

The Sociocultural Perspective on Non-native Teacher Identity Formation Process

Negimtakalbių mokytojų tapatumo formavimosi sociokultūrinė perspektyva

LINGUISTICS / KALBOTYRA

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Research on teacher professional identity has been flourishing in recent decades as part of a drive to understand how identity can influence self-perceptions and professional practice amongst teachers. This qualitative study investigates the identity formation process of seven non-native TESOL tutors working in a tertiary environment in the United Kingdom, and it examines the contextualized factors shaping their identities. To explore the teacher identity construction process, a sociocultural theoretical lens that emphasises the social embeddedness of teacher identity has been utilised. The findings of the study show that non-native teachers working in higher education are active agents who are able to construct and reconstruct their unique teaching identities, corresponding to the demands of the social contexts they are engaged within. The results of the study also demonstrate that a non-native status, through which teachers perceive their identities, does not disempower them as professional experts, but empowers them to enhance their professional identities through the process of context-specific acquisition of knowledge and new experience.

KEY WORDS: teacher identity, sociocultural perspective, teacher beliefs, non-native teacher, native speaker.

This article focuses on non-native teachers who teach English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). In particular, it focuses on professional identity formation amongst teachers who work in a tertiary education context. The concept of identity guides teachers in terms of 'how to be', 'how to act', and 'how to understand' their instructional practices and their roles in constantly changing societies (Sachs, 2000, p.15). Identity develops in the inter-subjective field and can be understood as a process of how individuals interpret themselves, and how they are seen by others in a specific context (Gee, 2001). Teacher identity, being a dynamic construct, can be shaped by a variety of tools, such as social and cultural settings, political contexts, school reforms and personal traits. Non-native English language teachers (NNELT) in particular face challenges imposed by the "native speaker fallacy", which refers to the

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Abstract

Introduction



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perception that an ideal teacher of English is a native English speaking teacher (Phillipson, 1992, p.195). This can lead to lowered levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy amongst NNELT (Day et al, 2006).

This research seeks to explore how professional non-native TESOL teachers perceive of their professional identities, and the factors framing their identities in a specific sociocultural context. In order to achieve this aim, the research questions posed in this study are:

- 1 What are NNELT self-perceptions about their non-native status?
- 2 What are NNELT reflected perceptions about being non-native speaking teachers in a native speaking environment?
- 3 How do NNELT frame their future TESOL career?

Study Rationale

The rationale for the study emerged from the fact that there are growing numbers of NNELT who are enrolled to study in TESOL programmes in the UK. These stakeholders are eager to continue their professional career in tertiary education institutions; however, NNELT are treated unfavorably in comparison with Native Speakers (NS) (Clark and Paran, 2007). They can be marginalized in terms of salaries, benefits or even in terms of perceptions that they are second-rate educators (ibid). Despite the fact that there is a dearth of relevant pedagogical background for this discrimination, the NNELT should outperform their counterparts who are NS in order to be accepted (Thomas, 1999). Understanding the process in which the NNELT form their identities in the professional area, whilst striving to be recognized as credible teachers in times of constant change is important, particularly for NNELT who plan their careers in the TESOL area, or who just want to broaden their professional horizons. Moreover, understanding identity formation amongst NNELT might be beneficial for in-service and pre-service educators, because the perceptions of professional identity is formed in those courses that can illuminate how “to cope with educational change and to implement innovations in their own teaching practice” (Beijaard et al, 2000, p.750).

Theoretical Background

Sociocultural theory has been considered as an appropriate theoretical paradigm to approach teacher identities. This theory explores human development and learning issues. The main aspect of this theory is that the human mind is mediated and socialised (Burr, 1995). In other words, humans do not live in isolation. On the contrary, they live in demarcated communities in which they communicate amongst themselves and create knowledge that is specific to their community. Vygotsky (1978) explained that human higher order thinking is not only biologically shaped, but is derived from social life that is culturally and historically influenced (Wertsch, 1991). That is, specific contexts where teachers perform their educational duties shape their identities.

