

Becoming a Confident Business English Teacher: Textbook Use and Identity Development Through *Perezhivanie* of Learning

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Abstract

This narrative inquiry, grounded in Vygotsky's theory of the social situation as a source of development, explores the trajectory of a Business English teacher¹, Siqi, by examining her experiences (*perezhivaniya*) as both an L2 learner and a professional, focusing on shifts in her identity over time. Using *perezhivanie* as the unit of analysis, which integrates both affective and cognitive and personal and social dimensions, the study illustrates how she engaged with the 'ideal form' within her social environment and adapted her 'real form,' shaping her development and identity. The study also reflects on the theoretical and methodological applications of these concepts. It offers practical suggestions for institutional design to support teacher development and raise teachers' awareness of their social environment as a source of development.

Keywords: *perezhivanie*, the social situation of development, teacher learning, business English teacher

1. Introduction

Teachers learn how to teach throughout their careers without following a single formula (Agnoletto et al., 2021). This learning occurs through systematic teacher education programs, institutional professional development initiatives, and the diverse, contingent contexts of their professional practice. Freeman and Johnson (1998) defined teacher learning as a 'normative and lifelong process emerging out of and through experiences in social contexts' (as cited in Johnson & Golombek, 2003, p. 730). In the field of second language teacher education (SLTE), teacher learning is recognized as a 'long-term, developmental process' (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. xi) that is 'socially negotiated, resulting through participation in the sociocultural practices and contexts of teaching, and grounded in the professional thinking and activities of teachers' (Borg, 2003; Freeman, 1996, 2002; Freeman & Richards, 1996; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2006a; D. Woods, 1996, as cited in Golombek, 2011, p. 121). This sociocultural perspective forms the basis for understanding teacher learning and development in relation to social contexts. Concepts such as Mediation, the Zone of Proximal Development, and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory are frequently used to study the cognitive and socialization processes of teacher learning. In recent years, researchers have also begun incorporating the emotional and affective dimensions of teacher learning and cognition (e.g., Golombek & Doran, 2014; Golombek, 2015). Vygotsky's dialectical approach to human cognitive development, which emphasizes the unity of the social and individual, emotional and cognitive, and personal and situational characteristics, is reflected in the concept of *perezhivanie*. However, only a few studies have explored the *perezhivaniya* of student teachers (Dang, 2013; Barahona & Toledo-Sandoval, 2022), novice teachers (Agnoletto et al., 2021), experienced teachers (Wei, 2021), and transnational teachers (Nasrollahi Shahri, 2018) in learning to teach and forming their teacher identity within regional contexts such as Vietnam, Chile, Brazil, China, and the USA.

In most of Vygotsky's works, *perezhivanie* is translated as 'experience' or 'emotional experience' (Lantolf & Swain, 2019, p. 82). In this study, I draw on one of Vygotsky's original texts, *The Problem of Environment* (1934), as well as interpretations by Veresov (2017) and Veresov and Mok (2018), to explore a Business English teacher's developmental trajectory through her *perezhivanie* of learning. I will introduce the theoretical framework and provide the rationale for using narrative inquiry as the research methodology. In the narrative section, I will identify and analyze her *perezhivaniya* of learning as both an English learner and as she navigates identity shifts toward becoming a confident Business English teacher, using *perezhivanie* as a theoretical lens. I

will conclude by discussing the key findings based on my understanding of Siqu's development through *perezhivanie* of learning and offer practical suggestions.

2. The Theoretical Framework

Perezhivanie is a much-contested concept interpreted by researchers from dispersed texts of Vygotsky's writing. In this study, to understand teacher learning as a mediated process of development through social activities, I will mainly draw from Vygotsky's lecture, *The Problem of the Environment* (1934), together with Veresov's (2017) theoretical interpretations with emphasis on the social situation as source of development. In *The Problem of the Environment* (1934), Vygotsky argued,

The environment exerts this influence...via the child's emotional experiences [*perezhivaniya*], i.e. depending on how the child has managed to work out his inner attitude to the various aspects of the different situations occurring in the environment. The environment determines the type of development depending on the degree of awareness of this environment which the child has managed to reach.

