

***Teacher Identity Construction:  
A Narrative Inquiry Into English Postgraduate Student Teachers***

Khusna Irfiana, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia  
Rojab Siti Rodliyah, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

The Asian Conference on Education 2022  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Teaching is a complex activity that needs a long-term process for shaping the identity of the teacher. This study explores the process by which English learning experiences have shaped the identities of two postgraduate student-teachers. A narrative case study approach was conducted through personal narratives written by the writer and a semi-structured interview with the participant. These narratives encompassed our reflections on various "significant moments" that pointed to three major themes: *becoming a teacher, a teacher's beliefs and knowledge, and professional teacher identity transformation*. The findings revealed that teacher identity involves comprehending the interaction between a complex and dynamic system of personal and social elements. The construction of a teacher's identity not only includes personal knowledge and behavior but is also influenced by ideological, political, cultural, and teaching interests and conditions. In addition, a teacher education program plays an essential role in that process. It provides general pedagogical, technical, and educational skills that are vital for the teaching profession.

Keywords: EFL, Narrative Inquiry, Teacher Identity Construction

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction**

Teaching is inevitably a complex activity as it concerns the teacher's entire person (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Teachers have to build personal and professional knowledge, develop a teacher's sense, and negotiate cultural and contextual concepts that shape teaching. As put by Reeves (2018), constructing and developing teachers' identities is a lifetime process. Its development is affected by various factors, including personal and professional experiences and the current context of teaching (Aghaei, Bavali, & Behjat, 2020; Olsen, 2008). Teachers usually construct their conceptual self-image through their professional role identity (Farrell, 2011). The process of identity construction occurs among complex systems (Henry, 2019) characterized by tensions and the struggle of different relations (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). It also comes from a complicated cognitive aspect, which comprises what the teachers know, believes, and think (Borg, 2006). Research shows that a teacher develops teaching and learning preconceptions from his/her experience as a learner (Borg, 2004; Han, 2016; Malderez, Hobson, Tracey, & Kerr, 2007). Those preconceptions are the primary source of the teachers' beliefs and experiences that influence their teaching practice.

In language teaching, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005, p. 22) have argued that "in order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers: the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them." Teaching and teacher education is inherently political since it involves negotiating conflicting values on educational purposes, roles, and content (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Research into the identity of English language teachers is an interesting area that puts identity and discourse at the core of language teaching and learning (Miller, 2009). Most of the recent literature on teacher identity formation mainly focused on novice teachers, both native and non-native English-speaking teachers (e.g., Johnston, 2003; Villegas, Varona, & Sánchez, 2020; Salinas & Ayala, 2018; Sarasa, 2016; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Varghese et al., 2005; Zhang & Zhang, 2018). However, teacher identity construction of experienced postgraduate English student-teachers has not yet received the same attention. Acknowledging teacher identity construction is essential to support experienced language teachers in their work since these formations are integral for their beliefs, assumptions, values, and practices that guide teacher acts both in and out of the classroom. Therefore, this study attempts to fill the gap and investigates foreign language teachers' identity construction manifested in two experienced female EFL student-teachers. It aims to answer the question "How do English learning experiences shape Indonesian postgraduate student-teacher identity?"

## **The Concept of Identity**

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Beijaard et al. (2004) point out that identity is rarely correctly defined. However, most researchers appear to agree that identity is an ongoing, dynamic process. Wenger's (1998) social identity theoretical approach contributes to identity research and investigates identity-building as a learning experience. Wenger views identity as social involvement in a community of practice. He defines identity as "a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other" (Wenger, 1998, p. 151). Likewise, Sachs (2005) notes that teacher identity provides the framework for teachers to build up their own conceptions about "how to be" and "how to act" in society. Sachs highlights the mutual nature of identity to negotiate experiences and to make them meaningful. Identity then can be described as an ongoing process of social

experience, how we perceive these experiences and how we build the meaning of our experience.

