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COMMUNICATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHER IDENTITY:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF BEING A NON-NATIVE
ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHER IN THE UNITED STATES

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Acceptance Page

This dissertation titled “COMMUNICATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF TEACHER IDENTITY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF BEING A NON-NATIVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING TEACHER IN THE UNITED STATES” is hereby accepted by the Faculty of Information and Communication Studies, U.P. Open University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Communication (DComm).

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rommel D. Dionson is currently performing his doctoral dissertation at the University of the Philippines Open University. In October 2009, he received his bachelor's degree in secondary education major in communication arts at the University of San Carlos. He also finished his master's degree in English language teaching at the University of the Philippines- Cebu in the year 2015, with a thesis focusing on English for Specific Purpose (ESP) coursebook development.

Mr. Dionson is currently teaching as an English Teacher at GFSD in Arizona, USA. He was a high school English teacher in the Philippines for five years, and he was also an ESL teacher for three years in an international academy. With experience in teaching foreign and local students, as well as in activities outside the traditional classroom, he has a diverse background that enhanced his success as a teacher. His experiences teaching abroad have proven to be an asset in the classroom. He has a deeper understanding of what diversity means through his travels and has been able to build productive and valuable relationships with diverse students and peers.

ROMMEL D. DIONSON

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DEDICATION

It's funny-- the people most deserving of accolades are the ones least desirous of them. This is the case with my mom. Since I was young, she has been my biggest supporter. And throughout this process, when I was feeling like I wanted to quit, I remembered all the times she told me that I could do it. It was me thinking about those words and seeing her in my mind that kept me motivated.

*To my mom,
You told me I could, so I did.*

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ABSTRACT

DIONSON, ROMMEL D., University of the Philippines Open University, June 2021, "Communicative Construction of Teacher Identity: A Phenomenological Study of Being a Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher in the United States"

Adviser: **Dr. Jean A. Saludadez**

Addressing the need of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) to construct an identity as legitimate professionals in the English language teaching arena, this study focuses on the importance of dialogues in creating a more empowering conceptualizations of self. Teacher identity construction has been studied under the various traditions of communication theory; however, this study explored identity construction by situating this to Phenomenological Tradition wherein the concept of "otherness" or discourses between self and others is applied.

This is a qualitative study that used the methodologies of autoethnography and narrative inquiry. In this study, the researcher used dialogic reflection as a NNEST teaching native English-speaking students in the United States. The autoethnographic data were collected and analyzed to answer the research questions: (1) What is my view of English language teaching as a non-native English-speaking teacher teaching native English-speaking students? and (2) How does my view of English language teaching, through my discourses and interactions with my native English-speaking students, parents, and colleagues, shape my professional identity as an English teacher?

Dialogues were used to generate rich, detailed views of language teaching. Data analysis from narrative dialogues illuminated five global themes: language teaching (1) requires extra effort; (2) needs accountability; (3) entails engagement and practicality; (4) based on teachers' personal qualities; and (5) requires knowledge, skills, and professionalism. These views shape the researcher's identity as a (1) supporter; (2) facilitator; and (3) motivator. The findings of the study suggest that dialogues are a strong motivational factor for the construction of teacher identity, and that they can be used to explore personal experiences and be connected to wider cultural and social understandings of identity formation.

Keywords: Non-native English-speaking teachers; Language teaching; Identity construction; Dialogues; Autoethnography.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Over the years, there has been an escalating demand in English learning that consequently posed a challenge for English-language program administrators, who are facing a shortage of qualified native English-speaking teachers (NESTs). This has prompted a growing number of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) desperately looking for jobs to teach the English language (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). According to Canagarajah (2005), 80% of the English teachers in the world are non-native speakers. Crystal (2008) also pointed out that the number of English speakers around the world was 1.27 billion, and more than 470 million out of them were English second-language speakers. Due to the fact that more speakers use English much more frequently with other non-native speakers as they have far outnumbered native-speakers, language researchers and even language teachers are becoming more adopting to a notion that native speakers are no more the exclusive owners of the language (Widdowson, 1994).

Recently, the field of English language teaching (ELT) as a whole has been criticized for idealizing the native speaker English teacher, and individuals in the linguistic community have begun to question whether the native speaker is the only authority on English (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). This elevation of the native speakers at the expense of the non-native speakers has been increasingly challenged by various researchers. For example, Cook (1999) suggests that native speakers no longer

remain a model for language teaching since they became an integrated part of a larger language speakers' community. Canagarajah (2005) added that the notion of the "native speaker" had become obsolete since an increasing number of people speak more than one language or more than one variety of a language. Moreover, Modiano (2006) argues that expertise in speaking English is not inherited by birth but by the ability to use the language correctly, and both native and non-native speakers can possess such ability.

Much research has been conducted in order to demonstrate that the "native speaker" construct is unsound, that discrimination against so-called non-native speakers solely on the basis of their first language is unethical. In fact, this assumption has been challenged by applied linguists who have proposed alternatives to the NES/NNES dichotomy (Cook, 1999). For instance, the World Englishes (Kachru, 1986) perspective on ELT values the richness in diversity of English (Davies, Hamp-Lyons, & Kemp, 2003) and argues for "the importance of inclusivity and pluricentricity in approaches to the linguistics of English worldwide" (Bolton, 2005). Like World Englishes (WE), English as an International Language (EIL) also highlights the complex sociolinguistic reality of the English language. The EIL paradigm, originally proposed by Larry Smith (1983), and developed by scholars such as McKay (2003), Tomlinson (2003), and Widdowson (1994) draws attention to the international functions of English and its use in a range of cultural and economic spheres by speakers of English from diverse lingua-cultural backgrounds who do not speak each other's first language.

Similarly, the emergence of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and the works of its proponents such as Jenkins (2007), Kirkpatrick (2010), and Seidlhofer (2011) has been shifting the focus from NESs to NNEs. ELF includes “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (Seidlhofer, 2011). In ELF, deviations from the NES norm are not viewed as inferior, and NNEs are not seen as “failed natives” (Cook, 1999) but as legitimate users of the language. Overall, English can no longer be said to “belong” to countries such as England or the United States. These countries are no longer the keepers of the “standard variety” of the English language since ‘foreign’ speakers have as much right of influence over the language as ‘native’ ones (Kachru, 2004; Byram, 2006; and Modiano, 2006).

Unfortunately, nowadays there is a negative prejudice against NNEs all over the world. An idealized notion of what constitutes a native speaker (Leung et al, 1997) and the underlying assumption that NESs are inherently better language teachers than NNEs remain pervasive in the English language teaching profession. NNEs have continued to be marginalized and the situation remains that NNEs still have difficulties finding teaching positions in ELT industry despite NNEs’ professional qualifications (Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Research reports that NNEs face discrimination and unprofessional drawbacks in employment and other aspects of their profession (Selvi, 2010) and are given lower professional status than native speaker teachers (Mahboob, 2003). For example, NESs are often hired even without any other qualification than their being native speakers (Braine, 2010). Thousands of English language teaching jobs, specifying that only NESs will be considered, are advertised in many different countries and educational institutions and contexts,

addressing a hypothetical preference by English learners for NES rather than NNEST teachers, and many NNESTs are not even considered for ELT jobs (Clark & Paran, 2007).

This hiring discrimination is damaging at many different levels as it leads to professional favoritism (Medgyes, 1994), and it diminished job prospects for NNESTs (Mahboob, 2003). In fact, few studies have been conducted regarding hiring practices for English teachers around the world. It has been found out that program administrators and other gatekeeping stakeholders often accept and function under the native speakerism paradigm, which, by definition, typecasts NNESTs as less instructionally qualified and less linguistically competent than their NEST counterparts (Lippi-Green, 1997; Maum, 2002). These stereotyped notions can cause NNESTs to feel disempowered (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999). This may result in the “impostor syndrome” (Bernat, 2009) in NNESTs, which can affect their teacher persona, self-esteem, and thus, their in-class performance (Selvi, 2010).

Indeed, the fact remains that a “standard” English accent is still preferred in ELT industry (Holiday, 2008), and teachers who do not ‘possess’ it are at a serious disadvantage in terms of securing employment. With the desire to stop this, TESOL had issued an anti-discrimination statement (TESOL, 2006) saying that teachers should not be hired on the basis of their native language. However, this demarcation continues to happen until today, which shows that despite many efforts to avoid discrimination, the situation is extremely complex, and there is so far no sign of change. As a result, many qualified NNESTs struggle to assert and negotiate an identity as legitimate professional English teachers in the contexts where they teach

because NES status permanently eludes them (Canagarajah, 2005). This undermines their professionalism and the English teaching profession as a whole.

Rationale

This study's rationale came about in an effort to answer several general concerns related to the professional identities of the NNESTs employed in the secondary level setting in an English-speaking country like the United States. A number of experiences in my own professional life have made me aware that carving an identity as a legitimate teacher of English can be fraught with some difficulties for a NNEST like me. This is due to the fact that the ELT industry subscribes to an assumption that NESTs are the gold standard of spoken and written language, whereas NNESTs are inferior educators because they lack this innate linguistic skill. According to Mossou & Llurda (2008), this positioning of NESTs as the ideal English teacher has established a false dichotomy between NESTs and NNESTs. This false dichotomy and the "inferior language teacher" paradigm inspired me to pursue this study.

Considering that NNESTs are estimated to make up 80% of the ELT workforce (Canagarajah, 2005), it can be argued that research focusing on NNESTs is a viable area to be investigated and explored. However, the existing research is quite limited and has only begun to surge in recent years. This is due to the fact that research focusing on NNESTs has traditionally been a sensitive issue and has not always been a politically correct topic (Mahboob, 2010). As I continue with my quest to better

understand what both NESTs and NNESTs had to offer to the field of English language teaching, I realized that I had found an area that I wanted to research. From my search for knowledge came the desire to look at my views of language teaching as a NNEST and how I develop my professional identity through these views.

