How do Chinese We-media Set the Agenda of Foreign English Teacher in China?

Jingyi Qu

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Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages
UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

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Abstract

China’s opening up policies and economic growth attracted overseas talent to work in China. With the substantial English educational market need, many foreigners work in China as foreign language teachers. The teachers were commonly called “waijiao” in Chinese. However, compared with the large Chinese population, waijiao is still a minority group. Media is an essential tool for the general audience to get to know this group of people. Media can shape public opinion, influencing the audience about “what to think” and “how to think.” (McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L., 1972) Also, with the rise of new media medium in China, we-media gained more “discourse power.” The audience could gather the opinion and attention on issues or news events, became a communicator in shaping the public opinions on waijiao. This research is based on a theoretical perspective of Agenda Setting in Communication studies, to analyze how Chinese media set the agenda for waijiao and how Chinese we-media set the agenda on waijiao. The media’s coverage of waijiao was measured through a content analysis; the sample data was selected from a state-owned news website ChinaDaily.com.cn (Zhongguo Ribao Wang 中国日报网) and a we-media platform Zhihu (知乎) from the year 2017 to 2018.

The present author first made an overall comparison on the two media platform, by sorting the content based on the layout of the news coverage, genres, themes, and attitudes, to see how different media set the agenda of waijiao. Zhihu has a more in-depth discussion on waijiao topic with more participants involved in building the agenda of waijiao, the high-quality answers on Zhihu with a longer length and various topics helped to create a more comprehensive waijiao discussion. On we media platform Zhihu, the question and answer based content style, users’ background, answer output quality, prime themes, and the social discussion functions affect the agenda-setting of waijiao to a negative media image, their illegal working status and the facts of high demand for waijiao needs, created a conflict discourse for the authors and audience. This research also found out that media commercialization influences the agenda-setting on waijiao. The foreign teacher agenda on Zhihu was used as a marketing tool for companies, individual teacher, and media users to promoting themselves and their different educational services.
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Finally, I finished the thesis in May, it was also around the time that Theresa May announced to leave her job. She said: “The work as the UK’s prime minister has been the honor of my life to hold”. I want to borrow her speech to say: “The work as the MA student has been the honor of my life to hold.” I made the right choice, and I am proud of it.

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Abbreviations

CCG    Center for China and Globalization
CCP    Chinese Communist Party
CNKI   Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure
EFL    English as a Foreign Language
GDP    Gross Domestic Product
ILO    International Labor Organization
MOE    Ministry of Education
NAS    Network Agenda Setting
NEST   Native English Speaking Teachers
NGO    Non-Governmental Organisation
NNEST  Non Native English Speaking Teachers
OEI    Overseas Expertise Introduction
Q&A    Question and Answer
SAFEA  State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs
SCIO   State Council Information Office of China
TEFL   Teaching English as a Foreign Language
WTO    World Trade Organization
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

After China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, the needs of economic development and globalization increased rapidly. With China’s open policies and economic growth, as well as China’s vast market and potential career development opportunities, many foreigners want to come to China to find business opportunities. The Chinese government encouraged overseas talent to work in China, and the government made full use of various channels to expand exchanges and cooperation in the field of international talent intelligence. Former Chinese politician Zhang Dejiang pointed out that to attract and make the best use of international talent for China’s economic development, it was essential to create a pleasant social atmosphere, providing good working and living conditions to the talent (Zhang D., 2010). In terms of employment, although China’s income level is still far behind that of developed countries, the low cost of living and abundant cultural experience opportunities still attracted millions of overseas talent to study, live, and work in China (ILO & CCG, 2017).

While overseas talent is continually being “brought in,” the Chinese people are always thinking about “going global.” In the process of opening up to the outside world, the enthusiasm for learning English has been constant, and with the growth of China’s per capita GDP and the growth of investment in personal education, the demand for studying abroad has continued to grow. According to a report published by the Financial Times Chinese and the British Council (2018), there are 81% of Chinese interviewed parents plan to strengthen their children’s

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1 China is vigorously developing the Overseas Expertise Introduction (OEI) plan and opening for more foreigners to work or in China. SAFEA is the main administration in charge of OEI plan and manage the foreign workers in China. The key programs including the “1000 Talents Plan” and the Recruitment Program of High-end Foreign Experts.
2 Based on GNI per Capita Data from World Bank.
3 Brought in, Going Global. Yin Jin Lai, Zou Chu Qu
4 http://www.ftchinese.com/ FTChinese is the only Chinese business financial website under the UK Financial Times Group.
5 The British Council for Cultural Education https://www.britishcouncil.org/
communication’s ability in English by sending their children to English tutoring schools. 53% of parents plan to send their children to receive higher education overseas, to broaden their horizons. Many parents choose Native English Speaking Teachers (NEST) for English tutoring services in order to let their children improve their English ability and adapt to the international educational environment earlier (Lv, 2018). With the high demand for English teachers, being an English teacher, often called waijiao by Chinese students, has become a popular career choice for foreign workers. China’s primary demand for NEST comes from mainly Western countries. For foreign teachers in the English training market, there are preferences for “white skin,” “Western name,” and “native English accent” (Lippi-Green, 2012). Farrer (2014) pointed out in his research that the ethnic capital of “whiteness” “language abilities,” and “academic networks” were considered as symbol capitals of internationalization for foreign teachers hired in Chinese institutions (Farrer, 2014). According to the statistics in Reports of Chinese K12 English Education Industry of the year 2018, more than 80% of English Education institutions used “European and American Foreign Teachers (Ou Mei Wai Jiao)” in their brand communication and marketing (Yiou intelligence, 2018).

Since China was not a destination country for immigration in the early stage of reform and opening up, policies and measures on immigration management issues are not particularly mature. With the growing international immigration in recent years, China is not prepared with a comprehensive approach to address issues as a result of demographic changes (Lefkowitz, 2013). The issue of immigrants’ flow in China began to appear on news media articles. An official statistics reported by Jie Mo Dui (an education-focused media) shows that the number of foreign educational professionals in China reached 400 thousand in 2017. However, there are only one-third of foreign teachers met the legal requirements for work permits (Xin, 2018). There is a stringent recruitment regulation for foreign workers in China (Lefkowitz, 2013). However, due to the huge market demand and lack of administrative supervision, falsifications of qualifications, or unqualified recruitment has become a significant problem in the foreign language industry. (Cao J., 2010).
1.2 Research Purpose

The general public in China has limited knowledge of foreign teachers unless their educational needs provide opportunities to interact with them. However, with the development of new media\(^6\), information on foreign teachers can be easily and quickly obtained from the internet and social media\(^7\). The media not only tells the audience “what to think” or “how to think”, but also determines how we can connect different pieces of information content together as a “cognitive network” of social reality (McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L., 1972) (Vu, H. T., Guo, L., & McCombs, M. E., 2014). In the process of new media communication, the communicator is becoming more diverse. Any individual, whether a journalist or producer, can be a communicator of information (Peng W., 2015). The media situation is no longer a one-way communication channel. New media creators can create various news content about foreign teachers on a social media platform based on the creators’ experience or resources. Comparing with traditional media, new media functioned more on framing a media image and agenda setting (Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D., 2006). There are several researchers Jie (2015), Spinu (2012), Yuan (2011) study on how we media\(^8\) shapes the image of a certain person or group. Most of the subjects being studied are politicians and vulnerable groups such as female, children, and Chinese rural migrant (Nong Min Gong). However, very little researches have been focus on the image of foreign language teachers on Chinese media. To fill the research gaps, this study aims to address the following research question: How do Chinese we media set the agenda of waijiao in China?

There are 3 sub-questions under the research question:

Do different media in China set the agenda of waijiao differently?

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\(^6\) New media are often contrasted to “old media” or “traditional media”, such as television, radio, and newspapers. New media shortens the distance between people and increased globalization. New media usually refers to a content-on-demand created over the Internet. For example, digital newspapers, websites, social media, and blogs are all new media platforms. It is a concept under Communication studies. In this paper, new media referring to Chinese discourse of Xin Mei Ti. New media is also the broadest concept of new media, we media, and social media. https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-different-types-of-media-platforms

\(^7\) Social Media belongs to category New media, American scholar Antony Mayfield firstly introduced this concept to the public. Social Media users can easily participate in, share and create content for, including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums and virtual worlds (Antony, 2008). For instance, Zhihu.com in later this paper, as a social question and answer website, is one type of social media platform that based on knowledge sharing and social network. There will be a brief introduction about Zhihu in this paper.

\(^8\) We media is the medium of New Media. We-media are individuals using new media as a platform.
How do we-media set the agenda of waijiao?
How does media commercialization affect the agenda-setting of waijiao?

