.2.4 Data collection and analysis

The teachers received the invitation and questionnaire through a contact person in the school, the organizer of a teacher training programme, or a post in an online teacher forum. The ranks, means, and standard deviations for the ten cultural values were calculated using the scoring key recommended by Schwartz (2001). The centred value

scores and standard deviations for the items measuring the values of the two groups of teachers were calculated and compared. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.2.

To determine how cultural values were associated with aspects of the teachers' intercultural identities, we conducted standard regression analyses. Based on the definition of the values, the results of previous studies, and our trial analysis, we selected six values for the regression analyses (i.e., tradition, benevolence, universalism, stimulation, power, and security; we excluded conformity, self-direction, hedonism, and achievement). The second section of Appendix 2 shows which questions in Schwartz's PVQ instrument represent the respective values. Three prediction models were formulated. In Model 1, we entered nationality and gender as independent predictors of the factors of teachers' intercultural identities, because in our pilot analyses we found these demographic variables to account for a considerable amount of the variation in the participants' responses. In Model 2, we added the six cultural values from Schwartz's theory (i.e., tradition, benevolence, universalism, stimulation, power, and security) in separate analyses for each of the intercultural identity factors. In Model 3, we split the teachers according to nationality and entered only gender and cultural values as independent predictors of the factors of their intercultural identities.

## **5.3 Results**

### *5.3.1 Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' intercultural identities: similarities and differences*

For a better understanding of the results of our exploration into the relationship between non-native EFL teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identity perceptions, we first summarize the results of the comparison between Chinese and Dutch teachers' intercultural identity perceptions (see also Table 4.3). From our large-scale exploration of teachers' intercultural identity perceptions in Chapter 4, we found that teachers in both China and the Netherlands generally considered themselves open to ES cultures, more connected to ES cultures than disconnected from them, and impartial in teaching about ES cultures. Furthermore, we found that the two groups differed significantly in three of the four factors underlying their identity perceptions: namely, 'Openness to ES Cultures', 'Disconnection from ES Cultures', and 'Impartiality with regard to ES

Cultures'. There was no significant difference in the scores for 'Connection to ES Cultures'. The comparison of the means suggests that, when considering their intercultural identities, Dutch teachers placed more emphasis than Chinese teachers on Openness to ES Cultures and Impartiality with regard to ES Cultures, and agreed less than Chinese teachers with Disconnection from ES Cultures.

In addition to the 'national group' variable, we found that teachers' gender could be related to two factors in their intercultural identities. Male teachers emphasised Openness to ES cultures and Connection to ES cultures more than female teachers. Such differences were more apparent among Dutch teachers. There were no significant differences between the Chinese male and female teachers on these factors, nor did we find any significant differences in the four factors related to their teaching experience (see Appendix 3).

### *5.3.2 Comparison of teachers' cultural values*

Table 5.2 shows that the ten cultural values of the Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers differed markedly. The most prominent differences are outlined below. While universalism ranked as one of the most important values in both groups (most important for the Chinese, and second most important for the Dutch), Dutch teachers attached significantly more importance to it than did the Chinese teachers. Chinese teachers ranked security as the second most important value; Dutch teachers, however, ranked security as moderately important. For the Dutch teachers, self-direction ranked as the most important value; Chinese teachers, however, ranked self-direction as moderately important. Benevolence ranked as the third most important value in both groups, although Dutch teachers attached significantly more importance to it than did the Chinese teachers. Conformity ranked moderately important in both groups, although Chinese teachers attached significantly more value to this than did the Dutch teachers. Finally, tradition and achievement ranked among the least important values in both groups, although Chinese teachers attached significantly more importance to these than did the Dutch teachers.

**Table 5.2***Comparison of cultural values for Chinese versus Dutch EFL teachers (N = 268)*

Individual levels	CN (n = 114)				NL (n = 154)				t
	rank	M	SD	$\alpha$	rank	M	SD	$\alpha$	
Conformity	6	-.02	.48	.625	6	-.32	.71	.646	4.76***
Tradition	8	-.39	.62	.533	9	-1.02	.69	.483	7.85***
Benevolence	3	.19	.49	.691	3	.70	.59	.625	-7.49***
Universalism	1	.37	.42	.738	2	.71	.61	.776	-5.38***
Self-Direction	4	.18	.37	.510	1	1.04	.55	.671	-15.24***
Stimulation	9	-.47	.75	.580	7	-.37	.83	.722	-1.07
Hedonism	5	.03	.68	.522	4	.09	.85	.809	-.63
Achievement	7	-.09	.51	.738	8	-.48	.87	.813	4.49**
Power	10	-.63	.98	.597	10	-1.06	.79	.627	3.86***
Security	2	.27	.43	.721	5	.02	.58	.631	3.94***

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation. CN = Chinese EFL teachers; NL = Dutch EFL teachers.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ,  $t$ -test results, two-tailed.

### 5.3.3 Relationship of teachers' cultural values to their intercultural identities

The results of the standard regression analyses are presented in Table 5.3. As to the significance of the three models in prediction: Model 1 explained all of the variance in the factors of teachers' intercultural identities; Model 2 explained only two factors (disconnection from ES cultures and impartiality with regard to ES cultures); and Model 3 predicted the factor of disconnection from ES cultures in the Chinese group only while in the Dutch group all of the variance was predicted (Table 5.3). From another perspective, connection to ES cultures was the only factor that could not be predicted with the selected cultural values (in the Dutch group, only gender was significantly correlated with the factor in Model 3). To make comparison of the results for Chinese and Dutch teachers easier, in Table 5.4, we report only the significant results of Models 2 and 3 regarding the question of how much variance in the intercultural identity items is explained by the set of selected cultural values (the  $\beta$  value) in both the Chinese and

the Dutch groups of teachers.

**Table 5.3**

*Regression of items concerning factors of teachers' intercultural identities on nationality, gender, and selected cultural values: Comparison of three models (N = 268)*

Factors of intercultural identities	Regression models	R <sup>2</sup>	Sig. F Change
Openness to ES cultures	1	.063	.000
	2	.104	.076
	CN	.047	.630
	NL	.095	.039
Disconnection from ES cultures	1	.371	.000
	2	.447	.000
	CN	.198	.001
	NL	.140	.002
Connection to ES cultures	1	.045	.002
	2	.068	.396
	CN	.052	.559
	NL	.098	.032
Impartiality with respect to ES cultures	1	.077	.000
	2	.211	.000
	CN	.113	.071
	NL	.243	.000

*Note.* For Model 1 we used nationality and gender as independent predictors of the factors of intercultural identities of the teachers. For Model 2 we used six cultural values from Schwartz's theory (i.e., tradition, benevolence, universalism, stimulation, power and security) in separate analyses for each of the intercultural identity factors. In Model 3, we split the teachers according to nationality and entered only gender and the selected cultural values as independent predictors. CN = Chinese EFL teachers; NL = Dutch EFL teachers.

Table 5.4 shows the predictability of the factors underlying the Chinese and Dutch teachers' intercultural identities on the basis of the cultural values the teachers reported adhering to (Models 2 and 3); only those factors that can be significantly predicted by cultural values are presented. Three of these values —benevolence, tradition, and power— were found to be strong predictors of three factors of teachers' intercultural identities in Models 2 and 3, namely: Openness to ES cultures, Disconnection from ES

Cultures, and Impartiality with regard to ES Cultures. However, these three values were found to be related to more variance in the factors of intercultural identity among the combined group of teachers and among the Dutch teachers than among the Chinese teachers. None of the values was found to be a statistically significant predictor of intercultural identity perceptions among Chinese teachers (see Table 5.4 for the results).

**Table 5.4**

*Results of regression of factors concerning teachers' intercultural identities and ES cultures on selected cultural values (N = 268)*

Factors	Regression models	National groups	$\beta$		
			Benevolence	tradition	power
Openness to ES cultures	2	CN+NL	.097	-.159	-.028
	3	CN	-.046	-.120	-.148
		NL	.155	-.189*	.010
Disconnection from ES cultures	2	CN+NL	.044	.204***	.150*
	3	CN	.137	.054	.165
		NL	-.047	.298**	.204
Impartiality with respect to ES cultures	2	CN+NL	.202**	-.155*	-.180*
	3	CN	.171	-.012	-.171
		NL	.197*	-.299**	-.254*

*Note.* The selected values were tradition, benevolence, universalism, stimulation, power and security. CN = Chinese EFL teachers; NL = Dutch EFL teachers.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , one-tailed.

## 5.4 Conclusion and discussion

In the current study, we explored the relationship between non-native EFL teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identity perceptions. We examined how cultural values can be used to predict teachers' perceptions of themselves in relation to the cultures they teach about. The questionnaire responses of the 268 non-native EFL

teachers in our study show different cultural values and intercultural identity perceptions. The most visible difference between the Chinese and Dutch teachers with regard to their cultural value orientations was that the two groups put different emphases on universalism, self-direction, security, benevolence, conformity, and achievement (see Table 5.2 for the rankings and differences). The teachers maintained almost the same set of preferred cultural values as found in earlier, general studies of the respective populations (Hofstede et al., 2010; Schwartz, 2006, 2014). Chinese culture emphasises hierarchy and stability in social relationships, whereas Dutch culture emphasises autonomy and equality.

Furthermore, our findings revealed that for the total group and the Dutch group, benevolence, tradition, and power were strong predictors of three underlying factors in teachers' intercultural identity perceptions, i.e., 'Openness to ES cultures', 'Disconnection from ES Cultures', and 'Impartiality with regard to ES Cultures'. However, none of the values was found to be a statistically significant predictor of the intercultural identity perceptions of the Chinese group of teachers. Benevolence, which was regarded as one of the most important values by both Chinese and Dutch teachers, emphasises 'voluntary concern for others' welfare' (Schwartz, 2012, p. 7). This means that the positive correlation between benevolence and impartiality with regard to ES cultures indicates a connection between teachers' willingness to help others (in this case their students) and their support for impartial positions in comparing the cultures. Conversely, tradition and power values are linked to avoidance of conflict and maintenance of the current order or control, which can limit or hinder people's acceptance of other cultures or their communication with people of other cultures (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). Although tradition and power were regarded as not as important as other values by Chinese and Dutch teachers, they appeared to be strong predictors for teachers' identity perceptions, especially as far as 'openness to ES cultures' is concerned. This means that, when teachers emphasised tradition and power, they were less likely to feel open to those cultures.

When exploring the explained variance in teachers' identity perceptions for each of the two groups, we found these results to be statistically significant for the Dutch group and, in two out of the three factors, for the combined group, but not for the Chinese group. This implies that the connection between these cultural values and factors that characterize teachers' intercultural identity perceptions was more obvious among Dutch

teachers than Chinese teachers. At first sight, it seems strange that benevolence and tradition had predictive value for the combined group and for the Dutch group, but not for the Chinese group, because the Dutch teachers attached significantly more importance to benevolence than did the Chinese teachers, and the Chinese teachers attached significantly more importance to tradition than did the Dutch teachers. A closer look, however, shows that the standard deviations for each of the factors of intercultural identity were much higher among the Chinese teachers than among the Dutch, and that the standard deviations for cultural values did not differ that much between the two groups (see Tables 4.3 and 5.2, respectively). This can explain why within-group differences in the Chinese group with regard to intercultural identity perceptions have no clear relation to differences in importance attached to cultural values within the Chinese group. The Chinese teachers possibly interpreted their relationship with ES cultures as a professional one, while they may have interpreted their opinions on cultural values as being more personal.

