Identity and Challenges of Swedish Language Teaching Profession in Sweden:

A comparative study of native and non-native Swedish speaking teachers’ reflections

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Abstract

Along with the increase of immigrants, Swedish language teachers play a more and more critical role in the acculturation and integration of immigrants. The status of native speaking teachers and the relationship between native and non-native language speaking teachers have always been a concern. This study aims to explore native and non-native Swedish speaking teachers' (NSSTs/ non-NSSTs) reflections on their professional identity and the challenges they encountered in Sweden. The research questions are (1) What are the perceptions of NSSTs and non-NSSTs towards their professional identity? Is there any similarity or difference between the two groups of teachers? (2) What challenges do NSSTs and non-NSSTs encounter concerning teachers, students, and institutions? Is there any similarity or difference between the two groups of teachers? (3) To what extent are these differences of challenges relevant to the participants’ language and cultural background? Note, the central idea of this study is to show what happened rather than why it happened. Therefore, this study pays more attention to explore the answer to the first two questions.

In this thesis, a total of 10 participants, 5 NSSTs and 5 non-NSSTs, were invited to the semi-structured interviews. By adopting thematic analysis, the findings revealed teachers' reflections on professional identity, and the challenged faced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs from student-teacher-institution related factors. The results showed different language or cultural background did influence the similar or different reflections of native and non-native language speaking teachers, but it was not the only factor, while the complex combination of contextual and individual factors accounted for these differences. This study also proposes further implications for further research, educational practice, and educational policy.

Keywords
Native Swedish Speaking Teachers; non-Native Swedish Speaking Teachers; professional identity; challenges; reflection; perception
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List of Abbreviations

NSST          Native Swedish Speaking Teacher  
Non-NSST      Non-native Swedish Speaking Teacher  
SFI           Swedish for Immigrants

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Chapter 1  Introduction

This chapter is mainly divided into four parts, addressing the research background, clarifying the aim of this study, illuminating research questions, and pointing out the significance and limitations of this study. In terms of the research background, it starts with emphasizing the importance of Swedish language teachers in the process of immigrant integration and acculturation in Sweden, addressing the worldwide debate between native and non-native speaking teachers, showing the shift of research focus as well as existing deficiency, discussing the meaning of this research from the international and comparative perspective, and introducing as well as defining key concepts in the end.

1.1 Research Background

Along with the increase of immigrants, Swedish language teachers play a more and more critical role in the acculturation and integration of immigrants. As Statistics Sweden (2018a) states, Sweden has a long history of migration, and it has seen record growth in population over the past few years, mainly because of immigration. Swedish as an official language in Sweden has maintained a unique position, even if English is widely spoken here. To better understand Swedish culture and better fit into Swedish society, learning Swedish is still significant for immigrants. On the other hand, since Sweden received a record of 163,000 asylum requests at the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015 (Parusel, 2016, p.2), immigrant adaptation problems set off a furious debate. The Swedish government must take positive countermeasures to help immigrants better fit into Swedish society. Keeping providing Swedish language learning programs or courses such as Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) courses for immigrants is also the response to this issue. In this sense, Swedish language teachers as the undertakers of providing quality Swedish language classes for immigrant students should receive enough attention.

As Swedish language teachers consist of native and non-native speaking teachers, they also meet different challenges of teaching immigrants with diverse backgrounds. To explore what kind of challenges do they face is essential to facilitate the solution of the
problem and promote social integration. Along with the recent refugee crisis in Sweden, there are a series of reports about Swedish language teachers. For instance, according to The Local which is a multi-regional, European, English-language digital news publisher, a piece of news reported the issue of “long queues and lack of teachers hit Swedish for Immigrants courses” (2018). In this sense, it is meaningful and necessary to explore the teaching and learning experience of native Swedish speaking teachers (NSSTs) and non-native Swedish speaking teachers (non-NSSTs), and make their voice heard.

In regard to native and non-native speaking language teachers, the status of native speaking language teachers and the relationship between native and non-native language speaking teachers have always been a controversial topic. Pacek (2005) states the stereotype of a native speaker’s superiority goes against teachers’ professional development and students’ learning experience (p.243). Nadeau (2014) also points out a widely held view in the native speaker's superiority has long occurred among language learners, educators, and language-learning services related businesses (p.1). Language schools hire native teachers of the target language as a very effective means of advertisement (Moussu, 2010, p. 746). Native speaker teachers are commonly considered to be better at language proficiency or experience level than any non-native speaking teachers (Medgyes, 1992, p.343). This kind of belief sets the foundation for the debate about the proficiency and competence of native-speaking teachers and non-native speaking teachers, especially for English language teachers. It is well known that Sweden as a country, keeps pursuing equality, and consequently, it is necessary to examine the stereotype of native speaker teachers' superiority from the perspective of NSSTs and non-NSSTs. Thus, to gain a better understanding of both groups of teachers’ perceptions of their professional identity is meaningful.

When you browse job research websites, such as indeed.com, LinkedIn, and graduateland, it is not hard to notice that for language teachers’ positions always with the identity requirement of a native speaker. However, the question of “what it is a native speaker” always varies and unclear, since the definition of “native speaker” varies. For example, Bloomfield (1933) claims that “the first language a human being learns to speak is his native language, he is a native speaker of this language” (as cited in Lee, 2005,
p.154). Davies (1991) argues that this definition is too limited, due to a language that is acquired later can replace the first learned language through “the more frequent and fluent use of the later-acquired language where the first language is no longer useful, no longer generative or creative and therefore no longer ‘first’” (p.16). For Swedish language teachers, they also consist of native and non-native speakers. How to define both terms in the context of Sweden will be explained in Chapter 2.3.

When it comes to the teaching profession concerning their native/non-native status, the focus of research has changed over time. Earlier studies were inclined to discuss and compare native and non-native speaking teachers on the basis of their expertise, linguistic proficiency, and credibility issues (Demir, 2017, p.142). Later, due to the different strengths and weaknesses of the two teacher groups, research positions have changed, and they tend to support cooperation and mutual sharing among the teachers, the shift from “either-or” logic to “both-and” logic (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001, p.110). Demir (2017) also adds that recent research tends to be based on exploring pedagogical differences between native and non-native speaking teachers, instead of making two groups of teachers “the controversial subject of theoretical argument” and “who is worth more debates” (pp.142-143). Hence, in order to support cooperation and mutual sharing among native and non-native speaking language teachers, it is necessary to understand the challenges experienced by two groups of teachers during their collaboration and ideas sharing.

According to the author’s current knowledge, a large amount of literature research analyzes the issues of native and non-native speaking teachers from the perspective of students rather than two groups of teachers. English as a lingua franca in the world, numerous studies talk about native and non-native speakers in the area of English language education (Brown, 2013; Demir, 2017). For example, according to Suriatijusoh et al. (2013) reviews on selected research and theses from the year 2002 to the year 2011, 67% of studies talked about the issues of students’ attitudes towards teachers while only 30% about teachers’ attitudes towards students and two groups of teachers, and 3% of studies were about administrators’ perceptions of two groups of teachers (p.36). In comparison to literature research about native and non-native English speaking teachers,
the number of studies on NSST or non-NSST is relatively few. Anyway, no matter native/non-native English speaking teachers or NSST/non-NSST, in the field of linguistics and teaching professional development, both are mutually referential. In short, due to the research gap among native and non-native language teachers, the research on NSST and non-NSST makes sense.

Meanwhile, based on Demir’s (2017) analysis of the challenges faced by native and non-native language speaking teachers, they experienced different issues due to their different pedagogical and cultural backgrounds (pp.143-145). Student, teacher, and institution as bonded factors help to gain deeper insights into the understanding of challenges faced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs (Demir, 2017, p.147). In sum, native and non-native teachers’ self-understanding of their professional identity, as well as their perceptions and attitudes towards their language teaching profession, it is not only a national issue but also an international issue. From the international and comparative perspective, it is meaningful to analyze and compare their experience and reflections of teaching Swedish in Sweden.

1.2  Aims and Objectives

On a multifaceted basis, this study aims to explore NSSTs’ and non-NSSTs’ professional identity and the challenges they perceived to encounter in Sweden. The study context of this thesis is SFI schools with two groups of teachers as the informants, representing the relations between the host country and immigrants. By conducting semi-structured interviews and comparing the experience and perceptions of NSSTs and non-NSSTs, research objectives and related questions are as follows. Note, the central idea of this research is to show what happened rather than why it happened, although both sides are involved. In this sense, this study pays more attention to explore the answers to the first two research questions.

1) Objective: To explore and analyze the perceptions of NSSTs and non-NSSTs towards their professional identity.
Research question: What are the perceptions of NSSTs and non-NSSTs towards their professional identity? Is there any similarity or difference between the two groups of teachers?

2) Objective: To investigate similarities and differences of teacher-student-institution related challenges experienced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs.
Research question: What challenges do NSSTs and non-NSSTs encounter concerning teachers, students, and institutions? Is there any similarity or difference between the two groups of teachers?

3) Objective: To understand how much these differences in challenges experienced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs relate to their language and cultural background.
Research question: To what extent are these differences of challenges relevant to the participants’ language and cultural background?

1.3 Significance of the Study

First of all, this study can broaden the range of studies in relation to native and non-native speaking language teachers. As mentioned above, the majority of relevant studies are about the speaking of English language. Even if the reviews are about native and non-native speaking teachers, but they tend to analyze it from the perspective of students. It should be noted that on account of Swedish as the native language in Sweden, the relevant Swedish linguistics and Swedish educational studies are in Swedish. It brings language barriers not only to the author of this thesis but also to other English speaking scholars or researchers.

Secondly, this study can provide a reference for Swedish language teachers’ professional development, to promote the understanding and cooperation between NSSTs and non-NSSTs, and to provide better Swedish language education for immigrants. It could help to reduce existing prejudices against native and non-native speaking teachers, especially non-native speaking teachers. In this sense, it can also give insight into the long-term challenges of immigration in Sweden.
Furthermore, this study has further implications in the sphere of international and comparative education. At the international level, the terms of “native speaker” and “non-native speaker” are the products of globalization. Different teachers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, for some of them even with varying backgrounds of migrants, the debate on native speaker and non-native speakers is worldwide. At the comparative level, examining the difference between perceptions and challenges of NSSTs and non-NSSTs can enhance mutual understanding and cooperation. Respect for diversity should become not only a slogan but also practice.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

Due to the limited time and lack of funding, the author should take feasibility into consideration. The limitations of the small sample size as well as the difficulty of finding suitable participants to control variables might not convince conclusions (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002, p. 223). Due to its special concern and contextual particularity, this study serves as “an intrinsic case in itself” which usually does not have the representative or broader investigation characteristics of other cases (Tavakoli, 2012, as cited in Demir, 2017, p.145). Besides, as Bryman (2016) points out, qualitative research is too subjective and not easy to generalize the findings (p.398). No matter how the author avoided subjectivity, she would still be influenced by her cultural background and educational background which cannot avoid subjectivity completely.

The distinction between native and non-native speakers is quite controversial, and it is hard to give a definitive definition of native and non-native speakers. Although some linguistic researchers are not satisfied with the binary distinction between native and non-native speakers, there is no viable alternative. As Pacek (2005) mentions, disregarding recent challenges to the notions “native speaker” and “non-native speaker” among researchers of language learning and education, “the debate regarding such loaded terminology fails to offer a viable alternative” (p.243). Anchimbe (2006) also notes that “native speakers themselves are speakers of non-standard dialects of their languages” (p.12). No matter what, native and non-native teachers’ distinctions continue to exist in “the minds of the general public” (Pacek, 2005, p. 243).
Moreover, the language barrier is a limitation that cannot be neglected (Bryman, 2016, p.583). English proficiency of interviewer and interviewees, social desirability bias, the interviewee-self lack of Swedish language skills, which leads to various literature in Swedish cannot be referred to. As both sides are not native English speakers, it is challenging for both comprehend each other’s expression entirely. The interviewer can repeat and explain the questions until interviewees can understand them. However, social desirability is something rooted in our blood, and it is hard to be detected. It can be remedied by large sample size and other research designs.

1.5 Key Concepts

The key concepts involved in this research are foreign background, native Swedish speaking teachers (NSSTs), non-native Swedish speaking teachers (non-NSSTs), professional identity, Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). This section aims to not only introduce and define these key concepts but also analyze how and why these concepts play an important role in this research.

Foreign background

The official definition of foreign background comprises “individuals either born abroad or having both parents born abroad” (Statistics Sweden, 2018b). It is the only concept relevant to the terms of “native” or “non-native” on the Swedish official website. It can be seen as a criterion to distinguish two types of NSSTs, with or without foreign backgrounds. The reason for dividing NSSTs into two groups because two NSSTs who were also second immigrant generations showed the confusion of their identity, so it caught the author’s attention to explore the different reflections between NSSTs with/without foreign backgrounds and non-NSSTs.