Now, the questions is: how can NNESTs articulate, claim, and assert an identity as legitimate professionals in ELT? First of all, this process requires NNESTs to critically examine their own views about what it means to be a NNEST. For NNESTs, the opportunity to discuss who they believe themselves to be and what they believe in is necessary for developing a healthy professional identity (Thomas, 1999; Lewis, 2007). In order to assert their identity as legitimate professionals, NNESTs must negotiate different identity options as they interact through discourse. According to Gee (1996), identity is constructed, maintained, and negotiated to a significant extent through language and discourse. Grounded in Phenomenological Tradition of communication theory, this conceptualization perceives language (or discourse) and identity as mutually constitutive. Identity is created by participating in various discourses.

Research Framework

The Phenomenological Tradition conceptualizes communication as the experience of self and other in dialogue. According to Craig (1999), this tradition views communication as the essential dialogue through which the world and other people can be directly and consciously experienced and interpreted. Communication in

phenomenology is further conceptualized as the “experience of otherness”. He added that when communication is studied from the phenomenological tradition, it is associated with concepts such as “human experience”, “subjective perception”, “interpretation”, “dialogue”, “authenticity”, “the self and others”, and “hermeneutics”. In phenomenological tradition, all that humans can really know is that which they experience and personally interpret (Macguire, 2006).

Similarly, Littlejohn & Foss (2008) defined phenomenology as an intuitive process of observing phenomena as they objectively are, and assigning meaning to them based on the feelings and perceptions elicited during a life experience. They summarized the character of the phenomenological tradition in three core principles: (1) knowledge about the world lies in the direct experience of it, (2) the meaning of experiences depends on subjective perception and interpretation, and (3) phenomenological experiences rely on the active process of interpretation and the hermeneutic circle, which indicates the way experiences are interpreted by “going back and forth between experiencing an event or situation and assigning meaning to it, moving from the specific to the general, and back to the specific again”.

Given the characteristics of the phenomenological tradition, as explained by Craig (1999) and Littlejohn and Foss (2008), topics of life experiences, the process of interpretation, authentic dialogue, and human relationships are typically classified under the phenomenological tradition’s scope. Influenced by the philosophical principle of seeking understanding of all human existence, phenomenology holds the premise that the meaning of life and existence lies not in physical circumstances but rather in intersubjective participation (Angelo, 1998). The founder of phenomenology,

Husserl, saw it as a “method for analyzing conscious experience” (Craig & Muller, 2007) in which meaning, understanding, and knowledge about human existence can be found (Bodie & Crick, 2014). Phenomenological approaches maintain that all experiences are both objective and subjective at the same time as the physical world is always objectively available but can only become known when humans directly and subjectively interact with and experience it (Craig & Muller, 2007).

Moreover, according to Patton (2002), phenomenology is focused on individuals' meaning making as the quintessential element of the human experience. He added that phenomenological inquiry holds the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience. In phenomenology, the barriers that might appear in communication can be the consequence of self-unawareness, non-acceptance of difference, or strategic agendas. The phenomenological interpretation is intentional analysis of the person's everyday life standpoint that is living it, and the important findings derived from phenomenology are an understanding of a phenomenon as seen through the eyes of those who have experienced it (Patton, 2002). Thus, the phenomenological tradition places great emphasis on people's perception and their interpretation of their own experience and the experience of others in genuine dialogue.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), a German philosopher, attempted to address the problem of mind-body dualism with the intent of explaining the workings of consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). He attempted this by describing the process of how mind creates meaning. To do this, he developed the idea of intentionality, and he named this theory of creation of meaning as transcendental subjectivity (Russell,

2007). Transcendental subjectivity is the idea that people have the ability to rise above their subjective selves and interact with the objective world; in other words, Husserl attempted to explain the interaction between subjective experience as it produces meaning for the external world so that other people can understand a person's lived experience in a productive way, in a way that transcends mere subjectivity.

Husserl claimed that people create meaning as they perceive the external world and then create concepts through intentional acts to explain what they think about those experiences (Giorgi, 1997). Understanding Husserl's concept is important to this dissertation because it directs how to reveal meaning for my experiences in relation to the formation of my professional identity. According to Moustakas (1994), the meaning a person creates for a phenomenon is bound together by revealing the external objective experience with the internal subjective experience. In other words, researchers reveal meaning by describing what they do and describing what their rationale or thinking is behind their actions, i.e., why they do it. In this manner, Husserl argued that the phenomenologist overcomes the mind-body problem by combining the object with the subject, the body and its actions with the mind and its thoughts (Moustakas, 1994; Russell, 2007). Hence, within such a description the phenomenon is revealed.

Phenomenology has points of similarities and differences with other traditions. Phenomenology and semiotics agree on the ideas that signs and symbols are based on subjective interpretation and personalized meanings and that these intersubjective understandings are often the cause of communication problems (Craig, 1999). Phenomenology, however, rejects the semiotic perspective that interpretation is

separate from reality and that symbols are mere representations of the world. For phenomenology, interpretation and symbols construct a reality that does not exist before it is experienced (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). On the other hand, studies of perception are dominant to the sociopsychological tradition, and thus, phenomenological ideas on subjective perception and artful interpretation (through the hermeneutic circle) are very attractive to sociopsychological studies of human perception. The hermeneutic circle of phenomenology is also frequently used in psychological studies. The sociopsychological tradition, however, differs from phenomenology by maintaining that people are not self-aware of their cognitive processes during interpretation (Craig, 1999).

In relation to the field of identity research, there is not much literature about situating identity construction in the phenomenological tradition. There is indeed a gap in literature, and it warrants further exploration of identity construction through this study. Phenomenology is about the experience of self and other in dialogue; therefore, this study would contribute a different dimension of explaining the construction of identity. Phenomenologists argue that meaning is conveyed through the language used to describe one's experience. Phenomenological research is used to generate a theoretical account that permits researchers to elicit the effect and significance of an experience or experiences that an individual may have undergone (Davidsen, 2012). Hence, this framework will provide a path of increased knowledge about identity construction through my experiences with English native speaking students and colleagues in dialogue.

Research Questions

Looking at identity construction as a social phenomenon through the lens of communication, this study contends that identity is a dynamic process of intersubjective discourses, experiences, and interactions: all of these change over time as discourses change, constantly providing new configurations. Even 'small events' within a particular context are significant in constructing social meanings as they are subjected to discursive practices. Having this in mind, my research questions are as follows:

1. What is my view of English language teaching as a non-native English-speaking teacher teaching native English-speaking students?
2. How does my view of English language teaching, through my discourses and interactions with my native English-speaking students, parents, and colleagues, shape my professional identity as an English language teacher?

In this study, interpretation of my teaching experiences, as interpreted through dialogue with myself and students and colleagues, will lead to understanding and knowledge about teacher identity formation. The associated idea is that dialogue, whether with oneself or other people, is a central part of the interpretation process of meanings, which are based on subjective perception and interpretation. As West and Turner (2014) puts it, communicative interactions are at the center of direct experiences and interpretations, ensuring "production of meaning, dialogue, rhetoric, and representation".

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

(Teacher) Identity

Because NNESTs find themselves viewed as deficient educators (Wang, 2012), it is key for their professional development that they critically understand and learn identity formation by investigating their experiences. Duff and Uchida (1997) stated there is little research on language teacher identity, particularly for NNESTs' identity development (Johnson, 2001), and it is still considered a budding field of inquiry since research on language teacher identity has begun to surge in recent years (Miller, 2009).

Multiple researchers such as Block, (2006), Coldron and Smith (1999), Dillabough (1999), Kerby (1991), and Pavlenko (2003) view teachers' professional identity as a constantly changing process of interpreting and reinterpreting experiences, and it is constructed by numerous factors. Wu (2011) defines identity as the way we view ourselves and are viewed by others and it is inextricably tied to the social contexts out of which it arises. It is, furthermore, constructed through a mixture of social practices in which individuals are involved in their daily lives.

Similarly, Day et al., (2006) defined identity as "the social positioning of self and other". They conceptualized identity as "a phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories". Pavlenko (2003) also

defined identities as “social, discursive, and narrative options offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to which individuals and groups of individuals appeal in an attempt to self-name, to self-characterize, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives”.

Moreover, according to Norton (1997), identity refers to “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future”. Finally, Danielewics (2001) notes that identity refers to “our understanding of who we are and who we think other people are”. In this view, teachers’ construction of an identity is intricately connected to what they believe, to their perceptions of themselves, to how they are perceived by others, and to the emotions that become prominent in this process of identity construction (Arvaja, 2016). Overall, identity, as Ige (2010) puts it, is unarguably a reflection of the various ways in which people understand themselves in relation to others.

For this study using the phenomenological lens, identity is defined as multiple, dynamic, relational, situated, and embedded in the experiences of self and others in dialogue. This study focuses on use of dialogues and interactions as key factors for an emphasis on the discursive nature of identity construction. For Harr’e (1987), identity is about the constant and ongoing engagement of individuals in dialogues and interactions with others. In this phenomenological perspective, language and discourse play a key role as “[w]ho we are to each other, then, is accomplished, ascribed, disputed, resisted, managed and negotiated in discourse” (Beijaard et al., 2004). Likewise, Duff & Uchida (1997) pointed out that “in educational practice, as in

other facets of social life, identities and beliefs are co-constructed, negotiated, and transformed on an ongoing basis by means of language".

Identity across the Traditions of Communication Theory

My understanding of the traditions of communication theory is built on the essay *Communication Theory as a Field* written by Robert Craig (1999) and on the book *Theories of Human Communication* by Stephen Littlejohn and Karen Foss (2008). According to Craig (1999), "Communication theory is enormously rich in the range of ideas that fall within its scope ... [Yet] communication theorists apparently neither agree nor disagree about much of anything. There is no canon of general theory to which they all refer. There are no common goals that unite them, no contentious issues that divide them. For the most part, they simply ignore each other."

To address the lack of theoretical unity in communication theory, Craig (1999) developed a metamodel called the seven traditions of communication theory. This review firstly discusses and illustrates the core assumptions and theoretical character of each tradition. After that, indication as to how communication scholars perceive identity construction will be classified into different traditions. This literature will also pay specific attention to the multidisciplinary roots of each tradition, unique conceptualization of identity through communication, and, where applicable, the points of similarities and differences between traditions in relation to identity construction.