To answer the research questions, the present author will firstly give some clarifications on the terms used in this study. In the second chapter, the present author will first define the key concepts: waijiao, agenda setting, we media and media commercialization used in this study, and summarize the existing related researches. In the third chapter, the present author will introduce the research methods, and two Chinese new media used as sample content database, which includes a state-owned news website Chinadaily.com.cn and a social Question and Answer Community Website Zhihu. The data collection process would also be present in this chapter. In the fourth chapter, the present author will explain the content data based on the sub-research questions and see how foreign teachers are presented in media coverage, and explore the difference between the present forms of foreign teachers in different media, and why they report differently. In the fifth chapter, the present author will give a conclusion based on the findings and agenda setting theory in communication studies, find out how agenda setting affect we-media to set the topic, image, and attitude towards waijiao. Moreover, how media commercialization affects we-media on agenda-setting. In the sixth chapter, the author will summarize the research, and point out the findings and deficiencies of the research, answer the research question.

The present author used to work in an English educational institution with, where involved a group of American waijiao gave private tutoring lessons on English. After talking with waijiao and observing working life and personal life, the present author found out that Chinese people have some misunderstanding on this group of people, sometimes too positive, sometimes too negative. Also, waijiao themselves felt lack of communication with local Chinese people. There is an information gap between the two groups. The present author would like to use this opportunity to discover why waijiao groups are under attention, in a meanwhile, lack of attention. This research will provide an insight on foreign language teachers working in China have been discussed by Chinese media especially on social media platforms and providing an innovating angle to do study waijiao in academic research fields such as Communication studies, the academic discipline and research field of immigration in China.
Chapter 2: Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of Waijiao

Who is waijiao? It is an abbreviated form of a Chinese term. In this paper, wai in Chinese means “foreign”. It means foreign nationality (wai jii) or foreign country (wai guo). In the Chinese context, race, ethnicity, and citizenship are not clearly distinguished (Farrer, 2014). James Ferrer(2014), a scholar on international migrants to China, notes that “foreigner” (laowai or waiguoren) in Chinese is a fuzzy category since foreigner as a term contained “race (whiteness)”, “ethnicity (non-Chinese),” and “nationality (non-PRC)” (Farrer, 2014). He also clarified that Japanese, Korean, and ethnic Chinese with foreign passports are rarely considered as foreigners in China (Farrer, 2014).

The State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA) used the term waijiao as an abbreviated form for “Foreign Culture and Educational Experts (hereafter as foreign experts)” on its official documents (SAFEA, 2010). In the meanwhile, the Ministry of Education of China (MOE) used term waijiao as an abbreviated form for the foreign teacher (waiji jiaoshi) on their official website:

“To ensure the foreign teachers (hereafter as zhuanjia and waijiao) hired by universities could serve a better work toward Chinese higher education, the MOE announced this regulation based on the “Trail Regulations for Foreign Experts of Work” launched by the State Council Information Office of China (SCIO) (MOE, 1991, p.1)”

Based on the search results on the Chinese full-text database China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (CNKI) by the present author, term waijiao not only refers to “foreign

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9 Foreign Culture and Educational Experts was also known as Foreign experts in Chinese formal documents. On Chinese media in English content, the term Foreign experts are used the most. But in Chinese content, both Foreign Culture and Educational Experts, Foreign experts and Waijiao were used in the news content. So the term Waijiao in Chinese media could be multi-meaning. The meaning depends on the content.

10 Translation of “为保证高等学校聘请外籍教师（以下简称专家、外教）的工作更好地为社会主义高等教育服务，根据国务院《外国文教专家工作试行条例》特制定本规定.” By the present author.

11 CNKI is a Chinese Academic Literature Database. The search was carried out on Chinese language website and the search term is “waijiao” in Chinese. http://www.cnki.net
experts,” but also refers to “foreign teacher” at the same time. However, the search results matched in 315 items in category “foreign teacher” and 151 items in category “foreign expert”. According to an official document launched by the SAFEA and the MOE, foreign professionals who work for schools and other educational institution are the main part of foreign expert work and Overseas Expertise Introduction(OEI) plan. This document considers foreign experts as A-level professionals while foreign language teachers are B-level professionals (State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs & Ministry of Education, 2009) In document “Announcement of Launching professional training program for foreign language teachers (English Subject)” issued by the SAFEA, waijiao is a short term of foreign experts. Moreover, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers with qualified training certification could work with foreign experts (waijiao) title (SAFEA, 2010). Farrer (2014) pointed out that foreign teacher is the largest single category of foreign experts (Farrer, 2014). Although the term waijiao has different definitions depending on the official source, waijiao is more commonly understood as a foreign language teacher in common Chinese usage. However, both of these two categories will be discussed in the conclusion chapter. In this present research, foreign teachers refer to EFL teachers with no specific nationality unless the nationality is specified in the text. If no extra details are given regarding the instructed language, foreign teachers only refer to EFL teachers. This research discusses aspects including the nationalities of foreign language teachers (native English speakers or not), their work statuses (whether a work permit is granted or not), full-time or part-time employment, and their employers (public universities or private educational schools).

2.2 Waijiao in China

Scholars Shu (2013) and Fu (2003) used the term waijiao in their research on EFL teacher’s recruitment management in Chinese universities and colleges. Scholars Chang (2006), Yan (2005), and Hu (2005) studied the reason behind the increasing needs of the foreign teacher in Chinese English education. Xu and Connelly (2009) mentioned in their study that foreign teachers can create an impact on English teaching quality and methods (Xu, S., & Connelly, F.

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12 Translation of “学校及其他教育机构聘用外籍专业人员工作是我国引进国外智力和外国专家工作的重要组成部分” By the present author.
Meanwhile, Tim Mazzarol (1998) pointed out that the employment of foreign teachers in a university is a main factor showing the internationalization level of the school (Mazzarol, 1998). According to the scholar Jeon (2006) and Fu (2003), hiring foreign language teachers in the Chinese education system not only provides students with better English education, but it also boosts school’s reputation. (Jeon, M., & Lee, J., 2006).

Despite the comprehensive regulations on the recruitment of foreign teachers in China, there are still several of foreign teachers do not have proper certifications but are nevertheless qualified due to the privilege of only being “white” (Cao B., 2004). In some circumstance, the recruitments of foreign teachers in some areas in China are even less strict (Chen, 2011). With the increasing number of foreign workers in China, legal and racial issues arise. As a consequence, there is an urgent need for the administrative supervision of waijiao (Wu, 2013).

2.3 Agenda Setting and we-media

2.3.1 Agenda Setting

“Media could not tell you “what to think,” but it could tell you “what to think about.” This is a famous quotation in communication studies given by Bernard Cohen (1963). Based on this idea, scholars McCombs and Shaw (1972) tested and a positive relationship between the media and the public agenda in the well-known “Chapel Hill study”, also proposed the earliest agenda-setting theory after this study.

“McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997) asked respondents to articulate a hierarchy of attributes, ranked by importance, to describe a candidate, and they found a positive connection between the media and the voter agenda for candidate image attributes during the 1995 Spanish gubernatorial elections. Based on research on the 2000 presidential primary in New Hampshire, Golan and Wanta (2001) found strong agenda-setting effects between media coverage and public opinion.” (Cheng & Chan, 2015, p.1092)

The mass media not only affects the voters’ attention to the object but also their judgment on the nature of the issue (Takeshita, 1995). McCombs (2009) point out that media can set the agenda and provide content to determine how the public think about issues and evaluates its value. Also,
the rise of new media represented by the Internet has promoted the transformation of the media from the message to the new media. Guo and McCombs (2009) brought up a new theoretical model called Network Agenda Setting (NAS), which was also known as “the third-level agenda-setting” (McCombs, 2009). Chinese scholar Bai (2016) used Sina Weibo as an example to discuss the effect of the network agenda setting in the Chinese new media environment. It analyzes the interactive relationship between the official media, commercial media, and web opinion leaders in China on the social platform Weibo. The study found that traditional mainstream media has lost the ability to guide public discussion on Weibo, the social media agenda had a great impact on traditional media, and there is almost no correlation between the topic network between traditional media (including official media and commercial media) and Weibo opinion leaders (Bai, 2016). In the present study, two media platforms will be analyzed to see the difference of agenda setting in different media.

2.3.2 We Media in China

We-media refers to the new media that communicates normative and non-normative information to the unspecified majority or specific individuals utilizing modernization, electronicization, generalization, and autonomy. The general term is also called “personal media. (Gillmor, 2004)” In July 2003, the Media Center of the American Press Institute published a “We Media (self-media)” research report jointly proposed by Bowman and Chris Willis (2003), which contained “We Media (self-media).” A very rigorous definition:

“We Media is a way for the general public to strengthen their digital technology and connect with the global knowledge system, and to begin to understand how the general public can provide and share their own facts and their own news.” (Bowman & Willis, 2003)

“We media is a new social media form based on the internet. As Dan Gillmor (2004) also mentioned in his book,

“The ability of anyone to make the news will give new voice to people who have felt voiceless—and whose words we need to hear.” This attracted all the audience in the past to spread the news in a more efficient way. We-media gained a large audience group in a short time.” (Gillmor, 2004)
Chinese new media are rapidly replacing traditional media in many ways based on mobile mobility and new technology. The timeliness is greatly enhanced by we-media. From production to publication, the work is fast and efficient, which is beyond the reach of traditional media such as TV and newspapers. Since the media can quickly spread the information to the audience, the audience can quickly feedback the effect of the information dissemination. There is no distance between the media and the audience. (Dai, 2011)

Scholar Xia (2017) summarized three significant rising waves of We-media in China. The first rising wave is the blog. With the improvement of internet use and more convenient access, ordinary people in China became a citizen journalist, received the opportunity to express their voice to the public audience and make a contribution to civic journalism (Xia, 2017). The power of interactivity is beyond the reach of any traditional medium in China. The second wave is about the use of microblog, Weibo (which was often introduced as Chinese Twitter) as a public anti-corruption platform. In China, We-media has also become the best place for the civilian public to publicize their personality and express themselves. Influencers on Weibo could gain a verified logo based on their identity. There are also online newspapers or public sectors opened their Weibo account to publish news in a very effective way. The verifies identity helped to build up the trustworthy of the we-media news. Later with the rise of Wechat and other online social media platform. Xia(2017) also pointed out that we-media have changed significantly in China, people’s main aim of creating and managing their own We media is not only for disseminating information but also for making money (Xia, 2017). She also refers to Gao S, Krogstie J (2015)’s study saying that the newly developed we media not only have the political and public opinions settings function but also have a profit aims to get commercial interest (Gao & Krogstie, 2015, emphasis added).