Although our findings provide insight into the extent to which Chinese and Dutch teachers' cultural values predict their intercultural identity perceptions, we have to acknowledge that our study has limitations. First, the specific characteristics of the non-native EFL teachers in our study may explain our findings. For example, teachers who work in their native country do not face the same pressure to acculturate and adapt to a foreign culture as do teachers who have emigrated to a foreign country (e.g., a Chinese speaker in the USA, or a Russian speaker in the Netherlands), and they may understand the items about intercultural identity from the perspective of the setting of their teaching. It would, therefore, be an interesting topic for future research to further delineate the common features of EFL teachers across countries (and possibly across other contexts), in order to identify not only the roots of their similarities but also how these similarities can be used to benefit students and EFL teachers worldwide.

Second, the number of variables included in our study was limited. Apart from the variables of cultural values, national group, gender, and teaching experience, which were included, other variables could be considered in future research into the intercultural identity perceptions of EFL teachers, such as teaching context and institutional climate. In this respect, future research needs to complement our study with small-scale qualitative research. Such an approach would also enable meaningful consideration of variables such as teachers' responses to aspects of ES cultures

presented in textbooks, teachers' levels of language proficiency, and teachers' interpersonal skills.

Our findings indicate the need for EFL teachers to be aware of their own perspectives when teaching about ES cultures. These findings also underline the importance of considering the diversity of EFL teachers worldwide when investigating how non-native teachers teach about ES cultures. An implication of our findings may be that EFL teachers need more opportunities to increase their experience of ES cultures by travelling to those countries more often. This could help EFL teachers to develop greater understanding and critical views of those cultures, as can be seen from the experiences of teachers in previous studies (Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Ortaçtepe, 2015; Phan, 2007, 2008; Phan & Phan, 2006). In the meantime, if teachers and their students gain more opportunities to explore or experience ES cultures by themselves, such as through conducting peer interviews, joining communities of EFL teachers, or making portfolios to promote intercultural understanding, this might yield interesting possibilities for culture-related language teaching from which both students and teachers can benefit (Nguyen, 2016; Su, 2008, 2011). Furthermore, our findings might encourage EFL teachers and other practitioners in language teaching to reflect on their own ideas with regard to foreign cultures, be critical of possible prejudices among themselves, colleagues and students, and think about how to respond to that (Byram et al., 2002).

Although our findings have helped to pin down the characteristics of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers, we must be careful not to create stereotypes. For researchers and teacher educators, such connections offer an opportunity to understand different intercultural identities by looking into the values of EFL teachers. However, it should be noted at the same time that the connections between teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities were not the same in the two national groups. These connections were more apparent among the Dutch teachers. Teachers in different cultures attach different importance to values, but the values are not totally context-free and they need to be interpreted in specific contexts (Schwartz, 2006). For example, because the traditions in Chinese and Dutch cultures are different, what Chinese teachers consider helpful to their students when teaching about ES cultures might be different from what Dutch teachers would consider helpful. Wette and Barkhuizen (2009) found that Chinese EFL teachers wanted to maintain their traditional status as authority figures and still make sure that their teaching content was appropriate for students' developmental

levels and affective needs. Considering our findings about Dutch teachers' emphasis on self-direction and their greater agreement on wishing to avoid imposing on students (one of the items in the factor of impartiality), it is very likely that Dutch teachers would not do the same as Chinese teachers. This is why it is important to take into account the characteristics of specific cultural contexts so as to avoid forming new stereotypes about teachers' intercultural identities. Furthermore, although research has shown that the cultural values of members of the same national group tend to develop in similar ways, recent research also indicates that increasing numbers of educated young Chinese people are becoming more individualism-oriented (Y. Liu, 2012). This means that the development of the cultural values of various national groups may be influenced by globalization and the promotion of English language teaching. In the future, therefore, attention should also be paid to the roles of, for instance, popular culture, which may have different effects on the intercultural identity perceptions of students and teachers (Menard-Warwick, 2011). It is our hope that our exploratory study will raise awareness of the marked variation in EFL teachers' identities and the many factors that shape them, and of the need for additional research in this area.



## Chapter 6

# General conclusions and discussion

## **6.1 Brief overview**

In this dissertation, we report on our exploratory study into the intercultural identities of Chinese and Dutch secondary school teachers who teach English as a foreign language (EFL). The aim of our study was to explore the characteristics of such intercultural identities in different countries, and the relationship between teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities. In order to be able to produce a rich description of teachers' intercultural identities and their cultural values, we used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Our main questions were: (a) How do non-native EFL teachers in secondary education in different countries perceive their intercultural identities? and (b) How are cultural values of these non-native EFL teachers related to their intercultural identities?

The main findings and conclusions of the three studies described in section 1.5 of Chapter 1, are summarized below: the review of recent studies on EFL teachers' intercultural identities (Chapter 2), the interview of a small group of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers (Chapter 3), and the survey of a large group of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers (Chapters 4 and 5). The second part of this chapter is an overall discussion of the findings, with special attention to the fluidity of teachers' intercultural identities, the context-dependent nature and implicitness of these intercultural identities, and the connection between cultural values and intercultural identities. In the final section, we discuss the strengths and limitations of the study and give suggestions for further research in this field.

## **6.2 General conclusions of the studies**

### *6.2.1 Review of recent studies (Chapter 2)*

The aim of the literature review was to provide an overview of the recent research on the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English. We attempted to answer the following research questions: (a) How are the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English characterized and defined in recent studies? and (b) What do these studies report about the formation of these intercultural identities?

To answer the research questions, we systematically reviewed 21 studies on the intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English worldwide. These were selected from all 59 particularly relevant studies that we found from a literature search in relevant databases. They had all been published in the last 15 years in international peer-reviewed academic journals. We categorized the studies into two groups according to their themes, namely: (a) characteristics of teachers' intercultural identities, and (b) the formation of teachers' intercultural identities. We reviewed and compared the aims, concepts and definitions, related concepts, methodology, and main findings of the studies.

The results of our literature review revealed the following characteristics of teachers' intercultural identities:

- being flexible and constantly developing,
- responding to different intercultural contexts,
- being influenced by teachers' language skills and intercultural competence, and
- influencing teachers' attitudes towards language, culture and teaching.

Three groups of interrelated factors that formed or shaped teachers' intercultural identities were found: (a) factors related to personal knowledge and experience, (b) factors related to teaching context, and (c) factors related to general sociocultural context. The results of the literature review permit the conclusion that both characteristics and formation of teachers' intercultural identities involve personal and contextual sides, as previously observed by Beijaard et al. (2004) with respect to an analysis of studies with a more general focus, i.e., studies on teachers' professional identity. The papers analysed in our review illustrate a shift of focus during the last few decades from only linguistic competence to an interaction between sociocultural factors and teachers' perceptions of themselves in the teaching context. Several papers referred to specific sociocultural theories (such as Vygotsky's) in the study of language teachers (Ellis, 2013; van Compernelle & Williams, 2013). The review of recent studies drew our attention to various theoretical approaches and empirical research findings that seemed useful for designing our research on teachers' intercultural identities. To explore the characteristics of teachers' intercultural identities in various sociocultural contexts further, we found it necessary to conduct both an in-depth case study and a large-scale survey.

### *6.2.2 Interview with Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers (Chapter 3)*

The aim of the interview study was to explore and compare how Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers perceive themselves in relation to ES cultures. We attempted to answer the following questions: (a) How do Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers perceive their intercultural identities? and (b) What similarities and differences exist between their perceptions of intercultural identities?

To answer these questions, we conducted an exploratory study by interviewing 5 Chinese and 5 Dutch secondary school EFL teachers. The interview questions were focused on four aspects: (a) teachers' feeling of connection with ES cultures; (b) influence of ES cultures on their personal or professional identity; (c) intercultural sensitivity, i.e., their perceptions of their own ability to cope with intercultural experiences; and (d) their attitudes towards ES cultures in teaching. In our analysis of the interview data, we quoted key words and phrases related to these themes, and phrases with similar meanings were combined into categories. A descriptive label was then chosen for each category.

The results of our exploratory interview study show that both the Chinese and Dutch teachers kept a strong affiliation to their own cultures, while perceiving themselves as also connected to ES cultures by profession and/or by personal interest. These teachers tended to be flexible rather than rigid in coping with cultural differences pertaining to their intercultural sensitivity; they noticed the influence of ES cultures on certain aspects of their lives; all of them tried to remain impartial in culture teaching, because they considered it important to regard cultures as equal and to avoid imposing their ideas on students. However, some of the teachers focused particularly on the teaching of language skills. Others considered it difficult to teach about cultures in an impartial way because they contended that students could pick up teachers' attitudes anyway. These findings are consistent with the results of the small number of previous studies that are available about EFL teachers, which found that teachers had a tendency to maintain their affiliation to their home cultures (Phan, 2007; Phan & Phan, 2006), experienced influence of ES cultures on their personal identity (Menard-Warwick, 2011), and experienced difficulty in avoiding personal attitudes and opinions in culture teaching (Byram et al., 2002).

Apart from the similarities mentioned above, differences were also found between the two national groups in the perceptions of their intercultural identities. For example, Chinese teachers felt connected to ES cultures mainly because of knowledge and profession, while Dutch teachers felt so mainly because of their interest in ES cultures. Chinese teachers felt comparatively less confident than Dutch teachers when communicating with native speakers of English and saw more differences than similarities between Chinese and ES cultures. Dutch teachers felt comparatively more comfortable when talking to native speakers of English, and saw more similarities than differences between Dutch and ES cultures. Chinese teachers felt that their knowledge about ES cultures was limited but wanted to highlight the positive sides of ES cultures. Dutch teachers felt it was difficult to remain impartial because students can often pick up the teachers' attitude anyway, even if the teacher does not express it explicitly.

The results revealed challenges and difficulties for EFL teachers in culture teaching, not only for teachers whose home culture is far from ES cultures but also for those whose culture is close to ES cultures. For Chinese teachers, the sources of their difficulties lay mostly in their limited access to the authentic materials from ES cultures and lack of immediate need for intercultural communication with people from ES cultures. For Dutch teachers, there were also challenges related to different cultural norms (e.g., between Dutch and American cultures), and the risk of overlooking cultural differences. These challenges and difficulties reminded teachers of the need to reflect on their attitudes to cultures.