Native Swedish Speaking Teachers

Due to lack definite definition of “native speaker”, with reference to Saniei’s definition of the term of “native speaker” (2017), the Swedish official definition of “foreign background” (2018b), and Christopherson’s terms of “primary” and “dominant” (1988), native Swedish speaking teachers (NSSTs) is defined as someone who was born
in Sweden, learned it during childhood and speaks Swedish as a dominant and primary language in his/her life. How to define this term will be explained in detail in Chapter 2.3. The key point of this study is to compare and analyze similar and different perceptions of NSSTs and non-NSSTs on professional identity and perceived challenges.

Non-Native Swedish Speaking Teachers

In comparison to the term “NSST”, The term non-native Swedish speaking teachers (non-NSSTs) is defined as someone who was born outside of Sweden, learned other languages except Swedish during childhood and speaks Swedish as a second language. The definition of this term will be explained in detail in Chapter 2.3 as well.

Professional Identity

According to Faez (2011), identity is understood as “dynamic, dialogic, multiple, situated, and, more importantly, contextually negotiated” (p. 234). From this point of view, identity is constructed in social contexts rather than fixed or predetermined. As an analogy, Sachs views professional identity as “dynamic and contextually constructed and negotiated” (2005, p.15). Eteläpelto and colleagues (2014) define professional identity as “individual’s self-conception as a professional subject”, and it comprises “the relationship between individual subjects and their work, and involves what is seen important at work” (p. 648). When it comes to the importance of professional identity negotiations, it “influence transformations of work practices, and transformation of work practices […] push individuals to negotiate their work identities” (Eteläpelto et al., 2014, p. 665). Professional identity as a theoretical framework for this thesis, its negotiation will be elaborated in Chapter 3.2.

Swedish for Immigrants

When immigrants arrive in Sweden as adults, they have the opportunity to learn Swedish. The Swedish language course for immigrants is called SFI. As Schou says, SFI is important to these issues because schools are often the first regular contact between immigrants and Swedish society (2010, p.5). At SFI, participants not only learn Swedish, but also the culture of Swedish society. SFI schools in Stockholm were selected to be the study site in this thesis. It will be elaborated in Chapter 4.4.
Chapter 2  Previous studies

The studies on NSSTs and non-NSSTs are relatively few. In order to in accordance with the research questions, regarding the reviews on native and non-native English speaking teachers, this chapter shows the previous review from three aspects. Firstly, describe the history of migration in Sweden, which sets a contextual foundation for the analysis of NSST and non-NSST. Secondly, analyze the definitions of “native” and “non-native speaker”, which aims to define NSST and non-NSST in this thesis. Thirdly, summarize four aspects of the previous research on the differences between native and non-native speaking teachers. There are 1) language proficiency and competence, 2) experience in learning the target language, 3) teaching style and 4) cultural adaptation and conflicts.

2.1 Sweden and Migration

Immigration has been a significant source of growth in population throughout the history of Sweden. Integrating immigrants into Sweden society is always a big task. Various Swedish language programs and courses are offered just for the sake of alleviating this problem. Sweden was mostly an emigrating country until refugees escaping World War II began to slowly change it back into an immigrant country, which is what it is today (Statistics Sweden, 2018a). As Obondo (2017) states, following the end of World War II, immigration to Sweden increased steadily (p.1). Between the 1980s and 1990s, owing to Iran-Iraq War, Wars in former Yugoslavia, the majority of immigrants were political refugees from Chile, Turkey, Iran, and Lebanon, as well as Syria (Obondo, 2017, p.1).

Today, the refugee challenge has been a hot debate ever than before in Sweden. The majority of immigrants from non-Western countries to Sweden are refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Eritrea, Somalia, and other countries of Africa and Asia (Statistics Sweden, 2019a). Among them, the number of refugees accounts for a large percentage.
From 2012 to 2017, the number of refugee population increased from 92,872 to 240,899, multiplied by 2.59 times (World Bank, 2019). Although the number of refugees as a proportion of immigrants has decreased, the rate of increase in immigration peaked in 2016 (Statistics Sweden, 2018a). Besides, according to Statistics Sweden’s latest data (2019b), around one-sixth Sweden’s current population has an immigrant background. To discuss the causes of this phenomenon, five main reasons could account for migration to Sweden, family reunification, asylum, working opportunities, studies, and EU/EES (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Granted residence permits 2010-2018 by reason for immigration to Sweden](adapted from Swedish Migration Agency, 2019)

### 2.2 The Definitions of Native and Non-native Speaker

In this day and age with globalization, the influence and infiltration between different regions, countries, nations, and individuals are strengthening. The increasing flow of talent makes the pursuit and respect for diversity even stronger. Attracting teachers from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds has been an essential criterion for the internationalization of education in many European schools and universities (Van der Wende, 2001, p.408). With the increasing number of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, it is considered essential to hire teachers from similar backgrounds (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009, p.595). Quiocho and Rio (2000) argue
that non-native teachers can show more different perspectives to education due to their personal experiences are not only different from native teachers but also might be close to the rooted culture of students from diverse backgrounds (as cited in Zhang, 2019, p.1).

The notion of the “native speaker” which plays a central role in all areas of linguistics, has also been questioned (Davies, 2008, p.439). Some researchers do not believe it is meaningful to explore the distinction between native and non-native speakers in studies of language use, variation and change in contemporary multilingual contexts due to lack of nativeness criteria to categorize informants into homogeneous groups (e.g. Fraurud & Boyd, 2006). On the other hand, some researchers express the need for “native speaker” norm in foreign language learning or second language acquisition classroom. For example, as Koike and Liskin-Gasparro argue:

If the native speaker is not to be considered the model for learners to emulate, then who should provide that linguistic model? [...] [Without the native speaker.] the teachers and learners of foreign language are left (1) without a target language norm, and (2) with an unrealizable dream of becoming native-like speakers. These two notions render any efforts in the foreign language classroom unproductive (Koike & Liskin-Gasparro, 2003, p.263).

Here, it is necessary to clarify the difference between second language acquisition. As Ringbom defines (1980), “the second language is learned after the native language, and the language is spoken in an immediate environment of the learner” (p.38). In comparison, a foreign language is a language not spoken in the learner's immediate environment. In this sense, immigrants study Swedish as a second language in Sweden.

Coulmas (1981) views that the concept of the native speaker is “a common reference point for all branches of linguistics” (p.1). This point of view treats native speakers as a model for learning a language. Besides, Coulmas (1981) also puts forward the most important and common criteria to conceptualize native speaker, that is language
acquisition in early infancy, in conjunction with primary socialization (p.4). Stern (1983) argues that an ideal native speaker is a person who has subconscious understanding of rules, creativity in the use of language, a series of language skills, the ability to intuitively grasp meaning, to communicate in various social environments, and is capable to judge whether the language structure is acceptable or not (as cited in Saniei, 2011, p.75). Davies (1996) adds that a native speaker should be able to “produce fluent discourse”, have knowledge of differences “between their speech and that of the ‘standard’ form of the language”, and be able to “interpret and translate into the first language” (as cited in Cook, 1999, p. 186). The distinction between native and non-native speakers originates from the perception of the colonists considering colonized people to be incompetent speakers and illegitimate offspring of English (Mufwene, 1994, pp.23-25).

In the context of Sweden, it is hard to find the definition of “native” and “non-native” speaker. However, there is one term “foreign background” relevant to the distinction. The official definition of foreign background comprises individuals either born abroad or having both parents born abroad (Statistics Sweden, 2018b). Foreign-born or foreign-born parents are often classified as "first - and second-generation immigrants" (Fraurud & Boyd, 2006, p.60). As we know, babies are not born with specific language skills, which is closely related to their language environment, just like Saniei (2011) argues that “native speaker of one language is someone who born in that language country, learned it during childhood, and speaks it as a first language” (p.74). As mentioned above, challenges of limited time and lack of nativeness criteria increase the difficulty to define native and non-native speakers. To solve this problem, Christopherson (1988) mentions the two terms “primary” and “dominant” have been proposed to replace “native”, while both terms refer to priority in terms of importance (as cited in Saniei, 2011, p.76).

Due to Sweden as a multicultural country, most people are bilingual or even multilingual, and they might learn more than one mother tongue since they were born. Even so, to make sure the status of the Swedish language in native speakers’ life, Swedish must be a primary and dominant language in their life. Besides, it is noted that Swedish is not only the official language in Sweden but also in Finland. Karlsson (2017) points out that Swedish is Finland’s second national language, and it has been spoken in Finland.
since the 1100s at least (p.30). However, due to the dialect of Finnish Swedish is different from Swedish in Sweden, so Finnish Swedish has not been taken into consideration in this thesis. On the basis of Saniei’s argument, the Swedish official definition of “foreign background”, and Christopherson’s terms of “primary” and “dominant”, native speaker in the context of Sweden in this thesis is defined as someone who was born in Sweden, learned it during childhood and speaks Swedish as a dominant and primary language in his/her life. To be more specific, the term “native speaker” includes two situations:

1) individuals, as well as at least one parent, was born in Sweden. In other words, that is individuals without foreign backgrounds;
2) the second immigrant generation. It means individuals were born in Sweden and their parents were born abroad.

Meanwhile, the non-native speaker is defined as someone who was born outside of Sweden, learned other languages except Swedish during childhood and speaks Swedish as a second language. In other words, the notion of “non-native speaker” only to those born abroad and/or with foreign citizenship (Fraurud & Boyd, 2006, p.60). The notion of ‘non-native speaker’ includes the first immigrant generation as well as to those born abroad and/or with foreign citizenship. Therefore, the selection criteria of the participants were followed in this thesis, refer to Chapter 4.5. There is no denying that some exceptions may be beyond the range of definitions, such as people who were born and grew up outside of Sweden, but Swedish is still their dominant and primary language. However, these exceptions are not the key points of discussion in this thesis, which need further analysis in the future.

2.3 Earlier Studies Concerning Native and Non-native Speaking Teachers’ Experiences in Their Profession

Nowadays, it is common to see a lot of non-native speaking teachers working together with native speaking teachers in host countries. One of the main goals of this study is to show the difference between native speaking teachers and non-native speaking teachers to promote collaboration and reduce the tension between native and non-native
speaking teachers in the profession. From a long-term point of view, just like Celik (2006) states, when language education professionals (textbook writers, curriculum specialists, language teachers, and administrators) realize and take into account the differences between the two groups of teachers, they will be more likely to make improvements that help improve performance in the field of language education (p.372).

At this point, it is essential to discuss the main difference between native and non-native speaking teachers. Derived partly from Árva and Medgyes (2000), Braine (2005), Celik (2006), and Demir (2017), this section will analyze the difference between native and non-native speaking teachers from four aspects. There are 1) language proficiency and competence, 2) experience in learning the target language, 3) teaching style and 4) cultural adaptation, and conflicts. It should be noted that all of the selected articles are about native and non-native English speaking teachers. Due to the limitations of a single target language category (English), the context needs to be taken into consideration carefully. One other thing to note is that these are not “merits” or “demerits” that make them better or worse, but “natural outcomes of being different” that should be appreciated (Celik, 2006, p.373).

**Language proficiency and competence**

There is no doubt that the primary advantage of native speaking teacher lies in their superior target language competence (Árva & Medgyes, 2000, p.360). This difference, or in other words, superiority not only lies in the public’s mind but also actually happening. Harmer (1991) states, “average native speakers [...] do not consciously know any grammar and cannot produce any rules of grammar without study and thought, but they do have a language competence which is subconscious and allows them to generate grammatically correct sentences” (p. 13). As Árva and Medgyes (2000) also mention, native speaking teachers’ superiority is said to be particularly spectacular in their capability of using the language spontaneously and in the most diverse communicative situations (p.360). Besides, pronunciation can be almost the most obvious way of distinguishing non-native’s status. Just like Gimson shows, “pronunciation may most obviously provide clues for non-native status since it is formed in early age and maybe the least conscious element is speech” (as cited in Paikeday, 1985, p. 23). In Brown’s
(2013) small-scale study, it compares native and non-native English language teacher in Sweden from the perceptions of students. It turns out although most of the students believe as long as they are a good teacher and it does not matter what the teacher’s native language is, the majority of students still tend to treat native English speaking teachers as an ideal example of an English speaker. As Celik (2006) states, native speakers are evidently superior for language speaking ability (p.373). However, when it comes to this, it is worth considering that language speaking ability is not equal to language teaching ability. If native speaking teachers do not have formal training in the target language while non-native speaking teachers have been trained formally, it is not rational to judge a person’s teaching competence only based on “native” or “non-native”.

**Experience in learning the target language**

Generally, compared to native speaking teachers, non-native speaking teachers also have experienced the process of learning the target language, keeping practicing, then master the language proficiently. Medgyes (1992) shows that non-native speakers enjoy advantages in:

1) *can serve as imitable models of the successful learner of the target language;*
2) *can teach learning strategies more effectively;*
3) *can provide learners with more information about the target language;*
4) *are more capable to anticipate language difficulties;*
5) *can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of their learners; and*
6) *can benefit from sharing the learners’ mother tongue* (p. 346-347).

