

Teacher Emotions in CLI Reform: a Narrative Study based on Emotional Geography

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Abstract: *The concept of content language integration (CLI) emphasizes the organic integration of content language and the cultivation of students' comprehensive qualities. The teaching reform guided by this concept has achieved certain results. This study adopts a narrative research method to explore the changes and influencing factors of emotional experiences of two English teachers in the process of English major CLI reform, and draws an emotional geographic ecosystem model that promotes changes in teachers' emotional experiences. Research has found that teachers' emotional experiences during the reform process are dynamically changing, showing an overall trend of first being positive and then negative, but ultimately showing a more positive trend; The main factors affecting teachers' emotional experience in CLI reform are "teacher self", "social relationships", and "macro system". The results of this study contribute to clarifying the developmental patterns and ecosystem influencing factors of emotions among CLI course teachers, and have certain reference significance for the future teacher training and development of CLI course teachers.*

Keywords: Content language integration (CLI), Curriculum reform, Emotional geography, Teacher's Emotions.

1. Introduction

The prevailing English major curriculum in institutions of higher education is beset by a number of challenges, including a paucity of specialized content, obsolescence, an absence of depth and systematicity, and an overemphasis on the instrumental nature of English, with concomitant neglect of the humanities. In response to the national call for teaching reform, our teaching and research personnel have introduced and localized the concept of Content and Language Integration (CBI), which posits the notion of Content and Language Integration (CLI). This teaching concept emphasizes the organic integration of content and language, as well as the cultivation of students' multifaceted abilities and comprehensive qualities (Zhao et al. 2020). It addresses the shortcomings of the current skill-oriented foreign language teaching and has achieved remarkable results. Many English majors in Chinese colleges and universities have carried out a series of teaching reform attempts based on this concept. Notably, the CLI reform has presented significant challenges to some college English teachers, as these teachers are expected to be both content and language experts, a requirement that has led to feelings of concern and anxiety among teachers.

However, current studies have predominantly centered on teachers' teaching behaviors and beliefs (Sun & Zhou 2022; Zhu et al. 2021; Wang & Xia 2019). There is a paucity of research, however, on teachers' emotions. Consequently, there is an urgent need to explore teachers' emotions in CLI reform from multiple perspectives (Jin & Zhang 2016), so that they can interact positively with the reform and activate and exert their boost to the reform.

2. Literature Review: Teacher Emotions in College Curriculum Reform--core Concepts and Theoretical Perspectives

Despite the longstanding emphasis on the study of learners' emotions by academics (Rui et al. 2023; Li 2021; Shao et al. 2013), the study of teachers' emotions has been repeatedly

neglected. It was not until the 1980s that positivist studies of teachers' emotions began to garner researchers' attention (Yin 2008). In recent years, scholars have expanded the scope of teacher research by employing post-structuralist perspectives (Eteläpelto et al. 2013; Yi 2008), the dynamic system model of identity (Yang & Shuang 2021), and other methodologies to study specific emotions and identities, such as burnout, teacher identity, and teacher beliefs. However, emotion, as a socio-cultural construct, necessitates a more comprehensive exploration of teachers' emotional experiences and a deeper recognition of its significance for their professional development. To this end, it is imperative to situate teachers within the context of social interactions to comprehend their emotional performance (Yin 2008). Consequently, Hargreaves proposed an "Emotional Geography" from the vantage point of sociology and organizational psychology to comprehend school life and teachers' emotional changes from the perspective of interpersonal interactions and relationships (Hargreaves 2001). This approach can facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the process of teachers' emotional changes in the midst of change and the influences on them.

Emotional geography is comprised of five primary dimensions: sociocultural geographies, moral geographies, professional geographies, political geographies, and physical geographies. The latter are defined in Table 1.

According to Hargreaves' (2000) theory of emotional geography, the five dimensions of interpersonal distance determine the generation of emotional understanding or misunderstanding. Teachers' emotional understanding is a core element of teachers' emotions (Sun & Li 2014). The theory accentuates the interactive construction of teachers' body culture and social culture, and it provides a multidimensional explanatory path for identifying teachers' emotional support systems and reform resistance by examining their emotional perceptions of change (Su & Li 2014).