### *6.2.3 Survey among Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers: Characteristics of intercultural identity (Chapter 4)*

Based on the teachers' opinions collected in the interview study, the second phase of our research aimed to explore the general characteristics of non-native EFL teachers' intercultural identities in China and the Netherlands. We attempted to answer the following questions: (a) How do Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers perceive their intercultural identities in relation to ES cultures? (b) What variables in the personal backgrounds of the teachers, apart from nationality, are related to their intercultural identities?

To answer these questions, we designed a questionnaire survey based on the literature explorations and on the teachers' perceptions collected in the interview study.

We compared the results of the two national groups to see if there were any differences between Chinese and Dutch teachers. We also searched for underlying factors of their intercultural identities and relevant variables. Participants in the questionnaire survey were 114 Chinese and 154 Dutch EFL teachers working at a number of secondary schools in the two countries.

The results show that Chinese teachers and Dutch teachers viewed their intercultural identities differently and for both groups the sociocultural contexts of their teaching were found to be the most influential variable in making such a difference. Our results reveal four factors underlying the teachers' intercultural identities: 'Openness to ES cultures', 'Connection to ES cultures', 'Disconnection from ES cultures', and 'Impartiality with respect to ES cultures'. Related to the different distances from ES cultures, Chinese and Dutch teachers had different intercultural identities in terms of these underlying factors. Chinese teachers perceived more difficulties than did Dutch teachers in communicating with English speakers and in understanding or accepting ES cultures and these difficulties appeared to be related to their opinions about how to teach ES cultures. In addition, compared with Dutch teachers, Chinese teachers put less emphasis on being impartial towards ES cultures. Different intercultural identities may lead to different choices in culture teaching, from aims and focuses of the teaching, to different culture teaching activities, as also found in earlier research of, for example, Menard-Warwick (2008) and Sercu et al. (2005).

The findings of our survey confirmed the context-dependent nature of teachers' intercultural identities, and provided more insights into how to describe and compare non-native EFL teachers' intercultural identities in different nations.

#### *6.2.4 Survey among EFL teachers: Cultural values and intercultural identity (Chapter 5)*

The aim of this part of the study was to explore whether it was possible to gain insights into the nature of the relationship between the cultural values of EFL teachers and their intercultural identities. We attempted to answer the following questions: (a) What similarities and differences exist between cultural values of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers? (b) How do the teachers' cultural values relate to the intercultural identities of the Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers?

We formulated some expectations about the relationship between cultural values and teachers' intercultural identities, which were based on: earlier research on cultural values and attitudes towards intercultural communication (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 1996; Tartakovsky & Schwartz, 2001); studies of teachers' intercultural identities (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Newton et al., 2010; Sercu et al., 2005); descriptions of the values by Schwartz et al. (2001); our own concept of intercultural identity; and the situation of non-native EFL teachers who work in their own countries. The expectations were that the cultural values of tradition, benevolence, universalism, stimulation, power, and security might be connected to teachers' intercultural identities, while conformity, self-direction, hedonism, and achievement were unlikely to be relevant.

To examine our expectations, we adopted the English version of the 40-item Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ) of Schwartz et al. (2001) and we also included in our questionnaire the questions about teachers' intercultural identities that we had developed on the basis of our previous in-depth interviews (see Chapter 3). We sought to analyse the ways in which teachers' intercultural identities are predicted by their cultural values (according to Schwartz's cultural value theory).

In addition to the different opinions of Chinese and Dutch teachers about their intercultural identities (as summarized in Section 6.2.3), the results show that the teachers maintained almost the same set of preferences for cultural values that have been found in earlier studies with regard to the respective populations in general. Our hypotheses regarding the relationship between cultural values and intercultural identities were partly confirmed by our research findings. All the values we had selected, especially, tradition, power and benevolence, were connected to some of the factors, namely, Openness to ES cultures, Disconnection from ES cultures, and Impartiality with respect to ES cultures, in the directions we had expected. Significant differences were also apparent in the way in which the Chinese and Dutch teachers' cultural values related to their intercultural identities. The three values just mentioned were found to be related to more factors underlying the intercultural identity perceptions among the Dutch teachers than among Chinese teachers; for the group of Chinese teachers the relationship was not statistically significant. Our findings may alert non-native EFL teachers to the possibility that their accustomed cultural values may impede their understanding of ES cultures and/or allow stereotypes to invade and bias their teaching.

### 6.3 Discussion

World cultures and languages were previously often defined from perspectives centred in Western civilization; these perspectives are challenged nowadays and we are urged to reconsider them (Holliday, 2009). From relevant literature available about cultural studies, we see the trend of regarding cultures as dynamic and multi-dimensional rather than static and bounded only to nations. Specifically, in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language worldwide, the debates on the ownership of the English language and the roles of native and non-native English-speaking teachers have led to insightful reflections and perceptions. For example, it is widely accepted that competence for future intercultural communication, rather than native-like linguistic competence, should be the aim of foreign language education (Byram et al., 2002; Council of Europe, 2001). This also implies that teachers should pay more attention to cultivating intercultural competence among students, no matter whether the teachers themselves are native or non-native speakers (Newton et al., 2010), and that teachers need to be aware of their own relationship with the cultures taught in class, so as to be cautious about their attitudes and positions when they are teaching (Byram, 2008; Byram et al., 2002).

In this dissertation, we focused on how EFL teachers see themselves and perceive their roles in relation to the cultures they teach, i.e., their intercultural identities. The findings of our study reveal characteristics of teachers' intercultural identities, the differences between the intercultural identities of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers, and the relationships between the teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities. We will now discuss some of the key issues emerging from our research, i.e., the fluidity of teachers' intercultural identities, the context-dependent nature and implicitness of teachers' intercultural identities, and the connection between cultural values and intercultural identities.

#### 6.3.1 *The fluidity of teachers' intercultural identities*

We defined teachers' intercultural identities in this study as their 'awareness of themselves in relation to the cultures they teach'. The intercultural identity of EFL teachers manifested itself in our study as a fluid entity, rather than a fixed or prescribed one. We argue that recognizing the fluidity, and both the personal and contextual aspects of teachers' intercultural identities, is crucial nowadays.

As the demand for teaching foreign languages with an intercultural dimension increases, teachers need to familiarize themselves with different cultural norms in the world, together with their students. This also means that the teachers, consciously or unconsciously, need to ‘negotiate’ between these new cultural norms and their original ones, and the results of such negotiation can become part of their lives, helping them to see the world ‘through multiple cultural lenses’ (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Menard-Warwick, 2008, p. 622). Their intercultural identities emerge as a process of blurring of boundaries between their own cultures and other cultures, and in an individualized process of reflection and (re)forming of their own identities through intercultural experiences (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Kim, 2007). As Alptekin and Alptekin (1984) foresaw in the 1980s,

*It will be an identity which is able to transcend the parochial confines of the native and target cultures by understanding and appreciating cultural diversity and pluralism thanks to the new language, while not losing sight of native norms and values in the process. In short, it is a bilingual and intercultural identity (p.19).*

Though Alptekin and Alptekin mentioned intercultural identity in their article as the target for students who learn English as a foreign or second language, their description could apply equally to the intercultural identity of EFL teachers. Among the papers reviewed in Chapter 2, we found that teachers’ intercultural identities were constantly developing along with their educational, working or transnational experiences (e.g., Menard-Warwick, 2008, 2011; Nugroho Widiyanto, 2005; Ortaçtepe, 2015). During the process of identity formation, teachers can be influenced by various aspects of ES cultures (e.g., popular culture such as literature, music and films), reflect on their own values and ideas, and incorporate these elements of ES cultures into their own identity (Howe & Xu, 2013; Menard-Warwick, 2011; Moran, 2001). In the interviews that formed part of our study, we also found that the participating teachers recalled the influence from ES cultures, such as their interest in English language and literature, pop music, et cetera, on the formation of their own identities as EFL teachers.

In an increasingly globalized world, teachers’ intercultural identities develop constantly all over the world because they now have more convenient access to information about other cultures than had previous generations. We argue that it needs to be acknowledged that the sociocultural contexts of EFL teachers’ own countries may both promote and hinder the constant development of their intercultural identities. We

know from history that, as economic open door policies and international business development can greatly promote the need for intercultural communication, at the same time political media censorship and xenophobia can reinforce cultural stereotypes and limit people's tolerance, understanding or acceptance of other cultures.

This means that recognizing the fluid entity and both personal and contextual aspects of teachers' intercultural identities is more important than ever. Regarding the personal aspect, the fact that teachers have their own attitudes towards cultures which are rooted in their own sociocultural backgrounds and intercultural experiences should be taken into account. This also means that it is difficult for teachers to remain absolutely impartial in culture teaching without revealing any of their attitudes towards the respective cultures (Byram et al., 2002). Regarding the contextual aspect, different sociocultural contexts and the distances between cultures partly determine the means of communication between cultures, which, in turn, influence how teachers regard their relationship with the cultures they teach.

### *6.3.2 Context-dependent nature and implicitness of teachers' intercultural identities*

We argue that further understanding is needed of the nature of teachers' intercultural identity and the extent to which we can talk about intercultural identities in terms of 'awareness of self'. We know from our findings that teachers' intercultural identity needs to be understood as part of a context-dependent process that they go through, often without being conscious of it, in which they sometimes take deliberate identity positions. EFL teachers are continually exposed to new cultural ideas and practices in their teaching and, along with this, they constantly renegotiate their identities as non-native EFL teachers, a process which often remains implicit (Newton et al., 2010). In addition, we found that the EFL teachers in our research combined definitions of their intercultural identities with definitions of their roles in language teaching. The teachers in our interviews (see Chapter 3), e.g., Sha and Lotte, defined their intercultural identities (i.e., their connections to ES cultures) by explaining their relationship with the students or their teaching methods as related to their feelings of connection to ES cultures. This reflects other research: in the review of previous studies in Chapter 2, we also found that a variety of terms and perspectives about language-and-culture teaching and cultural studies were used to describe teachers' intercultural identity. However,

definitions in existing research were often vague or non-existent. On the one hand, this makes it difficult to do research and describe teachers' intercultural identities in a way that is meaningful to a broad audience; on the other hand, the results of our study appear to confirm previous findings that teachers' identities are holistic and responsive to several elements in the context (Bukor, 2015; Huang & Varghese, 2015). Meanwhile, our literature review and empirical findings illustrate that it is possible to describe teachers' intercultural identities in a meaningful way. Our research not only indicates the need to study and describe teachers' intercultural identities from multiple perspectives, it also shows that it is possible to do this on a larger scale and by using a questionnaire. Further research could build on our findings and explore more details of the processes by which teachers become aware of their own intercultural identities and adopt deliberate identity positions, for example, when faced with culture-related dilemmas, important decisions, et cetera. Observations and comparisons of intercultural identities among different groups of teachers, such as those in the studies of Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015), Llurda and Huguet (2003), and Menard-Warwick (2008), or classroom-based research of teachers in culture teaching, such as that of Su (2008, 2011), are much needed. In the meantime, systematic frameworks and practical instructions about teachers and culture teaching, such as those of Byram et al. (2002), Moran (2001) and Newton et al. (2010), are critical to the further exploration and development of teachers' intercultural identities.