### **Teacher Identity Construction**

Student teachers experience a changing identity from the very beginning of their education as they start taking over more duties and positions as actual teachers in their study and traineeship. Britzman (2003) argues that a teacher's identity is constructed as part of learning to teach. This process usually begins when students choose to teach as a professional choice, although they already have a firm idea of the meaning of teaching from their learning experience. This identity of a teacher is inherent in the concept of 'Who am I?' and 'Who you are?' which has been influenced by various internal factors, such as emotions (Rodgers & Scott, 2008) and external factors, such as life experience (Flores & Day, 2006). It is built from a social and personal perspective during the socio-cultural process (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; J. Johnston, 2012; Miller, 2009). From a social perspective, teacher identity construction includes the influences of contexts and traditions, experiences, social interactions, and positions (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Kelly, 2006; Miller, 2009). While from a personal perspective, its construction comprises agency, emotions, and systems of meaning and self-construction (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004). Emotions are not only seen as psychological expressions; they are also built and managed socially. Teacher identity construction entails intra- and inter-personal processes (Kaplan & Garner, 2017). As the formation of teacher identity is a complex process, it involves asking why, when, and how identities arise (Henry, 2019). Simply put, the teacher identity involves various multifaceted aspects, and if viewed from one perspective, it would cause limited understanding.

Teacher identity emerges in a teacher community as a process of participation and interaction. Although other forms of participation can occur, engagement, alignment, and imagination are three significant distinct modes of identification (Wenger, 2010). Wenger argues that engagement is related to practice. It entails participating in what is done and in relations with other community members. It provides an experience in understanding who a teacher is, how a teacher participates in activities, and what skills are necessary. However, teachers are not simply involved within the physical borders of communities. They are also part of wider professional networks, which is defined as alignment. Meanwhile, imagination is a personal and social activity. It enables teachers to disconnect and examine the community as an outsider, take chances, explore new ideas, and engage in a new involvement process (Wenger, 1998, 2010).

Kelchtermans (1993) identified five aspects that allow teachers to understand their professional identity. First, self-image shows how an individual describes oneself as a teacher. Self-description statements could be conveyed as general principles that regulate the professional behavior of the teachers, or they may refer to how colleagues or parents perceive the teachers. Second, self-esteem is closely linked with the appreciation and evaluation of oneself as a teacher. It is connected and led by comparisons with others and can therefore be defined by balancing self-images and professional standards. The third aspect of identity is job motivation. It includes motivation to join and continue to stay in teaching. Fourth, task perception shows how teachers define their job. There is a vital role in the quality of the relationships with pupils and discursive skills. However, cooperation and self-interpretation of class behavior are essential features related to task perception. The last aspect is a future

perspective or future dimension in the professional self of teachers. It encompasses teachers' expectations of and how they feel about the future evolution of their work situation.

## **Language Teacher Identity**

The identity of the teacher is critical in determining how language is taught. Teachers implement their teaching practices, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions through their identities, affecting students' learning through the class atmosphere and teaching methods (Varghese et al., 2005). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) stated that teacher identity development encompasses an understanding of the self and self-concept in an external context (i.e., a classroom or a school) that requires self-examination with others. They argue that the teacher's identity is shaped and transformed by professional relationships with others. Similarly, Martel and Wang (2015) explain that interactions with significant people, personal biographies, and individual contexts significantly influence language teacher identity construction. Teachers could imply different roles in different contexts, situations, and environments. Sometimes these roles may be distant; sometimes, they may overlap. A language teacher could even play some of the roles simultaneously, depending on the circumstances in each educational context. Farrell (2011) stated that language teacher roles could be divided into ready-made roles (i.e., teacher as a caregiver, entertainer) or individually-created roles (teacher as a collaborator, learner, knowledgeable). Teachers can formulate these roles through their memoirs, stories or journals while sharing their teaching landscapes with others.

## **Methods**

The present study is a narrative case study (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007) that explores how two Indonesian postgraduate English student-teachers construct their teacher identities through learning experiences. As this study involves my learning experience as the data, the narrative inquiry may help me readdress my experiences and understand them (Tran, 2019). I took part in the study with my friend (Mia, a woman, pseudonym). By the time of the study, we were in the second semester of the postgraduate program. The participant's selection was based on the differences in teaching experience in school. While Mia has been teaching for more than ten years, I have been teaching for more than five years. Mia taught in a formal school, while I taught in a non-formal institution. I also chose a participant who was willing to get involved in this study.