In comparison to non-native speaking teachers, Lee (2005) points out that native speakers have internalized knowledge of:

1) *appropriate use of idiomatic expressions;*
2) *correctness of language form;*
3) *natural pronunciation;*
4) *cultural context including “response cries”, swear words, and interjections;*
5) *above average sized vocabulary, collocations and other phraseological items;*
6) *metaphors;*
7) *frozen syntax, such as binomials or bi-verbials;*
8) *nonverbal cultural features.* (pp. 152-163).

In short, as non-native speaking teachers, they have similar language learning experience as their students, so they might be more sensitive to perceive what students need. For native-native speaking teachers, they are used to the language environment since they were born, so they might make language application more flexible and natural.

**Teaching Style**

The difference in teaching styles between native and non-native speaking teachers is also the focus of discussion. Braine (2005) points out when it comes to teaching style, and it includes the ability to answer questions and teaching methodology (p.21). The teaching styles of non-native speaking teachers tend to be identified as demanding, thorough and traditional in the classroom than their native-speaking colleagues, who are more outgoing, casual and talkative (Braine, 2005; Árva & Medgyes, 2000). For example, Samimy and Brutt-Griffel (1999) conducted a survey and interviewed 17 non-native speaking graduates students who either pursuing a MA or Ph.D in TESOL1 at a university in the United States(as cited in Braine, 2005, pp.15-16). Those graduate students’ perspectives towards native and non-native speaking teachers were summarized as follows:

*They identified native speaking teachers as being informal, fluent, accurate, using different teaching methods, being flexible, using conversational English, knowing subtleties of the language, using authentic English, providing positive feedback to students, and having communication (not exam preparation) as the goals of their teaching. Non-native English speaking teachers were perceived as relying on textbooks, applying differences between the first and second languages, using the first language as teaching medium, being aware of negative transfer and psychological aspects of learning, being sensitive to students' needs, being more efficient, knowing the students' background, and having exam preparation as the goal of their teaching (Braine, 2005, p.16).*

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1 Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, the teaching of English as a second or foreign language
Besides, there is common sense that non-native speaking teachers are more dependent on textbooks because they care more about grammar (Celik, 2006, p.373), just like Hutchinson and Torres (1994) says, textbooks are the most convenient way to provide structure (p. 317).

**Cultural adaptation and conflicts**

It is not hard to assume that teachers’ cultural background largely influences teaching performance. Zhang (2019) in her literature review points out for teachers with immigrant backgrounds (*based on the definitions of native and non-native speaking teachers in Chapter 2.3, no matter the second immigrant generation in the category of NSSTs or the first immigrant generation in the category of non-NSSTs, both immigrant generations have immigrant backgrounds*), they face different levels of challenge of adaption to a new social and cultural teaching environment which involves professional identity conflicts and interpersonal relationships barrier. Brown (2013) points out that teaching culture is a social aspect of identity building that not only connects students to a positive language community but also makes it easier to use the language in the proper context (p.26). The result of Brown’s study comes without surprise that it is generally assumed among students that non-native speaking teachers would not be able to know the culture of the target language as much as native speaking teachers know due to language cultural background (p.26). However, some researchers have different opinions. Nadeau (2014) argues that “the bias favoring native speaking teachers as powerful, knowledgeable users of the target language” still exists among inexperienced students, although recent research shows that “experience with non-native speaking teachers tends to eliminates this bias” (p.3). In comparison, experienced students care more about their “teachers’ professional ability and practice” rather than native status or not (Nadeau, 2014, p.3).
Chapter 3  Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the author describes the theoretical framework that underpins this study. Cross-cultural adaptation and professional identity are the two theoretical frameworks used in the thesis. Guided by cross-cultural adaptation theory, a basis for data collection and further discussion is given. Meanwhile, the theory of professional identity is applied to analyze the findings of this study critically.

3.1  Cross-cultural Adaptation Theory

International migration has more than tripled in size between 1960 and 2015 (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). As Lee (2017) indicates, historical research evidence has shown that immigrants have reshaped populations and local communities, and new immigrants have a great impact on economy, education, and labor system in the host society (p.315). Besides, the interaction between immigrants and their host community groups have a great influence on not only their host society but also immigrants themselves. Cross-cultural adaptation theory was designed by Kim (2001) in order to give some structural understanding of the process that immigrants or sojourners go through in their host society.

Kim’s (2001) theory of cross-cultural adaptation is to look at someone who lives in a new society but still linked to their home culture due to parents. The process shows how someone is fully acculturated into the new host society and analyzes the journey that a person takes from point A to point B and gets from the beginning to the end. This theory is very focused on the internal components of the individuals rather than comparing two societies and looking at the compatibility of the sending and receiving culture (Lee & Chen, 2000, p.768). In other words, many people are concerned about the compatibility between the two cultures, so when someone makes a suggestion, people tend to guide people about these cultural differences, rather than paying attention to the journey that one person goes through (McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014, p.136). In comparison, Kim’s theory looks at someone internally and the process that they have gone through to make the full acculturation.
According to Kim’s structural model (2001, p.11), when a sojourner or an immigrant tries to adapt to a new environment, he or she will experience a dynamic cycle of stress-adaptation-growth (see Figure 5). This process is like a spiral spring, two steps forward and one step back, gradually pushing forward under pressure. Individuals are spiraling forward and constantly adapting to different cultures. The degree of individual adaptation depends on the individual's ability to communicate in different cultures, the accommodation of foreign culture, and it is also affected by various factors such as age, personality, motivation, etc.

![Figure 2. Diminishing stress-adaptation-growth fluctuation over time](adapted from Kim, 2001, p.11)

At the same time, how individuals interact with the same ethnic group and host society members, and how they consume ethnic and host mass media, play an essential mediating role in the process of adaptation (Lee, 2017, p.316). In the structural model of cross-cultural adaptation, Kim lists several different stages that a sojourner or an immigrant goes through and several various factors that are important to make a successful assimilation process (see Figure 5). Predisposition-related factors include preparedness for change, ethnic proximity, and adaptive personality that set the initial parameters for the subsequent unfolding of the personal and social communication activities (Kim, 2001; Lee, 2017). Environmental factors include host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength. In terms of “individuals’ interactions with both host society members and coethnic members and their usage of both host and ethnic
media”, Lee (2017) states these are “major components that directly influence the process of cross-cultural adaptation” (p.316). Moreover, according to Kim, the degree of cross-cultural adaptation can be observed from three aspects: functional health, mental health, and cross-cultural identity (Kim, 2001; Lee, 2017).

Figure 3. A structural model of cross-cultural adaptation (adapted from Lee, 2017, p.316). IC = interpersonal communication; MC = mass communication.

Kim suggests cross-cultural adaptation is a process in which immigrants or sojourners face the pressure from an unfamiliar cultural environment, make constant self-adjustment, gradually adapt to the new way of life, and eventually form a cross-cultural identity. In this study, non-NSSTs, namely the first immigrant generation, are immigrants, while the host community group includes two categories, individuals without foreign backgrounds as well as the second immigrant generation. Inspired by this theory, Swedish schools as a starting point for the study, to explore the pressure that non-NSSTs have, the conflicts or differences between NSSTs and non-NSSTs, or the conflicts or differences between first/second immigrant generation and individuals without foreign backgrounds. Based on this idea, the author designed some questions in the interview guide for data collection as well as further discussion. For example, regarding teacher-related challenges, this study tries to investigate NSSTs’ and non-NSSTs’ towards their cooperation, to explore if NSSTs and non-NSSTs have or experience some stereotypes or negative attitudes. To avoid comparisons based solely on cultural or linguistic differences, this study pays attention to the internal components of the individuals.
3.2 Professional Identity

As Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) note, the definition of professional identity is seldom clear (p.107). According to Faez (2011), drawing on a sociocultural orientation, identity is understood as “dynamic, dialogic, multiple, situated, and, more importantly, contextually negotiated” (p.234). From this point of view, identity is constructed in social contexts rather than fixed or predetermined. As an analogy, Sachs views professional identity as “dynamic and contextually constructed and negotiated” as well as follows:

*It provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of “how to be”, “how to act” and “how to understand” their work and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience* (Sachs, 2005, p.15).

As noted, the concept of professional identity is constructed and negotiated along with an evolving and dynamic procedure, which includes four stages portrayed by Jebril (2008) as follows:

1) level of preoccupation, which is divided into two phases (preparatory and exploratory) and takes place during childhood and adolescence, when the anticipatory socialization plays a major role;
2) learning stage (to be able to relate the self with the profession) which corresponds to the phase in which the construction of professional identity is at its highest level, and in which the individual is identified with the chosen profession;
3) professional stage, which closes the gap between theory and practice, and corresponds to the phase of accumulation of experience and strengthening of professional identity, in which the individual uses the anticipatory reflection to reinterpret the experiences of the past, and from this reinterpretation quotes the future action;
4) post-professional stage, which represents the changes of professional identity after the reform. (as cited in Cardoso et al., 2014, p.84)
Basically, considering the actual situation of teacher's age and teaching length, this study discussed with emphasis based on preparatory and exploratory stage, learning stage and professional stage of NSSTs’ and non-NSSTs’ professional identity.

When it comes to the importance of teachers’ professional identities, Bressler and Rotter (2017) conclude that professional identity has great influence on “the professional development beyond initial teacher education”, “how teachers deal with institutional or administrative changes”, “teachers’ sense of efficacy”, as well as “teachers’ commitment to teaching and retention” (p.240). In short, teachers’ professional identities “shape their dispositions, where they place their effort, whether and how they seek out professional development opportunities, and what obligations they see as intrinsic to their role” (Hammerness et al., 2005, pp.383-384). As Lefever and colleagues (2014) mention, teachers’ sense of professionalism contributes to “self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation and job satisfaction” (p.85).

Undoubtedly, contextual and individual factors shape the professional identity of teachers. According to Bressler and Rotter (2017), the influence factors cover “close and extended family members”, “the teachers’ own school experience”, “the policy context”, “teaching traditions” and “cultural archetypes” (pp.240-241). In this study, concerning the influence factors, theory of Bressler and Rotter is seen as an analytical framework to identify how these factors shaped teachers’ professional identity.
Chapter 4  Methodology

Methodology is critical to any academic branch because unreliable methods can produce unreliable results and thus undermine the value of the study. In this part, the author outlines the research strategy, the research design, the research instrument, the research context, the sampling selection, the method of data collection, the type of data analysis, quality criteria of the study, and ethical considerations of this study.

4.1  Research Strategy

Research strategy functions as a general orientation to the conduct of social research (Bryman, 2016, p.32). This study applied a qualitative research strategy. Differing from quantitative research, qualitative research places emphasis on “[…] words rather than qualification in collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2016, p. 374).

By adopting a qualitative research strategy, this study took a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology. Warning (2017) indicates ontology is about the question “what is the nature or form of the social world?”, and he also views “under constructivism reality is neither objective nor singular, but multiple realities are constructed by individuals” (p.16). Epistemology asks the question “how can what is assumed to be known?” and interpretivism believes that “knowledge never comes directly, but it is developed through the process of interpreting people’s social world” (Warning, 2017, p.16). Besides, qualitative research emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, that is to say, the generation of theories (Bryman, 2016, pp.32-33). In this study, the author took an objective position to do the interview, to analyze and interpret the results.

4.2  Research Design

A research design provides the framework for data collection and analysis of the research and reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of the research process (Bryman, 2016, p.40). To answer the questions of this study, especially to
understand the similarities and difference between the experience of NSSTs and non-NSSTs, a comparative design was applied in this study. In this study, there are two contrasting cases, including NSSTs and non-NSST. Due to NSSTs and non-NSSTs from different cultural backgrounds, this research is also cross-cultural.

Bryman (2016) mentions that by means of logic of comparison, social phenomena can be understood better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations (pp.64-65). Bray (2007) also emphasizes that the purpose of comparative education lies in not only learning more about other cultures and societies but also learning more about its own culture and society (p.37). In this sense, through exploring challenges faced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs, the challenges of Swedish language teaching, as well as immigrant issues could be better understood. Once the researcher has identified the problems, the next logical step is to solutions (Bray, 2007, p.38). Looking ahead, identified issues require targeted solutions.

The field of comparative education used to be dominated by cross-national comparisons until the Bray and Thomas framework (see Figure 4) was introduced (Bray & Mason, 2007, p.9). The production of the framework known as *the Bray and Thomas’ Cube* extended the field of a comparative study from cross-national to intra-national contexts. Bray and Mason (2007) points out that this framework has been extensively cited in comparative studies in order to meet the call for multilevel analyses in comparative studies to achieve multifaceted and holistic analyses of educational phenomena among researchers (pp.8-9). On the basis of the Bray and Thomas framework, the author could make comparisons in three dimensions, and control other variables in various contexts that are embedded in this study.

According to the Bray and Thomas framework, in this thesis, the geographic/location level is individuals; the nonlocal demographic group is NSSTs and non-NSSTs; the aspect of education and society is teachers’ experiences of teaching Swedish language for immigrants. By comparing perceptions of NSSTs and non-NSSTs towards teaching Swedish for immigrants, this study aimed to investigate how NSSTs and non-NSSTs look at their professional identity, the challenges faced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs, and to
explore the reasons behind these difference. The results of the comparison can be found in Chapter 5.

