VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY-HANOI

**UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES**

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**ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS’ CONSTRUCTION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY:**

**A CASE STUDY AT A UNIVERSITY**

**IN VIETNAM**

**(Kiến tạo nhân diện nghề nghiệp của giáo viên giảng dạy tiếng Anh**

**như một ngoại ngữ: Nghiên cứu trường hợp điển hình tại một trường đại học**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Rationale of the study

In recent years, a great deal of research interest in teacher identity is centered upon the study of teacher professional identity from different perspectives. I am also concerned with the study of teacher identity-related aspects. The motives, which encouraged me to conduct this research, constituted the prevalent theme of professional identity, my own curiosity about my colleagues’ professional identity and the aspiration of the teachers themselves for the exploration of their professional identity.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Over the last years, it is recognized that Vietnam has been lacking in more studies related to teacher identity in general and university EFL teachers’ professional identity in particular. In addition, most studies are recognized to have paid little attention to spontaneously investigating three types of teachers, comprising novice teacher, experienced teacher and expert teacher. Furthermore, few studies have concentrated upon four aspects of (re)construction, reconstruction and negotiation simultaneously.

1.3. Aims and objectives

The objectives of this study are to investigatethe EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product, and to analyzing the external and internal factors that significantly exercise their influence on the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity.

1.4. Research questions

This study was carried out to address two research questions, (RQ1) *How do the EFL teachers (re)construct and (re)negotiate their professional identity?* and (RQ2) *What factors significantly influence the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity?*

1.5. Scope of the study

This study places focus on *investigating three EFL teachers’ professional identity* *as process and product*. Three participating teachers involve *a novice teacher*, *an experienced teacher* and *a teacher expert*. Also, it concentrates upon *analyzing what* *factors* significantly influence such (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity. In this study, the participating teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product as well as the dominant factors influencing such (re)construction and (re)negotiation were *perceived by the teachers themselves and interpreted by the researcher*.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study makes a useful contribution to language teacher education and teacher development theoretically and practically. *Theoretically*, it contributes to identifying teacher identity in general and gaining more insights into the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of professional identity of the EFL teachers working in a Vietnamese higher education context in particular. *Practically*, the *EFL teachers* have a more comprehensive understanding of themselves. Thanks to such teachers’ reflections, *stakeholders* in education can support them of their own professional development. Moreover, it can be suggested as *the medium of approaching further studies* on teacher identity-related issues in the future.

1.7. Research methodology

The research paradigm of this study is grounded in *constructivism*,which holds a *relativist ontology* and *subjectivist epistemology*. Within the constructivist paradigm, its research design is *qualitative case study*. In this study, case study methodology is used for investigating the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of professional identity of three EFL teachers working in a Vietnamese higher education context; and analyzing what factors significantly influence such (re)construction and (re)negotiation in a teaching life. The theoretical framework of this study was constructed from the combined frameworks of Wenger (1998) and Olsen (2008, 2016), named *“Teacher Professional Identity Model”*. The research instruments used for gathering data involve *guided reflective writings, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations*.

1.8. Structure of the thesis

This thesis is systematically organized into seven chapters, including Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Literature Review), Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), Chapter 4 (Professional identity as process), Chapter 5 (Professional identity as product), Chapter 6 (Influencing factors), Chapter 7 (Conclusion). The parts followed by Chapter 7 include List of Published Studies, References and Appendices.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 offers a critical review of literature on identity-related aspects (e.g., concepts of key terminologies, overview of previous theoretical frameworks and previous studies).

2.1. Identity and identity-related issues

2.1.1. Identity

*2.1.1.1. Identity conceptualization*

Wenger’s (1998) proposes that one’s identity does not live only in the way one talks or thinks about oneself, or only in the way others talks or think about one, but in the way one’s identity is lived day-to-day. Norton (2013) defines identity as how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future.

*2.1.1.2. Identity (re)construction and (re)negotiation*

Burns and Bell (2011) points out that one’s identity is constantly constructed and reconstructed in interaction with the others in socially-valued activities (p. 958). Norton (2010) comments that “every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganizing that relationship across time and space” (p. 350). Wenger (1998, p. 149) thinks that identity is closely related to practice and the construction of one’s identity is a dual process of identification and negotiation of meanings.

2.1.2. Teacher identity and language teacher identity

*2.1.2.1. Teacher identity and language teacher identity conceptualization*

Teacher identity has been used in academic research to describe how teachers seem to understand themselves as teachers (Ball and Goodson, 1985) whereas language teacher identity refers to the way language teachers see themselves and understand who they are in relation to the work they do. It is also the way others, including their colleagues and students and institutions, see them (Pavlenko, 2003; Morgan, 2004). Also, teacher identity is used to mention “the influence on teachers, how individuals see themselves, and how they enact their profession in their settings” (Varghese, 2006, p. 212).

*2.1.2.2. Teacher identity and language teacher identity (re)construction and (re)negotiation*

Teacher identity is a multifaceted and dynamic process that constantly shifts across time and space. Danielewicz (2001, p. 3) perceives becoming a teacher is “an identity forming process”, which is constructed not by the teachers themselves but also by others. The (re)construction and (re)negotiation of teacher identity can be considered the process of interpretation and negotiation of meanings of teachers’ lived experiences and interactions embedded in social-cultural contexts (Kerby, 1991; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Wenger, 1998; Olsen, 2010).

2.1.3. Teacher professional identity

*2.1.3.1. Teacher professional identity conceptualization*

Teacher professional identity is not a fixed property and is a dynamic process which is socially situated and is differentiated from a teacher’s role (Olsen, 2012). Also, professional identity is an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences (Kerby, 1991). My working definition of this study: “*Teacher professional identity is conceptualized as an ongoing process and a product to be (re)constructed and (re)negotiated in socio-cultural contexts”*.