Personal narratives and a semi-structured were held to collect the stories of the participants and my experiences related to teacher identity construction. In my narratives, I wrote several significant moments on how I learned and taught English. Then in an interview, rather than using a formal interview, I chose to conduct an interactive consisting of open-ended questions to make the participant comfortable telling her story. In addition, it enables the participants to describe their experiences and feelings (Seidman, 2006; Trahar, 2009). The interview lasted approximately two hours with zoom video conferences. The original interview guide consisted of 18 questions, all concerning the formation of teacher identity. Several questions were adapted from Gu and Benson (2015), and the rest were developed based on the conclusion and implications of the literature used in this study. All eighteen questions were asked in a semi-structured interview format. However, the order was changed, and there were further questions or discussions based on her answers.

During the interview, I listened to her own words and perspectives on her stories. I recorded these conversations and transcribed them. I went into specific topics further after reading and living with these transcriptions. Data analysis has been used to examine teacher identity formation at different stages in our careers in two student teachers and investigated which characteristics and experiences define us as teachers. Data analysis aims to identify narrative similarities and differences and to explore teachers' views, influences, and experiences in learning English. In order to ensure the trustworthiness (Gill, Gill, & Roulet, 2017) and verification of the interview data and minimize the interpretation in the final report, I reaffirmed the transcripts and the analysis of the stories to the participants to get her feedback and comments whether or not they were appropriate with her answer.

## **Findings**

In these narratives, I identified similar patterns that have shaped our student teacher's identities. Through my reflection and Mia's stories, the teaching formation process is framed in three categories: becoming a teacher, teachers' beliefs and knowledge, and professional teacher identity transformation. The first category has two dimensions: the role of families and former teachers, which has implications for the shift of my identity and Mia's.

### **Becoming a Teacher**

#### ***Role of families***

Families have seemed to shape the professional choices of student teachers in various ways, including implicit approval, expressed support and sometimes disagreement and discouragement (Clarke, 2008). The data identify the encouragement of family members who had been a teacher as some of the most recurring links between family and language-teacher decisions. The following two excerpts from Mia and I are representative:

I was once admitted into university through a special merit-based admission process called PMDK and passed it. But I did not take it because my parents said it was too far from home, and they thought it would be hard to find a job after college. They allowed me to go to college if I graduated right away to be a civil servant, e.g., The State College of Accountancy. I followed my parents' advice but did not pass. Then my parents suggested I take a course in college with an education course in my town. (Mia)

I grew up in a teacher's family, including my father, brothers, and sisters; yet, they were not the ones who inspired me to become a teacher. Eventually, when I was in the last semester of undergraduate study, my father once asked me what to do after graduation, and he suggested I become a teacher. (Khusna)

In the first excerpt, Mia explained in the entry interview why she had for choosing to teach. Her parents played a promising role, even if later she acknowledged it to be her 'decision' and clarified it as having no regrets. Mia told me that she never dreamed of being a teacher, although her aunt, uncle, and cousin are teachers. Rather than going to college, she chose to be a tailor to help her parents. However, as most of her family are teachers, her parents asked her to follow them.

Similarly, since most of my family members are teachers, at last, my parents asked me to follow them. He said to me that it was a good profession. Although actually, the act of becoming a teacher began for me sometime before I graduate. I found that teaching is challenging yet intriguing when I teach during my college, and it made me want to learn how to be a teacher. Nevertheless, the repeated explicit advice about the professional benefits of teaching from Mia's parents and mine might have influenced our choice.

### ***Role of teachers***

The data revealed the influence of our former teachers on our decisions about choosing to teach. The connection between past learning experiences and the desire to become a teacher appeared strong. It is apparent from the data that teachers provided models to either imitate or surpass. What teachers did as a result of their daily practice, behavior, or subject knowledge, for example, seemed to have impacted our aspirations on teaching either positively or negatively. The following extracts illustrate a good and bad model that played an influential role when the decision to become a teacher was made.