A. Cybernetic Tradition

The cybernetic tradition treats communication as a means of information transition; it is a systematic process of information. Cybernetics conceptualizes communication as information processing on the basis of electrical engineering in the middle of the 20th century. It differentiates human communication from the other types of communication system process (especially artificial intelligence) by the study of information processing, feedback and control. According to Littlejohn & Foss (2008), the core characteristic of the cybernetic tradition is the system; a structure comprising interdependent parts that work together to create a function that is worth more than the sum of the various parts. Systems interact with their environment to either receive from it or to give back to it (Monge, 1977). Systems also subscribe to the idea of circularity in the form of cause-and-effect interrelations between the parts of the whole system (Krippendorff, 1989).

From a cybernetic perspective, communicators experience uncertainties and problems because systems can malfunction or break down should there be a communication problem like an interruption in information flow, information overload, or other forms of noise that prevent information from being understood correctly (Craig, 1999). The cybernetic tradition typically focuses on concepts such as "system", "information", "processing", "feedback", "channel", "interconnectivity", "network", "senders", "receivers", and "noise" when theorizing about communication (Craig, 1999; Craig & Muller, 2007; Garcia-Jimenez, 2014). The cybernetic tradition can be used to classify theories about physical, biological, social, or behavioral systems in which communication influences, shapes, and controls the character of the overall system to achieve both balance and change (Littlejohn & Foss 2008). Relationships, for example, are complex social systems based on interaction that can only be created

and maintained through meaningful communication (Mascareño, 2008; Garcia-Jimenez, 2014).

In studying the concept of identity, George Herbert Mead founded a socio-psychological perspective on identity, which will be discussed in the next section. However, Mead's perspective on identity is greatly related to his cybernetic thinking (Buckley, 1967; MacKinnon, 1994; Shibutani, 1968). His concept of the reflexive self presupposes a reflective mind and consciousness, making possible the delayed response to stimuli and the contemplation, selection, and rehearsal of action that characterizes purposive human behavior. To capture the reflexive nature of human thought and conduct, Mead employed the "act"—a functional, goal-directed, and time-bounded segment of behavior—as his unit of analysis. Because of its anticipatory and adjustive nature, the act is not a simple linear progression, but rather a process of negative feedback and control. In Mead's words, "there is . . . an influence of the later act on the earlier act. The later process which is to go on has already been initiated and that later process has its influence on the earlier process . . . the thing we are going to do is playing back on what we are doing now". Mead's concept of the act, in conjunction with his related concepts of mind and self, explains purposive behavior without invoking a mystical teleology. In Mead's words, "the statement of the act includes the goal to which the act moves . . . a natural teleology in harmony with a mechanical statement".

However, Mead applied the principle of cybernetic control exclusively to the processing of cognitive information. His emphasis on cognition and his exclusion of affect resulted from his objective to build a genuinely social psychology. To underscore

the importance of both cognition and affect for an adequate theory of human motivation, MacKinnon and Heise (2010) proposed self-actualization theory using the principle of cybernetic control. Although they adopted Mead's view that the organization of self-conceptions is influenced by the organization of society itself, they contended that cognition provides direction to an act while affect is required to energize or mobilize it. Their theory of self and identity vitalizes Mead's self-theory by focusing on the affective aspect of self and self-confirming choices. From the perspective of their theory, self-conceptions mobilize self-confirming identities and identity confirming actions only indirectly through the self-sentiments that they evoke. Then, confirming self-sentiments requires cognitive processing that confirms self-conceptions. A person's simultaneous cognitive and affective processing accounts for both the direction and energizing of human conduct.

Another scholar who theorized identity under the lens of cybernetics is Peter Burke, who proposed identity control theory (ICT). Applying Powers' (1973) cybernetic control theory, ICT proposes that the activation of an identity establishes a feedback loop. The goal of the identity control process is to match the environmental or situational inputs (perceptions of self-relevant meanings) to internal standards (identity meanings). What is controlled is the input—reflected appraisals, which amounts to perceptions of others' activities, and this control is achieved by implementing appropriate behavior. According to this model, neither the input meanings nor the identity standards by themselves cause behavior; instead, behavior is a product of a comparison between the two (Burke, 1991).

For Burke (1991), identity is 'a sense of meanings applied to the self in a social role or situation defining what it means to be who one is'. Identity for human beings is the form of reflexive self-awareness by which social entities are conscious of themselves and of their embeddedness in a context of self and others. All social action takes place by and on behalf of identities. All social entities exist by virtue of their being an identity. To have an identity is to be recognized. He added that identities are constructed and maintained through the activities of control, which in themselves are secured through circuits and networks of communication. An identity, therefore, is a self-aware locus of social recognition and is the only source of social action in society (Burke, 1991).

B. Sociopsychological Tradition

The social psychology presents communication according to social interaction and influence. Social interaction is correlated to individuals' traits, attitudes, emotions, and cognitive processes. Influence appears among mass media on a larger scale than among individuals. The social psychological theorists and practitioners are concerned with effective communication. The sociopsychological tradition can be appealing to scholars because of its popular postulation that psychological elements such as personality, feelings, and attitudes influence the way communication messages are sent and received (Craig, 1999). The meta-discursive vocabulary of the sociopsychological tradition used when theorizing about communication includes terms such as "behavior", "cognition", "emotion", "attitude", "interaction", "influence", "personality", "effect", "individual", "trait", and "variable" (Craig, 1999).

The sociopsychological tradition conceives communication as a social process of expression, interaction, and influence with causes and effects (Craig, 1999; Macguire, 2006). Causes are related to psychological mechanisms such as emotions, attitudes, trauma, stress, depression, and/or individual traits (Garcia-Jimenez, 2014), and produced effects can be cognitive, emotional, or behavioral (Craig, 1999). Participants in communication are thus always influenced by both their own unique psychological factors as well as by the effects that the communication interaction might have on them.

The sociopsychological tradition correlates with the cybernetic idea that humans are “information-processing systems” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). Because the sociopsychological tradition conceptualizes communication as a process of interaction, the cybernetic construction of communication as a system for processing information during social interactions is an ideal point of comparison between the two traditions. The sociopsychological tradition, however, does not agree with the cybernetic tendency of reducing all communication to “information-processing algorithms” (Craig, 1999), and maintains that psychological variables like motivation, emotion, and personality influence the communication process.

As discussed in the previous section, Mead used the cybernetic control principle of modern systems theory to understand the concept of self and identity; however, the principle was exclusively applied to the processing of cognitive information. His emphasis on cognition and his exclusion of affect resulted from his objective to build a genuinely social psychology. To accomplish this objective, he constructed his social psychology on the basis of language, which has an inherently

social character because significant symbols evoke the same cognitive response or meaning in the communicator as in the recipient. Mead believed that the affective overtones of language and the communication of affective states lack this symmetry of response, so he excluded emotion from his social psychology and defined all his constructs, including mind and self, in cognitive terms (MacKinnon, 1994).

Mead viewed the self as integrated because the self is a microcosm of the larger society. "The unity and structure of the complete self reflects the unity and structure of the social process as a whole; and each of the elementary selves of which it is composed reflects the unity and structure of one of the various aspects of that process in which the individual is implicated" (Mead, 1934). By implication, the stability of individual selves is also a function of the stability of society itself. He added that the social constitution of self is compatible with individuality because each individual "reflects in its organized structure the behavior pattern of that process as a whole . . . from its own particular and unique standpoint within that process".

C. The Semiotic Tradition

The semiotic tradition is concerned with signs, symbols, their meanings, and how these meanings are shared and interpreted through communication (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). From this point of view, the communication is the process of sharing the signification by means of signs. A sign is anything that can stand for something else. The words are signs we call symbols. The semiotic tradition is trying to explain and reduce the problems and misunderstandings created by the use of ambiguous symbols. This tradition thus draws on multiple theoretical perspectives about signs

and symbols, language, discourse, and interpretation (Craig, 1999) and is characterized by studies which address the use of signs in human interaction and “how people convey meaning through sign systems (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993).

According to this tradition, communication is the “intersubjective mediation of signs” (Craig, 1999). Sign systems are “the productive agents of thought” (Craig & Muller, 2007) in society and thus people rely on the communication process to bridge the gap between two minds. Through communication, linguistic and symbolic signs come to have socially shared meanings and therefore communication is seen as the “mediator” of understanding between individuals. Communication theories that consider aspects such as the “structure of language and other systems of signs, the relationship between language and thought, and the communicative uses of signs” are thus easily classified under the scope of the semiotic tradition (Craig & Muller, 2007).

It is possible to connect the semiotic and the cybernetic tradition due to the shared notion of systems. Language, for example, is conceptualized by semiotics as a sign system, although the semiotic tradition disregards the strict functionalist explanations of system parts offered by the cybernetic tradition because it believes instead that subtleties and differentiation can exist in sign systems (Craig, 1999). An example for this is Peter Burke’s Identity Control Theory (ICT), which was discussed in section A. From a cybernetic point of view, Burke’s (1991) later extension of ICT adds the meanings of signs to identity meanings and situational perceptions. According to this extended model, the identity standard controls not only symbolic meanings through social interaction but also sign meanings through the manipulation of resources associated with a particular role; and matching input perceptions and

identity standards in the ICT model involves the control of both kinds of self-relevant meanings. The incorporation of sign meanings and the control of resources into the identity control model enables ICT to be situated in the semiotics tradition.

Another scholar who proposed a semiotic interpretation of identity is Robert Sidharthan Perinbanayagam (2000). According to Perinbanayagam, the objectification of self necessarily entails the operation of semiotic processes because the names and words individuals use to identify self and other “need to be articulated as signs and read as signs.” Such “signs of identity” are employed in four rhetorical modes: reflexively, to identify an individual to himself; addressively, to identify the other; and referentially and answerably, respectively, to refer to and answer the other. The rhetorical use of identity signs takes place in what Perinbanayagam calls “acts of identity”—“deliberate moves made by an individual to classify himself or herself, or another, in culturally given categories”. And “once the self has been identified in this manner, the particular signs of identification become a meaning for the self and are used to achieve his or her presence in the world through these vocabularies” (Perinbanayagam, 2000). This process enables an individual to claim both a continuity of self over time and a differentiation from the selves of others. In effect, Perinbanayagam views identification as a process of classification. By identifying objects in the world, including oneself and others, classification enables one to organize and to make sense of one’s perceptions and to communicate them to others.

