

UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF INDONESIAN EFL TEACHER EDUCATORS FROM A THREE- DIMENSIONAL NARRATIVE

M. Faruq Ubaidillah^{1*} Erna Andriyanti², and Anita Triastuti³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia

¹Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesia

mfaruq.2022@student.uny.ac.id¹, erna.andriyanti@uny.ac.id²,
and anitatria@uny.ac.id³

*correspondence: mfaruq.2022@student.uny.ac.id

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Abstract

Research into language teacher identity construction has proliferated in recent years. However, studies examining identity construction from an integral perspective of EFL teacher educators' past, present, and future narratives seem sparse. To fill this lacuna, the present study was designed to explore five Indonesian EFL teacher educators' identity construction from their past, present, and future narratives. This study's data were generated through multiple life-historical interviews with the five participants. The thematic analysis showcased that language teacher identity is constructed as a continuum from the teachers' past experiences as EFL learners, present experiences as lecturers and doctoral students, and future narratives as imagined teacher educators. The findings also revealed that the participating teachers constructed their language teacher identity through complex and context-dependent experiences in their past, present, and future narratives. Based on the study's findings, we offer a novel approach to studying language teacher identity construction employing teachers' three-dimensional narratives. This approach enables teachers to understand themselves and their relationships with social environments through the interconnectivity of their past, present, and future narratives.

Keywords: EFL teacher educator, language teacher identity, social theory of learning, three-dimensional narrative

Introduction

Numerous studies on language teacher identity (LTI) have been conducted recently (see Ardi et al., 2023; De Costa & Norton, 2017; Ubaidillah et al., 2023; Yuan, 2019). Language teacher identity is multidimensional as it entails sociocultural and post-structural aspects in the construction process. In the context where English is taught as a foreign language, EFL teachers may see themselves as undervalued individuals due to conflicts with colleagues and university administrators (Moradkhani & Ebadijalal, 2024). These discourses may then lead to teachers' identity construction dilemmas.



Much research has indicated that conflicts encountered by EFL teachers are concerned with curriculum reforms by which they have to comply with traditional pedagogies by the university administrators and seniors in enacting the reforms (Eslamdoost et al., 2020). Such conflicts contribute to the construction of teacher identity and professional lives. However, research into workplace conflicts and their impacts on teacher identity in the Indonesian context remains unclear. Several studies that attempt to address such a problem have different foci, such as on teacher stress and resilience, teacher autonomy, and EFL teacher professional dilemmas with the moral curriculum (Cirocki & Anam, 2021; Qoyyimah, 2015).

Furthermore, teaching English as a foreign language may also lead to emotional feelings among EFL teachers. Much research has reported that the teaching of English in EFL countries is emotional, thus yielding tensions in the teaching profession (Kocabaş-Gedik & Ortaçtepe Hart, 2021). The causes of EFL teachers' emotions and tensions may be due to "the effect of an encounter with objects, including ideas, memories, people, events, activities, places and so on" (Benesch, 2017, p. 28) and teacher engagement with power relations (Zembylas, 2005).

Teacher emotions and tensions are intertwined with teacher identity construction. However, research into these areas in the Indonesian higher education context is lacking. Many previous studies only examined emotional geographies with no further discussions on teacher identity (Rahayu & Asanti, 2021; Sulistiyo et al., 2022). In addition, despite well-documented empirical research using narrative inquiry as a research design in studying language teacher identity (Taşdemir & Seferoğlu, 2024; Weni & Yumarnamto, 2024), they did not specifically address past, present, and future narratives of language teachers as an integral notion in the process of language teacher identity construction. Thus, there is an urgency to integrate those narratives for language teacher professional development (Sun & Akbar, 2023).

Language teacher identity is complex, involving understanding of the selves and the social interactions (Yazan, 2019). However, studies on language teacher identity have exclusively focused on pre-service teachers which result in incomprehensive findings among EFL teacher educators. The present study is directed at learning EFL teacher educators' voices as they teach EFL teacher candidates. Their experiences will likely influence what they teach these teacher candidates. Therefore, our study aims to fill the gaps by exploring EFL teacher educators' identity from an integral perspective. The present study is guided by three research questions outlined in the following section:

- 1) How do EFL teacher educators' past narratives inform their identity construction as language teachers?
- 2) How do EFL teacher educators' present narratives inform their identity construction as language teachers?
- 3) How do EFL teacher educators' future narratives inform their identity construction as language teachers?

Findings from the study are expected to enrich the discussion of EFL teacher educators' identity construction from teachers' three-dimensional narratives using narrative inquiry which informs theoretical and policy contributions. Theoretically, this study's findings could centralize the importance of understanding identity from

teacher stories in the past, present, and future narratives. Their unique and complex journeys of becoming and being language teachers encapsulated through social, cultural, and emotional perspectives are essential to be voiced and heard. These experiences should be empowered and shared with others as meaningful and valuable life experiences in teacher education programs. The policymakers will also benefit from the study's findings by enacting sociological and sociocultural aspects that shape language teacher identity in the context of implementing a teacher professional development agenda. Such aspects include teachers' learning experiences in the past, teachers' current positioning in the workplace, emotions, agency, beliefs, participation in the community of practice, and teachers' imagined ideas for future careers.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Identity construction in second language education

Scholars have defined identity from different angles. For instance, Eccles (2009, p. 78) conceptualizes identity by addressing the following questions: "Who am I? What am I about? What is my place in my social group? What is important to me? What do I value? What do I want to do with my life?". Meanwhile, Danielewicz (2001, p. 10) conceptualizes identity as "our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are." Gee (2000) provides a different perspective, classifying identity into four different types. First, *Nature-identity* (N-identity) is biologically gifted without any pre-determined factors (e.g., males and females). None of the individuals can control and monitor this type of identity. Second, *Institution-identity* (I-identity) is seen as individuals' roles in an institution (e.g., a teacher, students). This identity is achieved through struggles and efforts. Third, *Discourse-identity* (D-identity) concerns individual traits (e.g., being active or helpful). This type of identity is not constructed by nature and institutions. Instead, it is created by social dialogues and encounters. Last, *Affinity-identity* (A-identity) is seen from how individuals associate with specific communities (e.g., teacher community).