I chose English because my English teacher in junior high school inspired me. He was very good at teaching; he loved to sing in class. Then, when I was in my senior year, my English teacher always invited the students to practice speaking. We always learned at the language laboratory. (Mia)

When I was in junior year, I was taught by a teacher who joked over the dirty words in the class. His teaching sessions were often missed for half, and he gave assignments without any feedback. It all seemed to me that he was an indolent teacher. All the things that he could do were about joking. I thought he did not care about planning a good lesson. He looked down at his students sometimes as well. I had a turn one day to read out loud a paragraph. Since I was nervous about speaking loudly in front of all my friends, I did not realize I read fast. After I finished reading, my teacher quickly imitated me, which made all the students laugh. I was so embarrassed that I wanted to leave the class. It made me hate the teacher, but it also made me think that I would never be like him if someday I become a teacher. I will encourage students to try and appreciate their effort, even though it is wrong. (Khusna)

Mia showed how teachers had inspired her to choose language teaching. From the data, she realized her motivation for foreign languages emerged due to her former teachers. Not only did Mia show a strong sense of inspiration, but she also found the origin of her interest in English. Her teachers' image of subject knowledge and language skills revealed additional reasons for her alignment with foreign languages.

On the other hand, I reflected on a model of teaching that was not inspiring. I highlighted important considerations regarding the role of the teachers from the reflection. Their responsibilities and their professional engagement became my attention. It is evident that teaching requires both pedagogical knowledge and professional development as well as the commitment of teachers. These brought me to conform with a fundamentally critical social and ethical sense of teaching.

This section demonstrated how families and previous teachers played the role of teacher identity construction. It shows how relatives and inspiring teaching models directly

influenced the student teachers' decisions about becoming language teachers. Although affection and tenderness, class participation, and learning opportunities were immediately understood to be critical features, another teaching model was dismissed because of the professional lack of engagement of the teacher. Briefly, the results reveal that inspirational and uninspiring models are provided by teachers who seem to affect the choices of postgraduate student teachers about teaching.

### ***Teachers' Belief and Knowledge***

The process of constructing a teacher's identity can be manifested in teachers' systems of beliefs and knowledge. The student teachers' beliefs in this section discuss how their classroom practice is manifested. Teachers often encounter many problematic situations such as students' behavior, workload, curriculum adjustment, or teaching facilities to perform their job. This challenges teachers to maintain their professionalism while demonstrating their emotional ability. How teachers control their emotions keeps them committed and optimal in teaching. It is illustrated in the following excerpts:

As I teach students in a rural school with no internet access, I found it is not easy to teach students using media-based internet to learn English.... And they do not have English exposure either in primary school or in their daily environment. To cope with these challenges, I have adjusted the media that is properly suitable for the conditions there {her school}. Because I like scouts, I sometimes use scout games to avoid monotony. (Mia)

As we can see, in order to enhance students' understanding and enjoyment, Mia demonstrated an explicit knowledge of the use of the available learning media resources. These fundamental principles in Mia's pedagogical knowledge of the subject provide a thorough understanding of the role of teachers in the language classroom. While Mia encountered constraints related to teaching facilities, I found problems regarding pedagogical knowledge.

When I am explaining a material, my student asked me which I forgot the correct answer. I answered it a bit hesitantly. So, he said, "You know nothing, right?" with a sarcastic smile. At that moment, I knew he asked the question to test me. Usually, if I am unsure of a possible explanation for an answer, I say, "I will check it later". Then I will confirm the correct answer at the next meeting. Instead of lying or pretending to know the answer, I chose to tell the truth. (Khusna)

If Mia reflected as a knowledgeable teacher who was full of creativity, I found myself an unknowledgeable teacher who could not teach due to my cluelessness. When my student looked down on my ability, I thought, "Do I deserve to be a teacher?" However, I believed that my decision to honestly tell rather than pretend to know the answer was correct since I emphasized students' character in my classroom. Those conflicting situations made me more aware that I need to learn more in order to be a good teacher to my students.