*2.1.3.2. Teacher professional identity (re)construction and (re)negotiation*

The (re)construction and (re)negotiation of teacher professional identity is considered *a process* of reconciling the personal and professional sides of becoming and being a teacher (Olsen, 2010) or involving many knowledge sources (Antonek et al., 1997) and struggles (Knowles, 1992). The (re)construction and (re)negotiation of teacher professional identity as *product* refers to “a given person’s professional identity” through the way teachers themselves and are recognized by others (Gee, 2000; Clarke, 2008).

*2.1.3.3. Characteristics of teacher professional identity*

Professional identity implies both person and context, sub-identities, and agency (Coldron and Smith, 1999, cited in Beijaard et al., 2004).

2.2. Factors influencing teacher professional identity (re)construction and (re)negotiation

The process of identity (re)construction and (re)negotiation can be influenced by a variety of factors, such as the social relationships and interactions with others within a sociocultural, historical, and institutional context; emotions; values; beliefs; traditions; educational background; discourses; and job and life experiences; among many others (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2012; Coldron and Smith, 1999; Palmer, 1997; Zembylas, 2003).

2.3. Theoretical foundation in teacher identity studies

2.3.1. An overview of theoretical frameworks in teacher identity studies

In the domain of teacher education, many educational researchers have taken a number of theoretical frameworks into consideration with the intent to explore teacher identity construction (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991; Mockler, 2011; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Engeström, 2001; Gee, 2012; Olsen, 2008).

*2.3.1.1. Vygotsky’s (1978) social constructivism*

“Vygotsky’s social constructivism”as a source of socio-cultural and socio-cognitive theoretical propositions provides the theoretical foundation for a wide variety of current studies, especially the study of identity.

*2.3.1.2. Engeström’s (2001) activity theory*

“Activity theory”can be used as a theoretical framework in the study of teacher identity based on Engeström’s Expended Activity Theory Model.

*2.3.1.3. Positioning theory*

“Positioning theory” is used as a theoretical framework in teacher identity studies in and through discourse.

*2.3.1.4. Mockler’s (2011) theoretical framework*

“Mockler’s theoretical framework”can be used for exploiting the formation and mediation of teacher professional identity within particular social-cultural contexts.

*2.3.1.5. Olsen’s (2008, 2016) theoretical frameworks*

Olsen’s (2008, 2016) sociocultural frameworks of teacher identity is developed towards the understanding of identity as a circular continuum influenced by the teacher histories in the past, current practice in their school contexts, and future aspiration.

*2.3.1.6. Wenger’s (1998) theoretical framework*

Wenger’s theoretical frameworks consist of Lave and Wenger’s (1991) social theory of learning and Wenger’s (1998) communities of practice.

###### **Communities of practice**

Communities of practices (Wenger, 1998) contributes to the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of teacher professional identity.

###### **Social participation**

Participation is always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning in the world (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 51).

###### **Identity formation**

Identity formation is *a dual process of identification and negotiability* that can give rise to participation as well as non-participation in various communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

###### **Wenger’s three modes of belonging - engagement, imagination, and alignment**

To further describe people’s ways of identifying with communities (“identification”) and the corresponding ways of communicating with others (“negotiability”), Wenger (1998) develops three *“*modes of belonging”: engagement, imagination, and alignment.

2.3.2. Critique of theoretical frameworks

If the positioning theory reflects clear understanding on (re)construction of identities through discourse(Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2012), the sociocultural theory contributes to understanding teachers as learners of teaching and professional learning (Engeström, 2001; Mockler, 2011) or interpretation of the process of teacher identity development at all stages of their careers and in all contexts where they live and work (Olsen, 2008, 2016; Wenger, 1998).

2.4. Previous studies on teacher professional identity

Over the last decade, teacher professional identity has emerged as a separate research area (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004; Mead, 1934; Erikson, 1968; Bullough, 1997;; Knowles, 1992; Olsen, 2008).

2.5. Chapter summary

This chapter gives a brief account of the literature on teacher identity in general and teacher professional identity in particular (e.g., definitions, characteristics or previous studies).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter represents the methodology and methods of data collection and analysis applied to this study.

3.1. Research paradigm

Following the constructivist paradigm, this study is based on *the relativist ontology*, *the subjectivist epistemology* and *the qualitative methodology* that are further discussed in this section.

3.2. Theoretical framework of the study

The theoretical framework for this study, named “Teacher Professional Identity Model”, was constructed based on the combined frameworks of Olsen (2008, 2016) and Wenger (1998).

3.3. Case study

*The qualitative case study methodology*, in this study, is employed to investigate the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product as well as analyze which factors significantly influence such (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity. The participants of the study involve a total of three EFL teachers working in a Vietnamese higher education context. Each participating teacher is considered a single case that means this study contains more than a single case and amultiple case study is required. In other words, the *multiple case study* is corresponding to this study.

3.4. Research setting

The participants of the study have worked as EFL teachers at a police school so far. As a multi-disciplinary educational training institution, its main duties are to educate professional cadres with bachelor, master and doctoral degrees, and spontaneously forming a source of key cadres as the spearhead of the police force of Vietnam.

3.5. Research participants

Three female EFL teachers (referred to herein, “**Teacher 1**”, “**Teacher 2**”, “**Teacher** 3”) were selected as participants who were enthusiastically involved in this study. By the time the teachers joined in the research, they were colleagues who worked at the same school. So far, they have still worked as English teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages directly governed by one of the key higher education institutions in the police force of Vietnam. Three EFL teachers have got enough qualifications (e.g., academic standard, professional ability, or military knowledge) and much teaching experience that cater for their teaching profession at the police school.