Language teacher identity conceptualization

Language teacher identity is the construction of power negotiation in foreign language classrooms between teachers and students. In this case, language teachers imagine how they "are," "can," and "should" and such a thinking process is aligned with how their students "are," "can," and "should" be (Yazan & Rudolph, 2018). Theoretically, Barkhuizen (2017) conceptualizes LTI in the following way:

Language teacher identities are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical – they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social material, and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. (p. 4)

LTI in Barkhuizen's (2017) work is a situated and negotiated notion of selves that interplay with both intrinsic and extrinsic factors in the teachers' professional lives. Thus, the construction of language teacher identity is situated

and negotiated within multidimensional frameworks experienced by teachers in their professional lives and social encounters. Furthermore, language teacher identity is seen as a “self-fashioning, agentive, internal project of the self” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 17). Such a definition considers identity as a collectively constructed notion rather than individually enacted, which shares the complex and fluid nature of identity itself.

Social theory of learning

Wenger (1998) views learning as social participation that covers four interrelated domains: *meaning, practice, community, and identity*. In his theory, learning encompasses dimensions of experience, doing, belonging, and becoming, which view participation as an ongoing process. In particular, *Meaning* refers to meaningful life experiences. *Practice* means shared social practices framed in mutual engagement. *Community* denotes social enterprises that share similar goals. Lastly, *Identity* relates to changing beliefs of who we are in the process of learning. The use of Wenger’s (1998) social theory of learning in this study reflects the nature of identity as a dynamic and continuum notion constructed by social spheres in teachers’ professional lives. Accordingly, we use this theory to see how EFL teachers engage in their community of practice, portray themselves, and become connected with the community.

Three-dimensional narratives: A work in progress

As a novel approach in language teacher identity research, three-dimensional narratives adopt Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry to understand EFL teacher educators’ identity construction from an integral perspective. In particular, we use the term three-dimensional narrative as an alternative to better explain language teacher identity from teachers’ past, present, and future narratives. While this is the case, the teachers’ narratives are also subsequently explored in relation to Clandinin and Connelly’s ideas, such as interaction, temporality, and situation. The three-dimensional narrative in the present study allows for a novel approach to viewing language teacher identity from an integral perspective, that is, the interconnectivity of teachers’ past, present, and future narratives.

Method

Research design

This study adopted life history narratives that capture five EFL teacher educators’ life profiles, events, and actions in the form of biographies (Meng, 2014). A life history narrative is a subtype of research design under the framework of narrative inquiry. In narrative inquiry, individuals as “human beings both live and tell stories about their living” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 44). Therefore, narrative inquiry aims to study experience as a story and is “first and foremost way of thinking about experience” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479).

Participant recruitment and profiles

The present study involved five Indonesian EFL teacher educators as participants. To differentiate between teachers and teacher educators, we highlight that the participants were lecturers who teach and educate EFL teacher candidates.

Meanwhile, teachers in general do not have to teach such students. Thus, our study employed the term teacher educators as the present participants work in teacher education programs.

In recruiting the participants, we set out some criteria as follows. First, three participants had been teaching English in university contexts for more than 10 years, and the rest had been teaching for no more than 10 years. This would yield multiple perspectives based on the lengths of the teaching experiences. In approaching the participants, we initially had informal conversations with six participants about their personal backgrounds, knowledge, beliefs, teaching philosophies, and doctoral study journeys through personal chats on WhatsApp and informal meetings in a cafeteria. However, one female participant suddenly withdrew from our study with no clear academic reasons. All five participants as volunteers were the first author’s colleagues. Therefore, in this study, we studied the five participants using “an insider view to elicit and understand the participants’ stories” (Nguyen & Dao, 2019). Table 1 is a snapshot of our research participants’ profiles with anonymity.

Table 1. Participants’ demographic data

No	Name	Gender	Age	PhD Study	Teaching Experience (years)	Home University
1	Student 1	M	36	Ongoing	8	Private University in North Sumatera
2	Student 2	M	38	Ongoing	15	Private University in West Java
3	Student 3	M	34	Ongoing	12	Private University in East Nusa Tenggara
4	Student 4	F	35	Ongoing	8	Private University in East Nusa Tenggara
5	Student 5	F	32	Ongoing	8	Private Islamic University in East Java

Data collection

The data were collected using a life history interview with a combination of face-to-face and online interview methods. The participants were asked to engage in narrative inquiry through one-on-one interviews and ongoing email or WhatsApp chats within a three to six-month data collection period. These interviews were guided by an unstructured, open-ended interview protocol. Points of interview questions include (1) life stories and personal myths; (2) language learning experience and becoming a language teacher; (3) stories of pursuing a doctoral study; 4) teaching experience in the higher education contexts; and 5) self-description and future career. These questions are referenced by the following works.

Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours in each session. All interviews were conducted outside of the participants’ workplaces. These interviews were recorded in a digital form and saved on the principal investigator’s personal computer which only the researchers can access. All interviews were done using both Bahasa Indonesia and English language interchangeably between the researchers and participants.

Data analysis

This study’s data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis procedure. To visualize how we systematically analyzed the narrative data from reflection to final themes, we adapted Hutabarat’s (2021, p. 91) visualization for our analysis procedure in the following Figure 1.