So, the environment does not directly determine a child's development, it is the kind of influence refracted through the prism of the child's *perezhivanie* that determines how the factors of the environment will influence the future course of a child's development. It is "how a child becomes aware of, interprets, [and] emotionally relates to a certain event," a child's *perezhivanie*, "such prism which determines the role and influence of the environment on the development of, say, the child's character, his psychological development, etc." (Vygotsky, 1934)

He went on to theorize *perezhivanie* as a unit of analysis,

Perezhivanie is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced—*perezhivanie* is always related to something which is found outside the person—and on the other hand, what is represented is how I, myself, am experiencing this, i.e., all the personal characteristics and all the environmental characteristics are represented in *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1934).

In *perezhivanie*, we deal with an indivisible unity of personal and situational characteristics. To study one's *perezhivanie*, we are to identify what is being experienced and how one is experiencing it. More specifically, "which characteristics of the environment affected development, and which personal characteristics participated in a particular *perezhivanie*" (Veresov & Mok, 2018, p. 91). It is one's *perezhivanie*—the experience of this situation—will determine his unique social situation of development. Therefore, we need to understand the development of an individual as a whole person, inseparable from the environment.

To better elucidate the relationship between environment and development, Vygotsky introduced another theory—"the interaction between *ideal form* and rudimentary form", emphasizing the theme of this lecture—the social environment as the source of development.

"... in child development that which it is possible to achieve at the end and as the result of the developmental process, is already available in the environment from the very beginning." (Vygotsky, 1934)

He once again underlined "the sociogenetic nature of human mental development" that "the forms of development that later appear in an individual must first exist in that individual's environment" (Veresov & Mok, 2018, p. 93). This end or result of the developmental process is called the *ideal or final form*, acting "as a model for that which should be achieved at the end of the developmental period or attained at the end of development," in contrast to the primitive and undeveloped form of individual practice.

He went on to illustrate, "And it is not simply present in the environment from the very start, but it exerts an influence on the very first steps in the child's development" (Vygotsky, 1934).

"... a human being is a creature who is social by his very nature, whose development consists of, among other things, mastering certain forms of activity and consciousness which have been perfected by humanity during the process of historical development, this fact is essentially what provides the foundation for this interaction between the ideal and the rudimentary form" (Vygotsky, 1934).

He highlighted the foundation of historical development as presented by the *ideal form* in interaction with the individual rudimentary form, exerting its influences on each step of an individual's development and resulting in a certain form of activity that then becomes an individual internal asset, his property and a function of his personality (Vygotsky, 1934).

However, how is this theory of interaction between the *ideal form* and the rudimentary form related to the concept of *perezhivanie*? The prism through which one refracted the influence of the environment and the unity of personal and situational characteristics. This interaction in the social situation entails the process as well as the result of development. It is a process of individual learning leading toward the *ideal form* of development. *Perezhivanie* is a process of learning through which an individual perceives and interacts affectively and cognitively with the *ideal form*, constantly appropriating his actual form in the social situation of development. Eventually, he can attain the level of development that the *ideal form* represents. To put it simply, his *perezhivanie* determines what kind of interaction will take place, thus determining his learning and development trajectory.

Based on understanding the social situation as the source of development through the two concepts proposed by Vygotsky (1934) and the interpretation given by Veresov and Mok (2017), I will analyze the narratives of a Business English teacher. I adopt *perezhivanie* as the tool for analyzing the role of the environment in Siqu's development through her English learning process and her professional career, and interaction between the *ideal form* and present form as a concept for analyzing her learning toward development through her identity shifts and her textbook use.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participant and Research Context

Siqu became an EFL teacher after earning her MA in Business Management from the UK and her BA in Accounting from Singapore. As a colleague, the researcher witnessed her professional growth over the years. In the spring of 2022, the researcher began observed her classroom teaching and textbook use. By the time of the interview on November 27, 2022, Siqu had been working at the same university alongside the researcher for about seven years.

The interview was comprehensive, covering topics such as Siqu's experiences as an English learner, her recollection of several influential English teachers, and her entire teaching journey as a Business English teacher across various courses. A special focus was placed on how she learned to teach through the Intensive Reading course, using the textbook *Intelligent Business*.