Teacher identities reflect the values of specific cultures and communities that shape how they “think about themselves, their students, the activities of L2 teaching and the L2 teaching-learning process” (Johnson, 2009, p.17). Thus, teacher identity cannot be separated from any specific context, and it is a fluid and amorphous concept that is ready to transform due to “fast-evolving, global, national, social, and individual realities” (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p.57–58). Socio-cultural theory, therefore, is accepted as appropriate to approach teacher identity as a concept.

Professional teacher identity can be conceptualized as a construct of self which is constantly developing over professional career paths (Lasky, 2005). Identity is multidimensional and multifaceted and it encompasses personal beliefs, lives, professional knowledge, values and experiences (Day et al, 2005). In this research, professional identity is perceived as an influential tool through which teachers understand themselves, and how they are seen by others in relation to the social contexts in which they function (Coldron and Smith, 1999).

A number of studies recognize that identity formation involves a complex interplay among teachers' workplace settings, their personal beliefs and values, and their professional knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Lasky, 2005; Day et al., 2005). Teacher's beliefs and their professional knowledge can therefore mediate their identity formation.

The definition of beliefs can include broad categories of cognitive underpinnings, such as attitudes, assumptions or values that shape teacher identities. Some researchers, for example, Borg (2003, p.81), use the term 'teacher cognition' and refer to the "unobservable cognitive dimensions of teaching" (what teachers know, believe, and think). The author primarily focuses on the mental lives of teachers and how these affect classroom practice. Moreover, Kumaravadivelu (2012, p.60) includes 'truth' and 'consciousness' in his definition of beliefs and approaches these as "views, prepositions, and convictions one dearly holds, consciously or unconsciously, about the truth value of something". The definitions above presuppose that beliefs guide our thinking and actions. As a result, teachers' beliefs influence what they do in the classroom, and how they organize teaching and learning processes.

However, other researchers, for example, Barcelos (2006) and Woods (2006), contend that beliefs, being a significant constituent of teacher identity, originate from the social environments in which people operate, and these are framed by cultural, historical and social factors. Therefore, the context in which teachers work, and form their experiences, will be taken as an important factor because the beliefs of teachers are "born out of our interaction with others and with our environment" (Barcelos, 2006, p.8). Beliefs do not function as discrete entities. Rather, they are closely related to contexts and the subjective values of teachers and their knowledge. As Kumaravadivelu (2012) points out, one of the most appropriate ways to clarify the understanding of the construct of beliefs is to associate it with knowledge.

Researchers indicate (see for example Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Golombek, 2009) that teachers' knowledge can be divided into three categories as follows:

- _ professional knowledge
- _ personal practical knowledge (PPK) and
- _ procedural knowledge.

Professional knowledge refers to subject knowledge, such as knowledge about language gained from multiple sources, such as pre and in-service training programs, books, journals, and conferences (ibid: p.24–27). Procedural knowledge, or, as Shulman (1986) puts it, "strategic knowledge" involves classroom management knowledge acquired through what Lortie (1975) calls "apprenticeship of observation". Meanwhile, PPK is the most significant category of knowledge, because it is derived from the actual experiences of teachers and is associated with their individual lives, cultural experiences and personal histories.

PPK amongst teachers is "constructed by teachers themselves as they respond to the contexts of their classrooms" (Golombek, 1998, p.447). For example, Elbaz (1983) is one of the

The Interrelatedness of Teacher Identity, Beliefs and Knowledge

Teacher Beliefs and Identities

Teacher Professional Knowledge and Identities

more prominent researchers who has investigated PPK and explained that teachers possess broad categories of knowledge, such as knowledge of the self, the working environment, subject matter, curriculum, and instruction. This type of knowledge is transformed to practice in several ways. For example, teachers present their knowledge as a set of clearly formulated rules in terms of “what to do or how to do in a particular situation” (Elbaz, 1983, p.133). These might also be perceived as images that reflect the past experiences of teachers and their self-perceptions. These can be reconstructed “to meet the demands of a particular situation, reordering her professional and personal experiences” (Golombek, 2009, p.156).