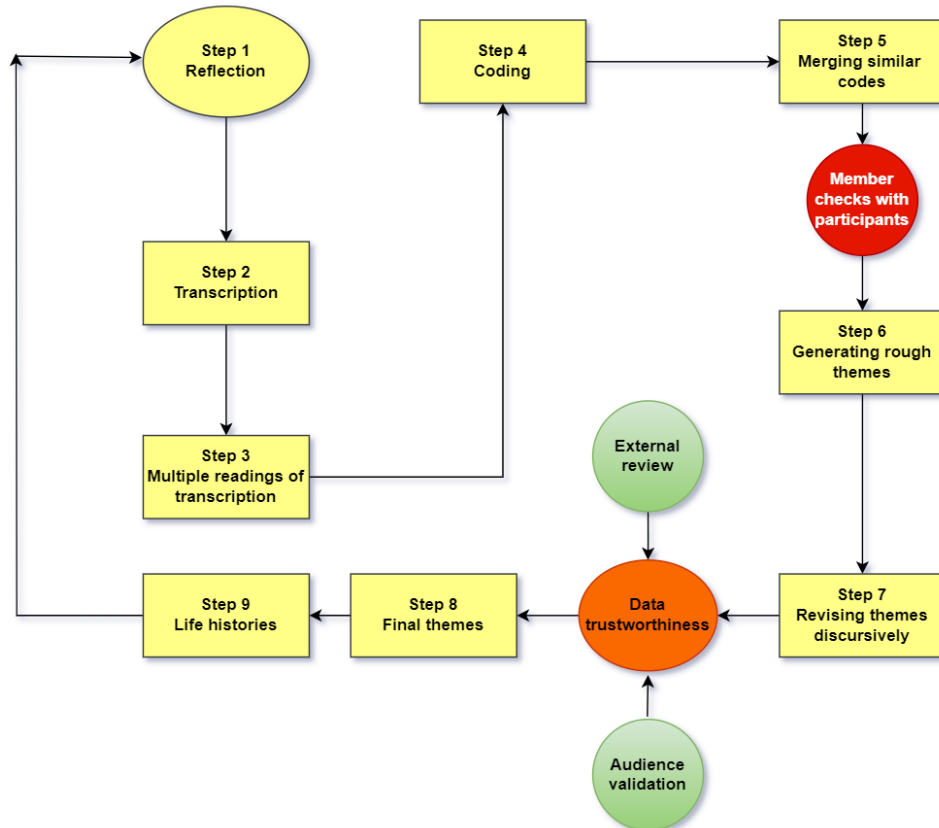


Figure 1. The flowchart of the data analysis procedure

Systematically, we first reflected (**Step 1**) on the interview activities with the participants, including writing our impressions, feelings, and ideas about their lives. In this phase, we did the reflection by listening to the recorded audio of our interviews multiple times until we obtained a holistic understanding of the participants’ lives. Next, we transcribed (**Step 2**) the interview recordings carefully by looking at the most important issues raised by the participants for the data analysis. Afterward, we read (**Step 3**) the transcripts multiple times to construe participants’ meanings of the stories. After understanding the participants’ stories comprehensively, we examined every specific code (**Step 4**), event, story, and experience shared by the participants.

We then merged and grouped similar critical events shared by the participants (**Step 5**) into a rough story. During this process, member-checking was also done discursively as we did not wait until analysis completion to gain feedback from our participants. Following that, we began preparing themes to finalize the participants’ life histories (**Steps 6, 7, and 8**) and asked them to check the themes for a better presentation. In addition, we also carried out an external review and audience validation between steps 7 and 8. Finally, we constructed a life history that tells the participants’ experiences using past, present, and future narratives (**Step 9**). Such a

life-historical display of each participant is also discursively reflected so that we can see the meaning behind their life experiences and link the meaning to the insider view perspectives (**back to Step 1**).

Trustworthiness of the study

To maintain the trustworthiness of this study, we employed Loh's (2013) two proposed categories within the member-checking method to ensure research quality in narrative inquiry: external review and audience validations. In the external review, we invited one professor whose research focuses on narrative inquiry to review the lines of storying and the retelling used in the data analysis. While in the audience validation, we invited two EFL teacher educators who have similar experiences with the stories shared by the participants to check the data interpretation.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

This section presents the research findings in three themed findings: identity construction from past narratives, identity construction from present narratives, and identity construction from future narratives.

Identity construction from past narratives

Receiving full appreciation from secondary English teachers

The narrative data suggest that each participant encountered different personal experiences when learning English in the previous schoolings. Such experiences are bounded by their circumstances and constructed within social interactions with the English teachers. Among the researched participants, two participants (Students 2 and 1) enjoyed their secondary school English learning. For example, Student 2 shared that his English learning experiences were fruitful and motivational when a new English teacher came and taught his class for the first time. The way the new teacher taught was appreciated as he invited all students to speak English without corrections and used the thumbs up when good speaking was made by the students. In our conversations, Student 2 conveyed that:

Entering high school is the change. At that time there was an exchange of new teachers who taught the first-grade students in my school and the new teacher in my English class was good. The way he taught us was simple. He allowed everyone to express themselves and I felt that I had a space to speak English without correction, with all thumbs up when I could produce good English sentences. (Interview, Student 2, April 2023).

Student 2's English learning was a typical form of communicative teaching enacted by his English teacher. It benefited EFL learners to express themselves using English communicatively, despite their mistakes. It also showcased motivational factors in learning English by permeating personalized learning. Student 2's encouraging learning experiences indicated his second language participation bounded within his social interactions with the teacher. Viewed from his personal experiences in learning English in the secondary school context,

Student 2 enacted full engagement and belonging in the class by believing that entering the secondary school was a change for him.