In the context of China's ongoing educational reform, scholars have begun to place greater emphasis on the concept

of emotional geography. For instance, Huang and Liu (2020) conducted a study on the emotions experienced by high school teachers within the reform’s ambit. of the new college entrance examination reform in Zhejiang Province by using a three-dimensional spatial framework of narrative research with the new college entrance examination reform in combination with emotional geography. Wang and Zeng (2023) studied the emotional misunderstandings caused by the emotional geography distance between novice teachers and parents in elementary school. Prior studies have identified that teachers exhibit varying degrees of emotional distance under diverse teaching reforms, varying stages of their lives, and varying interaction partners. This provides a framework for examining the emotional shifts experienced by teachers amid reform initiatives. However, there is a paucity of empirical studies examining the specific emotional geographies of college teachers during periods of reform, which creates a significant gap in our understanding and provides a valuable opportunity for this study.

Table 1: Five dimensions of emotional geography and their definitions

Geographical factors	Definition
sociocultural geographies	Closeness: similarities in culture, class, values, etc. make it possible for teachers and others to understand each other Alienation: differences in culture, class, values, etc. that make it difficult for teachers and others to understand each other
moral geographies	Closeness: alignment of goals between teachers and students or with stakeholders such as the education sector promotes emotional understanding Alienation: misalignment of goals between teachers and students or stakeholders such as the education sector creates emotional misunderstandings.
professional geographies	Proximity: teachers develop positive emotions when their intellectual literacy, teaching skills and professional judgment are recognized by others Alienation: when teachers’ professional standards are challenged and their professional identity is threatened, teachers develop negative emotions
political geographies	Closeness: elevated power or status that makes teachers feel safe and protected; close relationship between teachers and those in power, resulting in emotional understanding Alienation: power relationship gaps lead to emotional misunderstandings that negatively affect teachers’ emotions.
physical geographies	Proximity: close contact and communication between teachers and others that promotes emotional understanding Detachment: incoherent contact between teachers and others and blocked communication leading to emotional misunderstanding

In summary, extant research on the empirical studies of foreign language teachers’ emotions in colleges and universities is limited in number, dominated by quantitative studies, and deficient in the vivid presentation of teachers’ emotions through narrative studies (Xu et al. 2014). Concurrently, research on emotional geography predominantly occurs within the context of the reform of the compulsory education stage and is largely confined to a single framework of emotional geography. In contrast, research that explores the specialization of language teachers’ emotions from multiple perspectives and in a comprehensive manner remains underdeveloped (Zhou 2023), and even less research is conducted on the specific emotions of the teachers in the CLI of such a change of English in the localized colleges and universities, as well as on the influence of the environment of the reform on the emotions of foreign language teachers.

Therefore, this study proposes a binary analysis framework of teachers’ emotions grounded in the theory of emotional

geography, situating teachers and their interactions with stakeholders within the reform environment. The framework systematically comprehends teachers’ emotions and their causes in the reform of CLI from macro to micro, addresses the limitations of a single theoretical perspective, and realizes a multilevel emotional study from point to point and from whole to local. This helps to understand teachers’ behavioral motivation, teaching decision-making process, and willingness to continue to commit to the reform. Consequently, it provides key emotional dimensions for optimizing the implementation strategies and improving the effectiveness of the reform.

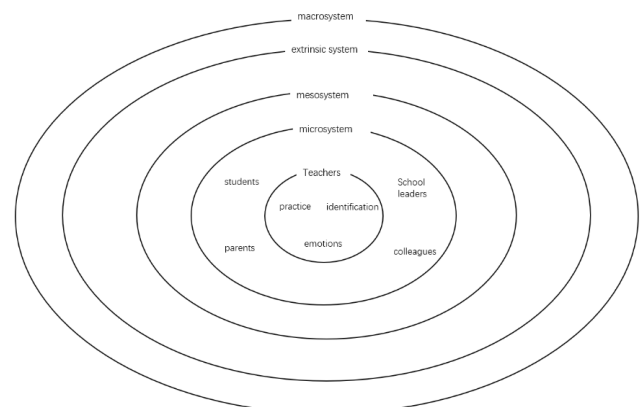


Figure 1: The framework of this study.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

This paper employs a narrative research approach and seeks to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the process of change in the emotions of teachers involved in CLI reform?
- 2) what factors contributed to the change in the emotions of teachers in CLI reform?

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted the principle of “purposive sampling” (Chen 2000) and took a language university in the northeast of China that implemented the CLI reform as the field. The English major at this university has been reformed since 2006 and has produced a number of excellent CLI teachers. Therefore, two reform-experienced English majors at this school were selected as participants in this study. The following is a list of the participating teachers’ key information.