### *6.3.3 Understanding the connections: Cultural values and intercultural identities*

Based on our research, we argue that more nuanced ideas about differences between non-native EFL teachers from various cultures are necessary, because there are important differences between various groups of teachers in this respect. For example, we found that the relation between teachers' cultural values and factors that characterize their intercultural identity perceptions was more obvious among Dutch teachers than it was among Chinese teachers. In addition, benevolence and tradition did have predictive value for the combined group and for the Dutch group, but not for the Chinese group. Although the Dutch teachers attached significantly more importance to benevolence than did the Chinese teachers, and the Chinese teachers attached significantly more importance to tradition than did the Dutch teachers, the standard deviations for each of the factors of intercultural identity were much higher among the Chinese teachers than

among the Dutch and, as a consequence, did not seem to have a clear relation with differences in attached importance to cultural values within the Chinese group. A possible explanation may be that the Chinese teachers interpreted their relationship with ES cultures as a professional one, while they may have interpreted their opinions on cultural values as a more personal attachment. Our interviews and survey showed that Chinese teachers felt less connected to ES cultures than Dutch teachers, because the distance between Chinese and ES cultures is much greater than that between Dutch and ES cultures. Moreover, the relationship between cultural values and (inter)cultural identities reflects the expectations of the dominant group in a society (Roccas et al., 2010), which means in our study that the relationship between teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities would reflect the mainstream ideas of Chinese or Dutch culture. Thus the degree of or ways of appreciating foreign cultures or people in Chinese and Dutch morals or beliefs, mainly forged at school or at home, can be quite different. As the interviews showed, Dutch teachers are accustomed to multilingual education (in pre-university secondary schools, students need to learn at least 3 foreign languages) and international travel. Assimilation into other cultures becomes part of their education at school and in the home. Due to the long distances to other countries and the social and economic conditions, it is not common for Chinese people in the mainland region (where we conducted our research) to learn another foreign language besides English, nor to travel abroad regularly. For schools and families, assimilation into other cultures does not seem an urgent need for children and is often ignored.

Our findings indicate the possibility that teachers' trusted cultural values impede their perceptions of ES cultures and/or allow stereotypes to bias their teaching. For example, we found that Chinese EFL teachers were more supportive of highlighting only the positive side of a culture. A possible reason for this could be that these teachers are eager to be good role models for their students (Scollon, 1999; Wette & Barkhuizen, 2009; Zhang & Liu, 2014). However, by only presenting the positive sides of a culture, students are given less incentive to critically reflect on ES cultures in relation to their own culture, and vice versa. While in our interviews we found that Chinese teachers regarded themselves as more egalitarian than authoritarian in their relationship with their students, our study on cultural values shows that the participating Chinese teachers had the tendency to put more emphasis on power and tradition than did Dutch teachers. These findings may indicate that Chinese teachers have more 'traditional' ideas about teaching and that they combined these ideas with those about teaching ES cultures.

Another example can be found among Dutch teachers. In contrast with the earlier finding that teachers' ideas about 'taking the perspective of others' was more related to European than to Eastern culture (Gholami, Kuusisto, & Tirri, 2014), some of the Dutch teachers in our interview held the opinion that certain phenomena in American culture are incompatible with Dutch ideology and that it would be difficult to get them accepted. For example, they found more homeless people on the streets during their travels to the US and were not satisfied with the welfare system there. More reflection on teachers' attitudes towards cultures, not only Chinese teachers but also of teachers from other nations, could help them to find ways to avoid imposing their own attitudes towards ES cultures on their students (Byram et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the differentiated findings in our study and the various possible explanations underline the context-dependent nature of teachers' intercultural identity perceptions, and illustrate that nuanced views on EFL teachers and their professional and personal concerns are needed.

#### **6.4 Practical implications: The intercultural dimensions of teacher education**

Sercu et al. (2005) provided a list of characteristics for an idealized 'foreign language and intercultural competence teacher'. Such an idealized teacher might be a helpful model in teaching intercultural competence, but can hardly explain how teachers in practice consider their intercultural identities, mainly because the sociocultural backgrounds of the teachers are not taken into account. It is difficult for teachers to remain absolutely impartial in cultural teaching without revealing any of their attitudes towards ES cultures (Byram et al., 2002). As one of the Dutch teachers (Vic) said in the interview study (chapter 3), teachers can be consciously willing to be neutral and impartial when discussing cultures in class, while their attitudes towards cultures can still be picked up by their students. This means teachers constantly need to reflect upon the possible influence of their stereotypes and prejudices on their teaching and be cautious of the ways they 'respond to and challenge their learners' prejudices' (Byram et al., 2002, p. 30).

Although geographical distance may still be an obstacle for many teachers to learning about other cultures, we argue that young students today have more opportunities to enjoy travelling abroad or to explore new things in the world online. As

students may be more sensitive towards other cultures than their teachers, this provides new chances for teacher to get to know more about other cultures. A case in point might be the news on Dec. 25, 2016, when some Chinese university students complained about the bias against women in the reading material of their English exam. The reading text encouraged women to please men in many humble ways. The students found that the material was taken from an English website providing tips for women to pursue men, and they questioned the appropriateness of using that material for an examination (Shao, 2016). Gender equality is one of the ideas imported from foreign cultures. It was obvious that the Chinese students were more sensitive to it than their teachers, and their knowledge was more advanced than the expectations of their teachers. Future research could investigate ways in which teachers could update their knowledge about ES cultures by learning more about youth cultures in their own country. The study by Menard-Warwick (2011) about the connections between popular culture and teacher identity, for example, could be a good place to start exploring the connections between the cultures of young students and the formation of teachers' intercultural identities.

The findings of our study remind teachers in every culture of the need for regular reflection and intercultural teaching skills. Teachers need to be alert to the possible occasions when intercultural misunderstandings may arise, e.g., when preparing teaching materials or organizing discussions about issues that conflict with the norms in their own or their students' cultures. They also need to be alert to 'the levels of communication at which intercultural misunderstandings may arise, and they should be able and willing to negotiate meaning where they sense cross-cultural misunderstanding' (Sercu et al., 2005, pp. 5-6). Teachers, teacher trainers and researchers could use our survey questionnaire for comparisons before and after intercultural experiences, teacher training programmes, et cetera, together with more comprehensive tools as used in the studies of Sercu et al. (2005) and Fasoglio and Canton (2009), to explore possible changes in intercultural identity perceptions.

According to Byram et al. (2002), teachers do not have to be very knowledgeable about other countries and cultures, but they need the skills to promote an atmosphere in class which allows students to take risks in their own thinking and feeling about cultures. Recent studies on culture teaching have included EFL classes in Taiwan, where a teacher asked students to do ethnographic interviews or cultural portfolio projects so as to explore foreign cultures by themselves (Su, 2008, 2011). Such practices may not only

cultivate students' awareness of other cultures, but can also provide reflective and critical perspectives on ES cultures for both teachers and students. It could be a mission for teacher trainers to develop programmes for EFL teachers about how to cultivate intercultural competence among students, e.g., how to integrate language and culture in teaching, how to engage students in genuine social interaction, how to encourage and develop an exploratory and reflective approach to cultures and how to promote explicit comparisons and connections between language and cultures (cf. Newton et al., 2010).

### **6.5 Strengths and limitations of the study and suggestions for future research**

Our study has shown one way to describe the characteristics of teachers' intercultural identities by means of a mixed study design. Through the interviews, we examined teacher identity in depth in specific sociocultural contexts and, by means of the questionnaire survey, we drew individual results together to explore general tendencies in the groups and to make it possible to consider them as a totality for further comparison and study. By combining the results of both phases of study, we gained more detailed insight into intercultural identities for both Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers. Our findings could serve as a starting point for researchers to further explore teachers' intercultural identities in different countries.

Like the studies by Guerrero Nieto and Meadows (2015), Menard-Warwick (2008), and Ortaçtepe (2015), our study highlights the importance of critical perspectives (meaning perspectives involving awareness of different ideologies and analysis of both merits and faults of cultural dispositions), culture teaching skills, and self-reflection by teachers. The questionnaire about teachers' intercultural identities was designed on the basis of opinions from both Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers, which, together with the ranges of intercultural identity perceptions as a reference, could also be used as a tool to help non-native EFL teachers to reflect on their own intercultural identities. Individual teachers could determine their own positions on the various scales and compare them to a group of teachers, in their school for example.

It should be noted that teachers' intercultural identities can be related to many aspects of culture teaching, including, for example, their opinions towards language and

cultures, their selection of teaching materials, their relationship with students, and their teaching skills or activities (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; Guerrero Nieto & Meadows, 2015; Menard-Warwick, 2008). Though our exploratory study focused only on non-native EFL teachers in their own countries, it should be acknowledged that such intercultural identity perceptions may exist among all foreign language teachers who deal with two or more cultures in class. Teachers who teach students from another nation or region also need to be aware of the cultural differences or diversities in their classes (e.g., Gu, 2013; Huang, 2014; Wang & Du, 2014). As long as there is teaching involving two or more cultures, research needs to be done to explore further how groups of teachers consider their intercultural identities, what the factors are behind such identities, and how they can be helped in culture teaching by reflecting on their intercultural identities.

Although our findings have helped to pin down characteristics of the Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers, we must be careful not to create stereotypes of teachers in different nations, as Moussu and Llurda (2008), Sercu et al. (2005), and Holliday (2010) have already warned against. As our earlier interview results show, notwithstanding the differences between the two national groups, there were also important differences and variations in ideas among the individuals within the two groups.

In addition, though more direct access to other cultures provides more opportunities for teachers to be exposed to other cultures, this does not necessarily mean that they are ready to understand everything about them or willing to take the perspective of others. With their different cultural backgrounds and levels of intercultural sensitivity, teachers might respond to certain phenomena in ES cultures in unexpected ways. As in the example quoted in Chapter 3, we found in the interview study that Dutch teachers who had been to United States admitted their difficulty in understanding some aspects of the culture there, which indicated that we need to look into the experiences and attitudes towards ES cultures of individual teachers, and find out more about the reasons behind them.

Our exploratory study focused on teachers' perceptions of their intercultural identities at one moment in time rather than over a longer period. Through gaining insight into the perceptions of their intercultural identities, it was possible for us to better understand how the teachers were aware of themselves in relation to ES cultures at that specific moment. Additional data may be gathered in the future to obtain a better

understanding of teachers' perceptions of intercultural identities, such as by using cross-cultural psychological tests or classroom observations (van de Vijver, 2015). In addition, it would be interesting to investigate, by means of in-depth explorations over a period of time (e.g., Trent, 2012, 2016; Tsui, 2007), how EFL teachers' intercultural identities develop in the context of their participation in a teacher training or postgraduate programme (e.g., Ilieva, 2010; Ortaçtepe, 2015).