Similar to Student 2, the second participant, student 1 also experienced positive support from his female English teacher. Despite student 1's inability to speak English well, his teacher often motivated him to try to speak English. In the interview, student 1 shared that:

You know, when I was in junior high school, I liked English. At that time, the teacher was female and good, and she always motivated me that I had potential. Although I still could not speak English well, the teacher always encouraged me to do that, again and again until high school. Such a motivation boost supported me to learn English and as you can see, I then took an English major for my university study. (Interview, Student 1, April 2023)

Student 1 also enjoyed his secondary English learning experiences by receiving support, motivation, and encouragement from his English teacher. His personal learning experience is evidence that changing beliefs in learning is a core of identity formation. Three modes of belonging in learning were reflected in student 1's learning experiences: engagement, imagination, and alignment. These three modes preceded student 1's identity formation as an EFL learner with a supportive learning environment. In his engagement in learning English, student 1 understood himself, and his weakness in speaking English, and then invested in shared practices by taking an English major to be involved in the community of practice and build relationships within the community.

All in all, both Student 2 and 1 constructed their identity as EFL learners through positive second language participation which was positioned in the class and mediated by interactional activities with their English teachers. Such a positionality was born by their English teachers' full appreciation of learning English.

Having little appreciation from primary school English teachers

Although Student 2 shared his fruitful English learning experiences with his secondary school English teacher in the previous section, such an encouraging learning experience did not concomitantly happen in his primary school English learning. Student 2 was the only participant in our study who showcased his uncomfortable English learning experience during his junior high school study. Student 2 used the metaphor of 'uncomfortable' to explain his disappointment in learning English after he endeavored to perform well in the class. Student 2's English teacher did not appreciate his work, and instead, suspected him of cheating. He shared in the interview:

I first learned English in my junior high school. At that time, I often completed the English assignment faster than my classmates. Although I did that, my English teacher did not appreciate my work, and even, she suspected me of cheating because of my fast work. In my opinion, that condition disturbed my English learning and made me uncomfortable in class. But, I still loved to learn English and tried hard to do my best in my English class, albeit with very little appreciation I received. (Interview, Student 2, April, 2023)

Student 2's personal experience of learning English in such a negative environment illustrates his effort to position himself as an active learner but received negative feedback from his English teacher. While Student 2 discursively positioned himself as an active learner in the class, he was repositioned by his teacher due to unequal power relations.

Participating in the English competitions

Central to the participants' identity construction as EFL learners, academic socialization in the form of out-of-class activities and engagement plays an important role in such a process. In this study, the two participants, as novices, activated themselves in English competitions to socialize their language proficiency with judges or other more experienced participants. Take, for example, student 4, who recounted that:

I once represented my school to participate in English speech contests and I became the winner. Since then, my aunt found that I had the potential to learn English well and then I took an English study program at the university level. Also, when I was studying at a vocational high school in Denpasar, Bali, English was used as a compulsory extracurricular at the school. We had speaking classes in that program. I was active in the class and participated in many English contests. So, I learned a lot from those competitions. (Interview, Student 4, April 2023)

As an EFL learner in the past, student 4's excerpt also informed an L2 investment that helped construct her identity formation as an English language learner. This investment was evident in her decision to take an English study program at the university level. Therefore, investment, as a notion, is an integral part of understanding identity construction as EFL learners. Slightly similar to student 4's experiences, Student 2 also enacted self-initiated engagement through English competitions. But student 2's experience was different in that his participation in English competitions was in the form of habitus. He shared in the interview:

In the 3rd grade of senior high school, I used to join a competition called Students' Speech Competition. So, the students prepared a speech and presented it in the competition. I became one of the participants. I showed my performance and I managed to pass the selection to represent the district in the provincial-level competition. Indirectly, I developed my English skills by participating in such a competition. (Interview, Student 2, April 2023)

In this finding, Student 2's English learning experience through joining English competitions included secondary habitus as he used to do that activity. The secondary habitus exercised by student 2 showcased his identity-in-practice constructed by his involvement in the district and provincial English competitions. This habitus also helped develop Student 2's language proficiency either consciously or subconsciously.

Identity construction from present narratives

Sudden appointment

The study's findings shed light on the participants' experiences of securing teaching positions in higher education institutions in Indonesia. Among the five participants, two shared sudden appointments which affected their identity as novice EFL lecturers. Take, for example, Students 2 and 4 shared in their narratives that teaching was not their first intention. It just happened suddenly that they were offered teaching positions shortly after graduating from their universities. As evidenced in the analysis, Student 2 did not aim to become an English lecturer. Instead, he intended to teach English at a senior high school level. Although Student 2's first experience was slightly insecure for him, he engaged in a supervisory relationship with his senior to behave professionally as a young lecturer. In our conversation, Student 2 said:

Once I graduated from my university, I was offered a teaching position by the Head of the English Department. I thought it was just a joke! But in fact, that was real. At that time, my department needed an English lecturer. At first, I felt insecure because my teacher who was a lecturer was now my colleague. I felt less confident at the beginning of becoming a lecturer and had time to meet seniors to ask for instructions on what kind of behavior I should have because it was really beyond my dream - my target was not to become a lecturer. Instead, I wanted to be a high school English teacher. (Interview, Student 2, May 2023)

Unlike Student 2, the next participant, student 4, experienced her first teaching position joyfully with a positive expectation to learn more from her teaching position, albeit it was also sudden. Student 4 did not seem to encounter difficulties as she also prepared to live in the new community. She noted that:

After I graduated from my university in Denpasar, I moved and resided in East Nusa Tenggara because I was offered a teaching position in a teaching college founded by a catholic church. So, it was my first experience going and living in East Nusa Tenggara. Although it was sudden and I had no prior teaching and research experiences, I agreed to accept the offer. I thought I could later learn more through teaching and research. (Interview, Student 4, May 2023)

From her narrative, student 4 is typical of an enthusiastic teacher-learner who enacted her teacher agency in a new circumstance. Teacher agency is defined as teachers' capacity to act and behave according to their contexts. This teacher agency also has a close relationship to teacher autonomy and relates to teacher identity formation. As evidenced in student 4s' excerpt, she understood that the sudden offer to be a lecturer was somewhat challenging. However, she was also aware of taking action to enact her capacity in the professions by implementing teaching and research as well as learning more from those activities.