Table 2: Participating teachers’ key information

Participants	Mrs L	Mrs Z
Gender	Female	Female
Teaching years	20	24
CLI course instruction (years)	18	14
Time to join the CLI reform	2004	2009
education attainment	Master	Doctor
Degree	Associate Professor	Professor
CLI Courses Taught	General English, American Society and Culture, British Society and Culture	British society and culture, American society and culture

In-depth interviews are a method of data collection that allow researchers to understand the feelings, thoughts, and intentions of the participants as a whole. For this reason, narrative semi-structured interviews are the primary data collection method in this study. The researcher's preliminary literature research determined the interview outline, which was subsequently analyzed by experts following the pre-interviews. The researcher then modified the interview outline by combining the conceptual framework and the emotional geography framework. The latter focused on the problems or frustrations teachers have encountered since the university's CLI reform, impressive events with stakeholders, the process of emotional changes, and perceptions of the CLI reform. Following the confirmation of the interview outline, the researcher conducted a total of four semi-structured interviews with two faculty members from November 2023 to June 2024. The second interview was conducted to add and confirm relevant information. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the consent of the teachers and transcribed as raw text, amounting to approximately 40,000 words. To ensure the reliability of the research, the researcher enlisted the assistance of a colleague to code the text. The coding exhibited strong consistency, as evidenced by a Kappa coefficient of 0.85, thus allowing for interpretation and analysis.

The data were analyzed in three stages. First, the interview texts were coded at three levels using Nvivo12. Then, based on the three-dimensional framework of narrative research, narrative threads toward correlation and resonance were sorted out from the data to construct a narrative. The timeline and spine coding, as well as the emerging codes and major themes, were examined iteratively to make interpretations. Finally, the coding categories were systematically sorted out from the data using the theory of emotional geography of Hargreaves and the theoretical framework of this study to form an interpretation of teachers' emotional narratives. The findings were verified and confirmed by the participants.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 The Process of Changing Teachers' Emotions in CLI Reform



Figure 2: The timeline of teachers emotional changes

The interview data revealed that both participants described their journey through the CLI reform in a similar manner. Therefore, it was decided to present the teachers' trajectories as a collective narrative because collective narratives represent the common stages that teachers go through in the CLI reform. Figure 2 shows the process of their emotional changes in the form of a timeline.

4.1.1 A First Look at Reform (2006): The Confusion of Starting a Business from Scratch

Before the reform, teachers were burned out on traditional skills-based teaching, and although they had expectations for the reform, they were apprehensive due to the lack of specific knowledge. The traditional pure skills-based teaching has

become a kind of teaching stereotype, and classroom teaching in such a teaching environment brings "burnout" or even "boredom", so when they first heard the news of the reform, teachers had a kind of curiosity and expectation for the reform. Therefore, when teachers first heard the news of the reform, they were curious about it and looked forward to it.

"English majors have been learning to listen and read and write and intensive reading and general reading, and I feel a little bit bored myself. (L1-68)"

The "burnout" of the traditional pedagogy and the "curiosity" of the newly arrived reforms made the teachers positive about the reforms before they formally participated in the reforms. However, what exactly is the reform about? How will it be implemented? Teachers "did not have much idea (L1-68/Z1-14)".

Based on the socio-cultural geography dimension of emotional geography, in the pre-preparation stage of the reform, teachers were eager to get rid of the stereotype of the traditional identity of "college English teacher" and to take the initiative to get rid of the identity consolidation, which is in line with the CLI reform, "to get rid of the identity of the traditional English teacher, and to adopt diversified teacher-student roles in the classroom". teacher-student roles" (Chang & Zhao 2020). The desire to shift role identities in socio-cultural geography and the overlap of goals in ethical geography brought positive emotions to teachers' participation in the reform.

However, the two teachers were not aware of the content and requirements of the reform, which might be related to the teachers' definition of teacher identity. In 2006, when the reform was initiated, the two teachers were novice teachers in the "survival phase", lacking teaching experience and practical knowledge, yet they had to face the complexity of the reform, which inevitably brought a lot of pressure and challenges to the teachers. As previous studies have found, when teachers enter the reform but lack practical knowledge such as teaching experience, it will lead to a decrease in their "self-efficacy", and they are prone to negative emotions such as "burnout", "dehumanization", and so on. "dehumanization" and other negative emotions (Liu 2014).