Similarly, Norbert Wiley (1994) distinguishes between self and identities to counter the dismissal of the concept of self. According to him, self is to identities as structure is to content. And while the content of self—identities and their meanings—

vary across cultures, the structure of the self is cross-culturally universal—a derivative of the view that all human beings are rational, symbolic, abstract, and linguistic creatures. Wiley calls this universal structure the “semiotic self”. Wiley identifies three semiotic levels within the self: individual signs (e.g., thoughts); systematic complexes of signs (e.g., identities and self-concepts), “and the capacity for semiosis, anchored in the I -you-me semiotic structure” of the self (Wiley, 1994). Although more general than individual signs, identities are less general than the self; they are “historically specific and ‘housed’ in the I-you-me semiotic structure of the self,” he added.

Finally, MacKinnon and Heise’s (2010) self-actualization theory, which was discussed in section A, adopted a semiotic perspective emphasizing both the semantics and structure of meaning. They viewed social institutions as “semantic fields or zones of meaning” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), and as “conceptually organized meaning-systems” associated with “fields of identity”—e.g., family, therapy, and so on (Perinbanayagam, 2000). In this perspective, social institutions are implicit in meanings of role identities and can be studied empirically by analyzing the meanings of identities in a society’s theory of people, under the assumption that the meanings link identities in the same institution to each other and to actions and objects relevant to the institution, generating confluences of meaning. For scholars adopting a semiotic approach, however, identities are not in themselves self-meanings but rather “signs that evoke self-meanings”. That is, identities are “indexes of the self,” signifying the “powers, status, inclinations, and feelings—in short, the self—of the persons to whom they attach. In this view, an identity is not a constituent feature of the self but a semiotic tool for situated self-making” (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996).

D. Sociocultural Tradition

The sociocultural communication tradition regards communication as the creation and enactment of the social reality. According to Craig (1999), one of the dominant assumptions held by the sociocultural tradition is the assumption that “individuals are products of their social environment” (Craig, 1999). He added that the daily interactions between members of society, based on established cultural and social patterns, are thus responsible for constructing and reconstructing “existing sociocultural order”. In Craig’s essay *Communication Theory as a Field*, the dominant theoretical concepts of the sociocultural tradition include “society”, “culture”, “patterns of interaction”, and “symbolic interaction”. Other terms related to this tradition are “context”, “order”, “construction”, “reconstruction”, “co-construction”, and “identity”. This tradition is predominantly concerned with human interaction in a sociocultural context, and it emphasizes the importance of society and the influence of social facts like conflict and culture on human interaction.

Likewise, according to Littlejohn and Foss (2008), the sociocultural tradition supports the premise that reality is a social construction. They added that this tradition views the communication process as important in the construction of social realities and the subsequent meanings assigned to social facts like culture and identity. Scholars who view the world from a sociocultural perspective will characteristically define society as patterns of interaction during which “meanings, roles, rules, and cultural values” are determined and communicated. To exemplify, they mentioned that theories that explain how social meanings and understandings are constructed and

maintained during communication are examples of the theoretical body incorporated under this tradition.

In understanding the concept of identity construction, the sociocultural perspective considers mind to be in the individual-in-social-action, taking non-dualistic ontology. Reflecting the interactions between diverse social and cultural factors and individuals, the sociocultural perspective shows how human cognition develops. The basic concept of this perspective is to include the external conditions of life in which human beings live to explain the highly complex forms of human consciousness. According to Vygotsky (1978), to encompass the process of development fundamentally means to discover its nature. Thus, the dynamic and changing nature of identity in daily social situations can be explained by seeing the process of its construction. The sociocultural perspective considers that self-consciousness arises not from the individual but from social relations with others and "the individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary" (Vygotsky, 1978).

Scholars who theorized identity using sociocultural lens are George McCall and Jerry Simmons (1978). They proposed the concept of "role identity"—"the character and the role that an individual devices for himself as an occupant of a particular social position . . . his imaginative view of himself . . . as an occupant of that position" (McCall and Simmons, 1978) emphasizes that identities are likely to be role-specific. In their theory, McCall and Simmons emphasized the situationally improvised nature of an identity and its corresponding role. This emphasis is embedded in their concept of the "interactive role"—a combination of the conventional and the idiosyncratic, cultural expectations and individual personality. And because specific other persons and

institutional contexts are built into the contents of role identities, “the content of a given role-identity continually changes as alters and institutions enter and pass out of the person’s life stream” (McCall and Simmons, 1978).

As social classifications, role-identities provide a basis for interpreting and assessing the meaning of a situation; as implicit plans of action, role identities allow vicarious performances of a role before committing to overt action; and as imaginative views of oneself in social positions, role-identities serve as personal criteria for assessing one’s thoughts and actions. This process schools of symbolic interactionism by McCall and Simmons resonates with the sociocultural tradition. They included an emphasis on constructionism—the construction of social reality and the construction of self as a social object, a product of social acts. They emphasize constructionism without sacrificing the idea of an organized and stable self at the center of one’s social existence and phenomenological experience.

Similarly, Michael Hecht developed another theory of identity using a sociocultural lens. The Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), one of the communicative approaches to identity, emerged in the 1990s in an attempt to centralize communication in the study of identity. It is a layered theory that conceptualizes identity as experienced at multiple levels or layers, multifaceted and dynamic, and communicated both verbally and behaviorally in diverse ways evolving over time. CTI provides an integrative framework for understanding the individual, social, and collective aspects of self. The theory posits that social relations and roles are internalized by individuals as identities through communication.

Scholars have attempted to link individuals and society focusing on the mutual relationship and influences between identity and communication. Individuals' identities, in turn, are acted out as social behavior through communication. Identity not only defines an individual but also reflects social roles and relations through communication. Moreover, social behavior is a function of identity through communication. CTI illustrates the ways in which identity is created and expressed via everyday interactions with others. In view of the close association between identity and communication, CTI provides an integrative perspective on identity and an analytic framework for understanding this construct by suggesting four frames of identity and dynamic relationships among them. The four frames of identity are labeled personal, relational, enacted, and communal identities (Hecht, 1993).

E. Critical Tradition

The critical tradition considers communication as a reflective challenge of unjust discourse. It discusses the implicit assumptions behind the discourse. The critical theories sustain that power structure in society prevents real communication by a systematic exclusion of the other peripheral voices, the voices of less power groups. Critical studies emerged from the principles of Marxism and became the dominant philosophy of the Frankfurt School (Craig, 1999). The premise of critical perspectives is that “conflict, distortion, injustice, and dominion” are an inherent part of human society (Garcia-Jimenez, 2014). Critical theorists thus openly question and criticize instances of oppression, power abuse, and discrimination with the goal of exposing social injustices and creating awareness that can ultimately lead to change (West & Turner, 2010; Garcia-Jimenez, 2014).

One way in which the critical tradition conceptualizes communication is as the enabler of critical reflection necessary to recognize social distortions and restore social justice (Macguire, 2006). This view of communication as the potential solution to social inequalities is called “discursive reflection” (Craig, 1999). Discursive reflection refers to communicative discourse that “freely reflects on assumptions that may be distorted” and allows for the critical examination of habits, beliefs, and power structures that are usually unchallenged in society. During discursive reflection, communication must be real and honest, otherwise emancipation and justice cannot be restored (Craig, 1999). The critical tradition also recognizes that communication itself can be the cause of social inequalities (Garcia-Jimenez, 2014) and communication is thus a problem when conversation, interactions, and even language support and promote these social distortions (Craig, 1999).

One example of communication being the cause of social injustice is the “native speaker” paradigm. In the field of language teaching, the “native speaker” myth and ideology continue to marginalize NNESTs and thus work to undermine their professionalism and the English teaching profession as a whole. As a result, it continues to harm the professional lives and sense of self-efficacy of many qualified NNESTs (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Pavlenko, 2003). At best, the NS myth propels what has been referred to as the NNEST “anxiety” (Llurda, 2004), the nagging sense of professional inadequacy that prevents many qualified NNESTs from becoming adequately confident instructors. Within this highly charged sociopolitical context, it is necessary to understand the processes through which NNESTs can achieve a sense of professional legitimacy and work to contest

dominant, ideological discourses that position them as less than ideal, second-rate, or altogether undesirable or incapable professionals.

Because NNESTs, despite their professional qualifications, are often prejudiced against by prospective employers, students, administrators, and others (Braine, 2010), it is key for their professional development and efficacy that they critically understand and learn to navigate the many power relations in the sociocultural and historical milieu in which they live and work. Before NNESTs can attempt to assert their professional legitimacy, they must first recognize which social and material conditions work against them as oppressive forces and how, both individually and collectively, they can work to mitigate such forces. Also, the process of achieving a sense of self-confidence is crucial in enabling NNSs to 'translate' or 're-story' themselves into a new self, one who is confident in her/his ability to function in a new language (Zou, 1998).

On the other hand, in the book *Theories of Human Communication* by Stephen Littlejohn and Karen Foss (2008) chapter 3, part 2, they emphasized that poststructuralism can be situated in this tradition. In a poststructuralist perspective, identity is considered to be fluid, multiple, diverse, dynamic, varied, shifting, subject to change and contradictory. It is also regarded to be socially organized, reorganized, constructed, co-constructed, and continually reconstructed through language and discourse (Miyaharay, 2010). Additionally, Varghese et al (2005) remind us that teacher identity is a process that is inextricably intertwined with language and discourse, insofar as all identities are maintained to a significant degree through

discourse. Language and discourse, therefore, play a key role in this poststructural view of identity.