Highly imposed status of being and becoming teachers

The study also inquired into participants' perceptions of the status of being and becoming teachers in the societies. It is important to understand how the research participants viewed their jobs as teachers from societal standpoints. For

example, in our conversations, students 5 and 4 acknowledged that being and becoming EFL teacher educators poses high respect in societies. Student 5 shared:

I thought at the first time that being a lecturer would benefit me much from living earns, but in fact, it is the same as being a teacher in primary and secondary schools, just a bit higher. My friends who are entrepreneurs earn much more than me. I feel that being a lecturer is more of a high status in communities. People often admire those who become lecturers. (Interview, Student 5, May 2023)

In her narrative, student 5 was aware of the fact that being and becoming a lecturer would not provide her with wealth, instead, such a profession is more of high respect in the communities by contending that ‘people often admire those who become lecturers’. student 4 also noted that:

Being a lecturer has a high status in society, just like being a teacher at the secondary school levels. Although the salary is not that much, by becoming a lecturer we have opportunities to expand our knowledge, ourselves, and experiences. (Interview, Student 4, May 2023)

In their narratives, students 5 and 4 believed that the status of being lectures is discursively constructed by societies in a high position. Both students 5 and 4 believed that teaching positions in higher education institutions provided them with self-reward as being highly respected. This finding illustrates the initial understanding of both students 5 and 4 on who they were and what they had to do. Thus, these participants inasmuch had construed that teaching or being and becoming lecturers is more highly respected in societies.

Participating in professional learning communities

Involving in a community of practice is part of teachers’ identity construction through sharing their goals in learning and developing professionally. Such participation is socially constructed because the community members negotiate their repertoire and assimilated skills as well as competencies for self-growth. One of our participants, student 1 shared his experiences with his community of practice involvement:

When I was a teacher, I was actively involved in the Subject Teacher Association (MGMP), and it was continued when I became a lecturer, I also engaged in the Association of English Lecturers in Indonesia. I and the other members often discussed scientific and classroom issues related to the teaching of English in the association. I was also involved in some seminars, training, and other academic-related activities for my professional development and identity construction. (Interview, Student 1, May 2023)

In his narratives, student 1 narrated that his engagement in the community of practice was fully directed to learning scholarly publications with his professional mentor. In a community of practice, a newcomer like student 1 tended to afford acceptance from a more senior member to gain legitimacy. As evidenced in the excerpts, student 1 tried to attain acceptance in his memberships by participating

actively in the writing mentorships although he first did not know many things related to scholarly publication. Student 1 added in the interview conversations:

I started to be involved in the English Lecturers' Association in 2017 when I first represented the English department's head, who was absent at the association's meeting. There, I met a young and cool mentor who trained us on publishing academic articles in ELT journals. Although I first did not understand what to do regarding publishing article journals, the mentor guided me and the other members. Since then, I have become fully engaged and learned other things related to publication and academic writing. (Interview, Student 1, May 2023)

Community of practice elaborates on individuals' identity construction which is mediated by their participation in the community. This participation takes place socially and historically through the negotiations of meaning, practice, community, and identity. student 1 experienced such a process by immersing into the community to develop professionally, thus leading to his ongoing professional identity development as a lecturer.

Trapped by administrative duties

The participants' identity construction as EFL teacher educators is also aligned with the fact that they had to maintain an administrative workload at the university. Such duties negatively affected their teaching and research performances. As evidenced in the narrative analysis, student 5 stated that she did not enjoy such conditions as she wanted to provide high-quality teaching to her students in the class. student 5's identity was negotiated within a choice of teaching or attending a sudden meeting by her top university management. She said that:

I feel guilty, maybe, because I teach at a local university based in a small district. Many of my students come from families with low economic status. This condition affects their learning and abilities. Also, I am assigned a structural and administrative position at my university. It has worsened the situations. I rarely go to class, I even rarely prepare for a good teaching, as I feel. For instance, when I came to teach the class, my top management called me and invited me to have a sudden meeting. It was just annoying for me. I did not feel any academic routines, but administrative activities. (Interview, student 5, May 2023)

In her narrative, Dia seemed to worry about her academic service towards the students. Moreover, most of the students came from low academic status, wherein they should be taught professionally and experience a good teaching and learning atmosphere. Student 5's identity was contested and negotiated by unexpected circumstances as indicated in her narrative. In particular, student 5's identity was positioned differently as being a lecturer and an administrator. It is evident in the analysis that student 5 enacted the two roles, both as a lecturer and an administrator.