4.1.2 Entering the Reform (2006-2009): Self-Doubt in the Absence of Knowledge

The prominent feature of the educational concept of CLI is to provide meaningful contexts for effective learning or acquisition of language through authentic and systematic language teaching materials (Li 2013), which requires a high degree of authenticity and authoritativeness of the teaching content. At the beginning of the reform, teachers were often faced with the dilemma of having no teaching materials at hand and had to "make up what they wanted to teach". As stated in L1-47, "You have to learn now and teach now, and there are many things that are not so solid, and the textbook has to be compiled one chapter at a time, and then taught to the students immediately after it is finished." The "teach-as-you-go" model of teaching resulted in a physical geography that was too close in time and space, which inadvertently brought more pressure on teachers to teach and

a negative feeling of “nervousness”.

“Just sweating after every class, it’s this high tension all the time. (L2-29)”

In terms of content teaching, teachers faced the dual challenge of ensuring the authenticity and authority of the content while balancing students’ understanding and interest. Due to the lack of relevant theoretical reserves and practical experience, teachers often feel “frustrated (Z1-15)” and “confused” in the content preparation stage. From the perspective of professional geography, the curriculum reform is a challenge to teachers’ original specialization, which requires teachers not only to have a language foundation, but also to master the necessary subject knowledge and interdisciplinary knowledge, and to be experts in educating people with ideas, abilities, and disciplinary literacy (Chang & Zhao 2020). However, there is a large span between this requirement and the teachers’ original stockpile of knowledge, and the gap at the professional-geographical level makes teachers constantly self-doubt in the early stages of the reform- “There are a lot of things that I haven’t accumulated too much of, so I don’t feel particularly confident when I’m outputting them. (L1-47)”

However, in order to make up for this gap in professional geography in the reform, teachers can try to improve their professional knowledge and make up for their shortcomings in content by means of data collection, textbook preparation, theoretical learning, and overseas study visits, and spontaneously shorten the distance of emotional geography. As pointed out by Ta and Gu (2016), in the reform, teachers in the face of unfavorable influences will play their initiative through choice and compensation to promote their own learning and development, and the confusion and self-doubt of self-expertise can bring pressure and motivation to teachers to improve their teaching level. However, long-term reliance on “negative incentives” may increase emotional geography and lead to the accumulation of negative emotions.

4.1.3 Deepening Reform (2009-2020): Bridges of Confidence and Support

4.1.3.1 Teacher-Student Communication: Confusion under Test-Based Education

As the reform progressed, teachers’ interdisciplinary knowledge base gradually improved. Yet student feedback failed to meet teachers’ expectations. Although the CLI reform emphasizes the simultaneous development of language skills and comprehensive quality (Chang & Zhao 2020), as stated in L2-35, “Some students may be confused and need to adapt slowly.” This discrepancy in teacher-student interactions became an important challenge for the reform to move forward.

Teachers believed that this disorientation came from the mismatch between high school test-based education and the reform concept emphasizing quality education and whole-person education, “They are still willing to pay attention to some knowledge points such as vocabulary and grammar (L2-35).” Influenced by the test-oriented education, most of the students continue to focus on vocabulary and grammar while treating the “content” with scorn, which to a

certain extent undermines the teacher’s belief in teaching and makes her feel that “the curriculum is not being taken seriously,” “students are not interested” and other negative feelings. The consistency of teachers and students in identity, behavior and goals directly affects emotional resonance. When cognitive bias occurs, socio-cultural and geographic identity differences can lead to goal perception discrepancies, triggering moral geographic alienation. As stated in L1-122, “Because he feels that the usefulness of this thing for his test-taking is not great, so he will have some very utilitarian consciousness.” This cognitive difference, although understood by the teacher, still triggered helpless emotions. From a socio-cultural geographic perspective, differences in social status and identity between teachers and students hinder effective communication and affect the quality of interaction. Positive feedback from students strengthens teachers’ beliefs, while negative reactions weaken enthusiasm for teaching (Han & Tian 2022), which ultimately affects teachers’ emotional state.

4.1.3.2 Teacher communication with reform teams: professional community and emotional support

Faced with the challenge of having students of varying standards and teaching results that were far from ideal, neither teacher chose to give up. While adjusting their mindset to improve teaching from their own perspective, the sense of community belonging brought by the professional community of teachers played an important role for teachers in the midst of reform. Unlike the situation in Hargreaves’ (2001) study where teachers viewed their colleagues as competitors, the teacher professional community in the CLI reform provided important communal support that mitigated the negative emotional geography generated by physical and moral geography alienation among traditional teachers.

In the early stages of the reform, participants spontaneously formed “small teams of teachers (L1-52).” Despite the division of labor in the curriculum, the shared challenges and emotional burdens of the reform prompted teachers to view their colleagues as supporters rather than competitors.