As a pioneer in the study of identity, Foucault (1984) argues that we need to trace the constitution of the self within a historical framework of how meaning intersects with experience. He suggests that the self should be seen as both an object and a subject of experience; in other words, the focus of analysis of the self and one's experiences is the discourse of experience rather than the experience 'itself'. The experience itself does not solely constitute self-knowledge. It is the interrogation of the discursive place from which questions of identity are posed that trace identity as subjected to the social and historical context of practices and discourses. As discursive practices shift, so do identities (Britzman, 1993). A poststructuralist view opens up a space between self-consciousness, and the interrogation of the discursive and affective conditions of a claim to identity (Bhaba, 1987).

Echoing post-structural conceptualization, the work of authors such as Foucault (1984), Weedon (1987), Wenger (1998), and Butler (1999), Block (2006) defined identity as a process which is "socially constructed, self-conscious, ongoing narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project in (...) actions and language". This view allows for an emphasis on the use of linguistic resources and interactions as the key ingredients in identity formation and thus helps us to understand and support the ways through which NNESTs' can opt to take on more empowering identity options through what they think, say, and do. As educators, teachers have the opportunity to "sketch" their own identities. For NNESTs, this means not only asserting an identity as a legitimate teacher, but also thinking of alternative identity options that are empowering

and constructive. Poststructuralist theory “encourages teachers to try to think differently, to ask themselves not only how discourses and the various norms in their schools have shielded them from their desires, but also how it has installed those desires as what they presume themselves to be” (Zembylas, 2003).

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Husserl, a person's experience is combined with the meaning he or she created (Moustakas, 1994). This concept of meaning is the uniting of the real or objective world with the ideal or subjective mind (Moustakas, 1994; Russell, 2007). In other words, the essence of a person's experience is the creation of intentionality for a particular moment. Furthermore, it is argued that from the meaning people create throughout life they form their personal assumptions, beliefs, and theories (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The combined meaning people create over time and throughout their lives represents their identity. This means the essence is a description of particular meanings for one's experience, while identity is the collective meaning of experiences over a lifetime.

In discussing the value of conducting phenomenological research, van Manen (1997) explained that researching people's lived experience can transform what people do and why they do it into a narrative that reveals the pedagogical meaning of human experience. He continued, explaining that as such, phenomenology can discover universal meaning from human experience and provide lessons that educate people so they can approach a situation more thoughtfully. Hence, revealing the essence of my experiences will provide an understanding of how teacher identity is constructed. Owing to the pedagogical nature of phenomenological studies, the results of this study will challenge other NNESTs to reflect on aspects of their professional

practice they might be overlooking. It will also provide findings that support NNESTs, thus potentially increasing their confidence as legitimate language teachers.

This study utilizes qualitative research as its foundation. The qualitative researcher's goal is to better understand human behavior and experience (Bogdan and Bicklen, 2007). Qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers several forms of inquiry where the researcher is studying a social context, while causing as little disruption as possible in the natural setting (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative studies tend to vary in their research designs. Instead of being fixed, they are flexible and do not follow a strict sequence, but there should be a reflexive process throughout the study (Maxwell, 2013). In qualitative research, researchers make the assumption that no data is unimportant, every detail is recorded and thought to make contribution to ultimate understandings. Qualitative methods are used when the goal of the researcher is to provide "rich descriptions of complex phenomena." (Sofaer, 1999).

Advancing to the borders of qualitative research are the methodologies of (1) autoethnography, a burgeoning form of research and writing about the self (Ellis, 2008); and (2) narrative inquiry, an examination of narratives to illuminate the meanings of personal stories and events. On one hand, autoethnography is a qualitative genre of research where the researcher describes his or her personal experience within a social context. One of the purposes of autoethnography as a method is to provide insight into the area of concern from an insider's viewpoint. The insider's viewpoint evokes the readers to immerse them into the writer's situation, looking for similarities to their circumstances, thus bringing about better understanding of themselves as related to the topic under investigation (Chang, 2008)

On the other hand, narrative inquiry examines the narratives themselves—the way in which stories are built and told. Much of the discussion on personal narratives in this paper can be traced back to Art Bochner's concept of narrative paradigm. Tahar (1999) further explained that narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research that involves the gathering of narratives—written, oral, visual—focusing on the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences, seeking to provide “insight that befits the complexity of human lives”. In this case, narrative inquiry is similar to and shares features with autoethnography as if these two were two overlapping circles.

Autoethnography

Certainly, there are multiple variations and definitions for autoethnography. My understanding and use of the term is built on the book *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social* edited by Deborah E. Reed-Danahay (1997) and the edited and authored publications by Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (i.e. Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Bochner & Ellis 2002). Through reading those books, I have found that scholars from many disciplines have gained an increasing interest in the inclusion and questioning of self in the scholarly work within the past twenty years. Good examples of this can be found in aforementioned texts and books edited by Bochner and Ellis (2002). In one chapter of those books, Bochner shared his narrative of coming to question empirical research and gaining an interest in self-reflexive methods of writing.

The qualitative methodology of autoethnography is defined by Reed-Danahay (1997) "as a form of self-narrative that places the self within the social context. It is both a method and a text, as in the case of ethnography". Similarly, Ellis & Bochner (2000) defined autoethnography as a genre of writing, research, self-narrative, and method that connects the autobiographical and personal interpretation (graphy) to the cultural, placing the self (auto) within a social or political context (ethno). Ngunjiri, Hernandez, and Chang (2010) also stated it succinctly by describing autoethnography as "a qualitative research method that utilizes data about self and context, to gain an understanding of the connectivity between self and others".

Unlike other forms of qualitative research where the researcher is expected to keep personal bias from the writing, autoethnography is written in first person voice, and it is usually expressed through alternative means of representation such as poems, performances, or narratives. It challenges traditional writing conventions that attempt to validate empirical science and uphold the power that accompanies scientific knowledge (Wall, 2006). In an autoethnography, the researcher is not trying to become an insider in the research setting. He or she, in fact, is the insider (Duncan, 2004). Autoethnography then differs from other methodologies because the researcher is the subject of the study. The researcher is able to draw connections from his or her personal life to the lives of others or extend understanding about a particular culture or society (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Autoethnography roots in the personal life of the researcher, thereby, summoning rich and contextualized information about various subjects.

As I mentioned in the early pages, I aim to discover and understand myself and simultaneously connect my experiences to a wider social and cultural understanding of NNESTs' professional identity formation. Therefore, the autoethnographic approach is suitable for conveying my experiences as a NNEST coming from the Philippines teaching native English-speaking students in the United States. Autoethnography is the ideal method of choice, particularly because it will allow me to focus on my intimate and personal lived experiences. Through autoethnography, I will be able to highlight the voices of NNESTs that are sometimes rendered speechless. Devault (1997) wrote, "The personal account makes excluded voices —hearable within a dominant discourse—it is compelling in part because it reveals in vivid detail those whose presence might not be noticed if they spoke abstractly".

Another reason why I chose autoethnography as methodology is because it is "reader-friendly", and it best aligned with the narrative nature of my writing style and affinity for storytelling. Chang (2008) said that personally engaging writing style tends to appeal to readers more than conventional scholarly writing. Nash (2004) also emphasized this idea that "scholarly personal narratives liberate researchers from abstract, impersonal writings and touch reader's lives by informing their experiences'. With autoethnography, I can offer readers to become a part of the research process. And through autoethnography, I can invite the readers to experience my journey of identity formation as a NNEST by giving the readers the experience of being there (Adams, 2008). I want to tell a story that readers can enter and feel a part of, in order to "evoke readers to feel and think about [their] life and their lives in relation to [mine] . . . to experience the experience [I am] writing about" (Ellis, 2008).

Personal narratives

My study entails my lived experiences as a NNEST teaching native speaker students in the US, and how these experiences help in the construction of my identity as a language teacher. In order to unravel the processes of NNESTs' identity formation, it is necessary to understand the teacher closely (Goodson, 1981). The literature review, specifically in the lens of phenomenology, shows that the professional identities of NNESTs are constructed in divergent multiple ways within multiple and intersecting discourses. By imagining a new or alternative self, individuals can in fact engage in an active process of negotiating their current identity so as to incorporate a new set of beliefs, emotions, and understandings.

According to Pavlenko (2007), if we are to understand identity, then personal narratives are a powerful tool to document the way discursive environments provide the construction of teacher identity. Social, cultural, and institutional discourses, when taken together, set the 'conditions of possibility' for who and what a teacher might be. Not only is there a story of the self, but the self, itself, is narratively constructed (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000); in other words, identity can be understood as a story with narrative constructs typically found in stories such as themes, plots, and characters. These stories are important both as means through which individuals understand themselves as well as tools for taking action. Thus, the stories that teachers tell are a fitting tool for analyzing teachers' beliefs, knowledge, practice, and identity (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994; Watson, 2006).

Ellis (2008) notes that 'narrative' refers to the stories people tell-- the way they organize their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes. Using the narrative approach, the researcher becomes the object of research and the text repositions the reader as a co-participant in dialogue and thereby rejects the orthodox view of the reader as a passive receiver of knowledge (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). In this study, narrative approach will cohere the stories of my experiences and my interpretations of how these experiences, through dialogues and interactions, help shape my professional identity. Richardson (1995) contends that the narrative provides a way of finding out about oneself and the topic under investigation; a way of knowing and discovering new aspects of the topic and one's relationship to it. As I write my story, I will gain insight about who I am as a teacher. I want the readers to situate themselves in the story whereby it evokes them to look within themselves for connections to their lived experiences and how the story can help shape their identities as well (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

According to Polkinghorne (1991), narratives are a uniquely human way of making sense of otherwise random events. We understand our lives by narrating them (to others and to ourselves) and by infusing our experiences with significance and meaning. From a narrative epistemology, we all live storied lives and build "storied selves" (Bruner, 2004). We discursively construct, through the stories we tell, our understandings of our lives and of who we are in the world (Olson, 1995). Likewise, teachers live storied lives (Carter, 1993; Olson, 1995). They continuously understand who they are through the stories that they choose to tell. As narratives are fundamental to the process of making sense of oneself and to the shaping of one's identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), the exploration of the meanings arising from and being

created by narratives (i.e., narrative inquiry) enables teachers to explore and articulate the often tacit connections between their identity and their instructional practices (Simon- Maeda, 2004).

