
The Role of Language Teacher Identity for Reframing ESL Teacher Professionalism

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Abstract: In recent years, the concept of language teacher identity has gained increasing attention among language instructors in the field of language education, as it begun reshaping the way language teachers see and perceive themselves. This article explores what is the role of language teacher identity in reframing ESL instructors' professionalism by investigating how identity construction impact language teachers' self and professional growth. It is widely acknowledged that experience, beliefs, interactions, and cultural contexts influence prominently to shape language teacher's identity. However, the concept also raises questions about its practicality and benefits for language educators' development and professionalism. Considering all these perspectives, this article highlights the great role of language teacher identity and how dynamic and reflective process it is that contributes to the evolving professionalism of ESL teachers.

Keys words: Language teacher identity, ESL professionalism, teacher identity construction, reflective practice, professional development, sociocultural practice

Introduction. Lately, there has been increasing demand for dynamic and self-reflective teachers in ESL education, since they developed language teacher identity, the concept which is crucial to reframe the professionalism of language teachers. Language teacher identity is not limited with language instructors who have reached an advanced stage of their professional work, but also it contributes profound meaningful guidance for novice and inexperienced language teachers in language education field. This perspective enables educators learn to teach, become language teachers, grow professionally within sociocultural, historical and political contexts.

Before language teacher identity term emerged in language education as a key concept, teachers often experienced struggles including constructing, negotiating and enacting their identities in their professional work, and practices. However, recognition of language teacher identity has significantly changed perspectives of language teachers on their professionalism, becoming thresholds of their professional movements in career trajectories.

Main body. In any education system, teachers serve as backbones of teaching and learning, and their professional identity plays an essential role in shaping their career path. Drawing on the concept of "transformative intellectuals", teachers' identity can be largely influenced by the level of teaching pedagogy, academic system, and practical experience as an academician. It is always believed that most of the teachers do not commonly identify their professional identity, and they do not directly transform their knowledge to learners because of education systems and restrictive educational policies in their areas. In some educational institutions, there are many interventions and restrictions, so ESL teachers like other educators do not clearly apply their identity to be the best version of themselves. Despite this

dominance by officials, teachers need to define their roles and understand their strengths and weaknesses, and develop capabilities and address weaknesses. This eventually may lead to carrying out duties with enthusiasm at work.

While thinking of reshaping language teacher identity, all teachers have to think of ways how they conduct their lessons. Setting up learning and teaching outcomes before each lessons assist teacher follow the steps of learning stages and consult learners easily when they face difficulties. Such thoughtful lesson plannings provide effective learning process, and create friendly atmosphere between language teachers and learners. During teaching process engaging with reflective practice may impact language teachers positively. They start paying attention to pluses and minuses of teaching practice, considering which areas should be polished or improved.

In other words, teacher identity is defined as an impression or mental picture of what “being a teacher” means. Through the years of work, teacher change their roles since social interaction contexts change. They also come into contacts with different people to improve learning environment. These roles are also influenced by different settings, places, objects in classrooms and institutions.

Language teacher identity also involves multiple roles by educators including instructor, cultural guide, language expert. All these jobs require language teachers handle internal tensions and negotiations. Since teacher’s job does not include only teaching, they come up with different roles as a psychologist or leader.

To reach higher professionalism, language teachers also have to form social construction with students, colleagues, institutions, and even materials like technology. Strengthening bonds with students and colleagues helps language teachers to build a better work personality which enables them become more flexible and adaptable with people. Working with technologies increases their opportunities to make lessons more engaging, interactive and tech-friendly.

Conclusion. Language teacher identity is one of the most important things each language teacher has to consider in their career path. Reshaping their language teacher identity based on the various factors teachers come across during teaching practice. Reflecting their work experience, improving strengths and addressing weaknesses, following objectives are paths each language teacher has to go through. Over the years of teaching, they may realize their teaching identity is not static, but open to novelties and exchanging experience with others.

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