As stated in L1-52, “Small teams of teachers can comfort and encourage each other to work through some of the more daunting or anxiety-ridden situations.” The CLI reforms require teachers to combine language proficiency with interdisciplinary learning to achieve language and content integration. This unprecedented challenge makes traditional college English teachers face similar dilemmas, invariably bringing the moral and geographical distance between teachers closer - “The three of us, all teaching the same type of classes, all facing the same problems”, the three of us in the team encourage each other, support each other, and have problems. encourage each other, support each other, and communicate with each other whenever we have problems. (L1-55)”

In addition to positive emotional support, the reform “workshop (Z1-23)” composed of experienced teachers also gave professional guidance to new reform teachers, especially the interaction between experienced and novice reform teachers in the “reform workshop”. In particular, the interaction between experienced reform teachers and novice

reform teachers in the “Reform Workshop” was of great help in solving problems. Z1-80 said, “When I participated in the workshop, I would ask other experienced teachers if I had any questions.” He synthesized the strengths of all the teachers and adjusted the arrangement and content of his reform course to improve the quality of the course, and at the same time, he also gained a sense of progress and direction, “I think I have learned a lot. “I feel like I’ve learned something and have some sense of direction. (Z1-27)”

The reform challenge breaks through the physical and moral geographical distances between teachers and colleagues (Zhong & Zhong 2022), and develops together in mutual cooperation and mutual learning, so that teachers feel a sense of community belonging that arises in the midst of teamwork, which makes the interaction between teachers present a state of positive interactions (Sun & Li 2014). Experience sharing and emotional support among teachers enhance professional beliefs and identity and help to shorten the emotional geography distance with other stakeholders. Previous studies have shown that harmonious collegiality and mutual support can stimulate teachers’ positive emotions, especially when they receive trust from their leaders and encouragement from their colleagues, teachers are more likely to maintain their teaching motivation (Sun 2015).

4.1.4 Envisioning Reform (2020-present): A Future of Reflection and Perspective

4.1.4.1 Teacher-self exchange: teacher development in reflection

In the middle and late stages of the reform, the two teachers had already accumulated a great deal of practical experience, gradually reflecting on and reshaping their teacher roles and professional identities through contact and social situations with the reform leads, the reform team, teachers from outside schools, and students. Teachers’ understanding of the concept has gradually deepened, and their initial lack of confidence has been transformed through the publication of textbooks, the accumulation of literature, and teaching practice, and their professionalism has surpassed the requirements of the reform. From the perspective of emotional geography, the shortening of the professional distance led to the fading of negative emotions and the development of positive emotions, and teachers realized the transition from “self-doubt” to “ease of use”.

In terms of professional development, teachers have expanded the breadth of their knowledge, but the depth still needs to be increased. As stated in L1-78, “Now this knowledge base is starting to grow, and it’s starting to go deeper.” The construction of teaching materials faces similar challenges, “If you take the current concepts, it has a lot of shortcomings, it is more about knowledge, but in terms of depth it is still lacking. (L2-47)”

Constant thought and reflection brought teachers closer to their professional and socio-cultural geographies of self. Teachers shifted from an initial lack of confidence in their professional knowledge and feeling of pressure to “motivation (L2-49)” in the reform, breaking through the solidification of the role of college English teachers at the beginning of the

reform and adjusting the difference in their emotional expectations of the outcomes of reformed teaching and learning as well as their students.

“I have to urge myself to learn when I have to accumulate in knowledge. (L1-51)”

“I actually learn and add a lot of things myself in the process of teaching. (Z1-81)”

However, self-development does not always result in positive emotions; rather, as expertise is accumulated, other negative emotions masked by “self-doubt” and “lack of self-confidence” at the beginning of the reform process can have a negative emotional impact on teachers. The CLI emphasizes that “language depends on content and content depends on language,” which requires teachers to have more specialized knowledge. As stated in L1-83, “Too much knowledge leads to a lack of understanding and often feelings of inferiority rather than self-confidence.” This state of affairs is consistent with Ference’s (1977) characterization of a professional “plateau,” which is corroborated by Z1-84: “The curriculum seems to be entering a bottleneck.”