Kumaravadivelu (2012, p.21) suggests approaching knowledge amongst teachers as an “umbrella term to cover the theoretical and practical knowledge of teachers, as well as their dispositions, beliefs and values” (ibid: 21). The author proposes a model of ‘knowing’ instead of “knowledge” (ibid: p.20). He suggests that knowing is a process, whilst knowledge is a product. He bases his thoughts on the idea that teachers are not only passive consumers of knowledge, but are producers of knowledge, who are involved in active knowledge-making processes in their classrooms. Thus, in this study, beliefs and knowledge are seen as inseparable parts of teacher identity formation that shape the thoughts, actions, and perceptions of the realities of teachers.

Personal Identities

Given the assumption that teachers’ professional identities are shaped by the social context they situate their professional activities within along with their experiences and knowledge, teachers’ personal understanding of their inner-self is also significant in terms of how they construct their professional identities (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). In this study, personal or inner self will be conceptualised as the personal dimension of teachers and their self-perceptions about their roles as professionals (Day et al, 2005). Moreover, self will be viewed as the inner-“ability and willingness (of teachers) to recognize and renew” their selves (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p.55). Based on these concepts, teachers recognize a wide array of phenomena, such as teaching contexts, learner needs, desired learning outcomes, social, political and cultural situations in constructing identity (ibid).

Kelchtermans (1993) argues that the self might be divided into several parts:

- self-image, which refers to how teachers position themselves in their professional path;
- self-esteem, which is perceived as an “evaluation of one’s self as a teacher” (p.449). Self-esteem is closely related to how others judge the performance of teachers. As teaching and learning are not individualistic processes, the knowledge required for teaching is created in mutual interactions between teachers and learners within the environment in which they function (Johnson, 2009). Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that students create a foundation for how teachers feel about themselves, and how they construct a learning process. Colleagues, principles, media, inspectors and parents might be included in the ‘judgement’ process of teachers.
- job-motivation and future perspectives drive teachers to choose their profession and to remain within it or move on to other careers. How teachers position themselves in the job market depends on their ability to adapt to constantly changing realities, and how they negotiate contradictory expectations, and derive meaning out of a seemingly chaotic environment (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p.58). Kumaravadivelu (2012) argues that in today’s globalised world, teachers should construct a “global cultural consciousness” that is based on their preparation to critically evaluate the contexts in which they work. It is also based on their ability to evaluate the needs of learners, and their motivation. In order to achieve this, teachers should become “strategic thinkers, exploratory researchers and transfor-

mative intellectuals" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; p.4). Thus, it seems appropriate to assume that professional identity brings "together the personal and professional dimensions of teachers' lives", and these are strongly interwoven (Scotland, 2014, p.34).

Defining NS and NNES

The two models of native "English speaker" (NS) and "non-native English speaker" (NNES) have received considerable attention from academics in the field of education. These two concepts are difficult to define due to the diversities of English (Clark and Paran, 2007, Kirkpatrick, 2007). It is accepted that British, American and Australian English are native varieties that are spoken by native speakers of English, and they represent the standardised model of English (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Nativised varieties, such as Indian or Malaysian English, are those that have developed in areas where English is not originally spoken in instances where it has been linguistically and culturally influenced by local languages. Therefore, people in nativised varieties are said to be NNES (ibid). The non-native speakership might be expanded to countries where English is spoken only as a foreign language (for example, where it is taught in schools and it is not a language of daily life) or as a second language (where it is the official, but not the "main" language of the country), thus, the speakers of these English forms are accepted to be NNES as well. However, Rampton (1990) suggests it is not helpful to differentiate between language users according to "language inheritance" or "language affiliation", but to focus on individual linguistic expertise. The author suggests replacing the term "native speaker" with "expert speaker" It is worth noting that NS and NNES labels still exist in today's educational field to emphasise the linguistic competence (Clark and Paran, 2007). Therefore, the NS and NNES concepts will be used as referents in this study.