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13 WeChat is a Chinese multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app developed by Tencent. It was first released in 2011. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WeChat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WeChat)
2.4 Media Commercialization

As scholar Chang (1989) elaborated in his study, after China’s Reform and Opening-up Policy as well as the continuous economic transition, the Chinese media system developed and transformed from totalitarianism to market authoritarianism (Chang, 1989). Castells (2010) wrote in his study that the state-owned media promoted economic roles and social construction to modernize and open up the country. Scholar Zhao (1998) points out that China’s huge market potential at the same time, tempted both domestic and foreign enterprises in the 1990s and advertising began to impact the entire media system. For example, Chinese state-owned newspapers, as one of the medium of Chinese traditional media, can offer commercial sponsorship of specific media content. Digital newspapers can also expand their channels to meet the advertisers’ demands for more space since 1992 (Zhao, 1998). Chinese new media information flows offered the Chinese public more diverse platforms to be informed of information, culture, values, and everything with the purpose of communication (Zhao, 1995). For example, “Community-based Q&A websites have become increasingly popular in recent years as an alternative to general-purpose web search engines for open-ended complex questions (Ma, Khansa, Deng, & and Kim, 2015).” Since everyone can create content on social community Q&A websites such as Zhihu,\(^{14}\) brands can now utilize new digital marketing tools to build relationships with customers and promote products by answering questions or writing in-depth-articles on these sites (Dudarenok, 2018). Besides, other types of social media such as Weibo,\(^{15}\) Wechat and also have paid information services that are integrated into regular media content.

\(^{14}\) Zhihu is a popular Chinese social Q&A Community website launched in 2011. More information about Zhihu will be present in chapter 3.

\(^{15}\) Sina Weibo is a Chinese microblogging website, it is one of the biggest social media platforms in China and it was officially launched on 14 August 2009. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sina_Weibo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sina_Weibo)
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Which media will be analyzed?

The content will be analyzing in this paper are online media content from *China Daily*. The reason for choosing *China Daily* in this study is because *China Daily* is a comprehensive multimedia outlet and one of the most influential national newspapers in China. *Chinadaily.com.cn*, the online news website of *China Daily*, launched in 1995 provides 24-hour authoritative information on China through multiple channels. On December 12, 2000, the State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China (hereafter as SCIO) approved *China Daily* to become one of the major state-owned websites and the first batch of key news websites in China. As a result, *China Daily* has become one of the online “mainstream media.” It also played an important role to exhibit Chinese “openness and boldness” (Luther, C. A., & Zhou, X., 2005) (Chang, 1989). The daily webpage views reached more than 52 million by 2016. *China Daily* also plays an vital role in online public opinion guidance and publicity” (The State Council Information Office, 2013). *China Daily* mainly provides an opportunity to build up national images of China and articulates the foreign policy concerns and priorities to the international community. It is primarily for international readerships such as foreign business persons, international students, and tourists, and diplomats in China (Zhang & Zhang, 2017). *China Daily* articles selected in this study have a broad audience, and it also counts as a representative of how media in China frame wajiao media image to the public audience.

Secondly, another essential content resource in this paper come from a Chinese social Q&A community Zhihu. Zhihu is a Chinese question-and-answer (Q&A) website where questions are

16 *Chinadaily.com.cn* is the digital news website launched by *China Daily*, it was considered as a new media platform based on print newspaper *China Daily*, so hereafter in this study, unless otherwise specified, China Daily refers to the news website, a form of new media.

17 This sentence is a translation of quotation from SCIO “2000年12月12日，人民网、新华网、中国网、央视网、国际在线、中国日报网、中青网等中央新闻务办公室批准，成为我国首批重点新闻网站。”

18 Professor Zhou Shenglin from Fudan University defined mainstream media as media with large circulation and ratings; more advertising turnover, and has great influence and authority.

19 Original Quotes: “我国重点建设的8家中央新闻网站和24家地方新闻网站，成为其主导网上新闻舆论的网络‘主流媒体’传播先进文化的新平台。重点新闻网站在网上舆论引导和对外宣传中发挥了重要作用。

created, answered, edited, and organized by the community of its users, which was launched in 2011 in Beijing. At first, Zhihu only allowed user registration through an invitation in 2011. Then Zhihu opened to all user registration in 2013, and it had exceeded 10 million users by the end of 2013. As of May 2015, Zhihu reached 17 million users and 250 million monthly page views (Shen & Lai, 2016). Zhihu has become the Chinese biggest and most popular Social Q&A Community as the counterpart of Quora. Huang (2015) and Peng (2016) report that users on Zhihu are mainly composed of high-educated, high-income, and experienced young professionals (Huang, 2015) (Peng L., 2016).

The main contents form on Zhihu are question and answers. Users can search keywords on Zhihu and find all the content related to the keywords they searched, including question and its answer and column articles (the title of column articles is also a question, such as “what is the experience of being a (profession)...” and “How does the (profession) work in China looks like?” The contents on the result page were sorted by time or relevance. Like the other topics on Zhihu, waijiao is a topic that has a particular group of followers, various background users to output the answers related to waijiao. The answers are also created mostly by the users related to waijiao, which helps the public audience to get an in-depth picture of waijiao. The topic has kept an active Q&A discussion and vote rate. In addition to that, the recently states policies materials, which relevant to the waijiao group, were also part of the content data collection.

### 3.2 Which method was used to collect the data?

Content analysis was conducted to collect data on media coverage of waijiao from China Daily online news website and social Q&A community Zhihu. Krippendorff (2004) defined content analysis as “A research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.” Downe-Wamboldt (1992) elaborated that content

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20 [http://tech.ifeng.com/a/20150320/41018550_0.shtml](http://tech.ifeng.com/a/20150320/41018550_0.shtml) The data about Zhihu is given by Zhihu CEO Yuan Zhou published on news website.

21 Quora, one of the most popular Q&A websites in the English world., it has over 100 million monthly unique visitors by March 2016.
analysis is not only about the numbers, it is also important to link the results and their context together:

“Content analysis is a research method that provides a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual, or written data in order to describe and quantify specific phenomena.” (Downe – Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314)

Philipp (2004) explained about content analysis in his work, “the qualitative analysis does not see to shut itself off from quantitative analytical procedures but attempts to incorporate them into the analytical process in a justified way (Philipp, 2004”). Nonetheless, the reader may have multiple interpretations of the same content. By examining the tone and word usage, one can determine the possible meanings of the text to the audience (Macnamara, 2005). Following the concepts of qualitative content analysis, it is necessary to divide sample content as meaning units. Content analysis was used to an interpretive level to find the underlying meaning of the text: what the text is talking about. (Malterud, 2001). Considering the sample answers contains varies information, the meaning units were condensed into a description close to the text (Joffe, 2004). The present author used a content layout and theme sorting method based on Peng(2015)’s method where he refers to Lasswell’s model “5W” s a model to divide to “who in evolved(communicator)”, “says what(theme)”, “in which channel(genres)”, and “attitude (effect) (Peng W., 2015).”

3.3 Database and Sample Selection

On the China Daily news website, the present author used their news keyword search portal to select the materials. First of all, the present author used the advanced searching function on China Daily, typed “foreign teacher” into keyword, and got 607 search results. Then articles time was limited the time range from January 2017 to December 2018, and the results were 454. In the second round, some articles discuss other types of foreign teachers that are not related to the definition of the foreign teacher in this paper. So a third round search was carried out with limitation in words with “foreigners”, “English,” and “teacher” in “words included in the text” section. It reached 217 news article titles. The present author selected the first and last articles

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22 Refers to http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/
23 In Chinese text, Waiji Jiaoshi means foreign teacher and waiji Jiaolian means foreign coach. The abbreviated form of both phrases are waijiao, that is why when users searched waijiao, there is also context about foreign coaches.
from each search result page, in total collected 22 articles related to foreign teachers as the sample data from *China Daily.*

On Zhihu, the present author chose to search “*Waijiao*” in “Topic (huati)” section. By March 22, 2019, there were 933 questions under *waijiao* topic in Zhihu, and 119 answers are “high-quality answers (*jinghua*).” Topic “*Waijiao*” has 877 followers, and it should be noted that “*waijiao*” is a sub-topic of “Foreigner.” The answer and questions could also be found in “Foreigner” topics as well. The topic has kept an active Q&A discussion and vote rate.