3.6. Data collection tool

In order to gather multiple data sources, three research instruments utilized in this study were *guided reflective writings, semi-structured interviews,* and *classroom observations*. The acquired data from these instruments were analyzed, triangulated and collated to investigate the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of professional identity as process and product and influencing factors and to avoid being restricted to the description or interpretation of the phenomenon from only one single perspective.

3.6.1. Preliminary study

The preliminary study offered me a general picture of some relevant aspects of theoretical framework (Wenger, 1998), data collection (reflective writing), data analysis under Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis, and findings discussion. This is really useful for the implementation of this study.

3.6.2. Guided reflective writings

This study employed “*guided reflective writings*” as the first research instrument to collect the data. The use of guided reflective writings constitutes the telling and documenting of teachers’ own lived experiences (Coffey, 2014; Olsen, 2016) or, in other words, the profound understanding of teachers’ private or unique worlds (Pavlenko, 2007; Le, 2018), which contributes to investigating the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation as process and product and the influencing factors throughout a teacher’s life. *The participants began with the initial writings in early November 2021 and finished this work in early June 2022*.

3.6.3. Semi-structured interviews

*Semi-structured interviews* were selected as the second research instrument for collecting the data in this study. One-to-one interviewing were made to have better access to the involved teachers’ backgrounds, perceptions and experiences throughout their teaching career (Kelchtermans 1994; McNamara, 1999; Richards, 2003; Dörnyei, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interviews were immediately made upon collecting all the writing papers from the participants. The group of participants constituted three teachers, who participated in the interviews after completion of their guided reflective writings. Three interviews were officially conducted face-to-face in a cozy atmosphere. One-to-one interviewing was made on different periods and dates of June 2022.

3.6.4. Classroom Observations

This study used “*classroom observations*” as the third research instrument *as an addition to gather the data*; however, this study focused mainly on guided reflective writings and semi-structured interviews. As an addition only to data collection, classroom observations were made once only per teacher.

3.7. Analytical procedures

This study used *Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis* to analyze the collected data, which were broken down into codes and themes. The thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006) is a process of analysis or a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data through six steps. Here is an overview of the process of analysis through six steps in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6. The Procedures for Data Analysis

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Steps** | **Descriptions** |
| 1. Familiarizing myself with my data: | Transcribing data (*transcribing*), reading and re-reading the data (*repeated reading*), taking note of initial ideas or general notes (*note-taking*) 🡪 **NOTES** |
| 2. Generating potential codes: | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set (*Manual Coding*), then collating data relevant to each code 🡪 **CODES** |
| 3. Searching for potential themes: | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme  🡪 **POTENTIAL THEMES** |
| 4. Reviewing the potential themes: | Checking if the potential themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, combining in each group 🡪 **SUB-THEMES** |
| 5. Defining the sub-themes and naming the potential final themes | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each sub-theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, collating and combining in each group 🡪 **POTENTIAL** **FINAL THEMES** |
| 6. Producing the report | Final analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis  🡪 **FINAL THEMES** |

3.8. Trustworthiness

The issue of trustworthiness of research is central to every research. Guba and Lincoln (1994) have proposed a set of criteria to judge the trustworthiness of interpretive research. Research is considered to be of good quality if it has credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114). The trustworthiness of the study was ensured based on various strategies (*triangulation, colleague relationship, my supervisors, and seminar participation*). This contributed to enhancing the validity and reliability of the study.

3.9. Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are seen as one of the essential prerequisites for every research that supports researchers of reducing the risks over participants. Specifically, when carrying out research and collecting data, it is important for researchers to give heed to their participants’ autonomy and privacy because ethical issues relate to the participants who directly determine the reliability of the collected data. Due to my consciousness of their necessity, I paid attention to ethical issues while carrying out the research. In this study, I directly socialized with the involved teachers to ask for their consent and then provide them with the details of study-related aspects (e.g., the purpose of the study or the participants’ roles and rights) prior to the collection of data. While conducting the study, every scheduled or even potential aspects were informed and explained in advance.

3.10. Chapter summary

This chapter discusses the methodology and methods employed for data collection and analysis from the start of research paradigm to the rationale behind the choice of the methodology.

CHAPTER 4: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AS PROCESS

Chapter 4 is established to answer the first research question *“How do the EFL teachers (re)construct and (re)negotiate their professional identity?”*.

4.1. The process of becoming

4.1.1. Prior teaching considerations

“Prior teaching considerations” was identified as the initial theme of the process of becoming. This theme was generalized from reviewing and collating the sub-themes (*preliminary thoughts of choosing teaching, thinking about becoming an EFL teacher, and final decision to become an EFL teacher*). This part represented the evolution of the participants’ professional identity from their preliminary thoughts to teaching to their official entry into teaching.

*4.1.1.1. Preliminary thoughts of choosing teaching*

1. **Family tradition**

*Family tradition* can be seen as an inspiration or an incentive to opt for teaching. In this study, therefore, family tradition was defined as one of the fundamental aspects that affected the involved teachers’ preliminary thoughts of choosing the teaching. *Family tradition* or *family members’ entry into teaching* offered opportunities for the participating teachers not only to grasp the meaning of teaching at an early stage but also to reflect on their initial thoughts and aspirations for their future career. All of the participating teachers have always received support from their family members; however, the most influential person in their life and career is their beloved mother.

1. **Social inheritance**

Social inheritance does not seem to directly refer to the involved teachers’ thoughts of the teaching; however, it is like *the foundations of or aspirations for their future caree*r. In this study, social inheritance can be understood as the inherited traditions from the participants’ social environments or hometowns on the alignment with the profession at the early stage.

1. **Initial thinking about English language**

Initial access to English created a distinct impression on the personal feelings for this new language. This aspect also contributed to shaping the involved teachers’ early thinking on the English language.