NS and NNES in the English Language Teaching

The dichotomy of native – non-native speakership has been the subject of debate amongst scholars. One strand of research acknowledges that only NS English teachers are "ideal" teachers of English because they have language proficiency in such respects as grammar, pronunciation and pragmatics (Braine, 1999). NS undeniably possess higher levels of linguistic competence than NNES, although they are sometimes judged by not knowing the learner's L1 (first language) and this can lead to difficulties in explaining, for example, grammatical patterns. Others have argued that NNES can be equally as legitimate as teachers of English in the TESOL field. Philipson (1992) calls the ostensible superiority of native-speakers a "native speaker fallacy". Canagarajah argues that NNES "may have a sounder grasp of English grammar and even be more effective...than the so-called native speakers" (1999, p.80). Moreover, NNES have more empathy for their students in comparison with NS (Nemtchinova, 2005).

It seems clear that the linguistic competence of NNES is often measured against that of monolingual NS, which is probably unfair, since bilinguals use two languages in different situations with different people (Baker, 1993). However, any degree of linguistic proficiency does not guarantee a successful teaching. Teachers are supposed to be pedagogical experts that possess the ability to engage with students. They are also expected to understand their minds and their problems (Beijaard et al, 2000). Moreover, they are not only the transmitters of knowledge, but are also learning facilitators and classroom managers that promote process-oriented pedagogy (Beijaard et al, 2000). This is based on the principle that learners are active agents that construct knowledge in a mutual dialogue with their teachers, who create meaningful environments, or, in Van Lier's (2000) terminology have a "semiotic budget" to in-

Current Debates on the Native and Non-native Dichotomy

volve learners in an active learning process. Therefore, English language teachers working in the TESOL field should be determined by their social sensitivity to the contexts in which they work. Specifically, teachers are expected to have intercultural competence, a global cultural consciousness, and an appetite to challenge hegemonies. They are expected to actively seek to renew and deconstruct their inner-selves “in order to gain positive learning and teaching outcomes” (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p.55). Moreover, if a language teacher is professional, friendly and enthusiastic with the ability to satisfy learners’ needs by providing culturally sensitive informative, innovative and interesting knowledge, then their first language background is negligible (Walkinshaw and Duong, 2012). It seems reasonable to assume that these far-reaching teaching principles and the demand to constantly renew the teacher’s role, requires teachers to have special pedagogical skills and didactic knowledge alongside strong moral and ethical traits.

Even though there are the native and non-native labels are strongly embedded within English language teaching pedagogy, it seems reasonable to accept Kumaravadivelu’s stance that special priority should be given to “mastering the teaching models than on modelling the master teacher...”, (2012, p.16). Gee (2011) contends that teachers should focus on a broad concept of literacy what encompasses, not only linguistic knowledge, but also social practices. The author advocates teaching language beyond reading and writing skills in order to explore discourses that involve “coordinating language with ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, feeling...”, (Gee, 2011, p.46). For this purpose being a multilingual NNELT might feel more valued than a monolingual NS.

Some academics pursue this debate by emphasising that the English language is no longer the property of a specific nation. It has been argued, for example that English, being a *Lingua Franca*, “belongs to everyone who speaks it, but it is nobody’s mother tongue, therefore teaching can be practiced by different educators” (Rajagopalan, 2005). Nowadays, English has become a language of self-representation and a tool for cross-cultural communication (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

The Impact of the NS Model on Teacher Identity

Research suggests that NNELT teachers are considered to have a marginalized status in comparison with NS, and they cannot achieve legitimacy in the field of TESOL (Kirkpatrick, 2007). This can lead to a low level of self-confidence or “identity crisis” amongst teachers in the profession (Braine, 1999).