3.2 Rationale for Narrative Inquiry

Narrative is regarded as 'a mode of thought' (Bruner, 1996) and is particularly valuable for representing the richness of human experience (Johnson & Golombek, 2002, p. 4). It functions both as a social phenomenon and a research methodology, primarily focusing on personal, practical, and individual experiences (Xu & Connelly, 2009). In this study, narrative inquiry was chosen to capture Siqu's *perezhivaniya* of learning—what she experienced and how she experienced it. Narratives allowed me to integrate her personal and professional worlds, providing a subjective perspective that relives her experiences authentically. According to Johnson & Golombek (2002), teachers' narratives can reveal and allow reflection on practices, perspectives, understandings, and experiences that shape their conceptions of teaching, which simultaneously influencing how they make sense of new experiences. Therefore, narrative inquiry is a process of teacher's reflective practice and a catalyst for teacher development.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Process

The narrative was constructed based on a thematic analysis of 120 minutes of interview data, and my field observations. The initial reading of the interview data identified two episodes of Siqu's English learning and three identity shifts in her professional career, structured along a past-present-future continuum. Following thematic coding and analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a second round of reading zoomed in on her experiences of BE teaching practice and revealed two prominent themes: her learning to teach within the course group and the consonance and dissonance in her use of the textbook use. These themes highlighted *perezhivaniya*-mediated processes of teacher learning and development.

Thus, the narrative analysis is structured into four sections, each focusing on eight key *perezhivaniya* at critical stages of her development. After compiling the narrative, it was sent to Siqu for verification, making it a collaborative construction between researcher and participant. This narrative inquiry aims to explore how her past experiences as an English learner shaped her L2 development and professional growth over time, and how she learned to teach using the current textbook by interacting with the ideal form and her actual form, which guided her professional learning in the social situation of her development.

4. The Narrative and Analysis

4.1 Siqi's English Learning Experiences

A child who had never learned English before (Perezhivanie 1)

Siqi was born in the early 1990s in a rural county of Henan. Like many children in rural areas at that time, she did not begin learning English until middle school. Her father encouraged her to study hard, promising to send her to a better school in town for the next stage of her education—a promise they kept. However, she felt completely out of place once she arrived at her new middle school, a prestigious institution with foreign teachers and fresh graduates from Normal universities. Having never learned English before, she struggled to understand what others easily followed. She was also the only student who had never visited a big city like Beijing. When her concerned mother asked if she felt sad, she admitted to her feelings of alienation. A memory she recalled vividly was her father's visit around Christmas when he asked, "Why don't you join in and sing with the others?" She could not, as she did not know the lyrics to "Jingle Bells." In her words, she did not fit in. Aside from one strict teacher who regularly checked her vocabulary, reinforcing her sense of isolation, she stated that she went through middle school without significant changes.

A fun and knowledgeable teacher vs. a rigid, textbook-driven teacher (Perezhivanie 2)

Siqi's experience in high school was markedly different, thanks to a memorable English teacher. She described him as fun, knowledgeable, with impressive handwriting, and, most importantly, someone who paid close attention to her progress. His teaching was free-flowing and flexible, never confined to the textbook. He explained grammar points using lists of example sentences and shared insights from previous College Entrance exams. He also introduced students to various methods and strategies for learning English effectively. Siqi's interest in English blossomed, and she became actively engaged in class, raising her hand to answer questions frequently. This teacher became a role model for her, and English soon became her favourite subject.

In contrast, she recalled another English teacher whose rigid, textbook-driven approach—rote memorization, dictation, and repetitive grammar exercises—made English difficult and unenjoyable for everyone. Siqi expressed that she never wanted to become such a "boring teacher" who would drain students' enthusiasm.

Siqi's early struggles in middle school, where she was the only student unfamiliar with English, caused her to feel out of place, limiting her development and confidence in the language. In contrast, her high school experience—*perezhivanie* 2, marked by a supportive, engaging teacher and a positive learning environment—boosted her motivation, interest, and performance in English. In this happy and delightful learning environment, she engaged in the class actively and devoted more time to learn English. Her interest and motivation kept all through high school, thus resulting in better L2 learning effects. She mentioned she "almost got everything right in the college entrance exam". All these positive perceptions of this social situation of development not only helped her excel in English but also shaped her confidence as an L2 learner and eventually paved the way for her to study Accounting in Singapore. Moreover, this *perezhivanie* was going to shape her identity and development as a teacher in her professional career, with the fun and knowledgeable teacher as her "ideal model" (against the despised model of boring type she consciously distanced herself away from) and her "primary model" in practice.