In relation to leaving classes for meetings, our next participant, Student 2, also experienced the same condition. He often had to apologize to his classes for not arriving on time. Student 2 shared in the interview:

[...], I was serving as the head of the Bureau for Academic Affairs then. Almost every day I had to attend two or three meetings, accompanying guests from government units, and it distracted my classes. I felt that I performed worse in my classes. You can imagine that I had to apologize every week to my students because of those meetings. (Interview, Student 2, May 2023)

Another participant, student 3, encountered similar yet slightly different duties in his position as a lecturer. While student 5 had to attend sudden meetings when teaching in the class, student 3 had to prepare administrative documents both for teaching and program accreditation. In his narrative, student 3 even did not have much time to write scholarly articles due to his administrative duties. Student 3 shared in the interview:

I think lecturers are busier managing burdensome administrative tasks. We are always asked to prepare lesson plans with a lot of pages but no real practice in the classroom because different conditions may occur in the classes. As a lecturer, we also must prepare many other documents. Moreover, when it comes to an accreditation session, all we do is copy and paste lesson plans and other documents without knowing what these all mean. As a result, we don't have time to do research and write for publication due to those nonsense activities. (Interview, Student 3, April 2023)

The experiences of students 5, 2, and 3 illustrated their identity positions and negotiations as EFL teacher educators mediated in an unsupported workplace. They were faced with negative job satisfaction due to burnout from administrative work. Such an emotion relates to their downgraded work engagement. Although it is essential to construct their identities as professional EFL teacher educators, students 5, 2, and 3 seemed incapable of distancing themselves from realities in their workplaces due to the unequal power relation, ideology, and culture of teaching and learning. This stance enables them to enact agency in the teaching position.

Perceptual conflicts with colleagues

Conflicting beliefs as to how to teach English may occur in social interactions. It is evident in our conversations with student 4. She may be the only participant who encountered conflicts with her colleagues in the institution. The conflicts student 4 encountered were related to pedagogical decisions made by her colleagues when teaching courses, wherein her colleagues used the Indonesia language in almost all classes. For student 4, such a different perceptual mismatch is irrelevant since they are teaching English. Student 4 shared in the interview that:

I and my colleagues have different perspectives on teaching English. For example, when teaching poetry, they used mostly Bahasa Indonesia. Also, when they are teaching drama classes. They use Bahasa Indonesia so much. So, I don't like such ways. We often debated each other because we always had different perceptions and knowledge. My colleagues do not have extensive experience in teaching and managing a university. For example, they use bahasa Indonesia when teaching English in almost all classes, and I do not agree with that. So, every time I told them they even argued against me. The students are studying English, not bahasa Indonesia. So, in my mind, they should be taught using English at most. (Interview, Student 4, May 2023).

Conflicts with colleagues in the workplace may become an important issue in the EFL teacher identity construction process. Workplace conflicts inform teacher identity construction and development as these concurrently occur with colleagues' ideologies of teaching. Such a theoretical landscape is evident in student 4's excerpts where she had to engage in a debate with her colleagues now and then. Student 4 was struggling to manage her identity construction as an ideal English teacher who should use English mostly in the classes. However, in her narrative, such an effort was contested by other ideologies that did not align with her pedagogical beliefs.

Escaping from administrative duties

Almost all participants shared that they pursued a doctoral study simply because they wanted to escape from their administrative duties at the university. Take, for example, students 2, 5, and 4 who stated that most of their time was spent only doing administrative duties at the university, leaving very limited time for preparing well-designed lesson plans and classroom teaching activities as well as professional development. Student 2 narrated that:

I continued my studies because there were so many structural [administrative] duties that I had to do. Most of my time at university was spent doing structural assignments. So, it was not fun because I didn't have time for my professional development. And yes, pursuing a doctoral study was the key for me to escape from that situation. (Interview, Student 2, May 2023)

students 2 was not alone. student 5 also spent most of her time on administrative activities. For student 5, doing a doctoral study allowed her to deepen her knowledge of English language teaching and research. students 5 noted that:

I started my doctoral study in 2019 with a scholarship from the government. By studying further at a doctoral level, I could expand and deepen my knowledge about teaching and research in English language teaching. I am pursuing my doctoral study because I want to escape from my structural position and other administrative duties at my university. I think that it is the best way to escape. (Interview, students 5, May 2023)

Different from students 2 and 5, 4 believed that doing a doctoral study was an escape to find a better institution for her career. Although she did not mention frankly administrative duties that made her situation challenging, her story of the disadvantaged conditions in the current institution further highlights doing a doctoral study as an alternative to such a situation. Student 4 recounted that:

I decided to quit teaching at my university because I wanted to focus on doing a doctoral study and find a better university for my career development. Frankly speaking, I enjoyed teaching at the university and meeting communities and students in the class. But, the conditions and facilities did not support me and my career. But my problem was that I seldom prepared my lesson plans well. So, everything ran unstructured in my class. It was because I had to handle many things in the university and I did not have much time to prepare a well-designed classroom learning, although I knew that it was a must and important for me and my students in learning. (Interview, Student 4, May 2023)

The three participants' narratives signalled their efforts to engage in a community of practice that could provide them with encounters with members who share the same goal for professional development. In that case, pursuing a doctoral study had been the choice to attain membership and leave the previous community that could not offer professional development opportunities.

Identity construction from future narratives

Seeing self in a different situation

When asked about how participants view themselves in different situations, they saw themselves in a combination of multiple roles, responsibilities, and identities. Some of the participants identified themselves as teachers, doctoral students, housewives, and husbands concurrently. Student 2, for example, said the following about his multiple roles and responsibilities:

In my particular situation, I feel different in multiple situations, particularly those that deal with my emotions as an EFL lecturer, doctoral student, and father. I feel that I have so many responsibilities that I must execute. This condition makes me depressed, sometimes, as I have to manage all things at the same time. I used to make a list of what I would do in the future, and it could help me a lot. (Interview, Student 2, May 2023)

Student 2 saw himself within three identities: teacher, doctoral student, and father. These triple identities were contested by his different responsibilities to be done concurrently, such as teaching, completing his doctoral study, and taking care of his children. Borrowing Gee's (2000) two identity classifications, *N-identity* (nature identity) and *I-identity* (institution identity), student 2 experienced changing emotions in enacting his multiple identities, despite his struggle to cope with such issues.