Mawhinney and Xu (1997) carried out research in Canada and revealed that races and accents influenced the validity of teachers as English language teacher educators with implications for self-esteem and the reconstruction of professional identities. Similarly, Sifakis and Sougari’s (2005) study of 421 Greek English teachers suggested that accents and pronunciation amongst non-native teachers were the most noticeable deficiencies of NNELT.

Mahboob’s (2003) study of 32 English language learners in the USA revealed that NNELT had weaker speaking skills and less cultural knowledge in comparison with NS. However, they valued particular work ethics, methodological approaches and the experience of NNELT.

Amin’s (1997) study of five minority female NNELT in Canada revealed that their professional identities were shaped negatively by their race. The study also showed that the stereotyped perceptions of learners and administrators about the prototypical “ideal” English language teacher were that they are white and NS. These factors, it has been argued, disempowered teachers in terms of professional identity.

On the other hand, being a NNELT might have some advantages. Firstly, almost all English language teachers are bilinguals and they have acquired high levels of intercultural compe-

tence (Neuliep, 2012). They are also motivated, skilled and sensitive and are able to adapt easily to constantly changing cultural contexts (Neuliep, 2012, p.29). In turn, their knowledge about different cultures is transmitted to their learners through their teaching or learning of English (Scollon et al., 2012).

Overall, this study utilizes a qualitative approach. It employs a case study design and an interpretative paradigm. The qualitative approach is useful for this discovery-oriented study because it enables the researcher to understand how people construct their meanings and how they understand their daily activities and the environment in which they function (Mottier, 2005). It also provides insights into the complexities of identity formation by making participants' voices heard within the social contexts in which they function (Creswell, 2007). It was crucial for this research "to capture what people say and do as a product of how they interpret the complexity of their world..." (Bridges and Smith, 2007, p.108). The aim was to perceive multiple realities by interviewing teachers to understand the impact of their working environments on their identity formation process. A qualitative methodology is naturally commodious to such explorations. To engage in dialogue with teachers, and to understand their world, semi-structured interviews were employed to allow an exploration of the thoughts about perceptions of teachers who are NNELT. Such a method also allowed for an examination of their work experience, and their reported future perspectives. Eliciting data from people who work in a specific context was paramount for this study because the aim was to interpret the identity formation of participants from a sociocultural perspective in such a way as to emphasize the significance of cultural and social factors framing wider teacher identity formation.

I was interested to find participants who can provide "rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation" (Dörnyei, 2010). The selection of seven NNELT working in university settings in the UK was based on both convenience and purposive sampling (Greener, 2011). Participants were employed using personal contacts. Two teachers were interviewed on Skype while others were interviewed in person.

All participants were NNELT (2 French, 1 Spanish, 1 Italian, 2 Greeks, 1 Austrian) working on TESOL programmes in different universities in the UK. Their English language teaching experience ranged from one to five years of tenure in a university environment at the time of data collection (between 2012 and 2013). The participants are all female and have been teaching subjects, such as intercultural communication, research methods, language and culture, TESOL methodology and social languages on TESOL programmes. Six tutors held a PhD degree from UK universities and one was a PhD student. Three tutors provided courses exclusively for TESOL Master's degree students, whilst one worked specifically with undergraduates. Another two tutors taught both Masters and Bachelor degree students.

Data transcription was undertaken following the interview process. Interviews with participants lasted about one hour. The interview data were transcribed fully, without any omission of information. After transcribing data, the coding process was undertaken. The analysis of data is based on a thematic analytical approach (Thomas, 2009).

Before conducting the study, the field participants were informed of the aim of the study and of the ways in which the data would be utilized. The interviewees signed an informed consent form which signalled their agreement to participate in the research project whilst reserving the right to withdraw at any time. All interview data were maintained confidential and anonymous.

Methodology and Method

Participants

Ethical Considerations

Findings

Confidence and Credibility as TESOL Professionals

The first research question aimed to clarify what the self-perceptions of NNELT in their non-native TESOL status were. Teachers shared a common belief that they are confident in their professional areas and consider themselves to be credible English language teachers despite their non-native speakership.