The social situation of development defines what could potentially develop during a particular period relative to a particular person and the forces that motivate this development. It is in its unit of analysis, *perezhivanie*, that characteristics of the environment (i.e., the objective external conditions being experienced) and individual characteristics (i.e., how it is being experienced) are both represented (Vygotsky, 1934).

Vygotsky's notion of the "social environment as a source of development" resonates with Siqi's experiences. Siqi's *perezhivaniya*—how she perceived, interpreted, and emotionally related to her school environments—shaped her learning and development. In middle school, the social environment constrained her English learning and development affectively and cognitively. While in high school, it fostered her L2 development and built her confidence, where she found great attention, supports and affordances that spurred her interests and motivation to devote herself to English learning.

4.2 English Teaching Experiences and Identity Shifts in Her Career

A failed ESP teacher at the start of her career (Perezhivanie 3)

Siqi began her teaching career at the university level as an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) teacher, teaching Accounting English to business majors. She described this experience as a failure.

A legitimate EMI teacher for content courses in Business English (Perezhivanie 4)

Next, Siqi transitioned to teaching Business English majors as an EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) teacher. Her qualifications—an overseas master's in Business and a bachelor's in Accounting—gave her legitimacy in teaching advanced disciplinary content like International Finance and Business Management.

A happy and content Business English language teacher (Perezhivanie 5)

Two years later, Siqi and a colleague Shaqi with a similar educational background were assigned to teach Integrated Business English (also known as Intensive Reading in Business Settings), an elementary course aimed at developing students' reading, writing, speaking, listening, and translation skills, alongside building their business knowledge. This course assignment was part of an institutional initiative to raise teachers' language awareness and enhance their professional development by balancing the roles of EMI and Business English teachers. After two rounds of teaching this course, Siqi felt her language competence had improved significantly.

She enjoyed teaching this course because the textbook offered pre-designed activities for classroom discussion, which allowed her to engage students more effectively. In contrast to the content-heavy EMI courses, where students often struggled without proper facilitation, Siqi found this course more interactive and enjoyable. Her background in Business also made the subject matter more manageable for her to handle.

Compared to her earlier experiences as a failed ESP teacher and a somewhat dull EMI teacher, Siqi found fulfillment in her identity as a Business English language teacher. From the social situation of development perspective, the critical difference lies in the presence of ideal forms in the environment. In her initial ESP experience, she was assigned the course due to a lack of other willing candidates, which required a teacher with specific knowledge. Without much sense of the course's meaning and lack of guidance and support, she relived her early childhood *Perezhivanie 1*. There was no sign of learning and failure seemed to be doomed.

For the second EMI teaching experience, she had a partner with whom she could collaborate. However, much like the ESP teaching experience, there was no ideal or already mature form presented in her environment, particularly pedagogy for the EMI course or a proper model EMI teacher that she and her colleague Shaqi could imitate. Vygotsky said, "If the appropriate *ideal form* is not present in the environment, then in the child the corresponding activity, characteristic or trait will fail to develop" (1934). He extended that if without final form to interact with the child, children similar at "lower, rudimentary form stage" develop together, then "they will always develop very slowly and in an unusual manner, and will never attain the level which they reach when the suitable *ideal form* is present in the environment" (Vygotsky, 1934). Again, we could see the importance of the social environment as the source of development. For teachers to learn and develop, there must be this ideal or final form to guide them through teacher training programs or other initiatives, such as short-term training beyond the university boundary. Without proper scaffolding for teacher learning toward the *ideal form*, the result of their development would surely be slow and limited.

In contrast, Siqi's experience as a Business English language teacher was shaped by positive social interactions. Thus, a completely different trajectory of learning and development was shown. In the first place, she was excited to find in the textbook the readily available activities that she, as an EMI teacher, struggled to come up with her idea and design, without which the class became boring to students. These activities helped engage students' class participation and built better classroom rapport. She learned through the scaffold given in the textbook for her development in pedagogical design ability among other knowledge and skills acquired. This *designated identity* helped her identify as an English *language* teacher, which prescribed her learning trajectory toward improved language competence.