![Diagram of Framework for comparative education analysis](image)

**Figure 4. Framework for comparative education analysis**
*(adapted from Bray & Mason, 2014, p.9)*

### 4.3 Research Instrument

The instrument of this study involved two parts, a self-administered pre-survey questionnaire and two interview guides of a qualitative semi-structured interview.

#### 4.3.1 A self-administered pre-survey questionnaire

The pre-survey aimed to grasp informants’ basic background information for better grouping and asking more pointed questions (see Appendix 3). The pre-survey was done online via Smart Survey platform. This pre-survey questionnaire included a list of questions as follows:

1. Demographic information: name, gender, age group, nationality, home country, family migration background, mother tongue, home language, most proficient language, birthplace, the place for growing up
(2) Teaching experience of Swedish language: length of teaching Swedish language experience in total/ SFI, qualifications, teaching level, the nature of work.

4.3.2 Two interview guides of a qualitative semi-structured interview

Taking the research objectives, questions, and feasibility into consideration, the semi-structured interview approach was conducted in this study. A semi-structured interview should cover fairly specific questions, often referred as an interview guide, and interviewees have a lot of leeway in how to reply (Bryman, 2016, p.468). In addition, Bryman (2016) suggests that questions in the interview guide should be less specific and leave the interviewee with some flexibility in response (pp.469). In order to ensure that the same general information is collected from the participants, two interview guides were made (see Appendix 1 & 2), one for NSSTs while one for non-NSSTs. Both interview guides allow a degree of freedom and adaptability to extract information from the interviewees. Both interview guides were designed based on the theoretical framework in Chapter 3 and some example questions in previous studies by Demir (2017) and Eteläpelto et al. (2014). Based on the interview guide, some questions were not asked if the informants had troubles. Meanwhile, according to the informants’ answer, the author sometimes robed with more questions to dig up some interesting points. Basically, five parts related to both interview guides were asked. There are 1) language skills, 2) past and current understanding of professional identity, 3) student-related challenges, 4) teacher-related challenges, and 5) institution-related challenges.

Due to the limited time and efforts, most of the interviews were conducted online via WhatsApp or Skype, while a few were done face to face. The duration of each interview ranged from 30 to 60 minutes and was recorded by laptop and mobile phone. Before each interview, the author sent the informed consent as well as a survey form on Smart Survey online in order to collect their personal information and protect their privacy. For the confidentiality reason, all the teachers’ and schools’ name should be anonymous in this study. Due to the author cannot speak Swedish, English as lingua franca, all the interviews were conducted in English. After the interview, the author transcribed all the recorded interviews. Note, the author has conducted a small pilot study to examine how well the research instrument works. The informant in the pilot study was from Uppsala instead of
Stockholm County. Based on this, the author modified an interview guide a little bit to enhance the validity and reliability of this thesis.

4.4 Research Context

SFI (Swedish for Immigrants) schools in Stockholm were selected to be the study site in this thesis. Swedish for Immigrants, normally known as SFI, is the national free Swedish language course offered to immigrants. SFI is primarily supplied to people with a residence permit who lack basic knowledge in Swedish language and age at least 16 years old (Stockholm Municipality, 2018). SFI consists of three learning stages (1-3) and four courses (a-d). After completing the entire SFI course, immigrants can continue to study Swedish as a second language in an adult school or university. The financial support comes from the municipality (local authority) in which the immigrant's residential address is registered, and adult's education department decides on the application. According to the yearbook of educational statistics 2015 (Statistics Sweden, 2014), 150437 student participants in SFI courses in 2013, which is more than double in 2003. Of those, 57 percent were female, and 43 percent were male. Besides, no matter what year it was, there were always far more female organizers than male. Just as the latest data in 2013, the number of female organizers was almost five times than the male. Between 2004 and 2013, the number of pupils per teacher (full-time) was between 20 and 22 in municipality SFI schools.

SFI as the key place for Swedish language learning, its development matters a lot not only about the adaptation of immigrants but also the harmonious degree of the whole society. Besides, Swedish language teachers as the main undertaker of teaching tasks play a vital role in SFI. However, according to previous studies, few studies talk about SFI in English. Even if the studies mention SFI, and they are always about the experience of SFI immigrant students rather than SFI teachers.
4.5 Participations and Data Collection

A snowball sampling approach was adopted in this thesis. According to Bryman (2016), snowball sampling starts with a small sample of people relevant to the research questions, and they can help to look for the other participants with the relevant experiences or characteristics (p. 415). At first, the author went to three different SFI schools in Stockholm to look for potential interviewees. Fortunately, the author found four teachers agreed to take the interview. Later on, with their help, the author found the remaining seven interviewees. However, due to the limited time and efforts, it is hard to control the variable of age, school setting, types of employment (part-time or full-time). In order to maximize the validity and reliability of this study, all the participants were from Stockholm County but differed in municipalities. They are five males and five females. Half of them are certified while the other half are not. Those selected participants are 1) five NSSTs from SFI; 2) five non-NSSTs from SFI.

The rationale of defining “native speaker” and “non-native speaker” is not the same in other studies. In this study, as mentioned in Chapter 2.3, native speaker in the context of Sweden is someone who was born in Sweden, learned it during childhood, and speaks Swedish as a dominant and primary language in his/her life. The non-native speaker is someone who was born abroad, learned other languages except Swedish during childhood and speaks Swedish as a second language. In accordance with the definitions mentioned above, in order to ensure comparability, all the interviewees should meet the following criteria strictly, and their personal information can be seen in Table 1.

For NSSTs, two groups of people were included in this thesis (refer to Chapter 2.3), and three NSSTs were interviewed from each group in this study. They should meet the criteria as follows:

1) For individuals without foreign backgrounds
   - They were born and raised in Sweden;
   - They have at least one parent born and raised in Sweden;
   - Swedish is their mother tongue;
- English speaking.

(2) For the second immigrant generation
- They were born and raised in Sweden.
- Both of their parents were born and raised outside of Sweden.
- English speaking.

For non-NSSTs, the author interviewed five informants. They should meet three criteria as follows:
- They were born and raised outside of Sweden.
- Swedish is not their mother tongue.
- English speaking.
Table 1. Personal Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSST/ NON-NSST</th>
<th>Interviewee code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>First/Second immigrant generation or not?</th>
<th>Where to be born and raised</th>
<th>Length of teaching Swedish language in total/ in SFI</th>
<th>Certified teacher or not?</th>
<th>Teaching level</th>
<th>Full time or part time?</th>
<th>School location (municipality)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSST</td>
<td>NT01</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>3C, 4D</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSST</td>
<td>NT02</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3 years/1 year</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Solna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSST</td>
<td>NT03</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>7 years / 6 months</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>4D</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSST</td>
<td>NT04</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5 years/4 years</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>1A, 2B</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Nacka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSST</td>
<td>NT05</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Not yet.</td>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-NSST</td>
<td>NN06</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Not yet.</td>
<td>2B, 3C</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-NSST</td>
<td>NN07</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40s</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>2.5 months</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-NSST</td>
<td>NN08</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Not yet.</td>
<td>2B, 3C, 4D</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Solna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-NSST</td>
<td>NN09</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Russia/Armenia</td>
<td>1.5 years</td>
<td>Not yet.</td>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-NSST</td>
<td>NN10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>2B, 3C</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the interview codes “NT” and “NN” represent NSSTs and non-NSSTs respectively; NT01 and NT02 were second immigrant generation.
4.6 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is the analytical approach adopted in this study. As Braun and Clarke (2006) state, thematic analysis is a dynamic process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within data (p.79). There are two primary ways in conducting thematic analysis: an “inductive” or “bottom up” approach, and a “deductive” or “bottom down” or “theoretical” approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.12). Inductive analysis means the themes identified are closely related to the data themselves, rather than “trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding framework, or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.12). In contrast, a “theoretical” thematic analysis would tend to code for specific questions that are pre-existing. In this study, the author was always concerned with dealing with particular research problems and taking this into account when analyzing data, so this was a theoretical thematic analysis rather than an inductive approach.

Coding as the primary process of developing themes within the raw data by identifying important moments in the data is considered to have great potential for inquiry (Boyatzis, 1998, p.63). According to Bryman (2016), coding is “in a constant state of potential revision and fluidity” (p.573), since the codes are revisited continuously, compared with potentially more suitable labels, reconstructed, defined and named. Bryman (2016) points out, coding involves the process of reviewing transcripts and/or field notes”, labeling potential significant component parts, compiling, and organizing data (p.586). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue the goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes as cooperating both latent and semantic aspects (p.98). Incorporating from “the guiding set of principles” (Bryman, 2016, pp. 587-588) and “6-step framework” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.90), the study took five steps to conduct thematic analysis. It entails the following process:

Step 1: Start initial reading and rereading of the transcripts to become familiar with the data
Step 2: Generate initial codes by labeling the fragments of verbatim
Step 3: Search for themes by elaborating many codes into themes
Step 4: Evaluate codes, themes, subthemes, and examine potential connections between codes, themes and sub-themes

Step 5: Write up findings and insights, and produce an academic report of the analysis

The author read the transcripts over and over again with the purpose of the study. By repeatedly reading the transcripts, and evaluating the relationship and potential significance of research questions, all the data were encoded twice, and 142 codes were identified as the core of the survey. Through the repeated reading of transcripts and identified codes, certain meaning patterns were recognized between the identified codes. These meaning patterns were interpreted and classified into themes and sub-themes (Patton, 2015, p.551). Consequently, 7 themes and 28 sub-themes were produced in this thesis. The example of generating codes, sub-theme, and themes from the dataset, concerning teachers’ perceptions towards language proficiency and competence are presented in Table 2.
Table 2. Example of generating codes, sub-themes, and themes from data about teachers’ attitudes towards non-NSSTs’ language proficiency and competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified codes central to inquiry</th>
<th>Sub themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ pronunciation (accent, dialect, vowels, intonation)</td>
<td>- Difference in pronunciation</td>
<td>Theme 1. Differences in Swedish language skills between NSSTs and non-NSSTs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ mother tongue</td>
<td>- Difference in grammar proficiency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ second language</td>
<td>- Difference in lexical richness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ problem with grammar (aposition)</td>
<td>- Difference in teaching style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ flexibility in vocabulary use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectured-based or activity-based teaching form</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of migration in Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of studying Swedish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs as a role model</td>
<td>Non-NSSTs have experienced the process of learning the target language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ good observation</td>
<td>Non-NSSTs can benefit from sharing students’ mother tongue</td>
<td>Theme 2. Non-NSSTs’ advantages in teaching Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ difficulties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ compassion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ more suitable teaching strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ mother tongue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ mother tongue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 codes</td>
<td>6 units of sub-themes</td>
<td>2 units of themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 Quality Criteria of the Study

When it comes to quality criteria in social research, three of the most prominent criteria for the evaluation of social research are reliability, replication, and validity (Bryman, 2016, p.41). Trustworthiness as an alternative term for qualitative research, it includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman, 2016, p.44). To make sure qualitative research is credible, the research needs to be ensured carried out as a good practice and the findings are accepted by research participants or by the peers who are familiar with the research fields (Bryman, 2016, p.385).

To ensure credibility, the author tried to be as authentic and fair as possible. From signing informed consent, doing interviews, recording to the final thesis, all the written and audio files are archived and transparent for the participants and readers. Transferability is always limited to qualitative research due to the small sample size and contextual uniqueness (Bryman, 2016, p.384). It is undeniable that transferability is quite limited in this study. However, referring to Geertz’s (1973) thick description, which emphasizes the significance of understanding the behavior itself in the context of the behavior (p.311). The author tried to provide rich accounts of the details of the experience of NSSTs and non-NSSTs to improve the trustworthiness of the research so that it can provide a reference for other relevant studies. Dependability should be guaranteed by keeping an audit trail that contains ensuring to maintain complete records of all phases of the research process, including problem formulation, sampling selection, data analysis, note-taking, interview transcripts, data analysis results and so on (Bryman, 2016, p.384). This criterion was obeyed by the author all the time. It is not only convenient for peer review but also conducive to record the procedure of writing this study for ease of self-reflection.

Even so, it is impossible to be completely objective. Bryman (2016) emphasizes personal values or theoretical inclinations should not sway the conduct of the research,

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2 Credibility: “which parallels internal validity …how believable are the findings?” (Bryman, 2016, p. 44)  
3 Transferability: “which parallels external validity… do the findings apply to other contexts?” (Bryman, 2016, p. 44)  
4 Dependability: “which parallels reliability… are the findings likely to apply at other times?” (Bryman, 2016, p. 44)  
5 Confirmability: “which parallels objective… has the investigator allowed his or her values to intrude to a high degree?” (Bryman, 2016, p. 44)
and the findings (p.386). Based on this criterion, the author tried to abandon personal subjective and analyzed the results based on data collection of participants’ statements. No matter during the interview or the analysis of data, the author never used opinionated, prejudiced, or exclusive language, and avoided over-interpreting informants’ ideas to maximize the confirmability.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

As Swedish research council (2017) emphasizes, “ethics considerations and guidelines play a vital role in the quality and implementation of research, and in how research findings can be used in a responsible manner to develop our society” (p.1). Based on the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018, going along with Article 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19, the author always adhered to the following principles:

1) Informed consent must have been obtained from the participants before the interview;
2) Informed consent must include research background, purpose, methodology, ethical considerations.
3) All the participants have the right to know what personal data are being held about them and have the right to have them deleted. Besides, they are also able to contact the author and the author’s supervisor as well as SU and the Swedish Data Protection Authority
4) To ensure all personal data must be processed in a secure manner, as soon as the author has recorded and transferred the data to Box, delete the original file from the phone/recording equipment. In this sense, the author should not keep the recording in the laptop, USB or any other cloud services;
5) Anonymize the data as soon as possible. When the essay is approved, the raw data is deleted from Box (European Parliament & European Council, 2018).