In another conversation with student 5, who was struggling with her multiple roles, it was shown that she assimilated herself into different situations and roles she is experiencing. For example, student 5 acknowledged that she positioned herself as an ordinary woman while she was at home, but she discursively altered herself as an energetic young lecturer at the university. This changing identity is characterized as *Affinity-identity* in Gee's (2000) framework. For example, she shared in her narratives:

It's very different. While at home I am just an ordinary housewife, it means that I go to a stall and then I meet the community. I position myself as an ordinary mother when I am at home. But when I am at university or on campus, namely as a lecturer and there I am still regarded as a young lecturer, because I am still a young lecturer, they think about me being an energetic lecturer and a versatile lecturer on campus. It will be different at home as I don't show that I am a lecturer. I usually blend in with ordinary people with other mothers. They just know it; I just feel good about getting along with ordinary people. (Interview, Student 5, May 2023)

One of the sources of identity formation is situation or place. It was evident in student 5's narratives that her identity was changing and influenced by the setting

place where she lived, namely when she was at home and the university. It thus affected how student 5 saw herself as a woman and a lecturer. Unlike students 2 and 5, student 4 seemed to experience unequal power relations in her identity formation. When asked about how student 4 saw herself in different situations, she shared that:

When I was in Flores at my campus, I felt that I had power as a lecturer. But at home, I felt powerless because I am just a woman and so I have to do household chores. Moreover, my husband and parents-in-law are culturally powerful because they are originally from Flores, while I am Javanese. So, I have more power at my university as a lecturer. And now, my classmates seem to underestimate me in my doctoral study because they look at me as a periphery lecturer from the eastern part of Indonesia, which is known as an unresourceful city. (Interview, Student 4, May 2023)

Student 4 acknowledged that her Javanese-born identity had been unequally posited in her family. Such a positionality had made it difficult for student 4 to empower herself as a woman and a housewife. In addition, due to student 4's residence in the eastern province of Indonesia, her doctoral classmates also negated student 4 as an incapable student. Such a class conflict also influenced student 5's Affinity-identity as she has to struggle to gain acceptance from her doctoral community. However, unlike in her family, student 4 felt more powerful and expressive when working as a teacher educator. It is also evident that student 4 looked at herself as a downgrade due to misalignment in her doctoral classes and family circumstances, but saw them as powerful in the university setting. Student 4 might have been positioned and re-positioned by their communities in different situations. However, the existence of unequal powers might create distractions in the individual's identity construction.

The next participant, student 3 attempted to understand his different positions as lecturer, doctoral student, and father. Juggling multiple roles and identities concurrently was challenging for student 3 as he had to deal with all responsibilities completely. Student 3 saw himself as a person who is fully responsible for his roles, despite the challenging dimensions. Student 3's understanding of his capacity to act and actualize such responsibilities is clearly explained in the idea of teacher agency. Although in earlier studies agency is explored under learners' learning, such an idea is also applicable to language teachers. To illustrate, Student 3 explained in his narratives:

As a university teacher with an ongoing doctoral study right now, I am more inclined to finish small things regularly rather than do big things at once. For example, I must complete a research proposal in my second year of doctoral study. If [it is] incomplete, my study will not run very well and it will affect my teaching position. Sometimes I am aware of myself as a teacher, but sometimes my position as a doctoral student is also challenging. The university where I am working requires me to complete my PhD study within three years. Just imagine that I am now working very hard to achieve this all. At home, I have to position myself as the first person to be fully responsible for my children and wife. It is so much different when I am at the university, where I teach students and require them to be critical. All class members are responsible for their thinking. (Interview, Student 3, May 2023)

Different from the other four participants, student 1 used a metaphor to illustrate his multiple roles and identities. In sum, student 1 saw himself as a struggling person with multiple roles at work, at home, and in the doctoral class. His metaphoric stories illustrate the significant efforts and professionalism that he had to maintain to succeed in the multiple roles. He narrated that:

If compared with a metaphor, I see myself as a rooster. The rooster hatches from an egg and then becomes a big rooster. In the end, it has to find its food. The reason I chose this is because as a lecturer and doctoral student, I have to make a big effort to manage my roles. Moreover, as a father, I still have another big responsibility with my wife and children at home. So, just be professional when at work, on campus as a student, and at home as a husband for wife and children. That's how I see myself as both a lecturer, father, and doctoral student. (Interview, Student 1, May 2023)

The participants in this study saw themselves as affiliated with multiple roles, responsibilities, and identities in different situations such as at home and at university. They seemed to switch themselves socially into different positions. The findings of this section showcase that identity is naturally developed, institutionally negotiated, discursively recognized, and socially constructed.

Expecting a good career

In imagining the identities of EFL teacher educators, most of the participants during our conversations aimed for good careers as lecturers. They believed it was 'normal'. Imagining a conducive work for teaching, researching, and engaging in a community had been one of the ideas that student 4 always thought of. She shared in the interview that:

I hope that I can be a normal lecturer. I am concerned about Tridharma, like teaching, researching, and engaging in the community. In my previous university, I taught many classes and that made me confused because I did not have time to do research and to be involved in communities. After I obtain a doctoral degree, I hope that I can work in a good university so I can do many more things about my career. (Interview, Student 4, May 2023)

In such a narrative, student 4 believed that her excitement as a lecturer stems from her *Tridharma* accomplishments. She understood that her roles and identity were regulated and negotiated under institutional circumstances as part of her identity construction. Further, student 4's imagined identity is a continuum because she envisioned her goals for understanding the nature of being and becoming a lecturer.