*4.1.1.2. Thinking about becoming an EFL teacher*

Further important aspect that affected the involved teachers’ preliminary thoughts of choosing the teaching was their thinking about becoming EFL teachers.

*4.1.1.3. Final decision to become an EFL teacher*

1. **Family aspiration**

Family aspiration was the initial aspect that officially impacted on the participants’ final thinking on their career choices.

1. **Former English teacher**

The second aspect that officially impacted on the participants’ final thinking on their career choices was former English teacher.

1. **The importance of English language**

Another aspect that affected the participants’ final thinking on their career choices was the importance of English language.

1. **Self-desire**

The following aspect that officially impacted on the participants’ final thinking on career choice was their desires or personal decisions.

4.1.2. Training perceptions: Learn to teach

“Training perceptions: learn to teach” was identified as the second theme of the process of becoming. This theme was generalized from reviewing and collating the sub-themes (*initial teacher education: university training perceptions, continuing teacher education: post-graduate training perceptions, and continuing teacher education: other professional development programs*). This part represented the subsequent evolution of the EFL teachers’ professional identity through their positive and negative experiences during the teacher training and development programs when they acted as teacher training students or even teachers.

*4.1.2.1. Initial teacher education: university training perceptions*

The participants of this study went through the university training program as the initial teacher education that contributed to gradually developing a sense of self as a teacher. All of them underwent a great number of positive and negative experiences during the training program. Every teacher enjoyed various university experiences; however, T1’experiences sounded a bit different from those of the two remaining teachers. Probably, she completed her university course with her major in English for police at a police school whilst the rest graduated in English language teacher education at the ULIS.

*4.1.2.2. Continuing teacher education: post-graduate training perceptions*

The continuing teacher education that stimulated the involved teachers’ gradual development of a sense of self as a teacher was the post-graduate training program. Every teacher differently got over a multitude of positive and negative experiences during this training program.

*4.1.2.3. Continuing teacher education: other professional development programs*

The continuing teacher education was the participants’ engagement in other professional development programs. Such involvement contributed to enhancing their English proficiency levels, perceiving more practical pedagogical knowledge, and satisfying their workplace’s requirements. Generally, three involved teachers underwent a variety of positive and negative experiences during the periods of involvement.

4.1.3. Prior teaching perceptions

In this study, “Prior teaching perceptions” was clarified as the third theme of the process of becoming. This theme was generalized from reviewing and collating the key sub-themes (*the lack of prior teaching experience, the possession of prior teaching experience, and official phases of teaching*). This part represented the evolution of the participants’ professional identity in the phases of prior teaching. In this part, the participants were grouped by teaching experience. T1 alone belonged to a group of teachers with the lack of prior teaching experience whilst the remaining were arranged into a group of teachers with the possession of prior teaching experience.

*4.1.3.1. The lack of prior teaching experience*

T1 attended the university with her major in English for police at the police school. She worked as an English teacher since when she graduated from the university. In reality, almost all of knowledge acquired from the university were unrelated to the pedagogy for teaching, so she did not have any theoretical knowledge of pedagogy or any practical experience in classroom teaching. Due to her self-consciousness of her limitations on English language competence and the pedagogical knowledge, she *felt quite worried* about all teaching-related aspects (e.g., ways of teaching, students’ learning behaviors or attitudes, how to deal with unexpected situations in the class). To overcome these difficulties, she *made* *necessary preparations* for the enhancement of English competence and the cultivation of pedagogical knowledge.

*4.1.3.2. The possession of prior teaching experience*

Both T2 and T3 gradually accumulated much theoretical and practical experience in teaching from the involvement in teacher training (i.e., overtime work and practicum) to the real teaching (i.e., entry into real teaching). Each phase of teaching brought these teachers a great deal of differently positive and negative experiences.

1. **Access to initial teaching: overtime work**

“Overtime work” was considered the initial phase of teaching, in which two involved teachers enjoyed various experiences.

1. **Access to continuing teaching: university or post-graduate practicum**

“University or post-graduate practicum” was regarded as the continuing phase of teaching, in which two involved teachers went through distinctive experiences.

*4.1.3.3. Official phases of real teaching*

“Official phases of real teaching” was defined as the continuing phase of teaching, in which three involved teachers underwent their positive and negative experiences separately.

4.2. The process of being

The process of being, in this study, was explored mostly in the two remaining stages of the model, including current teaching context/practice (stage 5), and future career plans (stage 6).

4.2.1. Current teaching perceptions

4.2.1.1. Teacher knowledge

“Teacher knowledge” as the groundwork for every teacher’s teaching practice and development refers to *teacher ideologies, beliefs and values about education, teaching and learning* as well as *teacher professional images*. The shaping of teacher knowledge seems not fixed, on the contrary, variable in the teaching process. Three cases herein exemplify this.

4.2.1.2. Teaching-related aspects

“Teaching-related aspects” refers to *teaching experience, interaction and relationship with colleagues and students, teaching environment* as well as *a sense of teaching*. These aspects also have a part in forming the stronger sense of teaching during the process of teaching practice.

4.2.2. Future professional goals

The second theme of the process of being to be identified from the collated data was “future professional goals”. Each participant came up with a number of goals.

4.3. Professional identity as process (case-by-case)

The acquired results acknowledged the professional identity of the participating teachers - three cases - as a dynamic and ongoing, not fixed or stable, process of becoming and being EFL teachers that has changed over time and space in different ways. In this study, the process of every case was manifested by the process of becoming and the process of being.