Finally, it should be noted that the participating Chinese and Dutch teachers had similar scores on several of the intercultural identity items in the survey, which indicates that they also shared many opinions towards culture teaching, as has also been found in other comparative studies (Sercu, 2002, 2006; Sercu et al., 2005). It would therefore be an interesting topic for future research to specifically explore the common features of EFL teachers across countries (and possibly across other contexts), in order to identify not only the roots of their similarities but also how these similarities could be used to benefit students and EFL teachers worldwide.

From another perspective, though previous studies have given some insight into the possible influence of cultural values on people's behaviour in intercultural communication, in our research, we found such influence to be different from or less salient than it was in the findings of those earlier studies. The shared dimension of the professional backgrounds of EFL teachers and the context of their culture teaching can mix up or dilute such influence. The role of shared versus non-shared professional backgrounds should therefore be further explored so as to better understand the connections between teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities (Phan, 2008). In addition, it is necessary to be aware of the diversity observed across teachers in terms of their national or cultural backgrounds, intercultural experiences, gender, teaching context, et cetera (Diniz de Figueiredo, 2011; Llorca & Huguet, 2003; Menard-Warwick, 2008; Ortaçtepe, 2015). In the future, attention should therefore also be paid to the roles of, for instance, popular culture (Menard-Warwick, 2011), and such personal characteristics as the teacher's response to aspects of ES cultures present in the textbook (Forman, 2014), level of language proficiency, prior intercultural experiences, and interpersonal skills (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Tsui, 2007). We hope that this first step in the study of the intercultural identities of EFL teachers will raise awareness of the marked variations in these identities and the many factors that shape them, and of the need for additional research on both these aspects.



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## Summary

This dissertation reports on how Chinese and Dutch teachers of English as a foreign language in secondary education in different countries perceived themselves as teachers in relation to cultures associated with the English language. In different cultural contexts, teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL teachers) can have diverse ideas about language-and-culture teaching, and they may have different notions of themselves as teachers in relation to cultures associated with the English language (or ‘ES cultures’, often referred to British and American cultures). The notion of how EFL Teachers see themselves and perceive their roles in relation to ES cultures is referred to in various studies as ‘teachers’ intercultural identities’.

In this dissertation, we explore the characteristics of EFL teachers’ intercultural identity perceptions, and the relationship between EFL teachers’ cultural values and their intercultural identities. Knowing more about teachers’ intercultural identities and about how teachers’ cultural values and their intercultural identities are connected, could contribute to and inspire pedagogies and training in foreign language teaching.

### **Chapter 1:** Introduction

The introduction chapter gives an overview of the background to the research project, the theoretical framework for exploring teachers’ intercultural identities, and the structure of this dissertation. First, we outline the current challenges of language teaching in the intercultural contexts that EFL teachers are faced with, which provide the background to this dissertation. Nowadays EFL teachers are expected to encourage their students to develop both the competence to use the language and the competence to communicate with people across cultures. Non-native EFL teachers, who are the majority of the EFL teachers worldwide, learn about the English language and ES cultures mostly in their home countries. These teachers may face dilemmas and conflicts between their home cultures and ES cultures, and may unconsciously bring their stereotypes about ES cultures to class. It is important therefore for teachers to be aware of their intercultural identities in teaching. However, the available relevant literature does not offer a sufficient understanding of non-native EFL teachers’ intercultural identities, nor of any variables that influence these identities.

Second, we discuss notions of culture, conceptualizations of teachers' intercultural identity, and cultural values. From a sociocultural perspective, language and culture are integrated in EFL teaching and learning, and culture is both the content and context of EFL teaching, involving both the personal and professional experiences of teachers. As teachers keep receiving various cultural ideas in the context of EFL teaching, they constantly renegotiate their identities. The identity of an EFL teacher can be seen as a crucial component both in determining language teaching practice and in understanding the sociocultural context of the language classroom. Cultural values, which express shared beliefs about what is good and desirable in a particular society, can be seen as one of the predictors for teachers' intercultural identities.

Third, the introduction chapter outlines the context, problem definition, and research questions of our study. We focused on non-native EFL teachers from two countries: China and the Netherlands. The two countries differ not only in their geographic and cultural distances from ES cultures, but are also very different from each other, as can be seen from their different cultural values and ways of communicating. In both countries English is regarded as the most important foreign language in secondary schools. However, the two countries differ in their education systems, requirements for teachers, use of English language in social life, and attitudes towards ES cultures.

In this research, we explored the characteristics of EFL teachers' intercultural identities and the relationship between their cultural values and intercultural identity perceptions, with the aim of contributing to pedagogies and training in teaching about culture. We focused on two main general questions:

1. How do non-native EFL teachers in secondary education in different countries perceive their intercultural identities?
2. How are the cultural values of these non-native EFL teachers related to their intercultural identities?

The study contains four phases: (1) defining intercultural identity through a systematic review of recent studies; (2) exploring intercultural identity through interviews with a small group of teachers; (3) comparing intercultural identities of Chinese and Dutch teachers by surveying a large group; and (4) explaining intercultural identity by looking into the relationship between teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities.

The dissertation reports the four phases in six chapters.

After the introduction and overview of the research in the first chapter, the second chapter presents a systematic review of the relevant literature which inspired us to design the present study based on a mixed method. The third chapter reports on an interview study in which Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers participated; the results of this study were later used to develop questionnaire items for the large-scale survey. The fourth chapter reports the results from the questionnaire survey, from which underlying factors of teachers' intercultural identity perceptions were found. The fifth chapter explores further the relationship between EFL teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities. The last chapter provides a general conclusion and discussion of our findings. Figure 1.1 provides a schematic overview of the whole study and the chapters.

## **Chapter 2:** A review study into intercultural identities of non-native teachers of English

In Chapter 2, we report on a review of relevant studies to pave the way for a theoretical basis for the perspectives and methods of the present research project. We selected 21 articles from a total of 59 potentially relevant articles in several international databases for research articles on the identities of non-native EFL teachers. Only articles that reported empirical studies were selected and the studies were conducted in both ESL (English as a second language) and EFL countries; all were published between 1997 and 2015 in peer-reviewed journals. The articles were categorized in two groups according to their themes: themes about the characteristics of teachers' intercultural identities, and themes about the formation of these intercultural identities. We provided overviews of the studies based on their aims, the adopted and related concepts, methodologies and main findings.

From the overviews, we found that three groups of interrelated factors shaped the intercultural identities of the teachers, namely, factors related to personal traits (such as personality, or linguistic, intercultural and teaching competence), factors related to the teaching context, and factors related to sociocultural context. The reviewed studies revealed three common characteristics of the intercultural identities of non-native EFL teachers. First, the teachers' intercultural identities were found to be flexible and were constantly adjusted depending on the challenges and conflicts they had to face. Second,

non-native EFL teachers developed different intercultural identities depending on their sociocultural and institutional backgrounds. Third, the teachers' confidence in their language skills and intercultural competence influenced their intercultural identities, which may then — in turn — have influenced their attitudes towards languages, teaching and culture, within the intercultural context.

Our review found that research on the intercultural identities of non-native EFL teachers has only recently begun to receive widespread attention. The small number of relevant studies, the limited number of participants in the studies, the limited variety of the participants, and the inconsistency of terminology used led us to conclude that only limited insight can currently be gained into how teachers consider their identities in relation to the target language and culture of their teaching. To enable further exploration of the intercultural identities of non-native EFL teachers and arrive at fruitful approaches for understanding the formation and roles of their intercultural identities, we need more in-depth case studies and large-scale surveys across countries to explore the characteristics of the intercultural identities of non-native EFL teachers. We designed an exploratory study with sociocultural perspectives and a mixed method involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The design of the study was based on the theories and research about culture in foreign language teaching, teachers' identity, intercultural sensitivity, and cultural values.

### **Chapter 3:** A qualitative study of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' intercultural identities

In Chapter 3, we report on an interview study with a small group of Chinese and Dutch secondary school EFL teachers. We focused on secondary school teachers because cultural content (in addition to mere language content) is more prevalent at the secondary levels of the compulsory EFL curriculum. The aim of the interview study was to explore and compare how Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers perceive themselves in relation to ES cultures. The questions in the interview protocol were designed to elicit the teachers' notions of themselves as teachers in relation to teaching the cultures associated with the English language, and their ideas about the influence of ES cultures on their personal and professional lives.

We interviewed 5 Chinese and 5 Dutch secondary school EFL teachers. The interview questions focused on four aspects: (a) teachers' feeling of connection with ES cultures; (b) influence of ES cultures on their personal or professional identity; (c) intercultural sensitivity, i.e., teachers' perceptions of their own ability to cope with intercultural experiences; and (d) their attitudes towards ES cultures in teaching. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and the answers were summarized and categorized by their relevance to the four aspects.

We found in the interviews that both Chinese and Dutch teachers maintained a strong affiliation to their own cultures. They felt connected to ES cultures by profession or personal interest. Some of the teachers noticed influences of ES cultures on their identities, and they were flexible in coping with cultural differences most of the time. They all tried to be impartial in culture teaching, because they regarded it as important to consider cultures as equal and to avoid imposing their own ideas on students. However, some of the teachers felt it was not always necessary to remain impartial because they seldom paid attention to culture teaching, or felt that it was not always easy to do so because their students were able to pick up their attitude in one way or another even if the teachers did not express it explicitly. These findings are generally consistent with the results of previous studies.

The intercultural identities of Chinese and Dutch teachers differed in all 4 aspects. These differences show a range of variance in each of the aspects, e.g., from feeling less to more connected to ES cultures, from having less to more awareness of cultural similarities, from being less to more influenced by ES cultures in personal lives, and from having less to more awareness of being impartial in culture teaching. When looking into the four aspects in each of the national groups, we found that the more distant the home culture of the teachers was from ES cultures, the less likely it was that the teachers regarded themselves as a person who feels connected to ES cultures in their personal lives, the less confident they felt in communicating with native speakers of English or about their knowledge of ES cultures, the less influences from ES cultures they saw in their personal lives, and the less awareness they reported of their own attitudes in culture teaching.

The results revealed challenges and difficulties for EFL teachers in culture teaching, not only for teachers whose home culture is far from ES cultures but also for those whose culture is close to ES cultures. For Chinese teachers, the sources of

difficulties lay mostly in their limited access to authentic materials from ES cultures and lack of immediate need for intercultural communication with people from ES cultures. For Dutch teachers, there were challenges in the form of different cultural norms (e.g., between Dutch and American cultures), and the risk of overlooking cultural differences.

**Chapter 4:** A large-scale exploration of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers' intercultural identities

Chapter 4 reports on the development and use of a questionnaire to explore intercultural identities among a larger group of Chinese and Dutch EFL teachers. The purpose of this study was to explore how Chinese and Dutch non-native teachers of English perceive their intercultural identities on a larger scale, what common factors underlie their identity perceptions, and what similarities and differences there are between Chinese and Dutch teachers' intercultural identity perceptions. To this end, based on both our literature review and the results of interview study from Chapter 3, we designed a questionnaire survey in which 114 Chinese and 154 Dutch non-native EFL teachers participated.