The unit of the sample in this paper are the top 22 high-quality content answers within “*waijiao*” topic question raised from 2017 to 2018. The reason for collecting data from 2017-2018 is because, in 2017, the newspaper. The *Vancouver Sun newspaper* reported, “A B.C. teacher stripped of his credentials for a history of sexual misconduct with teenaged students appears to be teaching at a prestigious school in Beijing (Shore, 2017).” Chinese journalists reported this news in China and started to discuss *waijiao*’s issue on Chinese media (International School Broadcast, 2017). In the meantime, the discussion of *waijiao* issues proliferated on Chinese social media. The public audience, including students, parents, schools, and public sectors started speaking out on media sharing their experiences with and opinions of *waijiao*.

The high-quality content answers from Zhihu was selected by the joint review of Zhihu content experts and computer analysis (Shen & Lai, 2016). Factors affecting rankings and selection includes not only the number of thump-up votes but also the quality of content length, professionalism, timeliness, and reader feedback (such as “opposition” and “not helpful to the question” to the answer). These measurement elements were chosen to achieve trustworthiness because the research findings should be as trustworthy as possible and every study must be evaluated concerning the procedures used to generate the findings (Graneheim, U. H., & Lundman, B., 2004). Zhihu adopted a series of policies to improve the quality of the discussion.

24 The articles titles will be listed in the Appendix.  
25 Jinghua refers to high-quality answers on Zhihu. The relevant factors about selection include approval number, length of the answer, professionalism, timeliness, reader feedback (such as opposition and no help).  
All questions must be submitted in an appropriate form, or edited by other users or deleted by Zhihu. If Zhihu and other users believe that improvements are needed to help, such as unsupported personal opinions and assertions providing the least explanation, and not answering the questions in good faith or insincerely, the answer will collapse. Based on the databased of high-quality answers on Zhihu, users have a good habit on using evidence and citations in their answers, and also with pictures and figures as pieces of evidence, the stories shared on high-quality answers based on reality (Zhang R., 2015).

Chapter 4: Findings

First, this chapter will start with the basic necessary data explanations, sorting the data to the content layout, genres, themes, and attitudes, to answer the research question of “Do different media set the agenda of waijiao differently?” based on the category of “who involved,” says “what,” “in which channel,” “to whom,” and “with what effect. (Peng W., 2015) Then, the finding focus will be on Zhihu content, since Zhihu as a we-media, provide all the communicators including journalists, news “procurer”, and news “producer” can affect the agenda-setting on waijiao. This would help to answer the research question of “How do we-media set the agenda of waijiao?”

4.1 Features and Content Category

4.1.1 Layout of the content

The place where media put the content is an important feature for media to guide public opinion and helps attract target readers. The layout and combination of content, as well as wording and forms, have to be taken into consideration for the layout. These play a crucial role in media content.

On the China Daily online website, the media contents were divided into different channel catalogs. Readers can choose which topic to read based on different channels. The media coverage of waijiao by China Daily presented in various channels including “Chinese World-
News (Zhongwen Jujiāo-Xìnwen)” “Chinese Society (Zhongwen Shehui)” “Local Reports (Difang Baođao)”, and “Industry Information (Chanye Zixun)”. According to the sample data, there are 60% articles presented in channel “Chinese World-News,” 18% articles in “Industry Information,” 12% articles in “Chinese Society,” and 10% articles in “Local Reports.” The “Chinese World-News” section is the primary news channel on China Daily. Waijiao’s media coverage on China Daily mainly appears at a relatively significant news channel. The content follows a news report and commentary style. The 4 sample articles published under the “Industry Information” are present in a similar way, which that the brand name of the English education institutions was mentioned in the content several times, also, at the end of the articles, readers can click the keywords and transfer a page to the relevant news search result page. The keywords include the brand name like VIPKID and 51Talk.27 Also, readers can share the articles on their social media platform by clicking the different icon at the end of the articles.

Zhihu, as a question-and-answer website differs from news websites China Daily in its layout design. Zhihu has the following major channels on: “Main Page,” “Discovery,” “Topics (Huati),” “Search bar,” “Recommendations,” “Focus,” and “Hits.” Only users with registration can get the full access on all the channel on Zhihu. The present author examined that users only get access to “Discovery”, “Search Bar” and “Hits” channels without login. The difference is that the login users can not only read the content of the answer, vote rates, and, but also give comments to the answer, view the topic or keywords in “Topics” channel, and forward the question and answer content to other social media platforms.

The present author adjusts the sampling process in accordance with Zhihu’s unique layout design. The sample contents related to waijiao are mainly derived from the “Waijiao” column under the “Topics” channel. The topic under waijiao is presented in three parts: “Discussion,” “High-quality answers,” and “Question to be answered.” The content in the “High-quality answers” section is presented in the form of question-and-answer in a default order according to popularity. Question titles decided the answer content theme, the content themes under waijiao do no have channel difference. However, the answerer range, who output the answer content, varies from

27 http://tech.chinadaily.com.cn/2018-06/28/content_36469791.htm
ordinary Zhihu users and students to English teachers, education companies, we-media account, and anonymous users.

4.1.2 Genres of Reports

The diversity of new media promotes the new forms of reports. Based on the characteristics of the media forms of China Daily and Zhihu, the present author selects the following genres of its sample study: short news reports, in-depth analysis, image stories, data reports, and investigation.

As a mainstream online news website, China Daily grows from a traditional medium in the context of new media. However, short news reports are still the main genre. Waijiao sample data are present in the forms of short news reports and image stories. As a state-owned media, China Daily put the primary media coverage on the Chinese political news. Waijiao is not the major topic, with the analysis of sample article length, over 65% of sample articles are short news reports. There are also image stories for waijiao. The word length of the sample articles on China Daily is around 1105 words on average. On China Daily, waijiao topic is mainly in a short news report form with limited word length.

On Zhihu, “questions” are the content titles, and “answers” are the main media content. As an answer, it has to be related to the question; the answer’s genres depend on how users asked the questions. The typical questions about Zhihu are, for example, “How to find a waijiao to teach my spoken English?” “Why foreign teachers are so popular in China?” However, there are also questions which did not ask specific questions but give facts and forward news on waijiao, for example, “From illegal waijiao to Ivy-league administrator, no wonder you were deceived.” Based on different question titles, the answer genres differ from a short comment to an in-depth explanation. Personal experiences are also shared, which use diverse genres. The high-quality answers in the sample data are mainly in-depth analysis with data reports. There are always references and quotations in the high-quality answers, and the word length is around 3042 on average. The sample study shows that in-depth analysis and investigation reports are the significant genres in Zhihu. Apart from the major genre of in-depth analysis, there are also news reports, image stories, and investigation reports. This, in turn, analyzed of waijiao more specific and comprehensive.
4.1.3 Themes of Media Coverage

Based on Dietram A. Scheufele & David Tewksbury (2007)’s study, “Judgments and attitude formation are directly correlated with ‘the ease in which instances or associations could be brought to mind. (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007)” Since the audience will not keep concentrated and focus on everything shows on media, the audience attention highly depends on the choice of the media content theme. The theme of the media coverage expresses the authors’ opinion on facts, attitudes, and views. The themes help the agenda of waijiao become more salient in the audience’s mind, to shape the considerations that people take into account when making judgments about and attitude towards waijiao.

Based on sample content, the present author divides the content themes of waijiao into the following categories: demands of waijiao in China, qualifications of waijiao, income, personal images, teacher-student relationship, and social influence. It is to be noted that one article can have one central theme and several sub-themes to support the central theme.

In China Daily’s samples, the themes include personal images, teacher-student relationship, social influence. Waijiao’s image becomes the most popular themes in China daily, with 45% articles using interview-based style to talk about waijiao’s image. In these articles, waijiao is popular among students, as a foreign teacher in China, they enjoyed the experience of teaching very much. There are 30% of articles that focus on social influence, and 5 articles focus on the student-teacher relationship. The lack of focus and poor understanding of and contact with waijiao, leads to a single form of reports and content without critical analysis. The media coverage fails to pay due attention to waijiao’s qualifications and needs. Overall, the media coverage of China Daily lacks in-depth analysis, and the themes are limited.

As a we-media platform, Zhihu integrates the content of a variety of themes from an extensive range of authors. The above themes are all mentioned in the sample content. Therefore, the media coverage of waijiao is more comprehensive on Zhihu. Moreover, there are frequent discussions on qualifications, personal image, demands, and incomes. However, waijiao’s social influence
and the teacher-student relationship are mentioned, but the attitudes towards these themes are negative.