**Case One: Teacher 1’s professional identity as process**

Teaching was *not really T1’s dream*. Although she did *not worry* too much about choosing teaching as her future job, she encountered *a lot of difficulty in teaching*. The reason was her graduation with the Bachelor’s Degree in English for police, not English language teacher education, with the result that she had *no pedagogic knowledge* and *no practical teaching experience*. So as to overcome the difficulties, she *attempted* to develop her English proficiency and cultivate her pedagogic knowledge by various means. Also, she had to register for a master training course in English language teacher education with an intent to consolidate and further acquire pedagogic knowledge. Accordingly, *her initial involvement in her official teaching* at the school where she had attended the university was *very challenging* to her. At that time, she had much trouble in the teaching. After the periods of struggle, she became *accustomed* *to the teaching* job and was *always self-aware* *of her job position* - an English teacher - with her growing sense of teaching responsibility. She gained little-by-little practical experience of teaching. Currently, she continues teaching many different classes with the *flexible use* of teaching strategies/techniques, enjoys the *confidence* of controlling the class, and *keeps self-studying* as well as *learning more* from other teachers’ lessons. She shows a *readiness for change* in her way of teaching provided that such change can motivate her students’ interest in learning or cater to their learning needs.

**Case Two: Teacher 2’s professional identity as process**

As for T2, she was *not really into* the teaching job, so she had *no intention* of being a teacher like her mother. She always dreamed of working for a professional foreign workplace to make a living with high salary to enhance my living standards. Despite this, eventually, she *herself decided* to pursue teaching career simply due to the fact that she had *no other choice but* to become an English teacher at the time of decision making. She was quite keen onlearning, so she regularly devoted most of her time to her study towards the development of self and her better future. She found that *learning as one of the best means of investment* could contribute to developing herself for a purpose of ensuring a brighter future career and make her life better. Besides, she was *active in working overtime* as an English tutor to cover her every day expenditures partly due to her unconditional family *background* and partly due to her personal aspiration to experience the realities of daily life as well as accumulate her teaching experience gradually. *To become a teacher*, she succeeded in her attempt to get the Degree of Bachelor and the Degree of Master in English language teacher education. *Accessing to* *the early stages of her official teaching* at the NEU was not really challenging for her. At that time, she had no trouble in the teaching and everything went smoothly. Even when *leaving for a new school* - moving from the NEU to a police school - she quickly became accustomed to the fresh work environment. She demonstrated her willingness to *adjust herself to necessary changes* in the teaching-related aspects. In spite of such changes, everything has gone smoothly without any hindrances. She is *always conscious of her social roles* as well as *the sense of teacher responsibility*. She has *achieved much experience* of teaching English, *expressed her confidence* of solving all professional matters advantageously and *enjoyed work-life balance* harmoniously that contributed to increasing the effectiveness of teaching periods, motivating the students’ active engagement, or controlling the psychological matters Throughout her teaching life, she has devoted *a great deal of hard effort to further develop herself* by cultivating her knowledge of English and professional pedagogy. Also, she will be *quite willing to adjust herself to change*s in her way of teaching if she thinks that such really need for the students’ learning.

**Case Three: Teacher 3’s professional identity as process**

Compared with the two said teachers, becoming a teacher - following in her mother’s footstep - was *always T3’s dream*. She was really impressed with her mother’s professional image that shaped her early thinking on the teaching. Aside from *her aspiration for the teaching* and *her passion for English*, her mother and high school English teacher were also regarded as *the role models* who were enormously influential in her official entry into teaching - becoming a teacher of English. Actually, *becoming a teacher* was her high-ranking career orientation, so she did not have to waste too much time and effort on her thinking about her future job. In order to make her dream come true, she fully completed the 4-year bachelor and master training programs in English language teacher education with effort and determination. *Accessing to the early stages of her official teaching* was relatively advantageous to her because her first workplace was the high school where she had ever participated in the university practicum course. Afterwards, she has *moved to the other workplaces twice* (a technical police college and a police school). Every time she changed, she adjusted herself to such new schools very quickly. She demonstrated her *willingness to alter her opinions* about a number of teaching-related aspects for a purpose of catering to such fresh work environments. In spite of such changes, everything has gone smoothly without difficulty. She has *always raised her awareness of the many roles* (teacher, partner, guider/instructor, supervisor) as well as *the sense of teacher responsibility*. Of these three involved teachers, she is recognized to accumulate *the most teaching experience*. She enjoys her *confidence* of dealing with all teaching-related issues effectively. *Throughout her teaching life, she has attempted to further better herself* by increasing her knowledge of English and pedagogics in various forms *In the future,* *she will continue* improving herself, performing her teaching, and adapting herself to changes in teaching if she feels that such are essential for her students’ learning.

4.4. Chapter summary

Chapter 4 demonstrated that the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of *professional identity as process* represented by *the process of* *becoming* and *process* *of being.*

CHAPTER 5: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AS PRODUCT

Chapter 5 is established to address the first research question “*How do the EFL teachers (re)construct and (re)negotiate their professional identity?*”. This chapter recognizes the EFL teachers’ professional identity as product (*the cases agglomerated and case-by-case*)

5.1. Professional identity as product (the cases agglomerated)

5.1.1. Developing a clear awareness of school disciplines and policies

All the participants have worked as not only university English teachers but also official members in the police force. This has strongly affected the inner and outer thoughts of these three teachers about the teaching which includes but is not limited to the *sense of discipline alignment*. They have to strictly abide by the rules and regulations of both the school and police forces. In other words, aside from the teaching responsibility, the teachers have to increasingly develop their awareness about the regulatory compliance and execution (e.g., their awareness of confidentiality and data protection regulations or their individual responsibility for satisfying job requirements)

5.1.2. Taking over numerous roles

Apart from the teaching, these teachers have been involved in many other activities with various roles (e.g., a guide, a motivator, an assistant, a part of group or a police officer). In their views, such role also brings in a number of advantages and disadvantages that contribute to affecting or even changing their own thoughts about the current teaching

5.1.3. Developing self-awareness and self-knowledge

The participating teachers’ initial thinking of teaching was shaped since their childhood. In the process of becoming and being a teacher, every teacher’s self-awareness and self-knowledge has been gradually developed in their social-cultural contexts through interaction. At first, the teachers’ preliminary thoughts or imagination of the teaching was constructed. Progressively, the teachers’ self-awareness and self-knowledge has been extended through interaction in their teaching life, which originated in the construction of their teaching philosophies (e.g., education, learning, teaching, professional image or ideology).