As an institutional design, the department was mobilizing teachers with different educational backgrounds toward balanced identity between EMI teachers and BE language teachers and their professional development. This design effort created a new space for professional learning. It stirred contradictions in teachers regarding how they should learn to master a new course and construct the "*designated identity*" of their own. The question is: Did they have the *ideal form* available in this social situation? Yes, they did. The old-timer teachers and their ways of teaching became the *immediate ideal form* present in the course group. Through interaction, the newcomers were supposed to learn to teach the course in an apprenticeship manner. However, that was not all. Both the newcomer

and old-timer would experience new trajectories of learning through this social interaction towards a different or shared new *ideal form* that would drive their development further. Whether the prospective development would take place or not depends on how they interpreted the initiative, how much support they could get from the department, how they collaborated, how they resolved contradictions, how far they could go beyond the constraints of the institution, and find themselves a new *ideal form* and engage in meaningful interaction toward a new level of development. Siqi's case showed that "the social environment as a source of development of the individual exists only when the individual participates actively in this environment, by acting, interacting, interpreting, understanding, recreating and redesigning it. An individual's *perezhivanie* makes the social environment into the social situation of development"(Veresov, 2017, pp. 57-58).

4.3 Learning to Teach in a Course Group

Round 1 A Blind and Easy Follower (Perezhivanie 6)

By the time she joined this course group³, two teachers, Jingqi and Cece, had already completed their first round of textbook use. This allowed her to follow their lead regarding the sequence of arrangements. She described this initial teaching round with the textbook as a learning journey with the students. She felt she had to learn everything: the textbook content, how to prepare, where to focus, and how to engage students with specific content or activities. She was apprenticed to teach this textbook through their guidance and modelling. She frequently approached Jingqi for suggestions on teaching and clarifying doubts about the texts. She respected Jingqi's leading role and 'authority,' expressing admiration for Jingqi's in-depth thinking, detailed analysis of the text—from word and sentence to punctuation—and her 'impressive pedagogical and test design'. Siqi reflected on her practice, acknowledging that she might have followed Jingqi 'maybe blindly' and admitted she was 'the easy follower kind,' adopting what she believed was 'the right way' to teach.

She mentioned several times that Jingqi and Cece were educated in the English Language and Literature Program, which made them more qualified to teach the course than she and Shaqi, who had a Business Education background.

Round 2 'Not Quite Confident' but Becoming Confident (Perezhivanie 7)

In the second round, she reported feeling more skilled and having clearer thoughts about lesson focus based on her knowledge of students' needs, language proficiency levels, and common difficulties. She began incorporating elements she had come to understand better, such as developing students' phonetic awareness. She also contributed ideas for activity design and homework assignments and helped new teachers with specific challenges, taking time to observe their classes and provide suggestions.

Notably, her reflections on detailed text analysis emerged from collaborative dialogues with another teacher, Ge, who taught "Advanced English: An Integrated Course" for junior students. Ge, a more experienced and respected teacher, was also the current director of their office—Faculty of Business English Program. Siqi described Ge and herself as sometimes 'not quite confident' in these interactions. Ge reflected on her strengths in detailed word and sentence analysis but weakness in grasping the overall structure and logic of the text. This resonated with Siqi, who realized she shared the same challenge. While she could explain each sentence in detail, she needed to zoom out and understand the text's central idea and the logical connections between paragraphs. Aware of this gap, she made it a point to slow down after detailed analyses and encourage students to think critically about the logic and coherence of the text.

In the first round of teaching with the textbook, her learning was mediated through cultural artifacts, such as the experienced teacher's textbook and PPT slides shared with her. More importantly, she relied on the leading teacher for pedagogical suggestions, who had served as a human mediator. Jingqi's references for her worked as other regulation in her learning to teach with the textbook.

Her admiration and awe toward Jingqi and her teaching style established an ideal form for her to imitate and learn from. In this context, the ideal form represented a perfect teaching model for the course, mainly embodied by Jingqi, who possessed the pedagogical content knowledge and skills that Siqi felt she needed to acquire. Through her constant interaction with Jingqi and reflection on her practice, Siqi was able to imitate and align her teaching style with Jingqi's general teaching procedures, despite feeling less competent and legitimate than her peers.

By the second round of teaching, Siqi had become more self-regulated, having developed a comprehensive understanding of the textbook and her students, allowing her to teach more skillfully and confidently, contrasting

her earlier heavy reliance on others. Her progress was evident as she could introduce new concepts, contribute to group work, and offer suggestions to new teachers. The natural collaborative dialogue between her and the expert teacher, Ge, highlighted a clear developmental trajectory from other regulation to self-regulation. Her reflective practice emerged through social interaction, signaling her maturation as an independent thinker and her evolving identity as a confident teacher, moving beyond the previous image of a mindless follower. With the support and affordances she drew from this specific social situation, including the teacher group and office community, she advanced beyond her initial stage. However, she had not yet achieved the ideal form of a teacher. Nonetheless, she made significant strides in her professional career.