In sum, the author promised to follow the principles of secrecy, professional secrecy, anonymity and confidentially (Swedish Research Council, 2017, pp.40-41), to make sure no harm to the participants and be responsible for the development of international and comparative education.
Chapter 5 Results

In this chapter, the results of research findings, concerning teachers’ perceptions on their professional identity, as well as challenges of Swedish language teaching profession, are presented. To answer the research question 1 about teachers’ perceptions on their professional identity, the chapter shows the results from two aspects, namely, 1) teachers’ attitudes towards non-NSSTs’ language proficiency and competence, and 2) teachers’ past and current understanding of their professional identity. Moreover, to answer the research question 2, concerning teacher-student-institution related challenges experienced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs, relevant student-teacher-institution factors are illustrated as well. The number of teachers is indicated in the respective themes and subthemes, with the aim of enhancing the trustworthiness of the research by showing the frequency of the pattern. Also, to improve credibility and reliability, as well as “to allow the reader to enter into the situation observed and the thoughts of the people represented in the report” (Patton, 2015, p.605), verbatim quotes are used to support the arguments. Note that, as mentioned in Table 1, the interview codes “NT” and “NN” represent NSSTs and non-NSSTs, respectively. Among them, NT01 and NT02 were second immigrant generations.

5.1 Teachers’ Attitudes towards Non-NSSTs’ Language Proficiency and Competence

Regarding teachers’ perceptions of their language proficiency and competence, two themes were identified as 1) differences in Swedish language skills between NSSTs and non-NSSTs, and 2) non-NSSTs’ advantages in teaching Swedish. Under both themes, 6 units of sub-themes were identified.

5.1.1 Differences in Swedish language skills between NSSTs and non-NSSTs
When the author asked all the teachers about the difference in Swedish language skills between two groups of teachers, four sub-themes were identified. Ranked by the attention, there are 1) pronunciation, 2) teaching style, 3) lexical richness, and 4) grammar proficiency (see Table 3).

Table 3. Differences in Swedish language skills between NSSTs and non-NSSTs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>NSST</th>
<th>Non-NSST</th>
<th>In total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Differences in Swedish language skills between NSSTs and non-NSSTs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Difference in pronunciation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Difference in lexical richness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Difference in teaching style</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Difference in grammar proficiency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Difference in pronunciation**

In this research, the sub-theme “difference in pronunciation” reached the highest concern compared to the other three sub-themes. All the informants’ answers involved this theme. All the teachers acknowledged the difference of pronunciation between NSSTs and non-NSSTs without any hesitation, especially the accent, the vowels and intonation of non-NSSTs make their identity as non-native speaker visible. All the NSSTs claimed they could always distinguish if they were native or not by the pronunciation. Besides, NSSTs also showed different levels of understanding of this issue. Three out of five NSSTs thought non-standard pronunciation could matter in class. Like NT02, she did not take it as a problem personally, but she also said students care about it. When NT04 talked about it, she was a bit emotional, and she also judged some non-NSSTs’ identity as a Swedish language teacher due to their poor language skills.

**NT02**: “I don't see it like (as) a problem because the students need to see other dialects and another non-native Swedish speaking too. But maybe some words can be difficult, maybe some teachers pronounce some words with another dialect, with native
language in it. Students can see a clear difference, and it can be difficult for them to learn a language from two teachers with two different dialects.”

NT04: “I think that it’s about how we talk. We can hear when they say something, they could not say it correctly [...] It’s more when you come, and you’ve not been living here for 10 years as an adult, then you hear that their Swedish is poor, then my colleagues and I would question why they could teach Swedish when their Swedish is so bad.”

For non-NSST participants, all of them acknowledged the existence of this difference. For three non-NSSTs, one studied Swedish for master degree and has lived in Sweden for 19 years, one came here as a teenager and has moved to Sweden for over 10 years, and one came here as an adult and has lived in Sweden for over 20 years. All of them pointed out it was hard to get rid of their accent.

NN09: “Certainly, only the accent, I can't get rid of it.”

NN10: “When in class or having lessons, you can still notice my accent is different from the real Swedish.”

**Difference in lexical richness**

The sub-theme “difference in lexical richness” ranked second in attention among four sub-themes. Seven out of ten teachers in total spoke of the theme of “lack of lexical richness”. Two NSST talked about there might be the difference in lexical richness between NSSTs and non-NSSTs, and both of them did not treat this as a big issue that influenced non-NSSTs’ teaching identity or the teaching profession. They also viewed it was relevant to the educational background and age.

NT03: “I mean maybe my Swedish is better because I am older and have richer vocabulary, and I have studied at the university for ten years.”

NT05: “There might be certain words that they don’t know as well, but it is nothing they left, like being to work.”

All the non-NSSTs identified with there was a difference in language richness between NSSTs and themselves. They generally spoke of there were certain words they
might do not know, or they might say the wrong word sometimes. But generally, they argued it was not a big issue.

**NN06:** “Sometimes, I make small mistakes. It takes 3 or more seconds to find the right word.”

**NN08:** “From my perspective, because I read a lot, so I have enough vocabulary, and I speak very well [...] Maybe some specialties that I don’t know, but it is not a big ideal.”

**Difference in teaching style**

The sub-theme “difference in teaching style” ranked third in attention among four sub-themes. Eight out of ten teachers in total talked about the theme of “different teaching styles” between NSSTs and non-NSSTs. Note, all the SFI teachers almost had no chance to be in other colleagues’ class. In this sense, most of them answered this question based on their ordinary chat and the materials that the other group of teachers used and their assumption.

Eight teachers shared their opinions about the difference in teaching style between NSSTs and non-NSSTs. Among them, six out of eight acknowledged this difference. Three NSSTs acknowledged this difference, while the other two NSSTs did not treat it as a difference at all. Based on the three NSSTs’ reflection, the different teaching style was specific in teaching focus and pedagogical methods. Basically, NSSTs tended to think non-NSSTs’ teaching form is single, more lectured-based rather than activity-based, and non-NSSTs were stricter with students’ grammar learning.

**NT01:** “My experience is that they are more lecture-based. The teachers grew up in Sweden and used to Swedish system are more activity-based, more social learning where you put them in groups.”

**NT02:** “The non-native teachers are stricter with grammar. I see a problem with that, because I'm the kind of teacher that don't do so much grammar. It's like a technique to learn a language. I do it without being specific, this is a pronoun, or this is verbs. I do it with talking and text, and more like not just practicing a repetitive grandma exercise.”
Three non-NSSTs talked about they had different teaching styles, and all of them acknowledged that there might be a difference in teaching styles. According to their answers, the difference in teaching style was specific in pedagogical methods.

**NN07:** “I like structured teaching. I noticed that not all the Swedish teachers like it.”

**NN10:** “For my background [...] it’s more emphasis on students remember things. I try to encourage them to remember the long text, while my colleagues encourage them to talk more.”

**Difference in grammar proficiency**

The theme “difference in grammar” ranked the lowest in attention. Only five teachers in total talked about this theme. Among them, two non-NSSTs made it clear that there was no such difference except the pronunciation. In comparison, two non-NSSTs and 1 NSST said non-NSSTs might have a slight difference in grammar in comparison to NSSTs, but that was not a prominent issue as well.

**NN07:** Of course, I am not fluent as teachers who have Swedish as mother tongue, like pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, all of these things.

**NN10:** Some grammar maybe. You know, non-native speakers will make some mistakes while native speakers won’t have this problem.

5.1.2 Non-NSSTs’ advantages in teaching Swedish

Generally, most of the interviewees agreed that there was not so much Swedish speaking difference between NSSTs and non-NSSTs. Not only that, all the five non-NSSTs and one NSST in the interviews talked about some benefits enjoyed by non-NSSTs from their past learning experience. In this section, two themes were identified regarding non-NSSTs’ advantages in teaching Swedish —1) Non-NSSTs having experienced the process of learning the target language and 2) Non-NSSTs sharing students’ mother tongue (see Table 4).
Table 4. Non-NSSTs’ advantages in teaching Swedish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>NSST</th>
<th>Non-NSST</th>
<th>In total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-NSSTs’ advantages in teaching Swedish</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Non-NSSTs have experienced the process of learning the target language</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Non-NSSTs can benefit from sharing students’ mother tongue</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-NSSTs having experienced the process of learning the target language

In this research, all the non-NSSTs in the interviews considered they benefited from the experience of Swedish language learning. Five non-NSSTs were confident with their Swedish language teaching. Meanwhile, three NSSTs also supported this view. To specify this superiority from transcripts, it reflected in non-NSSTs could be a role model for learning Swedish successfully, could be more conscious of language difficulties, be more empathetic to the needs and problems of students, and develop more suitable teaching strategies for students. All of these points exactly support the theory of Medgyes (1992) (see Chapter 2.3).

**NN06**: “As the Swedish native, you don’t learn Swedish as the same way we do. I can see pattern. I can see what the problem is or what the problem can be because I have the same problems when I learned Swedish so that Swedish native don't realize something can be actually quite a problem for them.”

**NN08**: “I have advantage because I've learned it, so I have inside perspective. I think I do that as an advantage. I can understand what the students asked about without completing the sentence.”

Non-NSSTs benefiting from sharing students’ mother tongue

Four out of ten teachers talked about the superiority of sharing students’ mother tongue. Two non-NSST informants spoke of benefiting from sharing students’ mother tongue. Meanwhile, two NSSTs’ arguments also favored it. Generally, four teachers expressed the same idea that when teachers and students spoke the same language,
sometimes it would be easier for teachers to understand students’ difficulties, to explain something that might be difficult for Swedish beginners to understand Swedish in Swedish.

**NT04:** “We have help from a guy (colleague) who speaks Arabic, so he speaks to some of their Arabic guys that how to treat woman.”

**NN08:** “There are students who we share the same language, so I can use their language as the resources, as a tool. Like sometimes, there is terminology that might be harder for them to understand that, so I can translate that. Because I have I speak two other languages except English, so I can use that.”

Of course, this strength could belong not only to non-NSSTs but also some NSSTs if they master students’ mother tongue as well. One NSST — NT05, she accepted non-NSSTs’ superiority of sharing students’ mother tongue in general, but also expressed this strength might also belong to NSSTs if they could speak students’ mother tongue as well.

**NT05:** “Let’s say, students are speaking in their mother tongue, like Arabic and the teacher doesn't understand this language. Then they complain and say all these students are speaking in their mother tongue all the time [...] but I can speak Arabic, so it is not a problem for me.”

### 5.1.3 Comparison of teachers’ attitudes towards non-NSSTs’ language proficiency and competence

In regard to teachers’ attitudes towards non-NSSTs’ language proficiency and competence, most of NSSTs and all the non-NSSTs in the research thought that was good. When it comes to the difference between both groups’ language proficiency and competence, no matter NSSTs or non-NSST, they first pointed out that they had differences in pronunciation. Some non-NSSTs also mentioned that even if they had moved to Sweden for quite a long time, but they still could not get rid of the accent. For NSSTs, they tended not to take this difference as a problem personally, because, in daily life, students also needed to hear people speak Swedish with different accents, but they
also said it might matter for students due to they wanted to learn standard Swedish, and one NSST also judged some non-NSSTs’ teaching ability because of their poor language skills. Meanwhile, the difference in lexical richness, teaching style, and grammar proficiency were more or less mentioned in both groups. However, most of the NSSTs and all the non-NSSTs did not see it as a big problem.

In addition, all the non-NSSTs were confident in saying they had advantages over NSSTs because they experienced the process of learning Swedish at SFI due to they were more conscious of language difficulties so that they could make more suitable teaching strategies. In comparison, three out of five NSSTs supported this idea. Besides, the advantage of sharing students’ mother tongue was also recognized by some NSSTs and non-NSSTs.

Generally, no matter NSSTs or non-NSSTs did not show too much judgment about non-NSSTs’ language proficiency and competence. The slight difference in their language proficiency and competence is natural and hard to be changed completely.

5.2 Teachers’ Past and Current Perceptions on Their Professional Identity

Regarding teachers’ past and current perceptions on professional identity, two themes were identified as 1) the motivation of being a SFI teacher, and 2) current understanding of the identity as a SFI teacher. Under these two themes, 11 sub-themes were identified.