It appeared that teachers took confidence from their educational backgrounds, and academic experience. This notion is encapsulated in the following quote:

"I feel absolutely confident what I am doing...I have sufficient knowledge in my professional area. I have graduated from two UK universities, I have a PhD and experience in teaching and research. And I am constantly progressing, teaching others and learning myself..." (Teacher 4)

The quote above clearly illustrates that the teacher attributed her confidence to her education and professional expertise. She continued to explain that the concept of non-nativeness does not play any significant role: *"I can be as good as native speakers. There are no measures for me how to weigh who is "good" or who is bad"*. It seems that she focused her attention on the acquisition of PPK, rather than on "nativeness". This idea resonates with Golombek's (2009) notion that professional knowledge can be considered as the most significant category of all types of knowledge, because it is derived from the actual experience.

Teacher 2 also rooted her confidence in practice and academic knowledge by stating that *"in education, practice is the backbone that equips you with necessary knowledge which is relevant to your teaching environment"*. She also denied a NS superiority emphasising that

"English is an international language, spread across the globe ...it is the language of international communicationand what is the difference who you are by your nationality".

This notion is clearly related to a belief that English belongs to everyone who speaks it (Rajagopalan, 2005) and that native-speakership is not important any more. Rather, four teachers saw value in being able to adapt to different contexts and to demonstrate a willingness to share their intercultural competence that they have acquired living and working in a variety of contexts. They suggested that this can benefit learners who are also ethnically and culturally diverse. This idea corresponds with Olsen's (2008) and Kumaravadivelu's (2012) stand points that teachers should be treated as sociocultural personalities who can easily construct and reconstruct their inner selves depending on the their contexts. It appeared that the interviewed participants basically constructed their identities on their personal knowledge and experiences that were shaped by the contexts in which they had worked.

Bilingual Identity and Social Context

The second research question focused on perceptions of how non-native TESOL tutors' identities are framed by being non-native speakers in a native speaking environment. The results of this study indicated that the professional context in which teachers work appeared to be a significant mediator in framing their bilingual identities.

Teacher 3, 4, 5 and 7 state that they have spent more than ten years learning or working in an English speaking environment, and they are therefore highly immersed in the context. Teacher 7 remarked that she is *"constantly speaking and thinking in English"* because her working environment is English speaking. She suggested that the English speaking context is *"dividing [her] personality into several parts: I can be Frenchand sometimes English...or something else"*. Later in the interview, she revealed that the surrounding environment is so influential that she speaks

English "when I am not at the university....but I feel an obligation to speak English in case my students listen to me..."

It is obvious that native-speaking environments, exposure to local people, their culture, work and societal commitments significantly frames professional identity. This finding corresponds with the argument put forward by Kumaravadivelu (2012) who emphasizes that teacher identity is “fluid and amorphous” and ready to reconstruct and adapt to fast-evolving realities (p.57–58). From the perspective of the sociocultural paradigm, people are social beings and they live in demarcated communities in which they communicate amongst themselves and create knowledge that is specific to their community. From this viewpoint, teachers are also members of a specific community and this shapes how they think about themselves, their learners and the teaching-learning process (Johnson, 2009).

One teacher shared her belief about the benefits of being a bilingual teacher in an NS context. She highlighted that bilingual individuals are multicultural individuals who are

“... much more professional, innovative and interesting than a NS teacher who has never experienced contextual changes...”.

These teacher’s beliefs align with Walkinshaw and Duong’s (2012) findings that the ability of teachers to provide innovative, informative and culturally sensitive teaching that meets students’ needs is more valuable than her/ his native-speakership. The same teacher explained that she is constantly moving from one job to another and she cannot “*find the same places and the same people*”. In other words, she remarked that every working environment requires her to “*reconstruct her values, teaching methods and communication*” in order to meet institutional and learners’ needs. Moreover, all teachers agreed that institutional requirements, such as curriculum, teaching methods and examination requirements, were the tools that mediate their identity formations. It seems that the pedagogical demands of their institutions have influenced their professional identities in a negative way. Scotland (2014) explains that imposing pedagogical practices onto tutors can be perceived as a way of controlling their identity, therefore their identities can be affected in an undesirable way. Though Beijaard et al (2000) argue that people are flexible individuals who can radically change their self-images if they want to adapt to specific contexts.