4.4 Siqi's Textbook Use: Consonance and Dissonance (Perezhivanie 8)

The pattern of her textbook use generally aligned with that of other teachers in the group. They adopted a text-based teaching method, followed the same sequence³, and shared teaching files, including syllabi, schedules, PPTs, online micro-courses, assignments, and test schemes.

However, she distinguished her teaching in several ways. Firstly, she emphasized her desire 'not to consume too much of students' time on textbook learning'. She would directly cover the practice section, "Career Skills and Culture at Work," allowing students to prepare for group presentations or other adapted activities within 20 minutes. In contrast, Jingqi's class typically required students to invest considerable time and effort in preparation, along with multiple conferences for coaching, advice, and revisions. Siqi preferred that her students dedicate their after-class time to test preparation, such as CET-4 and TEM-4, believing that 'learning the textbook literally would not improve your English skills.' She noted that she had already assigned several CET-4 practice papers this semester.

Additionally, she incorporated two parts of test preparation into her two weekly class sessions: 10 minutes for dictating CET-4 vocabulary and another 10 minutes for analyzing CET-4 translations. She clarified that this additional work did not take up much class time, as she and the students often arrived early for these activities. She underscored the importance of vocabulary, asserting that her close supervision of students' learning was essential, as no online app could replace this. Although she had initially compromised with the group, agreeing that 'there was much more important content to cover and not enough time for vocabulary,' she found that students often struggled to spell basic words correctly. Consequently, she reinstated vocabulary dictation and reaffirmed her stance, receiving support from director Ge for her decision.

Lastly, she felt a sense of pride in her new attempt: the 10-minute student presentations analyzing CET-4 translations. She credited this arrangement to collective wisdom from their office discussions, where Ge, the test analysis expert, had proposed the idea. Siqi and Shiqi applauded this great initiative after witnessing students' improvement, asking students to identify, explain, and conclude how culturally loaded traditional Chinese words and expressions were translated into proper English. Siqi was pleased with this new classroom activity and planned to retain it for the next round.

However, she recognized an area where she felt incapable yet saw a need for her students: instructing writing. She had planned to implement one-on-one face-to-face writing feedback conferences, which they had discussed in the group, believing this would be more effective than providing non-focused written feedback, often overlooked by students. Due to the pandemic, she resorted to an online automatic writing feedback system, though she remained uncertain about its efficacy.

We observe an overall developmental trajectory in her reflections on different identity shifts within the teaching profession and the two rounds of learning to teach through textbook use, we observe an overall developmental trajectory. However, it is important to argue that learning toward development is not always linear. From a dialectical perspective, development through perezhivanie is conceptualized as a process involving contradictions and qualitative reorganization (Veresov & Mok, 2018). Contradictions, the driving force of development, exist between the *ideal form* and the primary form, promoting individuals to learn, transform and reorganize qualitatively to achieve the desired level of development.

This narrative section reveals the consonance and dissonance of her learning to teach with the textbook are revealed. First, we must identify the *ideal form* she conceptualized within this social development context. As previously discussed, the ideal form was represented by the leading teacher, Jingqi, and her teaching style. During the first teaching round, Siqi primarily learned about textbook use by imitating Jingqi and modifying her practice accordingly, which constituting her concrete interaction with the ideal form in this situation. The *ideal form* was also solidified through group sharing of PPTs and other teaching files. However, as Siqi learned, her abilities developed and changed. This was evident in the second teaching round, where her emerging reflective practice

signified a qualitative reorganization toward development.