5.2.1 The motivation of being a SFI teacher

The reason for exploring what motivated teachers to be Swedish language teachers was linked to the preparatory and exploratory and learning stage of professional identity (Jebril, 2008) as mentioned in Chapter 3.2. It could provide perspectives about why they wanted to be Swedish language teachers, what factors influenced their decision. Regarding the motivation of being a SFI teacher, five sub-themes were identified (see
Table 5, namely 1) help immigrants or refugees, 2) past working experience as a teacher, 3) interest in language, 4) teach adults, and 5) make money.

### Table 5. Teachers’ motivation of being a SFI teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NSST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The motivation of being a SFI teacher</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Help immigrants or refugees</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Past working experience as a teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Interest in language</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Teach adults</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Make money</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Help immigrants or refugees**

The research findings demonstrated that six out of ten teachers, one important motivation was to help immigrants or refugees learn Swedish and get used to Swedish society. All the NSSTs and one non-NSST showed this good wish during the interview. According to what they said, they tended to treat working at SFI as a meaningful job, and they hoped to make themselves useful.

**NT04:** “I always worked with refugees, so that’s why I want to work at SFI”.

**NN08:** “Because I learned the language and I can teach someone else to know to learn the language [...] It's a meaningful job”.

Besides, for the two NSSTs who were the only two second immigrant generations in the research, compared with other native language teachers, they expressed a stronger motivation to become SFI teachers because of their parents’ immigrant background, and they showed more compassion to help immigrant students. Both of them also showed the confusion of their identity as Swedish or not, and they said they felt a strong sense of belonging when they worked with immigrant students.

**NT01:** *Even though I grow up in Sweden, I am still identified as an immigrant. I still cannot see that as part of my identity. I feel so compassionate to help immigrants. I think*
that’s common [...] Even though there are not so many non-native speakers, even though they are native speakers who are SFI teachers. In my experience, many of them have an immigrant background. I am not sure if I notice that by accident, but I think there are some connections there that those who grow up with immigrant parents joy teaching Swedish to immigrants.”

**NT02**: “I want to help immigrants to learn Swedish, and the reason is, because of my mom. When she moved to Sweden, she has a very bad SFI education in the 80s. Until now, she can’t speak Swedish fluently.”

Moreover, one non-NSST who used to be illiterate before she came to Sweden, also showed strong compassion for immigrants due to her personal learning experience in school.

**NT08**: “Because I came here without education, so I start my study here [...] when I studied SFI, I decided I want to come back here.”

**Past working experience as a teacher**

One NSST and three non-NSSTs showed that they were used to be other language teachers, and they could speak Swedish well, working as a Swedish language teacher could be suitable and exciting for them.

**NT03**: “Because I used to teach Swedish and English at high school...then when I got to SFI, it was like, well this is a new interesting thing”

**NN10**: “I think it is interesting, and I also used to teach Chinese, so I think it might be interesting as well.”

**Interest in language**

Two NSSTs and two non-NSSTs showed that they had a lot of interest in languages, so they wanted to be a language teacher. For the two non-NSSTs, they considered being a SFI teacher could also help them improve their Swedish language, and know more about Swedish culture.
NN06: “My Swedish is not perfect and I teach new beginners and I love it. I mean it's the challenge to communicate in Swedish so perfect, so it's a way better for me.”

NN07: “Here is also about education. It is interesting to me. It can help me learn Swedish better, learn more about Swedish culture and Swedish language.”

Teach adults

Among all the teachers, two NSSTs and one non-NSST showed they had a preference for teaching adults.

NT01: “I love working with adults, they are very responsible. That's good when you teach with adults. You can get constant feedback [...] They express their appreciation by the end of the class. That motivates me.”

NN08: “Because I want to work with adults.”

Make money

Two non-NSSTs said making money was the first motivation to be a SFI teacher.

NN07: “Money. It is a good way for me to make a lot of money.”

NN09: “The first motivation was to find a job and while I was the student, I needed some kind of job in order to provide for myself.”

5.2.2 Current understanding of the identity as a SFI teacher

The exploration of teachers’ current understanding of the identity as a SFI teacher was linked to the professional stage of professional identity (Jebril, 2008) in Chapter 3.2. It aims to show changes in teachers’ perceptions on their professional identity. Under the theme “current understanding of the identity as a SFI teacher”, six sub-themes were identified (see Table 6), namely 1) play a role of accelerating social integration, 2) have abundant knowledge of teaching Swedish, 3) get rid of some stereotypes of SFI teachers, 4) remove prejudice against immigrants, 5) enhance cooperation with business, and 6) teach students about social skills.
Table 6. Teachers’ current understanding of the identity as a SFI teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current understanding of the identity as a SFI teacher</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Introduce Swedish culture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Get rid of some stereotypes of SFI teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Remove prejudice against immigrants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Have abundant knowledge of teaching Swedish</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Enhance cooperation with business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Teach students about social skills</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduce Swedish culture**

When it comes to the question about the importance of SFI teachers, all of the ten informants talked about introducing Swedish culture to immigrants to help them better integrate into Swedish society. However, in comparison, NSSTs tended to stress they also represented Swedish culture.

**NT02**: “They are not just teaching the language but also Swedish culture, and it is related to their everyday communication.”

**NT05**: “We are like representatives of like Swedish Society for our students.”

**Get rid of some stereotypes of SFI teachers**

The interesting thing was teachers had various preconceptions of the identity as a SFI teacher before they took up the job. Six teachers, three NSSTs and three non-NSSTs, reported they had changed some stereotypes of SFI teachers’ identity, such as most of the teachers were old ladies or students were not motivated, but five out of six changed their mind during the work.

**NN01**: “I think that the students are much more motivated than I expected because before you start working, you are kind of hearing from the political debates and discussion. I think there’s a narrative that describes immigrants and perhaps lazy.”

**NN06**: “They are not old, around 25, 35, 40. and it's very active, politically. So very interested in language, very interested in culture, very interested in the performance of the country.”
**Remove prejudice against immigrants**

Five out of ten teachers reported a professional SFI teacher should be very open-minded, and prejudice. Among them, three were NSSTs (including two second-generation immigrants), and two were non-NSSTs.

*NT02:* “The most importance is the stereotypes that some SFI teachers have some stereotypes of immigrants. It should be removed.”

*NN06:* “(A professional SFI teacher should be) very open-minded, not afraid of all the cultures, or traditions or religions, and no prejudice.”

**Have abundant knowledge of teaching Swedish**

Two non-NSSTs talked about professional SFI teachers should be well-acquainted and have a vast knowledge of teaching Swedish.

*NN08:* “Someone who is well-acquainted hands, have abundant knowledge on the curriculum. Someone who tries to make a difference. Someone who renews their knowledge really often by reading the research.”

*NN10:* “Teachers should make the lessons interesting, stimulating and educational. Teachers should not only follow the plans but also making plans for students about the development of language skills.”

**Enhance cooperation with business**

One NSST expressed that students needed to learn some practical skills more than language at SFI school. From the perspective of student employment, she advised the school to enhance cooperation with business.

*NT04:* “I mean maybe they can cooperate with business. Students can go and learn Swedish. At the same time, you have practical skills in business. It might come together with the work market. Now I feel students just go to school, and it doesn’t lead to anything.”
Teach students about social skills

One non-NSST talked about the most crucial thing for SFI teachers was to teach students about social skills, in his words, a teacher should be a role model for his students. Besides, this informant also talked about he was influenced deeply by his former native SFI teacher, and he had a certain sense of identity in the dedication of his teacher.

NN10: “I studied Swedish at university. My teacher is a very good teacher. Actually, I would say she is my model [...] Like a Chinese idea. Teachers themselves should be a good example for students to follow. It is more about the teacher should have a good personality that students could imitate. Helping students not only about how to study but also how to be a human being. A good personality is very important.”

5.2.3 Comparison of two groups’ perceptions on professional identity

Generally, no matter NSSTs or non-NSSTs, they showed different attitudes towards their professional identity from different aspects. Regarding the motivation of being a SFI teacher, more NSSTs tended to make helping immigrants as the main motivation. Especially two second-generation immigrant teachers, they showed much more compassion to immigrant students due to their foreign backgrounds. They showed more wish and a stronger sense of responsibility for helping immigrants. They tended to seek for part of their identity by way of teaching immigrants. They showed some confusion about self-identity whether they were native Swedish or not. In comparison, before the interview, when the author invited NSSTs without foreign backgrounds for the interview, none of them judged their identity as a Swedish. However, when the author communicated with both second-generation immigrant teachers, both of them questioned the definition of NSST to make sure they were NSST in the research. For non-NSSTs, they tended to prioritize getting a good job. Most of non-NSSTs had working experience as a language teacher in their home country, and they thought it would be an interesting job as well.

When it comes to the current understanding of the identity as a SFI teacher, all the teachers reported that it was not only about teaching language but also introducing
Swedish culture to immigrants. In comparison to non-NSSTs, NSSTs tended to stress that they also represented Swedish culture. In relation to the challenges perceived by NSSTs and non-NSSTs, more teachers with foreign backgrounds talked about getting rid of stereotypes of immigrants.

5.3 Influence Factors of Swedish Language Teaching Profession

Regarding teachers’ perceptions about influence factors of Swedish language teaching profession, and to answer the second research question (see Chapter 1.2) as well, three themes were identified as 1) student-related factors, 2) teacher-related factors, and 3) institutional factors. Under these three themes, eleven units of sub-themes were identified (see Table 7).

Table 7. Influence factors of Swedish language teaching profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NSST</td>
<td>Non-NSST</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Student-related factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Mixed classes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Language barrier between teachers and students</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Discrimination or negative attitudes towards students or teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Students late for school or dropout</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Students’ high expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teacher-related factors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Not enough cooperation between teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>Cultural adaptation conflicts</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Institutional factors</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Lack of organization, communication, and collaboration within the institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Lack of technical support or teaching resources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Heavy workload</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Challenges in public policy</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
5.3.1 Student-related factors

In order to explore the challenges or difficulties that Swedish language teachers met when they taught immigrant students, regarding student-related factors, five sub-themes were identified, namely 1) mixed classes, 2) language barrier between teachers and students, 3) discrimination or negative attitudes towards students or teachers, 4) students late for school or dropout, and 5) students’ high expectations.

**Mixed classes**

The research findings showed that all the informants pointed out mixed classes could be challenging for their teaching in class. No matter for NSSTs or non-NSSTs, they all expressed they had students with diverse backgrounds, even for some were illiterate, it required teachers with good teaching techniques and it took a lot of time and patience as well.

*NT02*: “I can teach a classroom that they can’t read or speak Swedish or English at all. I can see that it’s very difficult to teach from my side.”

*NN10*: “Basically, the biggest problem is the students with diverse educational backgrounds. Lots of them are illiterate. They don’t have any educational background”.

**Language barrier between teachers and students**

Generally, all the teachers expressed the issue of language barrier between teachers and students. Nine out of ten teachers tended to think language barrier mainly came from lacking lingua franca between teachers and students.

*NT01*: “Students have different academic backgrounds. Although most of them can speak English, not all of them do. There is no lingua franca. There is no common language, so you teach target language in target language. That’s very difficult because you have no means of ex meaning or something. You have to teach Swedish to people who don’t know Swedish. It takes a lot of effort and energy.”

*NN06*: “The challenge is to make yourself understand when you speak on this with Swedish in Swedish and that sometimes it can be very hard. The students don’t see and
they don't know Swedish that much either. So when you are a new beginner and you hear the teacher speak Swedish and explain Swedish, it's very hard.”

Among all the teachers, two out of five NSSTs thought students spoke too much their mother tongue or other languages except Swedish in class and it was challenging for them due to they could not understand what students said, and it was hard for them to make sure if the students were talking about the content of the class or anything else. They felt a bit offended.

**NT04:** “It means who cannot speak the same language in class, then they can learn the language faster. When they share the same language, it makes me get harder to understand them, to learn from them.”

**NT05:** “But then, if the teacher doesn’t understand it, they might just talk about whatever. They're not interested in it. The teacher feels like they're not being motivated.”

In comparison, three NSSTs tended to accept students using mother tongue in class but not fine with students using English.

**NT01:** “However, those who speak English, I usually feel it is not so good. They ask questions in English, speaking English. I try to encourage them to reduce speaking English.”

In addition, one non-NSST also expressed the limitation of personal language skills. Due to the restriction of her Swedish language skills, sometimes she had to seek help from other students or teachers.

**NN07:** “I try to figure out how to translate the occasions, and I think this language skill is most challenging for me. Now sometimes students ask questions but I don't know the answers. And I used to ask someone if they know.”

**Stereotypes or negative attitudes towards students or teachers**

Two teachers from each group, so four teachers in total talked about some students showed prejudice against students or teachers because of their sexuality, gender and ethnicity.
NN06: “It happened but it was two years ago, a transsexual person. Some of the students didn’t like her. They spit on her. But we kicked them out. Our policy is no discrimination. Prejudice is still there but you are not allowed to affect them.”

NN08: “From my students not from my colleagues. Because sometimes they don’t know I understand their language, and they say like ‘oh, I wish we had white. I wish we had Swedish.’”