Four underlying factors in teachers' intercultural identities were found: *'Openness to ES cultures'*, *'Connection to ES cultures'*, *'Disconnection from ES cultures'*, and *'Impartiality with respect to ES cultures'*. The results show that Chinese and Dutch teachers perceived their intercultural identities differently in three of the four factors, though both groups considered themselves connected to ES cultures. Chinese teachers perceived more difficulties than Dutch teachers in communicating with English speakers and in understanding or accepting ES cultures. In addition, compared with Dutch teachers, Chinese teachers placed less emphasis on the importance of being impartial to ES cultures and they were more likely to highlight only the positive sides of cultures than were the Dutch teachers. For both groups of teachers, such differences were found to be more connected to their nationality than other background variables, such as gender and years of teaching experience.

The survey findings confirmed our findings from the interviews about Chinese and Dutch teachers' different intercultural identities, and the context-dependent nature of teachers' intercultural identities. The questionnaire survey provided more insights by comparing non-native EFL teachers' intercultural identities in different nations, e.g., searching for general tendencies of specific groups and testing relevant contextual

variables.

## **Chapter 5:** Exploring the relationship between non-native EFL teachers' cultural values and their intercultural identities

Chapter 5 reports on an exploration of how cultural values might be used to predict teachers' intercultural identities. The aim of the study was to explore the nature of the relationship between the cultural values of EFL teachers and their intercultural identities. Base on the review of relevant studies and Schwartz's theory about cultural values, we formulated some general expectations about the predictive power of the specific cultural values with respect to teachers' intercultural identities. These expectations were based on earlier, more general, research on people's cultural values and their attitudes towards intercultural communication, earlier studies of teachers' intercultural identities, descriptions of the values by Schwartz, our own concept of intercultural identity, and the situation of non-native EFL teachers who work in their own countries.

To examine the expectations, we adopted the English version of Schwartz's 40-item Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ), and explored the relationships between the cultural values and intercultural identity of Chinese and Dutch teachers in the analysis. To improve our understanding of teachers' roles and self-awareness with regard to teaching about culture, we explored how cultural values can be used to predict teachers' intercultural identities.

The results show that the Chinese and Dutch teachers maintained almost the same set of preferences of cultural values that had been found in those earlier studies for the respective populations in general. We found the 3 values, i.e., tradition, power and benevolence, to be connected to some of the factors, namely, Openness to ES cultures, Disconnection from ES cultures, and Impartiality with respect to ES cultures. The connections were in line with our expectations at the start of our research. In addition, these three values were found to explain more variance in the intercultural identity perceptions of the Dutch teachers than of Chinese teachers; for the group of Chinese teachers, the connection was not statistically significant.

## **Chapter 6:** General conclusions and discussion

In Chapter 6, we go back to our central research questions and we discuss the findings of the studies reported in Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5. We also provide implications for future studies on intercultural identities of teachers in different countries and for pedagogies and training in language teaching in intercultural contexts.

In the exploratory study, intercultural identity of EFL teachers manifests itself as a multi-dimensional and dynamic fluid entity, rather than a fixed or prescribed model. Teachers' intercultural identities enable different processes of extending their vision from their own cultures to other cultures, and blur the boundaries between cultures. Our study highlighted the importance of critical perspectives (meaning perspectives involving awareness of different ideologies and perspectives that justify analysis of both merits and faults of cultural issues), skills of culture teaching, and self-reflections of the teachers. As long as there is teaching involving two or more cultures, more research will need to be done to explore how other groups of teachers consider their intercultural identities, what the factors behind such identities are, and how they can be helped to use reflection on their intercultural identities in culture teaching. In future research, it would also be interesting to further explore the common features of EFL teachers across countries (and possibly across other contexts), in order to identify not only the roots of their similarities but also how these similarities could be used to benefit students and EFL teachers worldwide.

## Samenvatting

In dit proefschrift wordt verslag gedaan van een onderzoek naar de houding en positie van Chinese en Nederlandse leraren Engels ten aanzien van de Engelse en Amerikaanse cultuur. Bijzondere aandacht is er voor het beeld en de verwachtingen die deze leraren van zichzelf hebben in relatie tot de cultuur van de taal die zij doceren, in dit geval de Engelse en Amerikaanse cultuur.

Leraren in verschillende culturele contexten die het schoolvak Engels als vreemde taal onderwijzen en die het Engels niet als moedertaal hebben, kunnen uiteenlopende ideeën hebben over het onderwijzen van taal en cultuur. Ook kunnen zij zeer uiteenlopende beelden en verwachtingen hebben van zichzelf in relatie tot de cultuur van de taal die zij doceren. Het beeld en de verwachtingen die vreemdetalendocenten van zichzelf hebben in relatie tot de cultuur van de taal die zij doceren wordt in diverse studies aangeduid als hun ‘interculturele identiteit’.

In dit proefschrift worden de kenmerken van de interculturele identiteit onderzocht van leraren Engels, evenals het verband tussen enerzijds de culturele waarden die zij in het algemeen belangrijk vinden en anderzijds hun interculturele identiteit.

### Hoofdstuk 1: Introductie

Dit hoofdstuk geeft een overzicht van de achtergrond van het onderzoeksproject, van de theorie die gebruikt is bij het onderzoek naar de interculturele identiteit en van de opbouw van de dissertatie.

Ten eerste worden de uitdagingen besproken waarvoor leraren Engels zich momenteel gesteld zien. Van leraren Engels wordt internationaal gezien in toenemende mate verwacht dat zij hun leerlingen niet alleen de taal aanleren maar ze ook beter in staat stellen te communiceren met mensen van andere culturen. In dit onderzoek gaat het specifiek om leraren in het schoolvak Engels die de Engelse taal niet als moedertaal hebben. Deze leraren, die wereldwijd de meerderheid van de leraren Engels vormen, verwerven hun kennis van de Engelse taal en de daaraan verwante culturen normaliter binnen hun eigen land. Zij kunnen tegenstellingen ervaren tussen de cultuur van hun eigen land en die van ‘Engelstalige culturen’. Tevens is het is het mogelijk dat deze leraren, veelal onbewust, hun eigen stereotype beelden van Engelstalige culturen een rol

laten spelen in hun onderwijs. Ook om deze reden is het van belang dat leraren zich bewust zijn van hun interculturele identiteit. Het weinige onderzoek dat gedaan is naar de interculturele identiteit van leraren Engels en de variabelen die met deze interculturele identiteit samenhangen, geeft onvoldoende informatie daarover.

Ten tweede wordt nader ingegaan op de begrippen cultuur, interculturele identiteit en culturele waarden. Gezien vanuit sociocultureel perspectief zijn in het onderwijzen en leren van Engels als vreemde taal de cultuur en de taal geïntegreerd. Dit betekent dat cultuur zowel een context als een inhoud van het onderwijs vormt. Bij het onderwijs in de Engelse taal en cultuur spelen de persoonlijke en professionele ervaringen van de leraren onvermijdelijk een grote rol. Aangezien leraren Engels ook tijdens het lesgeven voortdurend nieuwe input krijgen over de Engelstalige cultuur worden zij regelmatig gedwongen om ideeën uit die cultuur en die uit hun ‘eigen’ cultuur met elkaar te confronteren en met elkaar in evenwicht te brengen en zo hun identiteit bij te stellen. De identiteit van de leraar is een cruciale factor in zowel de dynamiek van de onderwijspraktijk als in het begrijpen van de socioculturele context van de klas. Daarbij kunnen culturele waarden, die weergeven wat in een bepaalde samenleving als goed of wenselijk wordt gezien, opgevat worden als mogelijke voorspellers van de interculturele identiteit van de leraar.

Ten derde worden de context, de probleemdefinitie en de onderzoeksvragen weergegeven. Centraal staan leraren in het schoolvak Engels als vreemde taal die het Engels niet zelf als moedertaal hebben en die afkomstig zijn uit twee landen, namelijk China en Nederland. Deze twee landen verschillen in hun geografische en culturele ‘afstand’ tot de Engelstalige culturen, hetgeen onder andere blijkt uit de verschillen in culturele waarden die men belangrijk vindt en uit de uiteenlopende wijze van communiceren in deze landen. In zowel China als Nederland wordt het Engels in het voortgezet onderwijs gezien als de belangrijkste vreemde taal. Beide landen verschillen echter onderling wat betreft hun onderwijssysteem, de eisen die aan leraren gesteld worden, het gebruik van het Engels in het dagelijks leven en de algemene houding ten opzichte van Engelstalige culturen.

In dit onderzoek worden kenmerken van de interculturele identiteit van leraren Engels in het voortgezet onderwijs in kaart gebracht, evenals het verband tussen de culturele waarden van de leraren en hun interculturele identiteit.

De onderzoeksvragen zijn:

1. Wat is bij leraren Engels in het voortgezet onderwijs die het Engels niet als moedertaal hebben de perceptie van hun interculturele identiteit?
2. Wat is bij deze leraren het verband tussen de culturele waarden die zij belangrijk vinden en hun interculturele identiteit?

Het onderzoek werd uitgevoerd in vier stappen: (1) het omschrijven van het begrip 'interculturele identiteit' op basis van een systematische literatuurreview van recent empirisch onderzoek, (2) exploratie van dit begrip door middel van interviews met een klein aantal leraren, (3) vergelijking van de interculturele identiteit van Chinese en Nederlandse leraren in een grootschalige survey, en (4) nadere duiding van deze interculturele identiteit door het empirisch onderzoeken van het verband tussen culturele waarden en interculturele identiteit. Deze stappen worden beschreven in de volgende vier hoofdstukken.

**Hoofdstuk 2:** Literatuurreview van onderzoek naar de interculturele identiteit van leraren Engels die deze taal niet als moedertaal hebben

Dit onderzoek werd gedaan ter voorbereiding van het empirisch onderzoek. In internationale databases werden 59 potentieel relevante artikelen gevonden over de identiteit van leraren in het schoolvak Engels die deze taal niet als moedertaal hebben. Na screening werden 21 artikelen daarvan geselecteerd, waarbij onder andere het criterium werd gehanteerd dat er sprake moest zijn van empirisch en controleerbaar onderzoek, gepubliceerd in peerreviewed tijdschriften. Alle artikelen waren verschenen tussen 1997 en 2015. Op basis van de centrale thematiek werden de gevonden artikelen in twee groepen verdeeld: enerzijds artikelen over kenmerken van de interculturele identiteit van leraren en anderzijds artikelen over de manier waarop deze interculturele identiteit tot stand was gekomen. Er werd een schematisch overzicht gemaakt van alle studies, waarbij van elke studie het doel, de kernbegrippen met de daaraan gerelateerde begrippen, de methodologie en de belangrijkste resultaten in kaart werden gebracht.