4.1.4 Media Coverage Attitudes

“Attitude is everything.” It is common that there is always an attitude involved in a report. The media image of *waijiao* largely depends on the journalist’s attitudes towards *waijiao* as shown in news reports. The attitude of journalists is shown in their reports and commentary. Also, the attitude has the ability to make the report more appealing, enabling the audience to resonate emotionally and cognitively.

According to the analysis of the content of samples, the study will discuss three attitudes towards *waijiao*: positive, negative, and neutral attitude. Reports that adopt positive attitudes affirmed the positive personal image and positive social contribution from foreign teachers, including examples of a foreign teacher had a great affection for China, and he set up an NGO to help students in Chinese rural areas learn English.\(^{28}\) Also, the popularity of foreign teachers among students, the recognition of English Teaching quality, and positive personal images reflect a positive image as well. These positive attitudes mainly appear on *China Daily*.

There are 18 reports with a positive attitude in *China Daily* sample data, accounting for 86% of the sample. This is closely tied with *China Daily*’s status as state-owned news media. As the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), *China Daily* has to conform to national policies and help reduce or eliminate the negative image of *waijiao*. The positive report attitude can reflect the implementation of the opening-up policy and the development of culture soft power by using stories of foreign teachers, for example.

Among the sample, there are only 3 adverse reports which account for 14% of the total sample. The content of the adverse reports exposes the illegal work status of foreign teachers, also including examples of crime commitment, intentional concealing of facts, and lack of

\(^{28}\) [http://cn.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-12/20/content_35327848.htm](http://cn.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-12/20/content_35327848.htm)
professional morals. Apart from positive and negative attitude, there is also a type of neutral attitudes, the content mainly analyzes the phenomena from a relatively objective perspective, and emphasizes data analysis, policy analysis and quotations from academic writings. However, there is a lack of reports on China Daily that adopts neutral attitudes.

On Zhihu, the question type and answerer will influence the article attitudes. The media coverage on Zhihu adopts broad genres and has wide-ranging content. The content differs, and the attitudes vary with individuals. Answers to the same question denote both negative and positive attitudes. Even the same answer has both attitudes. For example, in sample 15, the user’s question is, “How to find a good waijiao to practice my spoken English?” The answer to this question firstly gave three tips on the positive effect on an English foreign teacher, with a positive attitude. Then the answerer made a list of 4 disadvantages on using an English foreign teacher to practice spoken English, make his saying like “It will bring a horribly negative effect to your spoken English”, “As they are only human, they could be trash human.” It is evident that the answerer has a negative attitude towards waijiao. After this content, the answerer listed five tips which could help the questioner practice spoken English without a waijiao. Under this circumstance, the present author divided the content to meaning units which could show a bright attitude, by analyzing the text meaning units, there are a total of 64% negative attitudes content towards waijiao on Zhihu, 25% neutral attitudes content shows in the sample.

4.2 Waijiao Agenda on Zhihu

4.2.1 Conflicting Image of Waijiao

“The sentimental tendency of the report will be significantly transmitted through the increase in the amount of the report. Attitude and emotion are more important than the influence of facts on public opinion (McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L., 1972).”

There is a different image of waijiao on media coverage. China Daily positively described waijiao, waijiao are very popular, and there is a significant demand for waijiao in the Chinese market. Waijiao becomes “role models” (bang yang), which all the students admire. “Parents hold the starting point for cultivating their children's international vision, and they all hope to find
a native English-speaking foreign teacher for their children to have the original English education (Text in sample 12).”

As a person who has the closest relationship with the foreign teacher in the teacher-student relationship, the student’s evaluation has a great influence on waijiao’s image. In the China Daily sample report, waijiao received positive evaluation and recognition from the students by being a role model.

In sample 2, W2\textsuperscript{29} kept doing charity activities in the rural area in China, which also influenced her students. Her behavior has affected 25 students and 30 teachers in the same school to join the charity team. Her students also said “She is a foreigner, and the first thing she came to China, is to help the people who need help. As a student, I am very touched. I also want to follow her footsteps to help others.” The school she worked affirmed her behavior and rewarded her a price. Her principal said, “They are always full of sunshine on her, with positive energy, and charm.”

W4 encourages students to write down their wishes, he hopes to use his own strength to give life directions to students.

“We know that our ability is limited, but we still decided to do it locally. Since people with the same ideals in the locality will also start from every good deed to help humanity achieve commonality. The goal.” (text in sample 4)

His belief has also been successfully supported by colleagues and students, helping him successfully establish the “International Education” voluntary agency. In sample 10, W10 has various experience of teaching and living in different countries, which let him have more stories to share with his students. He turns his writing hobby into the teaching job, inspiring students to work hard for their dreams and strive to change the future.

On the contrast, the personal image of the foreign teacher – “foreign face (yang mian kong),” “white man (bai ren)” mentioned the most in the sample data of Zhihu. This has been pointed out

\textsuperscript{29} The waijiao name mentioned in the sample date will be shown as “W + sample number,” for example. W4 means the waijiao mentioned in sample number 4.
by English education scholars that for language teachers in the private sector, in which case, institutions often show a preference for “white face.” Is that true that a foreign teacher can only “rely on a face (kao lian)” to find an excellent job in China?

In sample 19, the question raised is directly related to the appearance of the foreign teacher: “In China, does a foreign teacher (make a living) depends on their good looking appearance?” In the highly-voted answers, “whites” and “American whites” were mentioned many times. “If the foreign teacher is white, they gain a score, the English education institution, and the recruitment is simply not a problem, you know.” Moreover, the hiring standard of waijiao surprised everyone: “As long as it is a foreign face, it will be fine.” The Chinese superstition of foreign teachers is: As long as a foreign teacher can teach English very well (Sample 12). In sample 18, the appearance of waijiao is directly related to their income. The answerer who worked at a recruitment agency listed a recruitment rating form based on their own recruitment experience on waijiao:

“White NEFL teachers, young women, obtained a work visa already, have teaching experience, good looking appearance, salary is 20 thousand to 25 thousand per month with free accommodation.” “European white foreign teachers, no work visa, clear English pronunciation, salary is 10 thousand to 13 thousand per month with free accommodation.” (Sample text in 18, translated from Chinese text)

Many education institutions are not willing to pay a high salary to hire European and American foreign teachers. Instead, they hired a “fake foreign teacher (jia wai jiao).” The companies involved in illegal recruitment use the psychology of “parents believe in foreign faces.” They illegally hired a large number of low-quality foreign teachers with an only high-school education background. “Those fake teachers do not have the cultural knowledge of the English-speaking countries, nor do they have the language teaching experience, their knowledge relies on their appearance (zhang xiang).”

In sample 11, the answerer cited a newspaper article title in the text, waijiao was described as “wan ren mi (the geek),” and “American Wanted Criminals.” In a paragraph of sample 12,
waijiao was described as “Black waijiao (hei wai jiao)”\textsuperscript{30}, “dangerous people with a criminal background,” and “illegal worker in China.” Parents do not know about everything about this; most of them were deceived about the true identities of waijiao. These images were mostly described by the answerers, including learners, parents, and recruiting agency. However, the presentation of content is mostly based on passive behavior (For example, Waijiao be analyzed, waijiao be recruited). More than half of the sample data mentioned the personal image of the foreign teacher in the article. The words describing these personal images are negative. It is undeniable that these texts contain elements of ethnic prejudice. The point here is that the socially constructed “skills” that those recruitment agencies bring to a corporate setting often include “race” as a symbol capital, and not merely generic forms of transnationally human capital.

4.2.2 Facts about Waijiao in China

The facts of waijiao here refers to the high demand of waijiao in the Chinese market, the high income of waijiao, and recruitment with adjustable qualifications. In the news media, the demand for foreign teachers in the Chinese market is continuously mentioned. The present author gave a briefed introduction at the beginning part of the study. Here will be a more detailed explanation with the sample data collected in this study. On Zhihu, the answer length is not as limited as it on China Daily. Also, the length of the answers is one of the features to evaluate a high-quality answer. In the sample answers selected in this study, high-quality answers are often more detailed and comprehensively explained the reason of high demand needs for waijiao in China.

The high demand for waijiao

In recent years, due to the enormous base of Chinese English learners and the increasing emphasis on the parent for their children’s education, the foreign teacher become “special” and “valuable,” English educational institutions fight with each other to hire them. Especially in the less industrial developed area in China, foreign teachers become scarce resources. NEFL teachers have become very popular in China, both in public schools, international schools, and private English tutoring institutions. Hiring a foreigner as an English teacher in China has many

\textsuperscript{30} Black (hei 碳) in Chinese, can means the illegal status. For example, “Hei gong （黑工）” means illegal worker.
reasonable needs. No matter how much a native English teacher could help in student English learning, the demand for the foreign teacher keeps increasing in China.

Scholar Chai (2007) points out that foreign teacher gains direct academic training under the western culture and education system; they have a teaching style from the English speaking countries. NEST has advantages cooperate teaching with local teachers to provide more standard English pronunciation, more motivation for students and students get a chance to experience the western culture (Chai, 2007).