The dissonance between her current textbook use and the prototype within the group indicated divergent learning trajectories toward a new level of development. Her distinct arrangements for student presentations and the class time allocated to test preparation reflected her understanding of how students should utilize the textbook. She did not want her students to learn strictly by following the textbook, believing that *'learning the textbook literally would not improve your English skills.'* Furthermore, she emphasized the importance of building vocabulary and translation skills through test preparation alongside the textbook. Her actions diverged from the group consensus of the ideal teaching form. Nevertheless, from her emic perspective, these contradictions illustrated her interaction with a new ideal form she conceptualized based on her understanding of students' needs, teaching effectiveness, and the test culture over time and context. This interaction was mediated by a more capable peer, Ms. Ge, as well as the ideal form of her high school English teacher in her mind—the test knowledge expert. Siqi felt happy and proud of her new classroom activity and the students' improvement in critical thinking. Although she lacked sufficient scientific concepts to articulate her renewed understanding of teaching, her reliance on other regulation for the challenges she faced indicated that her pedagogical design capabilities and reflective abilities had indeed improved. Her journey toward becoming a more confident Business English teacher is ongoing, necessitating cumulative quantitative reconfiguration—an ever-refined expertise in teaching—to achieve qualitative reorganization and development.

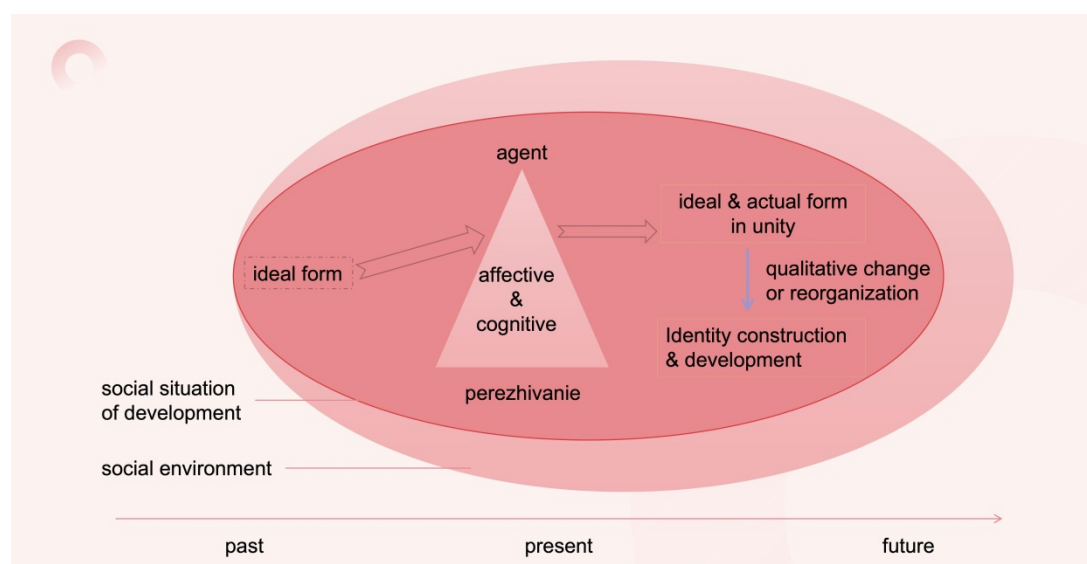


Figure 1. The theoretical framework of BE teacher's perezhivanie of learning

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this narrative inquiry, I adopted Vygotsky's concepts of perezhivanie and the interaction between ideal and rudimentary forms to examine the relationship between the social situation and Siqi's learning and development as both an L2 English learner and a Business English teacher. Taking perezhivanie as a unity of personal and situational characteristics, I revealed that her developmental trajectory was shaped by how she interacted with her social environment and responded to factors at key moments in her life and career. I also analyzed her developmental trajectory through identity shifts, where her perezhivaniya served as a mediation that integrates the affective and cognitive, personal and social characteristics for her to becoming a confident BE teacher. From the analysis, I conclude here that: 1) ideal form is essential in the social situation of development for one's learning and identity construction; 2) agentic actions of the subject create the condition for the interaction between ideal form and actual form; 3) a new ideal form will emerge, that is ideal form and actual form in unity, for one's qualitative change and reorganization towards development and identity construction (see Figure 1).

Throughout this study, I used the term 'development' in two senses. One aligns with Vygotsky's definition of the development of higher psychological functions, which refers to the 'internalization of socially rooted and historically developed activities' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57), while the other refers to professional development as a teacher. Examples of her learning, such as her imitation of the ideal form during her first round of teaching and her

reflective practice during the second round, illustrate her developmental trajectory. How, then, does her *perezhivanie* of learning relate to development? This study supports Veresov and Mok's (2018) view that *perezhivanie* allows for a closer examination of the 'reflexive relationship between learning and development in a holistic manner.' (p. 93) Learning leads to development, but subsequent development changes the nature of learning. Thus, an individual's learning is dynamic, with the way they learn and perceive their environment evolving alongside their development.