Talking about students' behavior in the classroom, Mia commented on an obstacle she encountered when first beginning to be involved in the teaching profession. She recalled that she met with a teasing student when she was teaching in a senior high school by sending a private message.

So, I used to reply to the chat because I think he is my student, of course with the portion of the teacher-student. Then, when I went to the cafeteria, one of the sellers in the canteen asked, "Do you like to chat with Indra?" I said yes because it was a fact. Perhaps the student enjoys telling his friends that he often chats with me in "another" context. But actually, I positioned the teacher to the students only. Well, from there, I began to realize to be more careful. (Mia)

As a novice teacher at that time, she had to position herself as a teacher and friend. She affirmed, "Afterward, there were even some students who were like Indra (send a private chat) because maybe at that time they thought their age was not so far, another 5-6 years with me." This kind of student behavior became another conflicting situation regarding how teachers should behave. She believed that a teacher needed to build the relation outside of the classroom, not only in an academic context. As Kusmaryani et al., (2018) suggested, teachers' services cannot be separated from social interaction by educating, teaching, directing, guiding, training, assessing, and evaluating students. Therefore, she assumed that facilitating students to ask questions outside the classroom is one of the teacher's roles.

However, both Mia and I agreed that teaching is a dynamic profession. Sometimes we laugh at the students' actions, and sometimes also annoyed by their actions. If there is a saying that being a teacher makes us young, that is true. Because every day, there is something that keeps us young. Mia even said that being with children made her happy. She further said the children's world affects her aura and mood in daily life.

This section offers significant insights into the teaching beliefs and knowledge of postgraduate student teachers. Knowledge and pedagogy of subject matter may have been aligned in classroom practices coherently and incongruously. While Mia experienced professional inclusion and acknowledgement, exclusion also existed. I also reported a dual sense of mutual involvement when my student judges and evaluates me and explains my poor performance in the class during my teaching. This finding can help us understand how teaching identity emerges from an interplay between experience, cognition, emotion, and meaning-making.

### ***Professional Teacher Identity Transformation***

It is believed that becoming a teacher comprises a participation trajectory in which practice is essential. The teachers' professional identity, on the other hand, was developed as a result of a long training period which may start at the beginning of their learning experience. Thus, this section explores how the learning experience transforms the professional teacher identity of postgraduate student-teachers.

Mia discussed how she perceived English for the first time. At first, he felt that learning English was commonplace. After entering postgraduate studies, she found it is a liability to learn English as a student as well as a teacher. Mia expressed, "I think if it is called 'love English'.... many other areas are more pleasant for me." However, Mia thought that learning English had many impacts on her individually, academically, and professionally. She shared a lesson that she learned in postgraduate studies:

Previously, I thought students should be given tasks and homework to understand the subject material. After entering the postgraduate program, I feel that it was not wise to provide the students with many tasks, especially if the assignment was beyond their



burden. Therefore, I am more relaxed and less demanding about my teaching now. I am also inspired by one of my lecturers, who use the scaffolding method during the learning process. (Mia)

She elucidated:

There is a time when I want to travel. The impact of learning English makes me wish to explore further the outside world. I wish to be able to learn the language of a country of origin. Although a postgraduate program is not so influential for my promotion or position, I was motivated to continue my studies because I felt saturated with my work; I felt... I have to go to school again to expand my knowledge and skills. (Mia)

Mia also shared that when getting a teaching job for the first time. She felt she lacked pedagogical skills and realized she had a lot to learn about how to deal with the students in the class. Mia added that she put more emphasis on the character, spirituality, and social nature of the students since it is crucial in their daily lives. While Mia learned English as a commonplace, I considered it interesting since I enjoyed English lessons from primary school, which influenced my teaching practice.