**The high income of waijiao**

In sample 13, answerer pointed out that the high demand for waijiao even spreads from tutoring institutions to kindergarten. The reason why kindergarten needs waijiao, is that hire waijiao is the best way for a school to reflect its educational strength. If there is no foreign teacher in the kindergarten and language training institutions, their teaching system will lack attraction. It is difficult for domestic teachers who work in the kindergarten to convince parents to pay the tuition fees. The foreign teacher becomes an “excuse” for some kindergartens, primary, and secondary school tutoring institutions to defraud Chinese parents for high tuition fees.

“Facing a strong demand for waijiao and lack of supply, all English training courses with waijiao as an attraction will be more sought after by parents. The major educational institutions have also seen the wind and the rudder, and the registration fees have risen because of that.” (Text in Sample 13)

The income level of waijiao is an attractive point to hire waijiao in Chinese schools. Also, it is an issue that created topics about the unfairness of the English teacher’s income in China.

“Waijiao with any education background (that is, regardless of your academic qualifications), the average monthly salary that can be obtained in China is 13.9 thousand RMB, which is much higher than a Chinese English teacher who is with a master’s degree. The average salary of a foreign teacher with a bachelor’s degree is 16.3 thousand RMB, and the graduating degree of a master’s degree is 20 thousand RMB. Of course, if you think that foreign teachers are simply high-paying, then you may be wrong. In foreign teacher recruitments, free accommodation, free round-trip air tickets, and free insurance are almost all included as standard welfare.” (Text in sample 15)
Sample 15 also gave a statement about *waijiào* who are mostly employed in private kindergartens as well as English training institutions. The income is relatively higher to work in private institutions. The teaching content and requirements are relatively easy, based on the students English proficiency. It is easy to get started, and some foreign teachers can teach while traveling with active mobility. Compared with the Chinese English teacher’s salary, *waijiào*’s salary and welfare are much better than the Chinese teachers.

**Low Recruitment with adjustable qualifications**

In Zhihu, the quotation from news also used as evidence to support their answer. For example, in sample 15, the answerer quote from the news that “Parents will not check the teacher’s qualification, the kindergarten will not check either. The only thing they care about is their appearance.” For these institutions, if they want to hire a qualified foreign teacher, first, they may not have the conditions to hire them; secondly, they need to invest great money and time. Therefore, they will choose to hire a fake *waijiào* instead.” It provides a reason why foreign teacher’s qualification in China could be adjustable.

Fu (2003) conducted a study on the background of foreign teachers in public schools. It can be seen from his research results that foreign teachers in China are mainly graduates from universities, retired English teachers in their home countries, and singles first time come to China. Foreign teachers with TEFL certificates only account for 40%. Most foreign teachers have only teaching experience instead of qualification certificates (Fu, 2003).
Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will firstly discuss the difference in how different media platform processes their news and what is the vital scope for the media to set the agenda of waijiao. It is an extension of the content of the previous chapter. Secondly, this chapter will discuss what the main factors that leads to the agenda-setting of waijiao on we-media Zhihu is. Thirdly, the discussion between media commercialization and Zhihu will provide an insight into how marketing, advertising influenced agenda setting of waijiao on Zhihu.

5.1 Different agenda scope in Media

Whether in a Western or socialist society, the media has distinct political attributes. Dominant rights institutions and economic forces dominate the media. Especially state-owned media plays an essential role in the dissemination of political issues, power supervision, and public agenda setting. China’s political system and conditions have determined that the media must obey the leadership of CCP. As a state-owned media platform, China Daily represents the interests of the ruling class. It has its responsibility to set China’s political and image propaganda.

For news media, they need to invest a lot of time, money, workforce, and other costs of news reporting. Besides, the undercover investigation and multi-angle analysis of foreign teachers require resources in educational industries (Feng, 2018). Moreover, most of the institutions will keep waijiao’s information as a private resource. Some journalists do not have the time and opportunity to take an in-depth investigative report, in order to reduce costs, journalists will select the appropriate source of information for short news reporting in the shortest possible time (Jie, 2015). As for the news content of waijiao, journalists considered using the most relevant resources they have to do interviews or investigations. As seen from the China Daily sample, foreign teachers’ employees are universities and colleges, compared with foreign teachers working in private education and training institutions, foreign teachers working in colleges and universities have more media resources to reach. They have more opportunities to get to know reporters through various interpersonal relationships. Moreover, most of the public university and
schools has their news campaign system, which could help the journalists to set up an interview to waijiao.

Mass media often cannot determine the specific views of people on an event or opinion, but it can effectively influence people to pay attention to specific facts and opinions by providing information and arranging related issues (McCombs, ME, & Shaw, DL, 1972). From the content setting of one topic to the mode of communication and the construction of the discourse, *China Daily* has its roles lead positive guidance on the premise of objectiveness, fairness, and facts, to resolve social contradictions and understand public emotions. The media coverage of foreign language education is not the priority on *China Daily*. However, the media content of the positive waijiao image and cheerful stories of waijiao and its students shows the implementation of the OEI plan in China. The stories of waijiao enjoy life in China, devoted their life to China’s education provide content which helped *China Daily* to build up Chinese public image and following the state’s policy, reflecting the development of changes in contemporary China and its openness. This is also how *China Daily* set the waijiao agenda to the audience, under the mainstream theme of China.

**5.2 Agenda Setting of Waijiao on We-media**

Donald Shaw (2006) divided the media into horizontal media and vertical media. Vertical media refers to mass media, such as traditional media and its digital forms, are responsible for conveying the public agenda and integrating people from different strata and groups. Horizontal media refers to social media based on more niche communities, such as Twitter and Facebook (Shaw, 2006). With the rise of new media, organizations, groups, and individuals on the Internet influenced social issues through we-media and affected the formation of the social agenda. The media agenda of the daily attention of the public is no longer highly homogenized under the control of traditional media. It has reduced its ability to set the public agenda and set the function of the agenda. The subject of agenda setting is more diversified, and we-media has become another important social issue original resource. Zhihu is a market-oriented media, follow the market-oriented operation. Under the highly developed social conditions, people are increasingly dependent on we-media content to know about the world. The audience can gain an understanding of the unknown object based on the content provided by we-media.
5.2.1 Zhihu puts more emphasis on the voice from the audience

Zhihu downplayed China’s political influence and analyzed and constructed *waijiao* images from a user’s perspective. On Zhihu, any individual, business related users, or institutions, can be the subject of *waijiao*’s agenda setting. Everyone can use the media platform to become the constructor and disseminator of the media image. The role of the communicator (who set the agenda) and the audience (who receive the news) is no longer wholly separate and opposite on we-media, but interconnected and interact with each other (Chang, 1989).

The audience’s reaction is selected by the audience based on its characteristics, social relations, and social needs. The agenda-setting on *waijiao* carried out from the user’s opinion, information appeal, and demand. When users on Zhihu output content and knowledge, to create and edit the answers, users analyzed the image of foreign teachers from a different perspective as learners (parents and students) and consumers. As a consumer, the *waijiao* experience was used as a piece of evidence to complaining and reporting the negative side of their business trade experience (unqualified foreign teachers), defended their rights and interest to engage with the topic to achieve more self-realization. As a learner, set up the topic of *waijiao* based on the *waijiao*’s relation with English learning. Those question created an agenda to discuss *waijiao*’s qualification and how *waijiao* influenced Chinese English learning. There are also we-media accounts analyzed *waijiao*’s income data. English study magazine editor who explained about where *waijiao* fit the Chinese English education the most and the real market demands of *waijiao*. Zhihu users with functional economic status, education background, can provide more comprehensive topical experience, and users with higher education background have greater interest and ability to use citations and evidence to support their answers, analyze from an objective perspective (Zhang R. , 2015).

5.2.2 Zhihu’s content makes the audience more engaged

Zhihu as a we-media representative in Chinese new media, there are relatively few political propaganda needs of Zhihu, which can accommodate content including sensitive, conflicting and extreme content and opinions. People can ask diverse questions about *waijiao* on Zhihu. The questions with an active discussion rate are “Why *waijiao*’s salary is much higher than a Chinese
English teacher?” “Why a fake waijiao can be hired in the Chinese education market?” “How could I find a waijiao to practice my spoken English?” “How is the waijiao service you had with (brand name)?” “Is waijiao helpful in English learning?”

The high content of waijiao came from the answers, which given by the various users on Zhihu. The content used in the answers, in addition to the quotations from official-published documents, also includes references to the mainstream media content, professional data analysis, and quotations from academic papers. In the meanwhile, in addition to Zhihu’s social media interactions, including voting, approval, commenting, and reporting answers, it has increased the discussion of topics and expanded the enthusiasm of the public to participate in the discussion of waijiao. Also on Zhihu, the attitude towards waijiao are mainly negative, with agenda theme topics on “illegal employment,” “qualification review is not strict,” and “governmental monitor responsibilities are missing,” in their answer content. However, the sample contents on Zhihu also show that the answers content style emphasizes and highlights the analysis of facts from a learner, the answers from educational experts, and the professional analysis of relevant practitioners in English educational institutions. The richness of the scope of the topic gave a comprehensive view the image of waijiao, giving the audience a space to think and discuss, guiding the direction of the subject to develop in a rational direction, and avoiding the extreme orientation of public opinion.