I also applied concepts such as mediational means, self-regulation, and other-regulation to better understand how she interacted with the ideal form in different social situations of development. However, the concept of 'interaction between the ideal form and present form' is broad enough to open up numerous possibilities for exploration: What exactly is the *ideal form* in an individual's social situation of development? How do individuals conceptualize the *ideal form*? Is it a concrete and observable form, or is it simply a prototypical concept in an individual's mind? How can researchers identify this *ideal form* for their participants? In this study, I attempted to analyze Siqi's *perezhivaniya* of learning in terms of both concrete and conceptualized ideal forms. For example, her learning through textbook use to construct her professional identity as a Business English teacher involved interacting with the ideal form represented by her lead teacher, her free-spirited high school English teacher, and a conceptualized ideal form in her mind. This interaction between the ideal form and her practice created consonances and dissonances (contradictions) that required continuous learning and reflection, eventually leading to qualitative changes that signaled a new stage in her development.

From a methodological standpoint, how do we capture the interaction between the ideal and present form in an individual's social situation of development? These interactions must be revealed in ways that allow us to examine the individual's *perezhivanie*—the key to understanding their social situation of development at specific moments. In addition to the narrative inquiry based on the participant's self-reports, Agnoletto et al. (2021) used microgenetic analysis to capture the moment-by-moment interactions between a teacher educator and student teacher, where the educator contingently provided ideal forms, recognized the student teacher's *perezhivaniya* and responsively mediated the student's learning in mentor-mentee interactions, guiding them toward development of the *ideal form*.

The findings of this narrative study cannot claim generalizability beyond this single case. I have provided detailed context and explained the process of data collection and analysis to ensure the study's trustworthiness. However, readers may bring their experiences and observations into this context, potentially gaining different understandings. It is hoped that readers will find something heuristic in this study. They are encouraged to consider the similarities between their contexts and the research context when deciding how to apply the study's findings.

Finally, this study offers insights for both institutions and teachers. Regarding institutional design for teacher professional development programs, it is essential to present or cultivate ideal forms of effective pedagogic practices or model images of teacher identity, within or outside the institutional community. For teachers, a basic understanding of the social environment as a source of development is crucial. While the environment is important, it is not the social environment itself, but rather how teachers perceive and engage with their social situation that will determine their development, as well as the development of their students.

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Notes

Note 1. Business English majors (abbreviated as BE) are an undergraduate programs in China's tertiary education system, derived from traditional English majors. This program focuses on cultivating students with international business perspectives, knowledge, and communicative competence for careers in international trade, e-commerce, finance, and accounting. As an interdisciplinary program, over 60% courses on business subject matter are taught in English. In comparison, approximately 40% comprises language skills courses, including reading, listening, speaking, and writing, all situated in a business context.

Note 2. Business English teachers typically fall into four categories: 1) those who studied English Language and Literature (BA and MA) without a business background; 2) those who studied business-related programs (BA or MA, preferably overseas for English language proficiency); 3) those with work experience in international

business (MA in a related English field); and 4) those who are Business English majors (BA or MA). Siqi belongs to the second category.

Note 3. The course Siqi teaches is an introductory class called Intensive Reading or Integrated Business English, typically comprising four hours of lessons each week. This course runs from student enrollment through the end of the second school year, spanning four semesters. It introduces students to the business world through sequentially arranged themes and scenarios, allowing them to learn language skills alongside business knowledge. As the National Curriculum Guidelines for Business English Majors (2020) outlines, the course content encompasses language knowledge and skills, including phonetics, vocabulary, syntax, discourse, pragmatics, and an understanding of business culture in core English-speaking countries and Belt and Road Initiative countries. Communicative tasks and activities are designed to enhance students' English proficiency in various business contexts.

Note 4. Siqi's group decision on the teaching procedure for each unit includes the following steps:

Step 1: Warming-up and vocabulary (discussion related to the unit topic)

Step 2: Business knowledge (concerning the unit topic and text)

Step 3: Reading (detailed text analysis)

Step 4: Language work and grammar (focused on the reading text)

Step 5: Career skills and culture at work (classroom presentations or group activities)

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Authors contributions

The author was responsible for all aspects of this study, including research design, data collection and analysis, interpretation, and drafting and revising of the manuscript. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

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