In my undergraduate study, I tried to get a part-time job in college by teaching English. Perhaps it was the only job I could be good at. By teaching from one institution to another, I realized that I love being a teacher. The opportunity to be in various classrooms at different grade levels exposed me to multiple teaching styles and personalities. I could not teach all my students in the same style. I had to dwell on what methods I could use and be effective for some students. While teaching, I considered several media and methods that I learned in my studies. Sometimes I had to adjust certain strategies until I obtained the best approach for my students. Therefore, I joined various teachers' training and community in order to learn from diverse perspectives. (Khusna)

From the data, Mia and I illustrate how learning practice impacted our sense of professional development. There is a clear connection between our learning experience and our professional representation. The findings involve diverse ways of negotiated interaction and involvement with several professional communities that play an essential role in constructing, retaining, or transforming student teachers' professional identities.

## **Discussion**

It is suggested that teachers acquire a new identity due to their experience in learning to teach. This identity is formed or transformed by participating in a teacher community, developing teaching skills and competencies, and engaging in professional development, which is essential for comprehending how student-teachers shaped the teacher's meaning. While studied independently, these three elements have inter-relationships. For instance, the development of teaching abilities is linked to past learning experiences, teaching knowledge, and involvement in a teachers' community (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

This study examines the teacher identity of two Indonesian postgraduate student teachers, who are closely socially cultural but distinguished in the learning experience. It explores how they enact their teaching identity, reflect on their identity and construct their learning

knowledge during their learning experiences. This study focuses on developing teacher identity and reflects Britzman's (2003) notion that learning to teach is a time of dynamic tension between the past, the present, and the future. It is "the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become" (Britzman, 2003, p.31).

Becoming a teacher is a tough and challenging task. The process of building the meaning of teaching involves strengths of commitment, motivation, and professional development. As we see in both stories, the two student-teachers force their knowledge to become good teachers by studying for a postgraduate program. The teacher identity construction provided by participants entails a relationship between individuals and socials as other studies on English teacher identity (e.g., Clarke, 2008; Gu & Benson, 2015; Li, 2020; Tsui, 2007). In the construction of postgraduate student-teacher, reflection, relationships with students, emotional involvement, and teacher knowledge building work together, influence each other, and shape meanings and practices in all aspects. The determining factors are integrated into the identity construction process.

It was revealed that the participant and I choose teaching based on an implicit or explicit approach to families and prior teachers as well as our interest in learning foreign languages. These findings reflected Clarke (2008), who said that families and teachers play a crucial role in choosing to teach. Whether we remarked that teaching was our first choice, we realized that our families played a particular role by suggesting that teaching is the best option. Although the part of teachers as positive and negative role models relates not to any specific pedagogical subject but to teaching itself (Clarke, 2008), a student's admiration and a negative image of prior teachers become a part of constructing our teacher identities.

The teacher identity of the participants of this study is based on certain beliefs in the reflection of early studies (Au & Blake, 2003; Beijaard et al., 2004; Clarke, 2008). The results indicate that our knowledge and belief systems were crucial to foreign language teaching. It has gained significant insights, including the belief that English teachers need to adopt proper teaching practices. Although it was not entirely what the teacher did at the school, we were conscious of the need to offer additional learning alternatives. The current data suggested that beliefs and practice in the classroom may not always correlate, and it was aligned with the previous findings (i.e., L. Li & Walsh, 2011; Petek, 2013; Phipps & Borg, 2009). However, we did not judge if our beliefs on the pedagogical issues are true; we merely investigated how beliefs construct our professional identity because it is commonly recognized that beliefs influence professional practice and resist change (Peacock, 2001).

In the process of building a professional identity, practice often plays a significant role. In general, the data reveal a good alignment with the teaching profession reflected in our desire to pursue our education, visit an English-speaking country, and enhance our skills and teaching competence. As Wenger (1998) stated, our teaching identities evolve as we experience ourselves through our involvement and the conceptualization of self and others. Although we were not in an early stage of our profession, the findings provided an important insight into the enormous impact of our initial learning experience on our professional development. This impact could be seen in our desire for further study or involvement in the teachers' community to improve our quality.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, three interwoven fields were discussed to assist us in understanding how student teachers construct teacher identity. They were becoming teachers, teachers' beliefs and knowledge in classroom practice, and the transformation of professional identity. First, the study revealed the importance of families' and teachers' roles in developing, supporting, and transforming teacher identity. Secondly, the findings showed two different situations concerning the student teacher's belief and knowledge in classroom practice. Although there had been notable instances of consistency between beliefs and classroom behaviour, incongruent correlations had been shown. The study concluded that the learning experience (learn to teach) significantly impacted the teacher identity construction of postgraduate student-teachers in two different ways: alignment and resistance to the teaching profession.