The environment is also an important factor influencing teachers’ negative emotions in the reform, with “research pressure” and “teaching pressure” having the most significant effects. Research is an important part of the professional life of foreign language teachers in colleges and universities (Gu & Gu 2019), which can stimulate teachers’ enthusiasm for reforms and research as well as bring corresponding pressures to teachers (Lodahl & Kejner 1965). The results of reforms are generally required to be transformed into research outputs, but under the double challenge of “reforming teaching” and “research outputs”, the pressure faced by teachers is also multiplied. It’s not so much the teaching aspect as it is the research, because it’s something you need to go through quickly and turn it into an article, and that puts a lot of pressure on me, and I can’t take my time to learn something at my own pace.” While the research requirement compressed the virtuous cycle of “practice-reflection-learning-practice again” (Xu & Lei 2020) and caused emotional stress for teachers, it also promoted professional understanding, as described in Z1-87: “The literature read to complete the research deepened the knowledge of CLI.” This research experience often becomes an important turning point in the reform process.

4.1.4.2 Teachers in the macro-environment and reform: self-help in the shadow of the professional crisis

The macro-environment, as a spatial extension of emotional geography (Gao 2010), is both the emotional context and its foundation. Hargreaves points out that the individual, the school and the society are the three main elements that influence teachers’ emotions. Despite the continuing reform of teaching in higher education, teachers still face multiple challenges at the social level.

The concept of teaching to the test creates resistance to whole-person education reform, as stated in L1-122: “Tests are still limited to basic skills such as listening, reading, writing, and translating.” This conception of education of

learning what is tested (Ling 2018) undermines the effectiveness of the reform. Although university teachers have greater autonomy in curriculum design, they are still at the disadvantage of political geography in a large-scale examination system. The dual distance of physical-political geography makes it difficult for teachers to participate in the development of the evaluation system, leading to a divergence between teacher narratives and authoritative narratives.

“But the larger environment is still the same, and many of the exams don’t look at things that are on the body of knowledge. (L1-122)”

“Personally, I think is it that we still haven’t found the right way to do it? Isn’t there going to be a better way to assess it? (Z1-93)”

The professional crisis in the English program itself has also had an impact on the emotions of teachers in reform. The macro-social system indirectly affects teachers’ emotional experience by shaping their ways of thinking and values. With the deep interaction between China and the world, the English major has a new mission of cultural exchange and dissemination, and although the educational goal of the CLI reform fits this macro background, the English major, as a traditional discipline in China for more than 60 years, still faces a great challenge to realize the transformation of this traditional discipline in a short time. This professional crisis needs to be tackled by teachers, students and reformers together, and only through reform can the English major be transformed and reborn for the times. As for the future of reform, both teachers agreed that there is still a “long way to go”.

In general, although teachers experienced unpleasant emotions of frustration and disappointment during the reform, they did not dwell on such negative emotions, but shifted their thinking to achieve more favorable results, and tended to gradually shift from relatively negative to relatively positive emotions during such reforms (Dionne & Hong 2012; Xia & Tang 2023; Huang & Liu 2020).

In the CLI reform, teachers’ emotions show a dynamic evolution: initially, they have expectations due to boredom with traditional teaching and curiosity about new ideas (Sun 2015; Gao et al. 2018). However, the gap between the professional competence required by the reform and the established reserves triggered confusion and anxiety. Through positive interaction with students and active communication among colleagues, teachers gradually get out of the emotional trough and realize professional cognitive reshaping. Although research pressure and professional crisis in the macro-environment still bring negative impacts (Dionne & Hong, 2012), the overall emotions tend to be positive, which is consistent with previous studies that teachers’ emotional changes in the CLI reform are closely related to their emotional geographic distance (Yin & Zheng 2014; Huang & Liu 2020; Zhong & Zhong 2022).

4.2 Factors Influencing Teacher Emotions in CLI Reforms

Teachers’ emotions are influenced by three factors:

self-perception, social relationships, and the macro-environment. Adjustments in teaching and learning due to macro-policy changes can lead to work stress and anxiety if there is a lack of professional identity, which can be exacerbated by inadequate support from the reform team and students. Conversely, good self-identity and social support can help teachers maintain emotional stability and effectively cope with the challenges of reform.

The concept of the “teacher-self” emerges as a pivotal internal factor that influences the teacher’s ability to cope with the demands of reform. Initial uncertainty and anxiety can lead to a state of low mood, but these sentiments can be transformed into a form of developmental motivation through continuous self-improvement (Jin, 2008). Self-efficacy, in particular, plays a crucial role in this process, manifesting in the dimensions of “work engagement” and “professional identity.” Engagement behaviors, such as the use of teaching materials and data collection, have been identified as significant factors in reducing the professional-emotional geographic distance and enhancing professional identity, which, in turn, has a positive impact on emotions. Teachers are therefore encouraged to cultivate lifelong learning abilities through cognitive adjustment, efficacy enhancement, and psychological expectation management to transition to a state of “reflective practitioners.”