The findings from this study illuminate the idea that different contexts, people and institutions frame identity formation with implications for how teachers perceive their socially constructed identities.

Future Insights: Multicultural Identities

The respondents of this study suggest that a multicultural identity of NNELT is a necessity. Teacher 1 argued that universities in the UK are extremely multicultural, therefore, different tutors with diverse experiences are required to meet the different needs of students. Similarly, Teacher 6 derived her credibility for her multicultural identity from her belief that

“nowadays teaching seeks not only to teach English but to focus on critical literacy, multicultural awareness and intercultural communication”.

It is obvious that this teacher positioned her professional identity in today’s global educational context, which necessitates that teachers foster students’ critical thinking and their ability to use language as a tool to communicate for different purposes (Kirkpatrick, 2007, Kumaravadivelu, 2012)

Likewise, Teachers 3 and 5 explained that they have already found their “*ways in this globalizing world*” and they are confident that their qualifications in multicultural universities will be desirable in the future. Other teachers emphasised their prowess in a research field that is a valuable asset in the tertiary working environment. Teachers 3 and 4 emphasised the importance of degree acquisition from reputable universities.

Discussion and Implications

The findings from this study have some implications for tertiary education tutors and for English language teacher educators. Even though the findings of the study are not generalizable, the implications offer lessons for enhancing instructional practice.

As the findings indicate, the professional identity of university tutors is strongly embedded in, and shaped by the environment in which they work. This finding closely corresponds to other studies, such as Lasky (2005), Day et al (2005), and Scotland (2014) that unanimously argue that educational settings play a significant role in shaping individual self-images and identities.

Educational contexts demand the plasticity and adaptability of professional identity that is ready to reconstruct and adapt to constantly changing environments. As this study suggests, however, adapting to new professional landscapes does not take place without a struggle. Based on the findings, university regulations, different teaching methods, linguistic and cultural diversity among university students are the mediating factors that create tension for the teaching profession. Kelchterman (1993) explains that, if there is an imbalance in terms of what teachers expect in their work environment and what they get in reality, demotivation might occur. On the other hand, the tutors interviewed clearly acknowledged that new teaching places create opportunities. It seems that new working settings, especially for TESOL teachers, either NS or NNELT that are expected to teach in a variety of countries, create opportunities for them to acquire new professional knowledge and practice. Teachers' research skills, cultural and critical awareness and innovative and context-sensitive teaching were seen as principle guidelines in this study. This finding aligns with Rampton's (1990) notion that expertise, being a dynamic and acquired asset, is a core for teacher profession. In other words, the nationality of teachers is not an issue in the globalised world where the English language plays a role in international communication with the goal of educating bilingual, multicultural and multilingual citizens (Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Therefore, in the light of these findings, it seems reasonable to assume that any university should create supportive environments for teachers in which they can acquire professional knowledge that is context-specific. Such environments should ensure that teachers are able to satisfy their students' educational needs. Most importantly, given the fact that sociocultural settings in which NNELT situate their identities might influence identity formation, it might be useful to pre-service language teacher education programmes to create supportive courses where individuals can construct their multicultural professional identities in a way that is adaptive to "global, national, social, and individual realities" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p.57–58).

Moreover, such programmes should help teachers to perceive the varieties of contexts in which teachers can perform their educational roles and they should promote ways to cope with the imposed constraints of teaching whilst offering ways of addressing culturally and linguistically diverse students' needs. Furthermore, given the data collected for this study, it is possible to suggest that university tutors should accept some responsibility, not only for their professional development and expertise in making academic content available to their learners, but for constant engagement in research activities. As Kumaravadivelu (2012) points out, teachers should

“play the role of reflective practitioners who think deeply about the principles, practice and processes of classroom instruction, and bring to their task a considerable degree of creativity, artistry, and context sensitivity” (p.9).