The findings in this study contribute significantly to the continuing discussion on how teachers embrace a new identity. It is believed that teachers construct their identity as a result of the experience of learning to teach. This process develops long-term by involving several activities such as participating in broader teacher communities, developing teaching skills and taking professional development. While the learning to teach is shaped and experienced individually, it is negotiated socially. The construction of a teacher's identity not only includes personal knowledge and behaviour but is also influenced by ideological, political, cultural and teaching interests and conditions. However, a teacher education program plays a significant part in this process. It gives general pedagogical and subject knowledge and teaching experience, all of which are considered key to the teaching profession. In a nutshell, teacher identity, as indicated in the findings, involves comprehending the interaction between a complex and dynamic system of personal and social elements.

## **Acknowledgements**

The writers would like to deliver the greatest gratitude to the Indonesian Endowment Fund of Education (LPDP) for financial support.

## References

- Aghaei, P., Bavali, M., & Behjat, F. (2020). An in-depth qualitative study of teachers' role identities: A case of Iranian EFL teachers. *International Journal of Instruction*, *13*(2), 601–620. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13241a>
- Au, K. H., & Blake, K. M. (2003). Cultural identity and learning to teach in a diverse community: Findings from a collective case study. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *54*(3), 192–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487103054003002>
- Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *39*(2), 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640902902252>
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *20*(2), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001>
- Borg, M. (2004). The apprenticeship of observation. *ELT Journal*, *58*(3), 274–276. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/58.3.274>
- Borg, S. (2006). The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers. *Language Teaching Research*, *10*(1), 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1362168806lr182oa>
- Britzman, D. P. (2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 35–75). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Clarke, M. (2008). *Language Teacher Identities: Co-constructing discourse and community*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2005). The new teacher education : For better or for worse? *Educational Researcher*, *34*(7), 3–17.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education*, *24*, 249–305. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x024001249>
- Coldron, J., & Smith, R. (1999). Active location in teachers' construction of their professional identities. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *31*(6), 711–726. <https://doi.org/10.1080/002202799182954>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2011). Exploring the professional role identities of experienced ESL teachers through reflective practice. *System*, *39*(1), 54–62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.01.012>

- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(2), 219–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.09.002>
- Gill, M. J., Gill, D. J., & Roulet, T. J. (2017). Constructing trustworthy historical narratives: Criteria, principles, and techniques. *British Journal of Management*, 29(1), 191–205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12262>
- Gu, M. & Benson, P. (2015). The formation of English teacher identities: A cross-cultural investigation. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(2), 187–206. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168814541725>
- Han, I. (2016). Conceptualization of English teachers' professional identity and comprehension of its dynamics. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 23(5), 549–569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2016.1206525>
- Henry, A. (2019). A drama of selves: Investigating teacher identity development from dialogical and complexity perspectives. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 9(2), 263–285. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.t.2019.9.2.2>
- Johnston, B. (2003). *Values in English language teaching*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Johnston, J. (2012). Using identity as a tool for investigation: A methodological option in the researcher's toolbox. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 5(5), 1–9.
- Kaplan, A., & Garner, J. K. (2017). A complex dynamic systems perspective on identity and its development: The dynamic systems model of role identity. *Developmental Psychology*, 53(11), 2036–2051. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000339>
- Kelchtermans, G. (1993). Getting the story, understanding the lives: From career stories to teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 9(5–6), 443–456. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X\(93\)90029-G](https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(93)90029-G)
- Kelly, P. (2006). What is teacher learning? A socio-cultural perspective. *Oxford Review of Education*, 32(4), 505–519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980600884227>
- Kusmaryani, R. E., Siregar, J. R., Widjaja, H., & Jatnika, R. (2018). Professionalism on teacher's perception. *Psychological Research and Intervention*, 1(1), 2018, 26-31.
- Li, L., & Walsh, S. (2011). 'Seeing is believing': Looking at EFL teachers' beliefs through classroom interaction. *Classroom Discourse*, 2(1), 39–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463014.2011.562657>
- Li, W. (2020). Unpacking the complexities of teacher identity: Narratives of two Chinese teachers of English in China. *Language Teaching Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820910955>