Social relationships, as microsystem elements, function as a conduit between the “teacher-self” and the “social environment.” Specifically, the interactions among students, colleagues, and reform leaders exert a direct influence on teachers’ emotions.

The significance of students in the context of teaching and learning is underscored by the profound impact of student-teacher collaboration in a reform classroom on teacher emotions. This observation stands in contrast to Hargreaves’s assertion that barriers to mutual understanding and moral geographic alienation between teachers and students have emerged as a pressing issue in educational reform (Hargreaves 2001). Conversely, positive teacher-student interactions have been shown to engender positive emotions, such as feelings of being “moved” (Z1-96), and to reduce socio-cultural geographical distance. This dual impact underscores the critical role of students in teachers’ emotion regulation (Wang & Cheng 2011).

Teachers on the reform team have been known to provide emotional support and professional assistance to their peers facing challenges through mutual support and professional exploration (Wang & Cheng 2011). This interaction has been shown to shorten the physical-moral geographic distance and strengthen the emotional connection (Zhong & Zhu, 2016), which is consistent with research on teachers’ “sense of connection.” This phenomenon may be attributed to the disparate teaching levels of the participants in this study, which contrasts with the predominantly compulsory education context of Huang and Liu ‘s (2020) study. In their study, teachers were under pressure to advance within their profession, and the prospect of reform was ambiguous, leading to ambivalent attitudes towards change. The differing moral geographies of these teachers contributed to their conflicted stance on reform. In contrast, college teachers’

roles encompass not only teaching but also research and work, fostering a collaborative environment where socio-cultural and moral geographies converge, thereby facilitating harmonious cooperation and emotional connectivity among faculty members.

In the macrosystem, the guiding concept of reform, social space, and administrative policies of the reforming institutions have mostly indirect effects on teachers' emotions in the reform. The concept of "content- and language-integrated education" closely matches the needs of English majors in the social space, has its long-term practical foundation and theoretical support (Chang & Liu 2020), and is a critical and contemporary concept. The concept's alignment with the "implementers of the concept" was found to be satisfactory, with teachers initially acquiring a foundational understanding of the theory through the guidance of reform leaders or other experienced educators. This was followed by the practical application of the theory in real-world classroom settings and course development. The subsequent discourse and resolution of challenges encountered during the implementation phase fostered a dynamic and constructive interaction between teachers and the theory, thereby engendering positive emotions among the teachers.

Compared with the concept of reform, institutional policies

and the social environment have a more negative impact on teachers' emotions. Research has demonstrated that the negative impact of "research pressure" on teachers' emotions is particularly significant (Wen & Zhang 2017; Zhang 2020; Wang & Pan 2022). However, it is important to note that moderate research requirements can also contribute to a deeper understanding of the reform process and the generation of positive emotions among teachers. At the level of the social space, English majors face a dual pressure of traditional dilemmas and emerging challenges, and the presence of social questioning can create a negative environment (Miao 2013; Chang & Jin 2012). Teachers' emotional stability is closely related to the social environment (Sun 2015), underscoring the need to cultivate an inclusive ecology, facilitate a "trial-and-error cycle" of reform, provide space for reflection, establish professional workshops, and promote the integration of teachers' and reform narratives to facilitate benign development of "strengthening the quality internally and reducing the pressure externally".

In summary, by integrating the emotions generated by college English teachers' interactions with various stakeholders in the context of CLI reform into the ecological framework, the research delineates an emotional geography and ecology of teachers in the reform.