Uit de bevindingen bleek dat er drie groepen van samenhangende factoren van belang zijn bij het tot stand komen van de interculturele identiteit, namelijk factoren die met de persoon van de leraar te maken hebben (zoals persoonlijkheidskenmerken, evenals de talige, interculturele en onderwijscompetentie van leraren), factoren die te maken hebben met de onderwijscontext van de leraar en factoren die te maken hebben

met de socioculturele context waarin zij lesgeven. Uit de literatuurstudie kwam een drietal algemene kenmerken van de interculturele identiteit naar voren. Ten eerste werd de interculturele identiteit beschreven als flexibel en zich voortdurend aanpassend aan de uitdagingen en problemen waarmee de leraar werd geconfronteerd. Ten tweede bleek de aard van de interculturele identiteit sterk beïnvloed te worden door de socioculturele en institutionele werkcontext. Ten derde bleek het vertrouwen dat leraren hadden in hun eigen taalvaardigheid en hun eigen interculturele competentie van invloed te zijn op de manier waarop zij hun interculturele identiteit percipieerden, hetgeen vervolgens weer, in omgekeerde richting, van invloed was op hun houding ten opzichte het onderwijzen, de taal en de daaraan gerelateerde cultuur.

Uit de literatuurstudie bleek ook dat onderzoek naar de interculturele identiteit van leraren Engels die deze taal niet als moedertaal hebben, veelal van recente datum is. Gegeven het kleine aantal relevante studies, de kleinschalige steekproeven in deze studies, de geringe variatie in het type deelnemers en de inconsistenties in de gehanteerde terminologie blijkt dat slechts in zeer beperkte mate inzichten zijn af te leiden over de manier waarop deze leraren hun identiteit percipiëren in relatie tot de cultuur van de taal die zij doceren. Voor een nadere exploratie van de interculturele identiteit van leraren Engels die deze taal niet als moedertaal hebben, de wijze waarop deze identiteit gevormd wordt en de rol die deze speelt bij het onderwijzen, is meer onderzoek nodig, zowel diepte-onderzoek bij individuele leraren als grootschalig onderzoek bij groepen leraren. In deze studie werd een exploratief onderzoek uitgevoerd met zowel een kwalitatieve als een kwantitatieve component. De opzet van het onderzoek was geïnspireerd door theorievorming en onderzoek over cultuur in het vreemdetalenonderwijs, de identiteit van leraren, interculturele sensitiviteit en culturele waarden in het algemeen.

### **Hoofdstuk 3:** Kwalitatief onderzoek naar de interculturele identiteit van Chinese en Nederlandse leraren Engels

In dit hoofdstuk wordt gerapporteerd over een kleinschalige interviewstudie met Chinese en Nederlandse leraren Engels uit het voortgezet onderwijs. Gekozen is voor het voortgezet onderwijs, omdat daar, als aanvulling op het onderwijs in de taal in engere zin, ook sprake is van een cultuurcomponent bij het onderwijs in een vreemde taal. Het doel van de interviewstudie was te verkennen hoe Chinese en Nederlandse

leraren Engels zichzelf percipieerden in relatie tot de ‘Engelstalige culturen’ en om een eerste indruk te krijgen van mogelijke verschillen tussen Chinese en Nederlandse leraren in dat opzicht. De vragen in het interviewprotocol waren zodanig opgebouwd dat de leraren zouden doen over hun beelden van zichzelf als leraar in relatie tot Engelstalige culturen en over de mate waarin deze culturen volgens hen van invloed waren geweest op hun persoonlijke en professionele leven.

Er werden vijf Chinese en vijf Nederlandse leraren Engels uit het voortgezet onderwijs geïnterviewd. De interviewvragen waren gericht op de volgende vier aspecten: (a) de mate waarin leraren zich verbonden voelden met de Engelstalige culturen, (b) de invloed van Engelstalige culturen op hun persoonlijke en professionele identiteit, (c) interculturele sensitiviteit, dat wil zeggen de mate waarin leraren volgens hun eigen perceptie in staat waren om te gaan met interculturele ervaringen, en (d) hun houding ten opzichte van Engelstalige culturen in het onderwijs. De interviews werden opgenomen en uitgeschreven, en de antwoorden werden samengevat en gecategoriseerd op basis van hun relevantie voor de vier genoemde aspecten.

Uit de analyse van gegevens bleek dat zowel de Chinese als de Nederlandse leraren een sterke gehechtheid aan hun eigen cultuur hadden behouden en dat hun gevoel van verbondenheid met Engelstalige culturen uit zowel hun persoonlijke als uit hun professionele interesse kon voortkomen. Enkele leraren spraken over de invloed van Engelstalige culturen op hun identiteit en zij beschreven zichzelf in de meeste gevallen als flexibel in het omgaan met culturele verschillen. De leraren gaven aan dat zij probeerden onpartijdig te zijn bij het onderwijs in cultuur omdat zij het belangrijk vonden culturen als gelijkwaardig te zien en zo wilden voorkomen dat zij leerlingen in dit opzicht eenzijdig zouden beïnvloeden. Sommige leraren vonden dit minder belangrijk, ofwel omdat zij eigenlijk zelden bezig waren met het onderwijs in cultuur ofwel omdat zij dachten dat de leerlingen hun houding ten opzichte van de verschillende culturen toch wel konden afleiden, of ze die nu expliciet zouden bespreken of niet. Deze bevindingen zijn in het algemeen in lijn met eerder onderzoek.

Er waren verschillen in interculturele identiteit tussen Chinese en Nederlandse leraren op alle vier de genoemde aspecten, dat wil zeggen betrekking hebbend op zich minder of meer verbonden voelen met Engelstalige culturen, op minder of meer invloed van Engelstalige cultuur op het persoonlijke leven, op zich minder of meer bewust zijn van culturele verschillen en op minder of meer bewust streven naar onpartijdigheid met

betrekking tot de verschillende culturen. Hoe groter de afstand was van de eigen cultuur van de leraren tot Engelstalige culturen, hoe kleiner de kans was dat de leraren zich in hun persoonlijk leven verbonden voelden met Engelstalige culturen, hoe minder zeker zij zich voelden in de communicatie met Engelstalige native speakers of over Engelstalige culturen in het algemeen, hoe minder invloeden van Engelstalige culturen in hun persoonlijk leven zij rapporteerden en hoe minder zij aangaven zich bewust te zijn van hun eigen houding bij het onderwijs in cultuur.

Uit de resultaten bleek dat er voor zowel Chinese als Nederlandse leraren uitdagingen en problemen te signaleren zijn bij het onderwijs in cultuur. Voor Chinese leraren komen de problemen voor een groot deel voort uit hun beperkte toegang tot authentieke materialen uit Engelstalige culturen en uit het ontbreken van de noodzaak tot directe communicatie met mensen uit Engelstalige culturen. De uitdagingen voor Nederlandse leraren hebben onder andere te maken met de onderlinge verschillen met bepaalde Engelstalige culturen (vooral met de Amerikaanse cultuur) en met het gevaar van het over het hoofd zien van bepaalde culturele verschillen tussen de Engelstalige en de Nederlandse cultuur.

#### **Hoofdstuk 4:** Een grootschalige verkenning van de interculturele identiteit van Chinese en Nederlandse leraren Engels

Doel van het hier beschreven onderzoek was dat in dit hoofdstuk beschreven wordt was om bij een grotere groep Chinese en Nederlandse leraren Engels in kaart brengen hoe zij hun interculturele identiteit percipieerden, wat de onderliggende factoren van deze percepties zijn en wat in dat opzicht de verschillen zijn tussen Chinese en Nederlandse leraren Engels. Bij het ontwerpen van de vragenlijst voor dit onderzoek werd onder meer gebruik gemaakt van de bevindingen uit de reviewstudie waarover in hoofdstuk 2 werd gerapporteerd en het kwalitatieve kleinschalige onderzoek dat in hoofdstuk 3 werd beschreven. In het vragenlijstonderzoek participeerden 114 Chinese en 154 Nederlandse leraren.

Statistische analyse van de gegevens leverde vier onderliggende factoren voor de interculturele identiteit op: (1) open staan voor Engelstalige culturen, (2) zich verbonden voelen met Engelstalige culturen, (3) zich niet verbonden voelen met Engelstalige culturen en (4) onpartijdigheid ten aanzien van Engelstalige culturen. Het bleek dat er verschillen waren in de manier waarop Chinese en Nederlandse leraren hun eigen

interculturele identiteit percipieerden met betrekking tot drie van vier genoemde factoren.

Zowel Chinese als Nederlandse leraren voelden zich verbonden met Engelstalige culturen. Chinese leraren rapporteerden duidelijk meer problemen dan Nederlandse leraren bij het communiceren met Engelstalige moedertaalsprekers en bij het begrijpen en accepteren van Engelstalige culturen. Vergeleken met Nederlandse leraren vonden de Chinese leraren onpartijdigheid ten aanzien van Engelstalige culturen wat minder belangrijk; Chinese leraren noemden overigens meer dan Nederlandse leraren de neiging om vooral de positieve aspecten van culturen te benadrukken in hun onderwijs. Bij al deze punten bleek de nationaliteit (Chinees versus Nederlands) tot meer verschillen tussen de leraren te leiden dan zaken als geslacht of het aantal jaren leservaring.

De bevindingen uit dit vragenlijstonderzoek liggen in het verlengde van de resultaten uit de interviewstudie over het context-afhankelijke karakter van de interculturele identiteit van leraren. Door het meer grootschalige karakter van het onderzoek waren uiteraard meer systematische vergelijkingen mogelijk tussen de twee groepen, gericht op het vinden van een algemene tendens en de onderliggende factoren daarbij. Aan het onderzoek naar het verband met de culturele waarden is hoofdstuk 5 gewijd.

## **Hoofdstuk 5:** Het verband tussen de culturele waarden van leraren Engels en hun interculturele identiteit

Nagegaan wordt hier in welke mate de culturele waarden die de leraren belangrijk vinden gebruikt zouden kunnen worden om hun interculturele identiteit te voorspellen, en wat de aard van dit mogelijke verband is. Op basis van bestaande literatuur over culturele waarden werd een aantal verwachtingen geformuleerd over de relevantie van een aantal specifieke culturele waarden voor het voorspellen van de interculturele identiteit van de leraren. Deze verwachtingen waren gebaseerd op eerder, meer algemeen gericht, onderzoek dat in het verleden gedaan is naar de culturele waarden die mensen aanhangen en naar hun houding ten aanzien van interculturele communicatie, eerdere studies naar de interculturele identiteit van leraren, de precieze beschrijving van de verschillende culturele waarden door Schwartz, eigen opvattingen over interculturele identiteit en de concrete werksituatie van de twee groepen leraren in de twee landen.