5.3 Media commercialization affect Agenda Setting on Zhihu

Media commercialization is joint on market-oriented media. As a social Q&A website, Zhihu has a healthy marketing function. Users who are attracted by the Q&A content form have higher accuracy in advertising (Zhipeng, 2017). In chapter 2, the present author introduced what agenda-setting is and what media commercialization situation in China is. The agenda-setting not only affects what people think, but also influences people’s thinking to some extent, such as selecting factual basis that is beneficial to their own views, enhancing the coverage of their opinions, and increasing the frequency and density of publicity (Mazzarol, 1998). Since the Q&A content mostly edited by high-quality user groups, based on “the exchange of views and experiences between users,” and the information is more credible on Zhihu (Zhang R., 2015).
Media sponsors conduct the Zhihu content for marketing use through agenda setting. Content on Zhihu attracted the audience which is better educated, have higher incomes, and the more purchasing possibility of a product (Dudarenok, 2018), the question-answer content style and the social media sharing function on Zhihu increase the user’s interactive participation and affects the user’s decision on waijiao service. Dudarenok (2018) found out that because of user’s needs on useful, practical, reliable information, Zhihu is the best media platform can offer professional knowledge or information from specific fields, including education services. In another way, Zhihu is the best channel for educational service brands to marketing.

5.3.1 Knowledge-based content agenda

This study found out that in-depth analysis, long word-length high-quality answers make users gain more knowledge and information on waijiao. When the answerer is sharing their own study experience with waijiao and giving content about their choices of the institution, evaluation of the teacher’s teaching, study tips, and purchase decision tips towards the audience, it helped to discover connotations and resonate with user values. The information gained from the answerer could influence the choice and thinking when they have needs for a waijiao service. On Zhihu, users like to trust other users.

The Zhihu account registration was based on a real identity verify; the user could choose to be anonymous or using a company name (Peng L., 2016). When doing knowledge marketing on Zhihu, the brand used their company name to gain more media exposure. Also, the user can add a short personal introduction next to the user name and image. Another method for brand marketing is to add introduction content of the brand at the beginning or the end of the answer text. For example, the answerer will directly mention he or she is working for an English institution, and they can provide more information about waijiao, at the end of the text. Such responses mainly affirmed the role of waijiao in English teaching. Alternatively, directly answer questions adding explanations of their product services. The content “Please contact me for more information about waijiao in the comment section below.” helped potential users and businesses to expand their relationships and create the possibility of transactions. It helped to gain more
attraction to the brands and to encourage and try to persuade the user to get to know the waijiao services.

5.3.2 Emotion-Based Content Agenda

“Emotions are ubiquitous throughout marketing. They influence information processing, mediate responses to persuasive appeals, measure the effects of marketing stimuli, initiate goal setting, enact goal-directed behaviors, and serve as ends and measures of consumer welfare.” (Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer, 1999, page 202)

As this research mentioned in chapter 4, the personal image of the foreign teacher – “foreign face (yang mian kong),” “white man (bai ren)” reflected the choice of the most Chinese customer’s choice on waijiao. The fact about the unqualified foreign teachers could still get a job, gaining a high income but not being responsible for the teaching quality built up a different image of waijiao. The attitude towards waijiao is mainly negative. This negative image of waijiao can help the brands to set up an emotional agenda.

For Zhihu users who may become the potential customers of waijiao service, they would like to receive some useful information about waijiao, not only the bad news. The research found out that merchants wrote answers and articles using news reports and investigation reports to express a negative image about the legality, teaching qualifications, foreign teachers’ personal background of waijiao. However, the merchants emphasized their own brand's advantages on waijiao’s background and qualifications, affect the value choice of users to a certain extent.

Another reason for merchants set the negative agenda of waijiao, is that they are not selling a waijiao service. Instead, the educational institutions or relevant merchants promoted the Chinese English teachers or other institutions that provide English-related educational service. Similarly, they created a negative image of foreign teachers by sharing negative waijiao service experience, the reason why waijiao cannot help to prove the Chinese student's English ability, and the facts of waijiao mentioned in chapter 4. The aim is to appeal and advocate a cautious choice of English tutoring teacher. This method target audience who are not interested in or not able to hire a waijiao, but still want to improve their English, which is also the leading target group in Chinese
English market. On we-media Zhihu, the social media function of helping media publishers expand the impact of their accounts by forwarding their Zhihu content to various social media platforms.

With media commercialization development, the method of doing digital marketing through media became very easy. In the meanwhile, combined more open registration rules and its we-media characteristic, Zhihu became the central media platform for knowledge and educational production marketing. The way of brands and merchants doing marketing on Zhihu, nit only influenced the theme, style, and quality of the Zhihu answers, but also affected the agenda-setting results on waijiao. Zhihu and all the audience first built the negative waijiao image, but later it was used as a tool to build another layer of agenda of English educational service.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the study

In this study, the present author has done a media content analysis, based on agenda-setting theory, in order to see how Chinese media, set the agenda of the foreign teacher (waijiao) who work in China. The analysis based on the sample content collected from Chinese state-owned new media Chinadaily.com.cn (China Daily), which is the digital media platform of traditional newspaper China Daily, and we-media platform Zhihu, which is a Chinese popular social Q&A website. The reason why the study chooses two media platform is that the present author would like to see how the Chinese media set the foreign teacher agenda in China. The study is mainly focused on the we-media platform Zhihu and its content and agenda setting. Content from China Daily is a very essential resource in order to see the difference, and as a comparison, to explain, how Zhihu works differently as a new media medium. Despite the sample group is relatively limited by the target group waijiao, the results are reliable since the Zhihu content in this study is mainly high-quality answers from Zhihu, which has been examined as a more reliable and trustworthy content from Zhihu’s own system and previous study results.
The present author has analyzed the media content layout, genres, themes, and attitudes on China Daily and Zhihu in the finding part. First, China Daily as a state-owned digital news website, website layout refers to news channels where sort the news by its theme and news report priority. The content on waijiao was mainly mentioned in the “Chinese Focus News” section, which is the leading news channel on China Daily. The content mainly in a short news form with a medium text length. The report attitude is very positive, avoiding the relevant conflict themes. It at least shows the importance of reporting waijiao, use waijiao topic as a way to show the audience about Chinese openness and development.

On Zhihu, the media Channel was in a different form compared with China Daily, and it was different to make a standard comparison. However, Zhihu’s media genres are based on a question and answer form, and has a very active social interaction function such as “vote,” “comment,” “forward,” and “report the answer,” which brought the news communicator and receiver together engaged with each other. Moreover, the high-quality answers on Zhihu are mainly in-depth analysis, data reports, experience sharing and investigations about waijiao, where evidence and facts and data’s involved in the answer, helped the audience get a comprehensive view of waijiao. The report attitude is mainly negative towards waijiao, this is because the facts about waijiao are more present through Zhihu, a more conflict topic themes were discussed on Zhihu with a less political propaganda control. It is also because waijiao is rarely appeared on Zhihu or Chinese we-media channel as a communicator, to talk about waijiao and English education in China, to talk about themselves.

The present author chose Zhihu to do a qualitative media content review to see how we-media set the agenda of waijiao. First, Zhihu users, as the main content contributor, set the agenda based on their needs, experience, and knowledge. The communicators on Zhihu varies from learners to professionals, waijiao’s colleagues to the recruitment agency. Secondly, the question and answer based content form allows the communicator to ask the most relevant question of waijiao based on their needs. With the facts that waijiao in China are mostly illegal teachers, the foreign teacher cannot help with Chinese students and so on, plus the students as consumers defended their rights on Zhihu by telling negative experiences they have with waijiao, which all helped to set up a negative attitude and topic themes towards waijiao.
Also, the last but not least, the media commercialization affect media in many ways. Zhihu, as a marketed-oriented media, has various media sponsorships possibilities. It has also been examined as an essential media platform for knowledge, educational-related brands to do online marketing. Those factors all lead to another critical agenda-setting theme of waijiao on Zhihu, which from a commercial angle. The brands used waijiao’s negative image theme as a tool to do online marketing. It not only will help the people who want to sell a better waijiao service, by providing a legal, qualified waijiao service but also will help Chinese English teachers to sell their service, by providing a more adjustable, adopted way to suit the Chinese English education environment. Moreover, some other we-media owner will use the conflict waijiao image to raise the public opinion discussion on waijiao, so that they can gain the website hits to promoting their we-media account.

6.2 Limitations and Suggestions of Future Research

Nothing is perfect, and every study has limitations. In this research, there are some limitations. First, the agenda-setting concept from communication studies was mainly used on political issues or a more substantial object like nation agenda setting, how to use agenda setting in we-media about a specific targeted group needs more support from the theoretical knowledge. The future research of similar topics should combine the framing theory and the third level agenda setting theory to have a more comprehensive theory supports.