Finally, because teachers' understanding of themselves and of their practice through narratives can potentially impact both how they view themselves professionally and how they teach (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985), narrative inquiry can become the very mediational tool and process through which NNESTs are encouraged to re-story their experiences, weave and negotiate empowering professional identity options, and seek to establish their professional legitimacy through what they say and do (Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999; Golombek & Jordan, 2005; Pavlenko, 2003). Thus, within this study, I will engage in narrative inquiry through dialogic interactions and stimulated recall sessions with myself. These communicative spaces will enable me to inquire into and reflect on my own thinking, life and professional experiences, and my teaching practices. These opportunities to inquire and reflect, in turn, will make it possible for me to begin to re-story my lived experiences and my personal and professional identities.

However, according to Ellis and Bochner (2000), there are multiple warning signs, skills and difficulties that are needed in writing narratives. One thing that will challenge me when writing my narratives is that it requires "both personal and scholarly" aspects; writing narratives "is both descriptive and theoretical" (Burnier, 2006). On one hand, I will need to showcase interesting and valuable personal and experiential stories while handling the vulnerability of revealing myself to a greater

audience. On the other hand, these personal narratives need to be presented under a particular theoretical framework and have substantive contributions to knowledge.

Although this autoethnographic study through narrative inquiry can be a difficult endeavor, I believe that producing evocative writing accounts allows teachers to engage in “narrative ‘theorizing’ and, based on that, teachers may further discover and shape their professional identity, resulting in new or different stories” (Beijaard et al., 2004). Teachers’ professional identities, referred to as “stories to live by” provides each teacher with a “special place and orientation” and a narrative thread or plot line that teachers draw on to make sense of themselves and their practice (Connelly and Clandinin, 1987). While narratives open the possibilities to multiple and shifting identities, they can also provide a sense of unity at the particular point of telling. This is because personal narratives connect the multiple identities of our lives into a pattern that explains a sense of self and ultimately “lends coherence to identity” (Lysaker, Lysaker, and Lysaker, 2001). In this study, I will take into account the benefits and challenges of studying teacher identity formation through the lens of a researcher as the primary instrument. The intended purpose of this study is to provide the opportunity for the reader and author to become co-participants in the recorded experience (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Some people seem to think that sitting at home and writing stories about yourself is an easy and fun task, but I believe that deep involvement in the investigation of self is occasionally devastating and always mentally and intellectually challenging. It requires courage, devotion, motivation, and trust that telling the personal narrative will have a positive influence on others. This I believe is the power and significance of

personal narratives in research. Narrative research at the service of educators alerts us to explore teacher identity formation as articulated through discourses and social interactions. Narrative analysis analyzes the discursive environments that affect the process by which experiences and meanings are assembled into identities. As Holstein and Gubrium (2000) point out, 'Considering the self in terms of narrative practice allows us to analyze the relation between the *hows* and *whats* of storytelling; analysis centers on storytellers engaged in the work of constructing identities and on the circumstances of narration, respectively'. Trinh (1992) also suggests that this approach of researching identity is moving away from traditional questions of *who* one is to new questions of *when*, *where*, and *how* one is.

Methods of data collection

Data gathering began in 2016 when I started teaching here in the United States. As a participant in a teacher exchange program, I keep journals, letters (and/or emails), and evaluation reports to document my (cultural) experiences since we are mandated to submit an annual report about it. For this dissertation, I will use these data sources in writing personal narratives of my experiences to see how I view language teaching and relate these views to the construction of my professional identity.

Engaging in dialogic reflection, which occurs when teachers reflect on their practices through 'discourse with others' (Mann and Walsh, 2013), is a method of discovering and framing truths. Consistent with narrative inquiry and autoethnography, I will write my interpretations in first person to reveal my thoughts and feelings. In doing

so, I will connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social aspects of society (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). I will use dialogic reflection to draw these interpretations. James and Busher (2006) highlighted the strengths of dialogic reflection associated with "allowing them to move back and forth through their narratives, thinking about their responses, drafting and redrafting what they want to write". In their view, this process results in a more grounded approach that improves understanding of academic experiences.

Data analysis and interpretation

In a phenomenological study, the foundational question is "What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?" (Patton, 2002). The interpretation of the experience as well as the perspective of the person is of great value. Alfred Schutz, one of the scholars who theorized social phenomena using the lens of phenomenology, focused on everyday life and the world around people (Borchert, 2006). Relying on Husserl's analyses of intentionality and the life-world, Schultz accordingly claims that the social world reveals and manifests itself in various intentional experiences.

This study follows a similar philosophical orientation. The data will be analyzed through narratives as filtered through my experiences. In phenomenology, "What is important to know is what people experience and how they interpret the world" (Patton, 2002). In a narrative inquiry employing autoethnography, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stated, "The processes of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are neither terminal nor mechanical". Data analysis and interpretation are intertwined and are collected

simultaneously. Interestingly, data interpretations and data analysis are often used interchangeably in autoethnographic studies (Chang, 2008). Creswell (2013) explained the difference: data interpretation involves "making sense of the data". This is done through an ongoing process of reflection and writing. Data analysis is explained as "the identification of essential features and the systematic description...in short, how things work" (Wolcott, 1991).

To attain trustworthiness, I believe that credibility should be established. Lincoln & Guba (1986) and Merriam (2002) said that credibility asks the researcher to clearly link the researcher's findings to reality in order to demonstrate the truth of the researcher's findings. Creswell (2013) recommended few procedures in relation to addressing credibility, but for my study I used the following strategies: (1) Narrative Analysis, and (2) Thematic Analysis. The first strategy is narrative analysis. Narrative analysis "assumes that a good story itself is theoretical" (Ellis, 2008). He concurred that "stories themselves are analytic". Thus, presenting my story as the researcher will permit me to demonstrate how I shape my identity by the manner in which I decide to choose and categorize my narratives.

Also, I used thematic network analysis which seek to unearth the themes salient in my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues at different levels. In doing thematic network analysis, I utilized Attride-Stirling's (2001) process for identifying a theme: (1) succinct labels (coding), (2) searching for potential themes, (3) construct and reviewing themes, (4) describe and define themes, (5) summarize themes, and (6) writing the analysis/ interpreting the patterns. Through thematic network analysis, I am able to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes. Also, I am able to

interpret and connect personal data to wider social and cultural understandings of teacher identity formation.

As shown in Table 1, thematic network analysis begins with dissecting data into codes. Once all data had been coded, themes were abstracted from the coded text segments. I repeatedly wrote a reflection in my journal, “the essential themes will float to the top of the data.” This concept was a guidepost for me. It was a metaphor that helped me makes sense of the phenomenological data analysis and understand the ways in which the themes answered my study’s research questions.

Table 1. *From Codes (Text Segments) to Basic Themes*

Codes	(Text segments)	Basic themes identified
- Transcending - Going beyond	• Offering extra tutoring services • Giving immediate feedback to students • Sending students emails • Hard work • Giving additional materials and resources • Guiding students through difficult times • Understand students' feelings • Checking on students • Curriculum development	1. A language teacher shoulders the additional responsibility of offering extra help sessions. 2. An effective teacher gives prompt feedback and uses different materials to ensure students' success. 3. Understanding students' feelings will improve teacher-student engagement. 4. An ideal language teacher communicates with students even during non-working hours.
- Liability - Focus - Precision - Meticulousness - Impartiality	• Holding students accountable • Genuine interest in each student • Commitment • Strict disciplinarian • Treating students equally • Fair teacher/ Unbiased • Attentiveness towards students • Honesty towards students • Detail oriented • Not judging students • Every student is seen and heard	5. It is important for language teachers to give students ownership of their learning. 6. An ideal language teacher shows honesty and is always fair towards students. 7. Effective language teachers create a culture of trust and responsibility.

- Assessment - Observation	• Observing students' progress • Evaluating students' academic and social growth • Keeping appropriate records • Maintaining gradebooks • Encouraging students to stretch goals • Test students' understanding • Taking great effort to go through students' work	8. An ideal language teacher is consistent in observing students and grading students' work. 9. Language teachers need to assess and keep records on students' progress, strengths, and weaknesses. 10. Assessment can help teachers fill the gap in students' knowledge and help them to learn best.
- Lesson engagement - Interaction - Learning opportunities - Critical thinking	• Structured lessons • Creating useful and meaningful lessons • Keeping the class interactive • Easy interaction with students • Fun activities • Enjoyable class • Use of leading questions • Giving students equal chances to speak • Giving more time to complete work • Not giving a lot of work • Getting students think critically • Giving students space for opinions • Stirring students' interests	11. Language teachers need to get the students focused on the lesson and keep their interest. 12. Language teachers who promote interaction in class can empower students and help develop communication skills. 13. Effective teachers engage in student-focused practices.
- Simplification of concepts	• Ability to explain complex topics • Making lessons simple • Bringing in a lot of examples • Simplifying lessons • Clear explanation • Raising learning points • Gives clear explanations	14. An effective teacher makes complex ideas simple. 15. An ideal language teacher gives clear explanations, uses good examples, and uses a variety of teaching methods.
- Attitude - Friendliness	• Happy/cool disposition • Not yelling at students • Kindness • Consideration • Patience • Warmth • Enthusiasm • Passion • Being approachable • Being supportive • Inspiring students • Spreading happiness • Loving and caring • High level of tolerance • Giving encouraging comments	16. An ideal language teacher has distinctive personality characteristics. 17. Teacher's personality is highly associated with establishing teacher-student relationship. 18. Good language teachers inspire students.
- Motivation - Encouragement		19. Motivating and stimulating the students is an important quality that a language teacher exploits around the classroom to maximize the learning possibilities.