- Malderez, A., Hobson, A. J., Tracey, L., & Kerr, K. (2007). Becoming a student teacher: Core features of the experience. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 30(3), 225–248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619760701486068>
- Martel, J., & Wang, A. (2015). Language teacher identity. In M. Bigelow & J. Enns-Kananen (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Educational Linguistics* (pp. 289–300). Routledge.
- Miller, J. (2009). Teacher identity. In A. Burns & J. C. Richards (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to second language teacher education* (pp. 172–181). Cambridge University Press.
- Olsen, B. (2008). How reasons for entry into the profession illuminate teacher identity development. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 35(3), 23–40.
- Peacock, M. (2001). Pre-service ESL teachers' beliefs about second language learning: A longitudinal study. *System*, 29(2), 177–195. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X\(01\)00010-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(01)00010-0)
- Petek, E. (2013). Teacher's beliefs about classroom interaction and their actual practices: A qualitative case study of a native and a non-native English teacher's in-class applications. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 1195–1199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.176>
- Phipps, S., & Borg, S. (2009). Exploring tensions between teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and practices. *System*, 37(3), 380–390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.03.002>
- Reeves, J. (2018). Teacher identity. In J. I. Lontas (Ed.) *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Reeves, J. (2018). Teacher identity. In J. I. Lontas (Ed.) *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Reeves, J. (2018). Teacher identity. In J. I. Lontas (Ed.) *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0268>
- Rodgers, C., & Scott, K. (2008). The development of the personal self and identity in learning to teach. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre, & K. E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions and changing contexts* (pp. 732–755). New York: Routledge.
- Sachs, J. (2005). Teacher education and the development of professional identity: Learning to be a teacher. In P. Denicolo & M. Compf (Eds.), *Connecting policy and practice: Challenges for teaching and learning in schools and universities* (pp. 5–21). Oxford: Routledge.
- Salinas, D., & Ayala, M. (2018). EFL student-teachers' identity construction: A case study in Chile. *HOW*, 25(1), 33–49.

- Sarasa, M. C. (2016). A narrative inquiry into pre-service English teachers' imagined identities. *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal*, 12(12), 96–114.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Review of interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. (3rd Ed.). Teachers college press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/032390>
- Simon-Maeda, A. (2004). The complex construction of professional identities: Female EFL educators in Japan speak out. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(3), 405.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3588347>
- Trahar, S. (2009). Beyond the story itself: Narrative inquiry and autoethnography in intercultural research in higher education. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-10.1.1218>
- Tran, H. T. T. (2019). An autobiographical narrative inquiry into the experiences of a Vietnamese mother: Living alongside children in transition to Canada. *in education*, 25(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.37119/ojs2019.v25i1.410>
- Tsui, A. B. M. (2007). Complexities of identity formation: A narrative inquiry of an EFL teacher. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(4), 657–680. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2007.tb00098.x>
- Varghese, M., Morgan, B., Johnston, B., & Johnson, K. A. (2005). Theorizing language teacher identity: Three perspectives and beyond. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 4(1), 21–44. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0401\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0401_2)
- Villegas, D. F. M., Varona, W. H., & Sánchez, A. G. (2020). Student teachers' identity construction: A socially-constructed narrative in a second language teacher education program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 91, 1–10.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103055>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. (2010). Communities of practice and social learning systems: The career of a concept. In C. Blackmore (Ed.), *Social Learning Systems and Communities of Practice* (pp. 179–198). London: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-84996-133-2\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-84996-133-2_11)
- Zhang, C., & Zhang, Y. (2018). Language teacher identity construction: Insights from non-native Chinese-speaking teachers in a Danish higher educational context. *Global Chinese*, 4(2), 271–291. <https://doi.org/10.1515/glochi-2018-0013>