Becoming professional teacher-researchers

Two of our participants asserted that they were aware of their positions as lecturers. However, such positionings did not align with their professional identities. One of the cited complexities of their positionings is their lack of research competencies. This is evidenced by student 2's narratives where he expressed his intention to invest in effective language teaching in the future. Student 2 narrated that:

I am aware of my position as an English lecturer. I must develop myself professionally, especially when dealing with research activities. I think in the next ten years or so I should be a professional researcher who can invent solutions for effective English language teaching. This is my responsibility as an academic. (Interview, Student 2, May 2023)

Among all the participants, students 2 and 4 were the most-voiced participants contending that they lack research competencies. This had posited them to envision the imagined teacher identity as a professional teacher-researcher. Both students 2 and 4 are teachers who envision their commitment to, participation, and investment in the profession. This was demonstrated by their awareness of their lack of research skills and the need to improve them.

Pursuing a professorship position

As part of our last inquiry into the participants' imagined identity seen from their future narratives, we asked what they would be within 10 to 20 years. The responses that symbolize the participants' investment in imagining themselves are pursuing professorship positions. For example, student 3 responded that:

As a university teacher, I have set my career goals. One of which is to be a professor in English language education. I know it's still far away, but I must achieve it since it is the only way I can obtain welfare and support my department's progress. (Interview, Student 3, May 2023)

In understanding the participants' future narratives of their imagined identities, we are aware that most of their narratives indicate resolutions of their complexities in the past language teaching and learning experiences. Albeit their identities are contested by their differing roles and responsibilities as a lecturer, a father, a mother, a husband, a wife, and a doctoral student, the participants' narratives showcase their insider views of what constitutes professional EFL teacher educators. In conclusion, the participants' past and present narratives have had an integral power in constructing their imagined teacher identities.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the evidence that the three-dimensional narratives portraying past, present, and future experiences of the participating teachers have important contributions to their identity constructions as language teachers. The interconnectivity of the three narratives has allowed for an integral view of language teacher identity that is constructed in teachers' life histories through their past, present, and future narratives. From the analysis, all participants seem to enact social participation in their past, present, and future communities of practice (for example, student 4 with her mother and colleagues; students 2 and 3 with his English teachers; Dian with his father; and student 1 with his colleagues) in order to attain membership and legitimacy as EFL learners, EFL teacher educators, doctoral students, and imagined EFL teacher educators. The participants' identities are discursively constructed through experiences mediated by interaction with members of the community of practice, settings of time from past, present, and future, and places where the participants live as individuals and work as teacher educators and doctoral students (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Li,

2022).

Much of the literature reviewed in this study has also concluded that language teacher identity is not constructed in a vacuum. Instead, the process entails multifaceted and dynamic experiences and constructs that align and support language teachers' identities such as agency (Kayi-Aydar, 2019), power of discourse (Yazan & Percy, 2018), emotional labor (Nazari & Karimpour, 2022), and workplace conflicts (Moradkhani & Ebadijalal, 2024). The findings in this study confirm the aforementioned previous works that view language teacher identity construction as a dynamic process. For example, the participants in this study enacted their agencies either as EFL learners or EFL teacher educators by socializing into a community of practice and investing in the teaching professions (see, for example, student 4's excerpts for her agentive actions). It is also evident from the teachers' narratives that their identities were co-constructed by the teachers' experiences of doing administrative work as EFL teacher educators.

Furthermore, conflicting relationships with colleagues were also identified in the present study as part of teachers' identity construction. It was experienced by student 4 who showcased her efforts in responding to different beliefs about teaching English with their colleagues in the classes. However, unlike previous studies that discuss workplace conflicts as institutional demands (Nazari et al., 2023), this study unlocks the participants' work conflicts from collegial relationships that help construct their language teacher identity. As evidenced in the next narratives, participants' pursuit of doctoral studies has particularly been used as an escape from their administrative work as EFL teachers in the universities. This finding shared a novel understanding of the doctoral education strategic reasons narrated by English language teachers which are not discussed in most doctoral education research so far (Shi, 2024; Triastuti et al., 2023).

The participants' imagined identities as EFL teacher educators seem to be reflective, serving as their resolutions to the many complexities they had experienced in the prior narratives. It highlights the integral view of language teacher identity, wherein teachers experienced their learning in the past, developed discursively through present complexities, and reflected for better careers in the future. Such a tripartite approach to seeing language teacher identity has not been documented in the recent literature. Take, for example, previous studies (see Nguyen & Dao, 2019; Sun & Akbar, 2023; Ubaidillah et al., 2020) that explored the imagined identities of language teachers and pre-service teachers with no critical looks at the interconnectivity of past, present, and future narratives. Thus, this study offers a novel way of understanding language teacher identity from an integral perspective.

Conclusion

The present study has delved into Indonesian EFL teacher educators' identity construction from a three-dimensional narrative. The teachers' past narratives indicate that they were struggling with multiple complexities in their initial journeys of English language learning. The study also unveiled how participants negotiated their concurrent identities as EFL teacher educators and doctoral students in their present narratives. Next, the participants' future narratives inform resolutions as part of the identity construction. The findings provide two implications for teacher education programs in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). First, since EFL

teacher educators' past, present, and future narratives are essential in their journeys of being and becoming teachers, teacher education programs need to enact such narratives as an integral perspective as part of the teachers' identity construction. Second, an identity-informed pedagogy should be encouraged in the teacher education program's curriculum to help construct EFL teacher candidates as professionals in their field. Despite these, two limitations are identified. First, as the study initially recruited six participants, one of them withdrew in the middle of the conversations. Second, the external review was not done longitudinally as time constraints existed. Based on these, future researchers are encouraged to build up a good rapport with narrative inquiry participants so no withdrawal will occur. Also, narrative inquirers should use longitudinal reviews from experts so that the storylines are of high quality.

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