Students late for school or dropout

All the teachers talked about the existence of this issue. Besides, they all showed a similar personal understanding of it, such as family issues, economic issues, governments’ policy, job, study at school, lack of motion, or unsatisfied with some teachers. All the NSSTs and two non-NSSTs did not treat it as a big issue.

NT03: “Maybe some teachers are not that great, and when the students feel that they don’t know the teachers, don’t like the way they teach me, and I’m not learning anything. They will just go somewhere else.”

NN09: “Since my class is such as that they are University students and workers coming to study voluntarily. I don't have any problems with that because I very well understand their situation.”

However, three non-NSSTs saw it as a big problem. They tended to believe it was students’ responsibility to be in class on time, and they also took action to tell students to be punctual in class.

NN08: “They might be late and you have to accept. I usually tell them almost daily.”

NN10: “Very big problem. They just disappear. As a teacher, I try to encourage them to come to school. But sometimes, their problems are beyond my control.”

Students’ high expectations

Only two teachers talked about the pressure from students’ high expectations. One NSST and one non-NSST complained that students came to SFI with high expectations,
while when they had difficulties that was different or opposite of their preconception, they would have a lot of complaints which put pressure on teachers as well.

**NT02:** “It can be like this because and all the students in the classroom have their own expectation of SFI school. Because of the expectations, teachers need to take lots of responsibilities. It can be stressful because every time when students complain about this whole curriculum, like why we are doing this not this. They have maybe very high expectations that they are going to learn Swedish in three months. When the students have very high expectations stresses teachers too.”

**NN07:** “Because the course is the beginning, they will complain that it is too fast, it is hard. I explain to them that it is hard at the beginning, like you don’t have any relationship with the students at the beginning, but they couldn’t understand me.”

### 5.3.2 Teacher-related factors

Generally, all the teachers reported that they had good cooperation with their colleagues, and they tended to think it mattered more about teachers’ personality rather than their ethnic background. However, some problems remained. Regarding teacher-related factors, two sub-themes were identified, namely 1) not enough cooperation between teachers, and 2) cultural adaptation conflicts.

**Not enough cooperation between teachers**

As mentioned above, all the informants reported the cooperation with colleagues was good. The interesting finding was if given a choice, NSSTs tended to cooperate more with NSSTs while non-NSSTs tended to cooperate more with non-NSSTs. Seven out of ten teachers talked about they had this tendency. Among them, two teachers, one second immigrant generation and one non-NSST, both of them expressed the bad feeling when they were discriminated by NSSTs or NSSTs without foreign backgrounds.

**NT02:** “It can be racism within the colleagues. I have not faced it, but here some colleagues have faced it. Like they don’t have native Swedish language, and then they can be asked like why you teach this language, it is not yours, do you still have some so false
in your dialects, the questions like that […] For me, they don't ask me directly but they can ask me like why did you take Spanish and Swedish, like why did you take that combination. I think they want to ask why I took the Swedish not to Spanish teaching language. I have faced some stereotypes like a person who was living or was born and raised in Rinkeby. They will ask me that can you speak like this, can you give me a slang or something like that […] If I'm going to be honest, (I cooperate more with) non-native Swedish or second-generation immigrants but not everyone. Not every native Swedish like that, but sorry the majority I have faced have that thinking in their mind."

NN08: “Like the first place that I used to work for. I don't know if they did it intentionally or not. But we had two rooms where teachers sit. One was predominantly white. The other one was predominantly teachers like me who have a different background, different ethnicity, and I was placed in this group and I didn't know if they did it intentionally or not. And even when we socialized, because I sit close to this one, then I'm socialized with people who look like me, who have another language. I stopped working there and I felt like it was too hard for me emotionally.”

In addition, one NSST without foreign backgrounds, she confirmed the existence of this issue that some teachers had prejudice or negative attitudes towards non-NSSTs. Besides, she also took her colleagues and colleagues as an example as the following:

NT04: “I can say that…of course, I can say myself too. I don’t understand how she could teach, because she cannot speak so well. But I don’t we go around and say that. But some teachers, their parents came to Sweden. They were born in Sweden, but they have another second language. So it’s more when you come and you’ve not been living here for 10 years as an adult, then you hear that their Swedish is poor. Then my colleagues and I would question why they could teach Swedish when their Swedish is so bad. Second immigrant generation is good, only some first.”

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6 Rinkeby is a district in the western part of Stockholm, and it is known for a large majority of inhabitants with foreign backgrounds (City District Council)
Cultural adaptation conflicts

Two out of five non-NSSTs with the shortest migration time reported that they faced some cultural adaptation conflicts which lay in different ideology.

NN08: “Like culture how we discussed in several different ways, they can also be sensitive subjects. You know, like homosexuality, women's right. Because I come from a culture that maybe have a very conservative way of what you are thinking about. So I might intend to explain why we should change what we think, but not only like this is how we do here”.

5.3.3 Institutional factors

In order to explore institutional factors that might prevent teachers’ professional development, four sub-themes were identified, namely, 1) lack of organization, communication, and collaboration within the institution, 2) lack of technical support or teaching resources, 3) heavy workload, and 4) changes in public policy

Lack of organization, communication, and collaboration within the institution

Nine out of ten teachers in total reported the quality of different SFI schools varied a lot. For eight teachers, four NSSTs and four non-NSSTs, they reported they faced or ever faced the issues of the lacking organization, communication, and collaboration within the institution. Explicitly speaking, too much extra and inefficient administrative work such as additional meetings, special dressing requirements, repetitive registration work, not making efforts to enhance teachers’ communication and not timely information discourse.

NT03: “I work at a school where you’re forced to wear a suit everyday [...] The activity just gives us more workload. I mean yeah that’s the kind of activities that I mean we have meetings. You know (we are) supposed to have meetings every other week. Lately, this year, it has been every week.”

NN09: “The administrative challenges, they were persistent throughout my employment there. Administrative challenges with registering students, their presences
and absences [...] so during that passage of the message, some messages got lost, some messages was (were) misinterpreted.”

**Lack of technical support or teaching resources**

In this research, seven teachers in total talked about this issue, and all of them tended to feel more or less lacking enough technical support, or teaching resources, or both. Precisely, the challenges lay in the shortage of students or teachers’ books, laptops for teachers in bad condition. One NSST said she had a very slow laptop. Seven teachers reported there were not enough books for students or teachers. Besides, all the teachers reported the schools that they belonged to did not provide private books for teachers. Among them, four teachers pointed out lacking their personal teaching books, although they could use shared teachers’ books at school, they could not bring home the books which were quite challenging for them. Meanwhile, four teachers reported although they did have lots of teachers’ books, they did not have the right one. Because of this, teachers had to use extra materials to make teaching planning by themselves which could be very time-consuming. This problem will be discussed later.

**NT05:** “I have an old computer which is very slow. That’s very frustrating. So we want to order more books for our class, but at the moment, we are not allowed because of the budget.”

**NN06:** “We do have a lot, but we don’t have the right one. I work with 7 books together.”

**Heavy workload**

Seven out of ten teachers in total reported they had a heavy workload at SFI. The interesting finding was regarding this issue, NSSTs tended to respond more strongly to this point than non-NSSTs. For non-NSSTs, they tended to acknowledge this challenge and accept it. In comparison, four NSSTs used “stressful”, “ridiculous”, “lots of complaints” certain strong emotional expressions to describe their workload.

Besides, this challenge was highly linked to the issue of not enough technical support or teaching resources which was mentioned above. Generally, teachers complained about
it mainly because of too many teaching plan hours after class. They tended to think it was unbalanced between their salary and working hours.

**NT02:** “It is even stressful when I’m at home planning the lessons. I do not have any books or any teacher books I can use for my lesson planning. So it's much more like I need to take my own ideas, and it can take a lot of time. Due to the school lacks funding and even for teachers, they cannot borrow books and they have to borrow books to make planning in the school. The hours they pay for my planning, actually I plan more than that hours.”

**NT05:** “It’s too much for the amount (number) of hours of planning that I get for each lesson. There's definitely like an unbalanced there.”

Moreover, the heavy workload could come from too many teaching hours as well. Two NSSTs reported they had 28 teaching hours per week, and it was quite normal for SFI schools.

**NT01:** “Yes, in SFI, there is more workload, 28 teaching hours per week and 12 planning hours. For us, according to what I have heard, we have more teaching hours.”

**NT03:** “Well, the thing is we complain about our work hours. Right now, there are lots of conflicts actually, because our lesson length is longer than the other classes. We teach (for) four hours, and the other classes are for three hours. And I mean, first of all, the lessons are too long, and there's also lots of extra work that we need to do.”

**Changes in public policy**

Seven out of ten teachers, three NSSTs and four non-NSSTs talked about changes in public policy putting some pressure on SFI schools. Three non-NSSTs and one NSST in the interviewed reported that their schools were going to be closed in June this year. They reported that because of the tightening of refugee and immigration policy, the number of students especially refugee students was decreasing. Besides, some municipalities reduced economic support for some schools, so some schools had to be closed soon or later. For two NSSTs talked about changing jobs in the future due to working for SFI is insecure.
**NT02:** “The jobs with SFI can be a little bit not secure for one in the future, like many schools are closing […] I think since November or December (in 2018), the number (of students) are decreasing a lot. In the class […] mostly they were coming from like Eritrea Syria and Iraq. That classroom they don't have so many students anymore because they are not coming so many immigrants. And mostly coming people are like people who study at the university.”

**NT03:** “I mean the workload on us right now is kind of ridiculous actually […] I am looking forward to getting rid of this.”

5.3.4 Comparison of influence factors of Swedish language teaching profession

Regarding the influence factors of Swedish language teaching profession, the findings were mainly from student-teacher-institution-related factors. About student-related factors, all the NSSTs and non-NSSTs in the research treated mixed classes as the biggest challenge. When it comes to the language barrier, all the teachers acknowledged they suffered more or less from it. In comparison to non-NSSTs, NSSTs tended to show more dissatisfaction with students using mother tongue or other languages, especially English. About students late for school or dropout, non-NSSTs tended to show more opinions about it. Over half non-NSSTs saw it as a big problem while all the NSSTs were the opposite. Discrimination or negative attitudes still happened among teachers and students. Besides, students’ high expectations also put some pressure on some teachers.

About teacher-related factors, the most important thing to think about was not enough cooperation between teachers. NSSTs tended to cooperate more with NSSTs. Non-NSSTs tended to cooperate more with non-NSSTs. For some teachers with immigrant background, they claimed they were discriminated against by some NSSTs, or some NSSTs without immigrant background. Non-NSSTs with the shortest migration time among five non-NSSTs tended to have more cultural adaptation conflicts due to different ideologies.

Regarding institutional factors, most of the teachers in both groups talked about the challenges of lacking organization, communication, and collaboration within the
institution, lacking technical support or teaching resources, heavy workload, and policy pressure. Regarding the challenge of heavy work, teachers from both groups, especially NSSTs showed more dissatisfaction with too many teaching and planning hours, and this problem was highly relevant to the issues of lacking collaboration within the institution and lacking technical support or teaching resources.
Chapter 6  Discussion and Conclusion Remarks

This chapter aims to make discussions and conclusions about the findings based on the earlier literature review as well as the theoretical backgrounds, intending to contribute to the further professional development of NSSTs and non-NSSTs. Generally, this study is able to explore NSSTs’ and non-NSSTs’ reflections on their professional identity and the challenges encountered in Sweden. Meanwhile, from a comparative angle, this study not only obtains the findings of challenges but also investigates to what extent are these differences of challenges and professional identity relevant to the participants' language and cultural background as what the research question 3 aims to explore. On the basis of the research findings, the discussion of related topics provides some ideas for promoting the professional development of native and non-native language teachers in Sweden and other countries.

6.1 Discussion

Non-NSSTs’ language proficiency and competence

With reference to teachers’ reflections on non-NSSTs’ language proficiency and competence, the majority of NSSTs and non-NSSTs thought it was good. Instead of the idea of natives’ superiority, non-natives’ superiority got more emphasis in this study. The findings showed no matter NSSTs or non-NSSTs did accept the idea of non-native teachers’ advantages from their past learning experience and sharing their mother tongue, and language speaking ability is not equal to language teaching ability, which exactly affirmed the findings of previous studies regarding non-native speakers’ advantages (Medgyes, 1992; Harmer, 1991; Celik, 2006). However, with the deepening of the interview, the superiority still appeared subtly. Few teachers with foreign backgrounds suffered more or less discrimination from other colleagues. On the other hand, according to the findings, the differences in language proficiency and competence were mainly from four aspects, pronunciation, teaching style, lexical richness, and grammar proficiency, which precisely confirmed the previous study about main differences between native and non-native language speaking teachers (Medgyes, 1992; Harmer, 1991; Celik, 2006). The
differences in pronunciation were reported to be almost the most obvious way of distinguishing non-native’s status, and it was pointed out in the previous studies (Paikeday, 1985). The teachers in this study tended to do not treat pronunciation with dialects as a big issue while they also claimed some students cared about it.