5.1.4. Showing the feelings of unsuitability for scientific research

The participants understand the meaning of these research-related activities; however, the research work is really a tough challenge to them. Scientific research can be viewed as one of the important activities that asks the majority of university teachers to join in. In the process of becoming and being a teacher, three involved teachers have paid attention to research-related activities beside the teaching. The participants understand the meaning of these research-related activities; however, the research work is really a tough challenge to them

5.2. Professional identity as product (case-by-case)

5.2.1. Case One: Teacher 1’s professional identity as product

**Being a university EFL novice teacher**

While getting involved in this study, she has officially worked as an EFL teacher at university for seven years. *She senses that her teaching experience seems inadequate and she resembles a university EFL novice teacher*. As a university English teacher, it is necessary for her to continue improving herself and accumulating further teaching experience. With her inadequate teaching experience, she has, therefore, regarded herself as a novice university EFL teacher. She needs to make more efforts, study more and teach more that can contribute to performing her teaching and satisfying the career’s demands

**Being an “inactive” teacher**

She is always conscious of her part as a university EFL teacher as well as her professional responsibilities. She has made efforts to complete all the teaching-related works as effectively as possible (e.g., imparting knowledge, motivating the students’ interest, preparing for the lessons well, managing the students or updating the latest teaching methods) and develop herself to satisfy her teaching career. When being asked, she has positioned herself, on the one hand as an active teacher, but on the other hand as an “inactive” teacher. According to her explanation, her image as an “inactive” teacher has been manifested differently in various aspects. Regarding the classroom management, her “inactive” image can be identified *as an “inflexible” teacher*. In terms of professional ambition, her “inactive” image can be visualized *as an “unambitious” teacher*. In light of research-related activities, her “inactive” image can be defined *as an outsider teacher or a lazy researcher*.

**Being a teacher with dependent proneness and inferiority feelings**

She positions herself as *a dependent person* who lacks self-determination. She depends on chiefly her family members and colleagues in her life. In the process of becoming and being an English teacher, she has depended entirely on other people’s advice, chiefly from her colleagues, on her teaching. Relying on such advice, she can be ready to change her teaching opinions without her thorough considerations. When she was a young kid, she had no thought of choosing the teaching job. And even as a university student, being an English teacher was not still her desire because she thought that English competence was not enough to teach this subject. It was her limited English proficiency that contributed to shaping her *initial feeling of inferiority.* During the process of becoming and being an English teacher, she has had *a sense of inferiority* beside her growing consciousness of her teaching job. Her general knowledge of English language and teaching pedagogy has made her lack confidence and even *feel inferior since her entry into teaching*. In everyday life, she normally says that she is a police officer if being asked. When she takes part in a number of teaching-related workshops outside the workplace, she often positions herself as an English teacher. Honestly, she is not confident of her self-identity as an English teacher in such education programs. Besides, her superficial knowledge of research works and her unconsciousness of their attractiveness can be also considered a culprit of causing her *feeling of inferiority*.

5.2.2. Case Two: Teacher 2’s professional identity as product

**Being a university EFL experienced teacher**

While participating in this study, she has official worked as an official EFL teacher at university for sixteen years. *With many years of teaching experience, she can be regarded as a university EFL experienced teacher*. Until the time of her involvement in this study, she has worked as a university EFL teacher for 16 years of experience. She believes the 16-year course of time is considered the duration of her accumulation of teaching experience. Furthermore, she enjoys the confidence of her English proficiency level and sound professional competence. Therefore, she confidently represents herself as a university English teacher experiencer

**Being a serious and outspoken, but sociable teacher**

She can be recognized as *a serious and outspoken, but sociable teacher*. The word “serious”, herein, implies that she is quite serious about her study (“a serious learner”) and work (“as a serious teacher”). In order to put herself in her current position as a university English teacher experiencer, she ceaselessly has made serious efforts in her teaching life. The way she represents herself can be identified as *an outspoken teacher*. If many people tend to be afraid of voicing their opinions, she is quite straightforward about her personal views. She dares not only acknowledge her failures and shortcomings (e.g., unsatisfactory results for international exams or pronunciation mistakes) but also show a straight talk about teaching-related aspects (e.g., English teachers or students). Aside from being a serious teacher, she also positions herself as *a sociable teacher*. She is quite enthusiastic about the school’s extra-activities (e.g., sports events or music contests) beside the teaching. She learns a great number of useful things from such conversations and activities (e.g., making new people, enjoying cultural and academic exchanges, sharing information about social issues or promoting team cooperation skills). With regard to the students, she regularly gives face-to-face talks to them with her positive attitudes that can be considered a way of stimulating interest in their study. In her teaching lessons, she desires to create a positive learning environment for her students. Accordingly, she often spends a little time telling a variety of humorous stories, giving funny examples or sharing her learning styles and learning material sources with her students.

**Being a self-reliant and determined teacher**

Self-reliance and determination can be considered the key to her professional identity. These two characteristics have been shaped since she was a child, as she can be recognized *as a self-reliant and determined teacher*. She shows her self-reliance and determination on every work-life-study aspect. She can do everything independently without confusion or disturbance (e.g., taking care of herself, doing self-study or earning her living). Relying on her knowledge and competence, she not only accomplishes all the tasks effectively but also develops herself with her determination.