- Competence - Quality education - Responsibilities	• Appreciation • Knowledge in writing skills • Strong knowledge of content area • Understanding of linguistics • Spending countless hours to prepare lessons • Preparing students for state testing • Maintaining communication with parents • Maintaining appropriate records and progress reports • Team player • Working within the guidelines of school • Working on school's curriculum	20. If a teacher is highly qualified, he may be able to satisfy his students' linguistics needs. 21. A language teacher bears professional competence and have thorough knowledge of their subjects. 22. An efficient language teacher does his/her duties and acts his/her role as a teacher.
- Classroom management - Classroom environment	• Reaching out to students • Making students feel comfortable and safe • Good communication with students • Controlling the class • Systematic and organized • Pleasant/ positive feel in the classroom • Creating a functional learning environment	23. Ideal teachers always focus on creating a conducive teaching/learning atmosphere. 24. An ideal teacher runs, administers, and manages students in a classroom. 25. An effective language teacher is always well- prepared, organized, and systematic.

In table 2 below, it shows how thematic networks systemize the extraction of:

(1) lowest-order premises evident in the data (Basic Themes); (2) categories of basic themes grouped together to summarize more abstract principles (Organizing Themes); and (3) super-ordinate themes encapsulating the principal metaphors in the data as a whole (Global Themes). In addition to ongoing bracketing and reflection activities, I spent the months following the conclusion of data collection, analyzing the data by looping back, and ensuring that the essential themes were true. Then I returned to my data sources, coded them again and confirmed that I hadn't missed any essential themes.

Table 2. *From Basic to Organizing to Global Themes*

<i>Themes as Basic Themes</i>	<i>Organizing Themes</i>	<i>Global Themes</i>
1. A language teacher shoulders the additional responsibility of offering extra help sessions. 2. An effective teacher gives prompt feedback and uses different materials to ensure students' success. 3. Understanding students' feelings will improve teacher-student engagement. 4. An ideal language teacher communicates with students even during non-working hours.	Going the extra mile Profound teacher-student relationships	Language teaching requires extra effort.
5. It is important for language teachers to give students ownership of their learning. 6. An ideal language teacher shows honesty and is always fair towards students. 7. Effective language teachers create a culture of trust and responsibility. 8. An ideal language teacher is consistent in observing students and grading students' work. 9. Language teachers need to assess and keep records on students' progress, strengths, and weaknesses. 10. Assessment can help teachers fill the gap in students' knowledge and help them to learn best.	Upholding fairness and Accountability Class observation and Assessment	Language teaching needs accountability.
11. Language teachers need to get the students focused on the lesson and keep their interest. 12. Language teachers who promote interaction in class can empower students and help develop communication skills. 13. Effective teachers engage in student-focused practices.	Steadfast engagement with the lesson	Language teaching entails engagement and practicality.
14. An effective teacher makes complex ideas simple. 15. An ideal language teacher gives clear explanations, uses good examples, and uses a variety of teaching methods.	Simplification of ideas	

16. An ideal language teacher has distinctive personality characteristics.	Amicability	Language teaching is based on teachers' personal qualities.
17. Teacher's personality is highly associated with establishing teacher-student relationship.		
18. Good language teachers inspire students.	Inspiring/motivating students	
19. Motivating and stimulating the students is an important quality that a language teacher exploits around the classroom to maximize the learning possibilities.		
20. If a teacher is highly qualified, he may be able to satisfy his students' linguistics needs.	Teaching competence	Language teaching requires knowledge, skills, and professionalism.
21. A language teacher bears professional competence and have thorough knowledge of their subjects.		
22. Ideal teachers always focus on creating a conducive teaching/learning atmosphere.	Excellent classroom management	
23. An ideal teacher runs, administers, and manages students in a classroom.		
24. An effective language teacher is always well- prepared, organized, and systematic.		

Ethical obligations

With a personal narrative autoethnographic approach, ethical issues and truth level are further questioned and challenged (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). In fact, this methodology may increase ethical issues that have greater consequences on the researcher's personal life (Holt, 2003). Autoethnography primarily takes the form of written narratives, and everyone who appears in the narrative is potential, if not explicitly, identified. In using personal narratives, researchers not only implicate themselves with their work but also close, intimate others (Adams, 2008). Therefore, "relational ethics" are becoming more intense in autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2011).

As I disclose stories from my experiences, it is important that the people in my stories are unrecognizable to the readers. In order to avoid the relational ethical issues in this research, I acknowledge the responsibility to protect the confidentiality of individuals and the need to respectfully depict those people in my narratives. I try to protect the privacy and safety of others by altering identifying characteristics such as circumstances, topics discussed, or characteristics like race, gender, name, place, or appearance. If verbatim or summary transcriptions are used in the narratives, pseudonyms will be used when referring to supporting participants. At the same time, I stay aware of how these protective devices can influence the integrity of the research as well as how my work could be interpreted and understood. However, it is not possible for me to prevent some people or communities within my story from recognizing themselves, also referred to as internal confidentiality (Tolich, 2004). All things considered, I know my narrative will stay within the margins of my professional and personal perspective, and I believe, finds a way to be scholarly, ethical, and authentic.

Chapter IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As reflected in the literature review, various studies have been conducted about NNESTs, and concerns have been expressed about NNESTs' position in the English language teaching arena. So far, however, there has been a little discussion about NNESTs' identity formation. In addition, no research has taken into account how dialogues affect or influence the construction of these teacher identities. My main focus in this study will be on this under-researched area of teacher identity construction using the lens of Phenomenological Tradition. In seeking to investigate and analyze how I view language teaching as a NNEST teaching native English-speaking students in the United States, this chapter will present the themes that floated from my dialogues with my students, parents, and colleagues. After that, I will discuss how my views, through the dialogues, communicatively shape my teacher identity.

A. Views of English language teaching

This section is devoted to the discussion on my view of English language teaching as a NNEST supported by sample passages extracted from my journal entries (JE), colleague letters (CL), parent letters (PL), student letters (SL), and student evaluations (SE). I employed the process of analyzing thematic networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001), engaging in a constant comparison analysis. In doing so, I

followed and coded strands of lived experiences and dialogues until I arrived at those global themes that formed the structure of the phenomena of language teaching. In presenting my data, I have organized my presentation and analysis under five global themes, which will address the first research question:

Research Question 1:

What is my view of English language teaching as a non-native English-speaking teacher teaching native English-speaking students?

1. First global theme: Language teaching requires extra effort.

The first view "Language teaching requires extra effort" transpired in my analysis of data. This thematic network, which is based on the first global theme (see Table 2), comprises two organizing themes and four basic themes. This network represents an exploration of my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues in the context of the broader discussion on the efforts a language teacher makes. The thematic network (Figure 1) illustrates concisely the organizing themes on which this global theme was anchored: 'going the extra mile' and 'profound teacher-student relationship'.

I could still remember one time during dismissal on my first day of teaching in the US, students were not lining up, and some of them were running and playing around. I was standing by the door watching how chaotic the dismissal procedure was. I was utterly appalled by the students' behavior. Few of the students tried to give me high fives on their way out, but I firmly rejected the gestures and compensated them with a smile and a greeting so that I wouldn't look overtly hostile. I have always created a business-like relationship

with my students, and I felt that acting too friendly with them was rather unnatural for me. The whole situation made me feel uncomfortable.

As the days passed, the more detached I became with everyone at work. Teaching was a struggle every single day, and it seemed that my teaching strategies were not working. Students were not motivated to learn, and behavior problems were getting worse each day. In the first few months, more times were spent correcting students' behavior than teaching. Due to difficulties, such as managing student behavior and overcoming my detachment towards work and school in general, my first year of teaching in the US was difficult, lonely, and miserable.

(JE- September 08, 2016)

It was a terrible day at school. Students are unspeakably rude. I sent one 8th Grader to the office for being so disrespectful and defiant. Our principal and I had a long talk with the parents. The parents were upset about the referral, and they decided to withdraw the student from our school. We just lost one student because of me. My principal reassured me that I was not at fault, but I don't know if he meant it.

There were a lot of times when I thought of quitting, yet I stayed. I stayed because of my desire to become a better educator, because of the people who never failed to believe in my abilities, and because of some fruitful and generative conversations I had in and out of class. Through the continual encouragement and support of my principal, family, and friends, I found the energy and determination to continue teaching. I also began acknowledging during this time, that if I wanted to become a better language teacher, I needed to devote a large part of my time and energy to doing just that the following year.

1.1. *Organizing theme: going the extra mile*

Many in our faculty were suffering from the belief that all children do not enter our doors equipped with the background, social upbringing, and educational experiences to be successful students, and that it is not in their job description to provide these skills or attributes. The doctrine that was adhered to by a portion of the faculty in our school was that students must conform to their classroom and their way of teaching. Children of color and students arriving from low-income households are naturally at a disadvantage in our school system due to an education system steeped in many of these traditional values. Our traditional system is not designed to provide all learners with the tools they need to experience academic success.

I understand there are outside factors that impact student learning. However, I don't have the privilege to use these as an excuse for not teaching a child. I must find different ways, different techniques and strategies to help them learn. Our school also tried a different approach with these students in the form of reducing the class size. These students, who all failed the ELA section of Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (AzMerit) test the year before, were taught in a classroom before and after school. I taught those students for a 90- minute block. This was a departure from past pull-out programs that were only 30 minutes in duration.

(CL- Administrator 1)

He spends countless hours preparing lessons to help educate his students on the rigorous state standards and preparing them for our AzMERIT state testing. Mr. Dionson gives extra tutoring services to students before and after school when students ask for extra help.

(PL- Parent 1)

Dear Mr. Dionson, We want you to know you are appreciated! All the hard work you put in day after day for your students does not go unnoticed. Thank you for being so patient with the kids and so willing to provide extra help and support!..