**Past and Current Perception on Professional identity**

When it comes to teachers’ professional identity, more NSSTs than non-NSSTs treated helping immigrants as their primary motivation, while for non-NSSTs, they tended to prioritize getting a good job. Among the teachers, NSSTs who were also second-generation immigrants, they showed much more compassion to immigrant students due to their parents’ migrant background and also expressed complex feelings of their native identity. Here, the author assumes in comparison to native language speaking teachers without foreign backgrounds, native language speaking teachers with foreign backgrounds would have more compassion for immigrant students. The assumption needs to be tested by further studies. In addition, in terms of their current understanding of the identity as a Swedish language teacher for immigrants, all teachers reported it was not only about teaching language also introducing Swedish culture to immigrants. NSSTs showed a stronger sense of cultural representation than non-NSSTs.

**Challenges perceived by NSSTs and non-NSSTs**

Regarding the challenges faced by both groups of teachers, this study discovered NSSTs and non-NSSTs generally claimed to have similar issues in relation to student-teacher-institution related factors. NSSTs and non-NSSTs arrived at a large consensus on the reality that mixed-ability class and language barrier were the biggest challenges that the teachers confronted. As Baker (2000) argues, mixed-ability classes could be difficult to concentrate all the students’ attention, and students’ motivation might be poor which leads to teachers’ frustration because it requires teachers to have much patience and time (pp.2-3). Besides, the issue of not enough cooperation between teachers with different ethnicity is worth consideration. Group separation happened among teachers which was not good for the school itself integration. In relation to group separation, discrimination due to language and background also occurred among teachers and students. Just like Lefever and colleagues (2014) point out that, “a person is not seen as an individual, but
as a representative of a culture” (p.74). Some teachers with foreign backgrounds strongly expressed the wishes of getting rid of the stereotypes of immigrants. Moreover, other outstanding challenges mentioned by teachers were lacking technical support or teaching resources and heavy workload. Both challenges influenced each other. For some schools where the teachers in this study came from, there was a severe shortage of course books for teachers or students. Due to the lack of course books, teachers had to spend more hours for teaching planning, and it also influenced students’ learning efficiency as well as teachers’ working efficiency. On the other hand, the findings revealed slight differences in challenges perceived by NSSTs and non-NSSTs. Concerning the heavy workload, non-NSSTs tended to complain about it but also accepted it while NSSTs expressed stronger dissatisfaction with too many teaching and planning hours. One NSST also talked about changing his job in the future due to the “ridiculous” workload. Generally, the challenges faced by teachers were more relevant to institution-related factors. When it comes to the issue of students late for school or dropout, non-NSSTs, especially new immigrant teachers, tended to show more opinions about it while all NSSTs were completely fine with that.

Influence factors of NSSTs’ and non-NSSTs’ different perceptions on the challenges and professional identity

Moreover, the research question 3 in this study is to investigate to what extent these differences of challenges are relevant to the participants’ language and cultural background. Without a doubt, people’s different language and cultural backgrounds do have an impact on their different perceptions on the same thing, as all the teachers in the study more or less talked about the influence from their native language culture. In this study, it was mainly found in different language skills, especially the pronunciation with dialects; cultural adaptation conflicts; and not enough cooperation between teachers with mixed ethnicity. However, as the fundamental idea that cross-cultural adaptation theory precisely delivers (Kim, 2001; Lee & Chen, 2000; McKay-Semmler & Kim, 2014; Lee, 2017), various language and cultural backgrounds are not enough for explaining their different perceptions of their experience. Generally, the findings proved that the complexity of their perceptions exactly confirmed the theory of professional identity about influence factors (Bressler & Rotter, 2017), which include “close and extended
family members”, “the teachers’ own school experience”, “the policy context”, “teaching traditions” and “cultural archetypes” (pp.240-241). Owing to these factors intersect with each other and correlation does not equal causation, NSSTs and non-NSSTs were influenced by different factors, so they showed different levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, motivation and job satisfaction, and it was difficult to make generalizations. For example, NT01 and NT02, both were second-generation immigrants who also showed great compassion for immigrant students in this study. Meanwhile, NT01 worked for the headquarter of SFI in Stockholm municipality, which is also recognized as the best one. The school that NT02 worked for was in Solna municipality, which will be closed soon. Due to their different school experience as well as the different policy contexts, they showed similar self-esteem, self-efficacy, and motivation, but different job satisfaction.

6.2 Conclusion

Adopting a comparative design in the specific context of SFI schools, the challenges or difficulties reported in this study are confined to the problems perceived by teachers in relevant programs. Due to the small sample size of teachers, as well as data collection only from teachers rather than both teachers and students, it is natural that the common or different problems of NSSTs and non-NSSTs are not limited to what was reflected in this research. In this sense, it would be difficult to make generalizations from this current study.

In terms of teachers’ perceptions of professional identity, NSSTs tended to treat helping immigrants as their main motivation, while for non-NSSTs, they tended to prioritize getting a good job and NSSTs with foreign backgrounds showed more compassion for immigrants. Regarding non-NSSTs’ language competence and proficiency, non-NSSTs’ strength from their past target language learning experience and mother tongue was generally accepted by NSSTs and non-NSSTs, while the pronunciation was reported to be the most obvious way to distinguish NSST’s status or not. In addition, all the teachers had the consensus that their job was not only about teaching language also introducing Swedish culture to immigrants. NSSTs showed a stronger sense of cultural representation than non-NSSTs.
This study analyzes the challenges faced by NSSTs and non-NSSTs from student-teacher-institution related factors. According to the findings, mixed class and language barrier were the biggest challenges that the teachers in this study confronted. Not enough organization, communication, and collaboration within the institution, lacking technical support or teaching resources, heavy workload, discrimination among teachers and students, and policy pressure were teachers’ main complaints as well. On the other hand, regarding the different challenges perceived by NSSTs and non-NSSTs, NSSTs in this study showed more dissatisfaction with students using mother tongue or other languages in class, especially English. In addition, NSSTs in the research also expressed more dissatisfaction with too many teaching and planning hours. When it comes to the issue of students late for school or dropout, non-NSSTs tended to show more opinions about it.

Generally speaking, according to the findings, different language or cultural background did influence the similar or different perceptions of NSSTs and non-NSSTs, but it was not the only factor, while the combination of contextual and individual factors accounted for these differences. The findings of the study exactly proved that the influence factors from Bressler and Rotter’s professional identity theory, namely “family members”, “the teachers’ own school experience”, “the policy context”, “teaching traditions” and “cultural archetypes” (pp.240-241) These factors intersect with each other to contribute to the complexity of NSSTs’ and non-NSSTs’ perceptions of their Swedish language teaching profession.
Chapter 7  Implications of the Study

In this chapter, the implications of the study are discussed. These implications can be useful for further research in the sphere of NSSTs/non-NSSTs. It is not only helpful for improving Swedish language teachers’ profession in Sweden, but also for teachers in other countries, by applying these implications to their contexts.

Implications for practices

First of all, as a consensus, different SFI schools’ development is not balanced. As SDG4 “quality education” points out inclusive education for all is not enough, equitable quality education for all should be pursued as well (the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, 2015). Therefore, to reduce the disparity of SFI schools, it requires joint efforts from teachers, schools, companies, and government. Moreover, the shortage of technical support and teaching resources, especially laptops and course books, has seriously influenced some teacher’s work efficiency as well as students’ learning efficiency. The schools should take action to improve the situation.

Implications for educational system and policy

No discrimination as an essential rule should be implemented in the Swedish educational system and policy. As the issues revealed by this study, some teachers reported experiencing discrimination or negative attitudes, and it is essential for teachers to enhance the communication and collaboration between teachers with mixed ethnicity in a Swedish context. It is impossible to eradicate discrimination or stereotypes, but it can be adjusted and weakened through the process of interactive communication and cooperation. While implementing the non-discrimination regulation (Sida, 2008), the schools should improve the working forms of teachers and promote cooperation and communication among teachers. For example, as some teachers mentioned, the schools assigned one NSST and one non-NSST in the same class, then it provides the opportunity for them to communicate and know more about each other.
Implications for future study

As for further study, the author suggests that it is necessary to conduct a quantitative research method to collect data from a larger sample size in order to reach a more transferrable and representative conclusion. As the issue mentioned above, about the second-generation immigrants’ confusion of their identity, it is worth being taken into consideration. Besides, according to the Interactive Acculturation Model (IAM) launched by Moise, Perreault, and Senecal (1997), different acculturation orientation held by the host community and immigrants could bring about different relational outcomes, that is, consensual, problematic, or conflicting relational outcomes (as cited in Bourhis et al., 1997, pp.381-382). Therefore, it will be meaningful to compare different acculturation orientation held by the host community members and immigrants.


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Appendix 1. Interview guide for NSSTs

**Part I. Language proficiency and competence**
Ask about NSSTs’ thoughts about non-NSSTs’ language skills
(1) Comparing yourself to non-native Swedish speakers, how well do you think they speak Swedish? Please explain
(2) Comparing yourself to non-native Swedish speaking teachers you know, how well do you think they speak Swedish? Please explain

**Part II. Past and current understanding of professional identity**
Ask about NSSTs’ understanding of “SFI teacher” identity
(1) What is your motivation to be a SFI teacher?
(2) Who are “SFI teachers” you thought before you became a SFI teacher?
(3) Did you make any changes about your opinion of “who are SFI teachers” during at your workplace?
(4) How much influence did your previous teaching experience have on your Swedish teaching?
(5) What should a “professional SFI teacher” be like?

**Part III. Student-related Challenges**
Ask about the challenges faced by NSSTs when they teach immigrant students
(1) Did you have any difficulties or challenges in teaching Swedish for immigrant students?
(2) What challenges do you face?
(3) How do you deal with the challenges?

**Part IV. Teacher-related challenges**
Ask about the challenges faced by NSSTs when they cooperate with NSSTs and non-NSSTs
(1) How is your cooperation with your colleague?
(2) Did you have any difficulties or challenges in cooperation with your colleague?
(3) In what sense do you think you teach differently from a non-native teacher?
(4) Is there any organized way of enhancing cooperation between native and non-native teachers in the staff?
(5) Is there any specific distribution of work between them?

**Part V. Institutional challenges**
Ask about the perceptions of NSSTs towards the institution
(1) How are you feeling about the working environment?
   i. What’s the difference compared to your previous working experience?
   ii. Do you have enough support?
(2) What is your opinion about the curriculum and assessment? Do you have any advice?
(3) What is your opinion about the workload? Is it ok, great or not so good?
Appendix 2. Interview guide for non-NSSTs

**Part I. Language proficiency and competence**
Ask about non-NSSTs’ thoughts about their language skills
(1) Comparing yourself to people who speak Swedish as their mother tongue, how well do you think you speak Swedish?
(2) Comparing yourself to NSSTs you know, how well do you think you speak Swedish?

**Part II. Past and current understanding of professional identity**
Ask about non-NSSTs’ understanding of “SFI teacher” identity
(1) What is your motivation to be a SFI teacher?
(2) Who are “SFI teachers” you thought before you became a SFI teacher?
(3) Did you make any changes about your opinion of “who are SFI teachers” during at your work place?
(4) How much influence did your previous teaching experience have on your Swedish teaching?
(5) What should a “professional SFI teacher” be like?

**Part III. Student-related challenges**
Ask about the challenges faced by NSSTs when they teach immigrant students
(1) Did you have any difficulties or challenges in teaching Swedish for immigrant students?
(2) What challenges do you face?
(3) How do you deal with the challenges?

**Part IV. Teacher-related challenges**
Ask about the challenges faced by non-NSSTs when they cooperate with NSSTs and non-NSSTs
(1) How is your cooperation with your colleague?
(2) Did you have any difficulties or challenges in cooperation with your colleague?
(3) In what sense do you think you teach differently from a native speaking teacher?
(4) Is there any organized way of cooperation between native and non-native teachers in the staff?
(5) Is there any specific distribution of work between them?

**Part V. Institutional challenges**
Ask about the perceptions of non-NSSTs towards the institution
(1) How are you feeling about the working environment?
   i. What’s the difference compared to your previous working experience?
   ii. Do you have enough support? (in-service training, technological support, teaching resources)
(2) What is your opinion about the curriculum and assessment? Do you have any advice?
(3) What is your opinion about the workload? Is it ok, great or not so good?
Appendix 3: A self-administered pre-survey questionnaire

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Background Information Collection

1. Name ________________

2. Gender
   a. Male       b. Female

3. Age group
   a. 20s        b. 30s    c. 40s    d. 50s   e. 60s

4. Nationality ________________

5. Home country______________

6. Family immigrant background ________________

Where were you born?
   a. Sweden
   b. Other country (please specify) ________________

Where did you grow up?
   a. Sweden
   b. Other country (please specify) ________________

1. Length of teaching Swedish language experience in total

2. Length of teaching Swedish Language in SFI

3. First language/ mother tongue (you can speak it proficiently) ________________

4. Home language ________________

12. Qualifications ________________

13. Teaching level in SFI

14. The nature of working
    a. full-time
    b. part-time