5.2.3. Case Three: Teacher 3’s professional identity as product

**Being a university EFL expert teacher**

Among three involved teachers, she enjoys the most years of teaching experience. When participating in this study, she has officially worked as an EFL teacher at high school for 4 years and at university for 18 years. *With many years of teaching experience, she can be recognized as a university EFL expert teacher*. Until the time of her involvement in this study, she has worked as an English teacher for 22 years of teaching experience. She believes the 22-year course of time can be viewed as the duration of her accumulation of teaching experience and knowledge. Not only does she enjoy the confidence of her English proficiency level and sound professional competence, but she also heightens her awareness of the obedience of rules and regulations seriously. Accordingly, she deserves to be identified as a university EFL teacher expert.

**Being an enthusiastic and modern teacher**

She can be positioned *as an enthusiastic and modern teacher*. She has always had a passion for the teaching of English because of her fondness for English and her genuine enthusiasm for the teaching and learning. Her slogan is “being the best version of yourself”, so she has heightened her consciousness of further developing her knowledge of English and professional pedagogy by way of her teaching and self-studying and getting involved in other professional programs/seminars. She has conveyed her knowledge of English in her teaching lessons with enthusiasm. Aside from this, not only has she stimulated interest in their learning, but she also has motivated her students to actively get engaged in the lessons. She makes use of different teaching methods to teach various classes with students who are in different levels and different attitudes. In order to promote her students’ active engagement in their lessons, she makes efforts to regularly keep updated of advanced teaching methods and select the best way of her teaching for each level of students (e.g., traditional method, learner-centered method or communicative approach). Like other woman teachers, she represents her ability to balance her work and life as reasonably as possible.

**Being a teacher with leadership styles**

*Leadership* can be recognized as a style of her professional identity that have been shaped since when she was small. She demonstrates her ability to do things independently, and communicate effectively that contributes to the construction of her leadership style. With her great English competence and sound pedagogical knowledge, she enjoys the confidence of accomplishing the work of teaching successfully. She is always active in taking part in every teaching-related activity with her key position as a role model (e.g., a keynote speaker, a research supervisor, an examiner, or a leading member).

5.3. Chapter summary

Chapter 5 discussed the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as product (the agglomerated cases and case-by-case).

CHAPTER 6: INFLUENCING FACTORS

Chapter 6 is produced to address the second research question “*What factors significantly influence the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity?*”. Although numerous influencing factors were identified, this chapter only focuses on discussing such dominant factors as the external factors (*family, neighborhood, school culture, influential teachers, knowledge sources*) and the internal (*self, investment*).

6.1. External factors

6.1.1. Family

*Family* can be identified as a key factor that influence the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product (Borg, 2003). The participating teachers come from the different family background and suffer the influences from their family’s side in various ways. Generally, all of them have always received substantial assistance and engagement from their family.

6.1.2. Neighborhood

Neighborhood as an external factor has nourished the spirit of their learning in such a positive way since when they were small. Such spirit can be viewed as a driving force that can contribute to the shaping of professional identity as the EFL teachers who are both responsible for and serious about their teaching.

6.1.3. Influential teachers

One of the important external factors that strongly influences the participants’ professional identity is their *influential teachers* (Knowles, 1992). These participants were exposed to the different influences from their influential teachers’ side on the way of teaching. The influential teachers can be defined as an external factor that greatly contributes to the distinctive shaping of each participant’ teaching style. Such shaping can result in forming a part of professional identity of the participating teachers.

6.1.4. Knowledge sources

*Knowledge sources* is also regarded as another important external factor that strongly impacts on the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product. Among the educational levels, university education and master higher education exerted a strong influence on professional learning of such teachers.

6.1.5. School culture

*School culture* is considered the external factor that exerts a strong influence on the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product (Borg, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Johnston, 2012; Miller, 2009; Richards, 2009; Burns and Bell, 2011). In this study, the school culture influences were represented chiefly by means of *school rules and regulations* and *teacher-student relationships and interactions*.

1. School rules and regulations

The two remarkable things that significantly influence the participating teachers’ professional identity constitute *the strict principles* and *teaching curricula*. As EFL teachers at a police school, each teacher has to *heighten the consciousness of the regulatory compliance and execution* abided by the rules and regulations of the school and police forces during their working and teaching time. Relying on such conformity, they have to increase the sense of responsibility for the application of such disciplinary stipulations to their teaching practice appropriately. It is due to *the school regulations on training curriculum and syllabus* that prevent the teachers from following the routine and the progress of their students’ learning closely.

1. Teacher-student relationships and interactions

All of the participating teachers are always *aware of the importance of their* *acquisition of professional knowledge from many other people*, chiefly their colleagues and students. The involved teachers also take interest in every student-related matter chiefly by means of regularly observing their learning and *actively socializing with their students* *within professional boundaries*.

6.2. Internal factors

6.2.1. Self

The analyzed findings indicated that *self* *as an agent of change* has a part in the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product (Olsen, 2008; Tsui, 2007). In this study, every participant has expressed the consciousness of self in various forms (e.g., self-awareness, self-desire, the power of self, the knowledge of self, self-regulation or self-reliance). In their teaching life, they have been always conscious of developing their English competence and enhancing their pedagogical knowledge.

6.2.2. Investment

*Investment* can be seen as another internal factor that contributes to influencing the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity as process and product (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011; Hsieh, 2010; Wenger, 1998). The acquired findings demonstrated that three participants have shared a common medium of performance - investment; however, they have their own goals of investment throughout their teaching life.

6.3. Chapter summary

Chapter 6 refers to the external factors (family, neighborhood, school culture, influential teachers, and knowledge sources) and internal factors (self, investment).

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Chapter 7 provides a brief summary and a detailed discussion of the findings, theoretical and practical implications, limitations, suggestions for further research and concluding remarks.