In practical terms, action research can help teachers to gain some theoretical and practical knowledge about their context-specific practices.

This case study examined the identity formation of NNELT working in a tertiary education setting by analyzing their self-perceptions of non-nativeness, and their roles of being NN-SETs in a native working environment. It also investigated how NNELT see their career perspectives in the TESOL field.

The findings revealed that NNELT shared a common view of being credible and adaptable professionals in their settings, and their non-native status through which they perceive their identities does not disempower them as professional experts. As the data illustrates, NNELT perhaps originate their confidence from several sources. Their educational background, teaching and research experience were viewed as influential tools that shape their professional identities. It appeared that non-native ways of speaking English did not necessarily create professional barriers in comparison with NS in the academic labour market. The study revealed that the participants had met different institutional and cultural demands, but these challenges have equipped them with additional opportunities to progress in their multicultural identity formation process, rather than creating transitional constrains. Viewed through the sociocultural lens the identity formation process amongst participants was viewed as dynamic, on-going and adaptive to the global educational priorities.

This case study has certain limitations. First of all, it is based on findings from interviews with teachers. It would be useful to interview students to get insights into how they perceive their tutors non-native status. Moreover, the study is based on interviews with only seven participants and the findings are therefore not generalizable. Additionally, to explore such complex and tacit constructs as teachers' values and beliefs, it would be useful in future to include more participants within several educational institutions in a longitudinal research study. Furthermore, given the fact that NNELT are constantly immersed in culturally diverse contexts with particular teaching traditions, institutional curricula requirements, local values, cultures and people and a narrative research approach with biographical perspectives of teachers working across the contexts might offer useful future research directions in order to clarify how diverse contextual environments can influence the professional identity formation process.

Conclusions

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

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Silvija Smilgienė. Negimtakalbių mokytojų tapatumo formavimosi sociokultūrinė perspektyva

Šioje mokslinė studijoje siekta išsiaiškinti, kaip formuojasi negimtakalbių anglų kalbos dėstytojų, dirbančių universitetinėje gimtakalbėje aplinkoje, profesinis tapatumas. 2013 m. septyni dėstytojai, dirbantys Didžiosios Britanijos universitetuose, dalyvavo mažos apimties atvejo studijoje. Atliktas kokybinis tyrimas atskleidė, kad negimtakalbystė, per kurios prizmę buvo apibūdinamas pedagogų identitetas, nėra suprantama kaip kliūtis, kuri varžo anglų kalbos pedagogų galimybes dirbti gimtakalbėje universitetinėje aplinkoje. Priešingai, respondentai tikino, kad daugiakalbė ir daugiakultūre aplinka daro teigiamą įtaką daugiasluoksniui profesiniam tapatumui formuotis. Gauti duomenys rodo, kad respondentų išsilavinimas (dažniausiai turimas daktaro laipsnis), profesinė patirtis moksliniuose tyrimuose ir pedagoginė patirtis, dirbant su įvairių tautybių ir poreikių studentais, suteikė jiems pasitikėjimo, kuris buvo vienas iš svarbiausių faktorių teigiamam pedagogų identitetui susiformuoti. Respondentai sutartinai tvirtino, kad tarpkultūrinio bendravimo įgūdžiai, jautrumas kontekstui, gebėjimas suprasti įvairių tautų studentų poreikius yra neatsiejamos 21-ojo amžiaus pedagogų savybės. Todėl daroma išvada, kad rengiant anglų kalbos mokymo programas, būtina įtraukti tokius kursus, kurie ugdo tarpkultūrinę pedagogų kompetenciją, kritinį mąstymą ir gebėjimą lanksčiai prisitaikyti prie nuolat kintančios mokymo aplinkos.

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Academic interests

English language teachers' identities, values, beliefs, critical literacy, global education, and teacher training.

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