Bij het onderzoek is gebruik gemaakt van de Engelstalige versie van de in 2001 door Schwartz ontwikkelde Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ), bestaande uit 40 items. Wat betreft de culturele waarden die door de leraren belangrijk werden gevonden bleek dat de bevindingen vrijwel hetzelfde waren als datgene wat destijds in de onderzoeken gevonden werd voor de Chinese respectievelijk Nederlandse populatie in het algemeen. Voor het voorspellen van de onderliggende factoren in de interculturele identiteit bleken vooral drie culturele waarden relevant: 'traditie', 'macht', en 'welwillendheid/vriendelijkheid'. Deze waarden bleken samen te hangen met de factoren 'open staan voor Engelstalige culturen', 'zich niet verbonden voelen met Engelstalige culturen' en 'onpartijdigheid ten aanzien van Engelstalige culturen'. De gevonden samenhangen tussen de waarden en de interculturele identiteit waren in overeenstemming met de verwachtingen zoals die eerder geformuleerd zijn. De hoeveelheid verklaarde variantie was groter bij de groep Nederlandse leraren dan bij de groep Chinese leraren. Het verband was statistisch significant in de Nederlandse groep maar niet in de Chinese groep.

## **Hoofdstuk 6: Conclusies en discussie**

Op basis van deze verkennende studie kan de interculturele identiteit van leraren Engels die deze taal niet als moedertaal hebben gekarakteriseerd worden als meer dynamisch en vloeiend dan gefixeerd. Interculturele identiteit staat voor de uiteenlopende manieren waarop leraren verder kunnen leren kijken dan hun eigen cultuur en de grenzen tussen de verschillende culturen kunnen doen vervagen. Uit het onderzoek blijkt het belang van een kritisch perspectief bij de leraar (dat wil zeggen een perspectief waarbij men zich bewust is van de verschillende opvattingen en waarden die een rol spelen in het eigen onderwijs en een afgewogen oordeel heeft over de positieve en negatieve aspecten van bepaalde cultuurgebonden zaken), het belang van vaardigheden in het onderwijzen van cultuur en het belang van het nadenken over eigen cultuurgerelateerde opvattingen door de leraar. Ten behoeve van alle onderwijs waarbij twee of meer culturen in het geding zijn blijft verder onderzoek van belang naar hoe andere leraren hun interculturele identiteit percipiëren, wat de factoren zijn die een dergelijke interculturele identiteit bepalen en hoe de leraren ondersteund kunnen worden bij het onderwijzen van cultuur en bij het reflecteren op hun eigen interculturele identiteit. In toekomstig onderzoek zou het met name interessant zijn om ten aanzien hiervan na te gaan wat over een groter

aantal landen en contexten de gemeenschappelijke kenmerken zijn van leraren Engels die deze taal niet als moedertaal hebben.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Questions about teachers' intercultural identity

When talking about cultures in class, teachers might need to take different roles and perspectives. However, underlying these roles and perspectives they may have in mind an overall attitude towards these foreign cultures. The following statements describe some ideas of teachers towards cultures of English-speaking countries. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. Please tick the boxes to indicate the likeness. Please note that in the following statements, 'he' means both 'he' and 'she'.

---

	How much like you is this person?					
	very much like me	like me	somewhat like me	a little like me	not like me	not like me at all
He feels very close to cultures of English-speaking countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He is fascinated by the English language and cultures of English-speaking countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He finds it difficult to understand or accept the values of native speakers of English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He tries to be as objective as possible when comparing cultures of English-speaking countries with his own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He prefers cultures of English-speaking countries to his own culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He finds that both his own culture and cultures of English-speaking countries have favourable and unfavourable aspects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He thinks a teacher shouldn't impose his likes or dislikes about cultures on his students. He'd like students to form opinions of their own.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He highlights only the positive aspects of cultures to students, no matter which culture is concerned.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He feels uncomfortable when talking to native speakers of English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

	How much like you is this person?					
	very much like me	like me	somewhat like me	a little like me	not like me	not like me at all
He looks at cultures of English-speaking countries from the perspective of his own culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He tries to find out more about cultures of English-speaking countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He understands cultural issues from the perspectives of native speakers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He can fit in both in his own culture and cultures of English-speaking countries very well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He questions himself about the ideas and behaviour he's used to when he finds different ones in cultures of English-speaking countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He finds himself between his native culture and cultures of English-speaking countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cultures of English-speaking countries have much influenced his thinking about the world and people around him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He thinks his relationship with students is much like classes of English-speaking countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The reason why he became a teacher of English has nothing to do with cultures of English-speaking countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
He feels his teaching style is the same as his colleagues teaching other subjects in his school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix 2

### Questions about cultural values

#### Section 1 Schwartz's Portrait Value Questionnaire, or PVQ

The following questions come from an existing questionnaire for international research into views and values related to daily life issues. It appears from international literature that there can be profound differences in this respect, especially between Western and Asian teachers. Your answers are therefore quite important for our comparison of Dutch and Chinese teachers' opinions. Here we briefly describe some people. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. Please tick one box in each of the following rows to indicate the likeness. Please note that in the following statements, 'he' means both 'he' and 'she'.

	How much like you is this person?					
	Very much like me	Like me	Somewhat like me	A little like me	Not like me	Not like me at all
(1) Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) It is important to him to be rich. He wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) It is very important to him to show his abilities. He wants people to admire what he does.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(6) He thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life. He always looks for new things to try.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7) He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8) It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(9) He thinks it's important not to ask for more than what you have. He believes that people should be satisfied with what they have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	How much like you is this person?					
	Very much like me	Like me	Somewhat like me	A little like me	Not like me	Not like me at all
(10) He seeks every chance he can to have fun. It is important to him to do things that give him pleasure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(11) It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free to plan and to choose his activities for himself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(12) It is very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(13) Being very successful is important to him. He likes to impress other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(14) It is very important to him that his country be safe. He thinks the state must be on watch against threats from within and without.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(15) He likes to take risks. He is always looking for adventures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(16) It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(17) It is important to him to be in charge and tell others what to do. He wants people to do what he says.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(18) It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(19) He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(20) Religious belief is important to him. He tries hard to do what his religion requires.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(21) It is important to him that things be organized and clean. He really does not like things to be a mess.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(22) He thinks it's important to be interested in things. He likes to be curious and to try to understand all sorts of things.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(23) He believes people should live in harmony all over the world. Promoting peace among all groups in the world is important to him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(24) He thinks it is important to be ambitious. He wants to show how capable he is.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(25) He thinks it is best to do things in traditional ways. It is important to him to keep up the customs he has learned.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	How much like you is this person?					
	Very much like me	Like me	Somewhat like me	A little like me	Not like me	Not like me at all
(26) Enjoying life's pleasures is important to him. He likes to 'spoil' himself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(27) It is important to him to respond to the needs of others. He tries to support those he knows.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(28) He believes he should always show respect to his parents and to older people. It is important to him to be obedient to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(29) He wants everyone to be treated justly, even people he doesn't know. It is important to him to protect the weak in society.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(30) He likes surprises. It is important to him to have an exciting life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(31) He tries hard to avoid getting sick. Staying healthy is very important to him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(32) Getting ahead in life is important to him. He strives to do better than others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(33) Forgiving people who have hurt him is important to him. He tries to see what is good in them and not to hold a grudge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(34) It is important to him to be independent. He likes to rely on himself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(35) Having a stable government is important to him. He is concerned that the social order be protected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(36) It is important to him to be polite to other people all the time. He tries never to disturb or irritate others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(37) He really wants to enjoy life. Having a good time is very important to him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(38) It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(39) He always wants to be the one who makes the decisions. He likes to be the leader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(40) It is important to him to adapt to nature and to fit into it. He believes that people should not change nature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section 2 Values and corresponding PVQ items

Values	PVQ Items*
Conformity	7,16,28,36
Tradition	9,20,25,38
Benevolence	12,18,27,33
Universalism	3,8,19,23,29,40
Self-Direction	1,11,22,34
Stimulation	6,15,30
Hedonism	10,26,37
Achievement	4,13,24,32
Power	2,17,39
Security	5,14,21,31,35

\* The item numbers correspond to the item numbers in the above PVQ table (adapted from Schwartz, 2001) .

## Appendix 3

### T-test results comparing male and female teachers' intercultural identities

*T-test results comparing the factor means of all male versus female teachers' intercultural identities and comparing male versus female Dutch teachers' intercultural identities*

Item	All teachers		<i>t</i>	NL		<i>t</i>
	Male ( <i>n</i> = 80)	Female ( <i>n</i> = 168)		Male ( <i>n</i> = 48)	Female ( <i>n</i> = 106)	
	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )		<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	
Openness to ES Cultures	4.63 (.80)	4.36 (.82)	-2.47*	4.75 (.60)	4.51 (.79)	2.05*
Disconnection from ES Cultures	2.92 (.82)	2.78 (.92)	1.17	2.52 (.63)	2.28 (.58)	2.27*
Connection to ES Cultures	4.31 (.82)	3.94 (.86)	3.27**	4.45 (.69)	3.97 (.84)	3.44**
Objectivity in Teaching ES Cultures	4.77 (.85)	4.92 (.71)	-1.40	4.94 (.75)	5.09 (.58)	-1.24

*Note.* *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation. Standard deviations are in parentheses below the means. CN = Chinese EFL teachers; NL = Dutch EFL teachers. Scores for the items range from 1 (not like me at all) to 6 (very much like me).

\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed. \*\*  $p < .01$ , two-tailed. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , two-tailed.



## **Curriculum Vitae**

Dadi Chen was born on February the 8th, 1976 in Beijing, China. He completed his secondary education in 1994, and was recommended by the school to Henan Normal University. In 1998, he obtained a Bachelor's degree in English education and became a teacher of English at the SA Engineering University in Xi'an, China. He continued with his postgraduate study at Xi'an Jiaotong University (XJTU) in 2002, and obtained a Master's degree in Foreign Linguistics and Applied Linguistics in 2005. Since then, he has worked at the School of Foreign Studies in XJTU as a lecturer and researcher. In 2009, he started his PhD project at ICLON—Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching, the Netherlands. In his doctoral project, he compared Chinese and Dutch secondary school teachers of English with regard to their intercultural identities. He has presented his research to various audiences, including the 3rd International Conference on English for Special Purposes in Asia (ESPA) in 2011, and later in several teacher-training programmes organized by ICLON, EP-Nuffic, and Groningen Confucius Institute, the Netherlands.



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I really appreciate the permission from Professor Shalom H. Schwartz and Professor Lies Sercu to use their questionnaires in this research. I would like to thank my dearest (former) colleagues at ICLON, among whom Ben Smit, who helped me with the statistical analysis, Ms. Alessandra Corda, Professor Jan van Tartwijk, Professor Klaas van Veen, Professor Hans Hulshof and Professor Wilfried Admiraal, who gave me substantial suggestions. The research team of 'ICLONers' offered me inspiring advice in my research and the revision of the dissertation.

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I owe so much to my beloved family. They are the source of my hope, courage and inspiration. They help me by taking so much of my family responsibility, and never lost faith in me. I will never forget my late father who, till the last minute, held onto the hope that I would come back early enough to share the joy with him. My words are pale

and limited when I wish to send them my love and gratitude, especially my mother, Xiaoli and Yiyuan. They are the heroes in my life.

Dadi Chen, October 2017

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