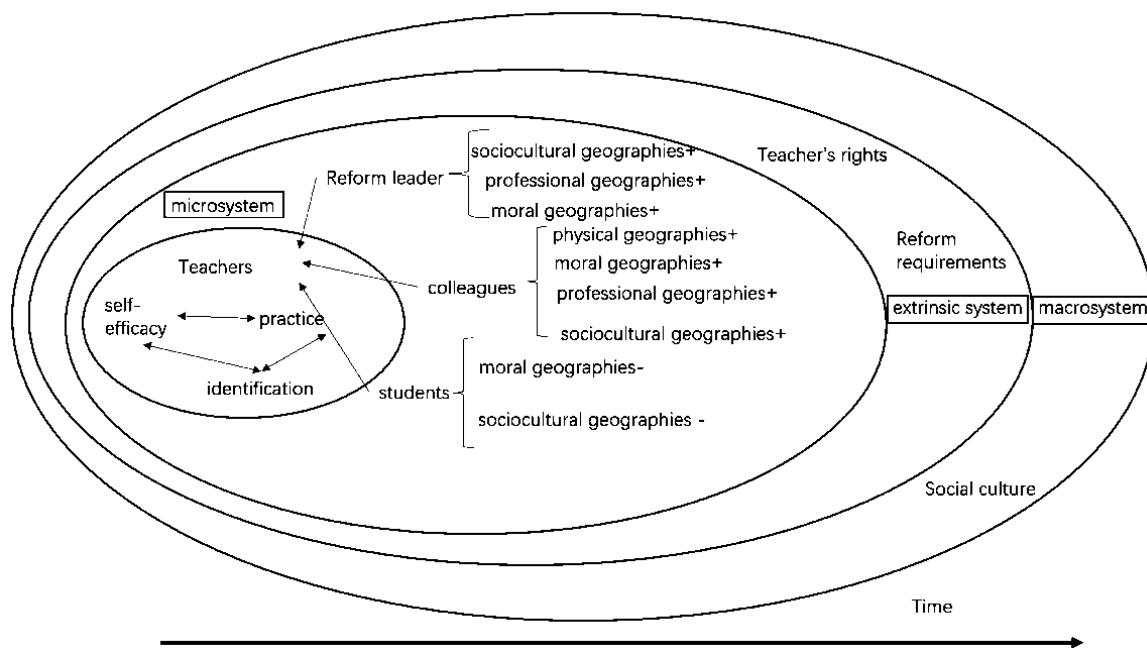


Figure 3: Teacher's emotional geography in cli reform

As illustrated in Figure 3, teachers' mood fluctuations are the consequence of the interplay of numerous social factors. The development of positive emotional geography should be undertaken from both the individual and social dimensions. Individual teachers ought to fortify their professional identity and self-efficacy, nurture their emotional intelligence and regulation ability, and encourage the dynamic adaptation of personal factors and the environment. When teachers' knowledge, ability, and emotional intelligence align with the demands of the reform, they can effectively bridge the gap in their emotional geography and maintain a positive emotional state. Furthermore, the presence of environmental elements that provide recognition, support, and encouragement fosters the likelihood of positive emotions among teachers. Therefore,

it is recommended that the ability to regulate emotions be incorporated into the teacher training system. Furthermore, knowledge sharing should be promoted through the formation of professional learning communities, and a platform for teacher development should be built. In response to the problem of misalignment between research pressure and the evaluation system, institutions need to optimize the pressure management mechanism, avoid the superimposition of multiple pressures, and build a reflective community culture of trust and support. The development of contextualized case teaching resources, the integration of emotional intelligence courses into the teacher education system, and the enhancement of the interaction between teachers and their environment are crucial for achieving the organic unity of

emotional management and professional development. Finally, emotions arise from and act on events, which cannot be separated from the interaction between individual teachers and the surrounding environment, and cannot be separated from specific scenarios. Consequently, the integration of courses pertaining to emotional intelligence within the teacher education curriculum system can be facilitated by means of case or story-based teaching methods.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the emotional progression of two English teachers in the context of CLI through a qualitative narrative study from an emotional geography perspective. The findings indicated that teachers' emotional changes exhibited a systemic characteristic, influenced by both internal factors, such as their personal experiences, and external factors, such as the prevailing conditions in their environment. Teachers' mobility enabled them to assimilate the ecological characteristics of their environment, thereby establishing a diverse network of reform-oriented communities. To that end, future CLI reform efforts should continue to absorb new forces, build an open and inclusive emotional geography, and synergistically promote the reform at the institutional, curricular, and technological levels. Such efforts should include the improvement of teaching materials, the empowerment of teachers, and the establishment of a stress buffer mechanism for novice teachers.

The results of the study have implications for CLI program design and teacher development. However, due to limitations in time and effort, this study did not include the collection of teachers' teaching logs and informal interviews. Subsequent studies can expand the scope of data collection to include teaching logs and informal interviews, and explore and analyze the differences in the emotional changes of teachers with different ages, academic qualifications, and personalities in the CLI reform. Quantitative, interdisciplinary, and international comparative research approaches hold potential for further investigation, with the aim of exploring the challenges and coping strategies that teachers' emotions may face in the context of AI-assisted teaching and learning. This expanded research could offer a more robust theoretical foundation and enhance the credibility of future studies.

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