7.1. Summary and Discussion

7.1.1. Summary of the findings

(RQ1) “*How do the EFL teachers (re)construct and (re)negotiate their professional identity?*”

The EFL teachers’ professional identity as *process* was represented by *the process of becoming* and *the process of being*. Through such process, a great number of implicit perspectives concerning the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of professional identity were acknowledged (e.g., the reconciliation of the personal and professional sides of becoming and being a teacher; the acquisition of knowledge sources and competencies; the sense of social roles and positions; the struggles for alterations and adjustments in such teaching-related aspects as teaching methods/strategies, working conditions, job requirements; professional boundaries in teacher-student relationships and interactions).

Also, the findings acknowledged the professional identity of the participating teachers as *product* (the cases agglomerated and case-by-case). Their professional identity as product (*the cases agglomerated)* was recognized as developing a clear awareness of school disciplines and policies (cognitive), taking over numerous roles (behavioral), developing self-awareness and self-knowledge (cognitive), and showing the feelings of unsuitability for scientific research (affective). Given their professional identity as product (*case-by-case*), every teacher has been identified separately, including T1 (a university EFL novice teacher, an “inactive” teacher, and a teacher with dependent proneness and inferiority feelings), T2 (a university EFL experienced teacher, a serious and outspoken, but sociable teacher, and a self-reliant and determined teacher), and T3 (a university EFL expert teacher, an enthusiastic and modern teacher, and a teacher with leadership styles)

(RQ2) “*What factors significantly influence the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity?*”.

The dominant factors embrace the external factor (family, neighborhood, school culture, influential teachers, and knowledge sources) and internal factors (self, investment).

7.1.2. Discussion

The EFL teachers’ professional identity, in this study, were (re)constructed and (re)negotiated *through self, others and experiences* (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Kerby, 1991; Kelchtermans, 1993; Wenger, 1998; Connelly and Clandinin, 1999; Johnson, 2003; Varghese, 2006; Tsui, 2007; Clarke, 2008; Hsieh, 2010). A noticeable dimension of the participating teachers’ professional identity refers to *the reconciliation of the personal and professional sides becoming and being a teacher* (Olsen, 2010), which was represented by the interdependent-interrelated-interconnected career transitions of their initial thinking on teaching, final decision on entry into teaching, professional learning, prior professional experiences, current teaching practice and future professional goals. Another dimension relates to *the acquisition of knowledge sources* (Antonek et al., 1997) and *competencies* (Pennington and Richards, 2016) that have been acquired chiefly from their self-study, the course of professional learning (university and post-graduate education) and the experiences of teaching practice as well. A further dimension of the participating teachers’ professional identity mentions *the sense of social roles and positions* (Lave and Wenger, 1992; Wenger, 1998; Norton, 2010). In addition, the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of the participating teachers’ professional identity is also presented as *struggles* (Samuel and Stephens, 2000; Volkmann and Anderson, 1998; Knowles, 1992). Teacher professional identity is (re)constructed and (re)negotiated through teachers’ *commitment* *to, participation as a way of promoting their agency, and investment in the profession* (Wenger, 1998; Danielewicz, 2001; Coldron and Smith, 1999)

7.2. Implications

7.2.1. Theoretical implications

This study contributes to yielding evaluable insights into the way how the EFL teachers (re)constructed and (re)negotiated their professional identity. The general overview of identity-related aspects (e.g, identity, teacher identity, language teacher identity, teacher professional identity, previous theoretical frameworks for or previous studies on identity/ teacher identity/ teacher professional identity) were presented herein. Aside from this, this study developed its own theoretical framework, named “Teacher Professional Identity Model”, for investigating the EFL teachers’ (re)construction and (re)negotiation of their professional identity in this particular context. This model can be suggested as a useful framework for investigating teacher professional identity in other contexts or approaching further studies on teacher identity-related issues (e.g., teacher personal identity, teacher moral identity or teacher emotional identity).

7.2.2. Practical implications

This study can help both the participating teachers themselves make *sense of their professional self as process and product* throughout their teaching life from their past, present and future. *Making sense of their professional self* begins from their shaping of initial thinking on teaching to their official involvement in current teaching practice (being a teacher), followed by their reflection on future professional goals. Such understanding is considered *a means to encourage these teachers to bravely reflect on their minds or thoughts regarding their rights, responsibilities and roles*. One of the major findings of this study identified the dominant factors, which significantly influence the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of the participating teachers’ professional identity, constituted the external factors (family, neighborhood, school culture, influential teachers and knowledge sources) and the internal factors (self, investment). Getting deep insights into such dominant factors can partly support stakeholders in education of devising immediate or future plans for continuous professional development by enhancing the ways in which teacher education programs are conceived or establishing teacher education programs in line with the status of teachers.

7.3. Limitations

The limitations of this study comprise *the length of the study, the sample of the study, and the research instrumen*t. The initial limitation refers to the length of the study. Further insights into the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of professional identity would need to obtained through a longitudinal study because I do understand that professional identity as a complex process cannot be explored in a short-term study. Another limitation relates to the sample of the study. This study investigated the professional identity of only three university EFL teachers, comprising a novice teacher, an experienced teacher and an expert teacher. In this study, all the participants are female teachers with no males. A further limitation constitutes the research instrument. Though this study gathered a large number of rich data from three various tools (guided reflective writings, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations), it was due to the lack of field notes that could block obstacles to the reach of conclusions about professional identity in practice.

7.4. Suggestions for further research

Relying on the said limitations, I would like to put forward a number of suggestions for further research, including *the duplication of this study, the making of a longitudinal study, the extension of the scope of research instruments and the involvement of diversified groups of teachers*. Such can be considered useful suggestions to support researchers of designing many other identify-related studies in the upcoming time.

7.5. Concluding Remarks

My reflections refer to my concern about the theme of teacher identity, the involved teacher and the acquisition of self.

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