Another limitation of this study is that it is difficult to get primary resources such as interview and questionnaires. The analysis was based on media content that chose from Chinese media. However, if the study could have an interview section about how foreign teachers evaluated the media content towards themselves, could help to find out more features about the agenda-setting on themselves. It is difficult to convince the foreign teachers who worked at the private institutions to accept the interview. Also, the sample data are limited in a period and specific numbers, the data was analyzed and translated manually by the present author within a time limitation, the interpretation may affect the finding results. So in future research, the study should use a more professional data analysis system to reach higher accuracy.
Reference


# Appendix 1: Terms in Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wai Ji</td>
<td>外籍</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wai Guo Ren</td>
<td>外国人</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wai Jiao</td>
<td>外教</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ou Mei Wai Jiao</td>
<td>欧美外教</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Wai</td>
<td>老外</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wai Ji Jiao Shi</td>
<td>外籍教师</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhi Hu</td>
<td>知乎</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hua Ti</td>
<td>话题</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jing Hua</td>
<td>精华</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhong Wen Jü Jiao Xin Wen</td>
<td>中文聚焦 新闻</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhong Wen She Hui</td>
<td>中文社会</td>
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<tr>
<td>Di Fang Bao Dao</td>
<td>地方报道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chang Ye Zi Xun</td>
<td>产业资讯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bang Yang</td>
<td>榜样</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yang Mian Kong</td>
<td>洋面孔</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Man</td>
<td>白人</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jia Wai Jiao</td>
<td>假外教</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nong Min Gong</td>
<td>农民工</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Xiang</td>
<td>长相</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wan Ren Mi</td>
<td>万人迷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hei Wai Jiao</td>
<td>黑外教</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Sample Content in the Text

“How to find a waijiao to practice my spoken English?”
如何找个外教练习口语?

“From illegal waijiao to Ivy-league administrator, no wonder you were deceived.”
“从黑外教到藤校招生官和学长，你们被坑一点都不奇怪。”

“…It will bring a horribly negative effect to your spoken English…As they are only human, they could be trash human.”
“…但是带来的负面效果很可怕…老外也是人，是人就有一定会有垃圾。”

“Parents hold the starting point for cultivating their children’s international vision, and they all hope to find a native English-speaking foreign teacher for their children to have the original English education.”
“不少家长抱着‘培养孩子国际视野’的出发点，都希望为孩子找到‘口语纯正的欧美外教’。为了让孩子从小接受‘原汁原味’的英语教学。”

She said: “I came here to bring them hope, which might help them to change their destiny, to let them live a better and braver life.”
她说:“我来到这里给他们希望，这也许会改变他们的命运，会让他们生活更好、更坚强！

“She is a foreigner, and the first thing she came to China, is to help the people who need help. As a student, I am very touched. I also want to follow her footsteps to help others.”
“她是一个外国人，来到中国第一件事，是来帮助需要帮助的人。作为她的学生，我也非常感动，我想继续跟随她的脚步帮助需要帮助的人。”
Her principal said, “They are always full of sunshine on her, with positive energy, and charm.”
她的校长说：“在她身上总是充满着阳光和正能量，极具正能量和魅力。”

“We know that our ability is limited, but we still decided to do it locally. Since people with the same ideals in the locality will also start from every good deed to help humanity achieve commonality. The goal.”
我们深知能力有限，但我们依然决定在当地做起，因为当地有同样理想的人们也会从每一个善举出发，帮助人类实现共同的目标。

“In China, does a foreign teacher (make a living) depends on their good looking appearance?”
“在中国，外教是看颜值的吗?”

“If the foreign teacher is white, they gain a score, the English education institution, the recruitment is simply not a problem, you know.”
“所以，如果是白色的，还有点颜值，那培训机构跪舔啊，那招生简直不成问题了，你们懂的。”

“White NEFL teachers, young women, obtained a work visa already, have teaching experience, good looking appearance, salary is 20 thousand to 25 thousand per month with a free accommodation.”
“母语白人外教，年轻女性，符合工作签证，有教学经验 且颜值高 - 20K～25K + 住宿。”

“European white foreign teachers, no work visa, clear English pronunciation, good looking appearance, salary is 10 thousand to 13 thousand per month with a free accommodation.”
“欧洲白人外教，不符合工作签证，发音一般却颜值高 - 10K ～ 13K + 住宿。”
“Facing a strong demand for waijiao and lack of supply, all English training courses with waijiao as an attraction will be more sought after by parents. The major educational institutions have also seen the wind and the rudder, and the registration fees have risen because of that."

“在旺盛的需求和匮乏的供给面前，凡是打着外教旗帜的培训班则会更受家长追捧，各大教育机构也纷纷见风使舵，报名费水涨船高。”

“Waijiao with any education background (that is, regardless of your academic qualifications), the average monthly salary that can be obtained in China is 13.9 thousand RMB, which is much higher than a Chinese English teacher who is with a master's degree. The average salary of a foreign teacher with a bachelor's degree is 16.3 thousand RMB, and the graduating degree of a master's degree is 20 thousand RMB. Of course, if you think that foreign teachers are simply high-paying, then you may be wrong. In foreign teacher recruitments, free accommodation, free round-trip air tickets, and free insurance are almost all included as standard welfare.”

“Any education（也就是不管你的学历）的外教，来到中国可以拿的月平均工资是13.9K人民币，比我们硕士毕业的英语老师还要高出不少。有本科学历的外教平均工资是16.3K，硕士毕业的轻松上2万。当然，如果你认为外教是单纯高薪，那你可能就错了。外教招聘中，免费住房、免费来回机票、免费保险几乎是标配。”

“Parents will not check the teacher’s qualification; the kindergarten will not check either. The only thing they care about is their appearance.” (30)

“家长不会审查教师资格证，幼儿园不去审查教师资格证，唯一的敲门砖就是他们的面孔。”
Appendix 3: List of Sample Articles

Don’t let “illegal foreign teachers” lower the level of international education.
别让“黑外教”拉低国际化教育水平


Canadian Foreign Teacher: Five Years of Public Charity: Love is the common language of mankind.
加拿大外教五年公益路: 爱是人类共通的语言

http://cnews.chinadaily.com.cn/2018-03/21/content_35891495.htm

Foreign Teacher in Shandong: The value of life lies in dedication
山东洋外教: 人生的价值在于奉献

http://en.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-12/20/content_35327848.htm

A foreign Teacher in a School in Beijing was questioned about sexual assault. The school said there was no evidence of crime.
北京一学校外教被质疑有性侵史 校方称无犯罪证明

http://cnews.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-09/04/content_31530054.htm

American foreign teacher smashed Einstein became a star: It is hard to say bye to Chinese students
美籍外教撞脸爱因斯坦成网红：难舍中国师生情

http://cnews.chinadaily.com.cn/2017-06/18/content_25756625.htm

Foreign teachers drifted across the sea to Beijing to play games with the students.
洋外教漂洋过海来京与学员玩起“搓麻绳”

http://cnews.chinadaily.com.cn/2018-02/01/content_35625167.htm
Foreign Teacher in Liaoning University: Shenyang is my second hometown

辽大外教老师：沈阳是我的第二故乡


51Talk eases the shortage of English and foreign teachers in China

51Talk 缓解国内英语外教短缺

http://caijing.chinadaily.com.cn/chanye/2018-09/06/content_36872797.htm

“Foreign teacher’s Freestyle,” New video release: Star foreign teacher record life with travel notes

“外教的 Freestyle” 新视频发布 明星外教用游记记录生活

http://caijing.chinadaily.com.cn/chanye/2018-09/19/content_36945081.htm

Obscene, rape, murder, stealing... How were these foreign teachers who came to China to be selected?

猥亵、强奸、杀人、偷盗…这些来中国上课的外教，是怎么被选上的?

https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/47618298

“Yang Wai Jiao” is actually an international wanted criminal? Stop white worship!

“洋外教”居然是国际通缉犯？崇洋媚外当休矣！

https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/57987451

From illegal waijiao to Ivy-league administrator, no wonder you were deceived.

从黑外教到藤校招生官和学长，你们被坑一点都不奇怪。

https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/36289910
How do you respond to people who think that as long as they talk to foreigners, can their English become better? Can you become an English teacher only if you are a foreigner?
要怎么回击有些人认为只要和外国人对话，英语就可以变好？只要是外国人就可以做外教？
https://www.zhihu.com/question/39129954/answer/79999541

How to find a waijiao to practice my spoken English?
如何找个外教练习口语？
https://www.zhihu.com/question/35068721/answer/91106342

No experience, no education background, why those foreign teachers get a high income more than 14 thousand? | Alfred Data Room
没经验没学历的外教为啥能拿 1.4W+的高薪？ | Alfred 数据室
https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/62268565

Is foreign teacher helpful in improving English?
外教对提高英语水平是否有帮助？
https://www.zhihu.com/question/24358440

Where does the foreign teacher resources of recruitment agencies come from?
外教中介的外教资源是哪里来的？
https://www.zhihu.com/question/24862421/answer/285695444

In China, does a foreign teacher (make a living) depends on their good looking appearance?
在中国，外教是看颜值的吗?
https://www.zhihu.com/question/41237756/answer/436234005

Is it really that amazing of foreign teacher teach amazing language class?
学外语，外教授课真的那么神奇吗?
https://www.zhihu.com/question/63741491