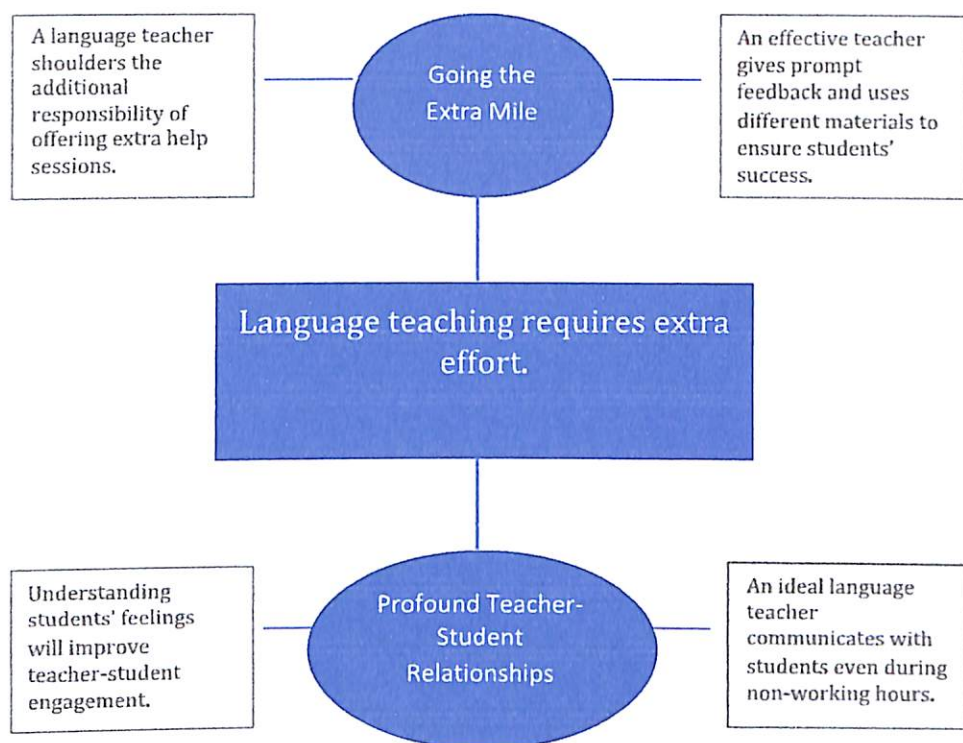


Figure 1. Thematic network for 'language teaching requires extra effort'

On a regular basis, I spent more time before and after school to see my students for extra help sessions. I also spent more time meeting with parents to discuss about students' progress. From time to time, I usually make myself a reminder note to make contact with students who previously failed the state assessment the year before. These students were predominantly children of color. Looking at the demographics of this group, it was evident that we had our work cut out for us to make sure all children succeed, not just the affluent population. I knew that one of the best ways to help our children of color to

become successful was to strengthen these relationships. As a teacher, I needed to reach out to these students and their families and find out how I can help them become successful in a school setting.

(PL- Parent 2)

Dear Mr. Dionson, We want you to know you are appreciated!... I want to thank you for caring so much about my child and all of your students... I also appreciate how you reach out personally when there are specific needs or concerns to make sure we work together to address...

(PL- Parent 3)

... You are such an amazing example of a teacher who goes the extra mile to make sure your students are all on the same page. It's not an easy task to keep middle schoolers engaged... We thank you for setting up extra time out of your already busy day to help Dana excel in her studies.

Undeniably, teaching is a demanding field, and I find it difficult to recognize myself and find the right ways to achieve what can, at times, seem like lofty goals. Since teaching is much more than "teaching", I believe that teachers must learn to use their full range of talents and experiences to help make the students receptive to learning. In my classes, I have found out that giving individual feedback is an effective strategy for student engagement. By personalizing my interaction with students, I could show my interests in my individual students, and I can make them internalize things and learn from their own mistakes or learn from what they did right and continue those things.

(JE- September 6, 2018)

A white student looked emotionless. She told me that she needed my comments for her essay. Although she was busy in jotting down notes while I was offering my comments on her assignment, she looked incredulous. At the end of our discussion, I said, "Hope it helps." "Hope it will be helpful." She snorted the words fraught with doubts. The following day during our class, she came to me and thanked me for the comments I wrote about her essay. She said her previous teachers never gave such thorough comments before.

(SL- Student 1)

I feel that you are one teacher who has done more than you should have. You always have insightful comments for us. You have also responded to my email queries in a very fast and responsive manner, clearing my doubts. You have also stayed back

and enabled me to understand my test answers in a better manner...it is also great that you went group by group to answer our inquiries. You are a good teacher!"

(SE- Student 1)

Mr. Dionson goes the extra mile to explain and recap content in thorough detail after every class. It is very useful for us because it provides a summary of important points, which we may forget after our class. Also, his feedback for our assignments is always very detailed, and he explains the reasons behind his comments very well.

Aside from giving detailed individual feedback, I also go the extra mile by giving students extra materials/resources and by using emails beyond working hours in communicating with students. In the study of Takayama (2015), he found out that building relationships with students was important for their immediate motivation, which means students like the teacher, materials, and each other.

(SE- Student 2)

Excellent teacher who goes above and beyond to ensure that his students are well-equipped with the materials being taught in class. He never hesitates to give additional resources and feedback to his students and treats us all equally. His enthusiasm has definitely rubbed off on his students and students become more attentive and active in class.

(SE- Student 3)

By the time I reached 6th grade, most of my classmates were enthusiastic readers. I wasn't. I was beginning to dread school, but my teacher Mr. Dionson took the pressure off and seemed to understand what I needed. He gave me a sack full of fiction books to take home -- and soon I was reading books and looking forward to school.

(SE- Student 4)

Very responsible, passionate and enthusiastic in teaching. He sends emails to remind us to send our projects for review so that he can give feedback. He also answers our questions readily and will check...to ensure that the answers are as accurate as possible. He also cares for his students and will ask his students what happened to them when the students did not appear for classes, just in case something...happened.

(SL- Student 2)

I'd like to take this chance to thank you for being such a remarkable teacher. I'm grateful for your patience and knowledge in writing skills, which you have passed down to me. Also, I appreciate the countless friendly email reminders you've sent us about various things...

(SL- Student 3)

Hi Mr. Dionson, I think it is really heartwarming to see such a teacher as yourself. Not every teacher has the time, heart, or even thought, of personally emailing their students whom they have taught.

Most teachers, if not all, long for a perfect class that came to their threshold with all the foundational skills needed to behave in socially acceptable ways and also the educational background necessary to make them great students. I think that we have to step back from our panacea and realize that our job is to educate all children, and that students come to us from a variety of backgrounds and a variety of needs. In the state of Arizona where I am currently teaching, the accountability system used is measuring with the correct yardstick. However, it did not provide teachers and administrators with the "three rulers needed for support." Each teacher has to formulate what this support looks like for learners and thus produce positive test results. In our school, we need to commit to the goal that we will be successful with racially and ethnically diverse students. The thought is that if teachers would buy in to the belief system that we are obligated to provide our learners the instructional scaffolding necessary for academic success, then we could move our thinking forward.

1.2. *Organizing theme: profound teacher-student relationships*

On the other hand, I realized that while creating good teacher-student relationships is most of the time an easy task, sometimes it requires extra effort. In Kim's (2005) study, they found that building teacher-student relationships was more difficult than classroom management related to instruction and students' behaviors. Based on my experiences, this could be true. It is quite

difficult to build a profound relationship with students due to class sizes and time constraints. However, there are many simple ways to attain good teacher-student relationship. The simplest among them is building relationships with students by understanding the feelings of students.

(SL- Student 4)

...Finally, you understand the student. I don't really know if this applies to all student but in my case, I think you really put in time to understand a student's feelings..."

(PL- Parent 4)

I honestly feel so lucky and blessed that my son has such a wonderful teacher like Mr. Dionson. He takes his time to make each child feel heard and important every day... even through the smallest tasks. The way he celebrates his students' successes and efforts (daily) in a way that builds their confidence and makes them want to try more is quite special...

Also, a teacher could also take the time to check in students so he/she can understand students better.

(SE- Student 5)

Thanks for making class fun and for making fun activities for us to do in class and for always taking the time to see how we have been during the week.

(SE- Student 6)

Not every teacher...goes through the extent of typing out such detailed summaries and feedback for their students – so I think that it is very commendable of Mr. Dionson to do so! I also appreciate how he tries to get to know his students better to teach them better.

(SE- Student 7)

He is encouraging, friendly, and approachable, and I can tell that he likes what he's doing, which is teaching. He checks in now and then to make sure we're on track too.

2. Second global theme: Language teaching needs accountability.

The second view "Language teaching needs accountability" comprises two organizing themes and six basic themes. This thematic network represents an exploration of my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues in the context of the broader discussion on accountability. The thematic network

(Figure 2) illustrates concisely the key themes on which the second global was anchored: 'upholding fairness and accountability', and 'class observation and assessment'.

It was during my third year when my teaching experiences in the US started to be going smoothly. I was still struggling with the heavy workload, but at the same time, I acquired various valuable and interesting knowledge from my colleagues and administrators coming from different cultures. Little by little, I mastered and practiced common school rules and procedures in the classroom. I also realized that I changed from being so friendly towards my students to becoming a strict teacher. I remember vividly the event that had led up to this moment. It was sometime near the end of my second year of teaching. Throughout my first two years of teaching experiences in the US, I was taught that I need to mean business at school, and that I needed to strictly keep discipline in the classroom, otherwise chaos and disrespect would be inevitable. Now, when I was told that I needed to be consistent, I took it to mean with everything-- procedures, rules, consequences, and even the orientation of grading students' papers.

(JE- April 10, 2018)

A Hispanic student was looking at me straight into my eyes throughout the whole class. He was mad at me because I gave him a referral to the office for misbehaving in my class the day before. As a result, his parents were invited for a meeting with the administration and his parents grounded him at home. His fixation was different from that of many other students. I felt the air inside the room terribly hot, humid, and suffocating. I also felt that I was like the bacon being grilled by his scorching stare. Honestly, I did not feel comfortable the whole time, but from time to time, I kept telling myself that it was my occupational ethics to calm myself down and fully concentrate on my class without being disturbed and distracted by the student. After our class, we talked, and I explained to him why the referral was necessary. I told him that he would always be held responsible for his actions.

(CL- Administrator 1)

Mr. Dionson holds each student accountable for their classroom work with high expectations of students' excellence.

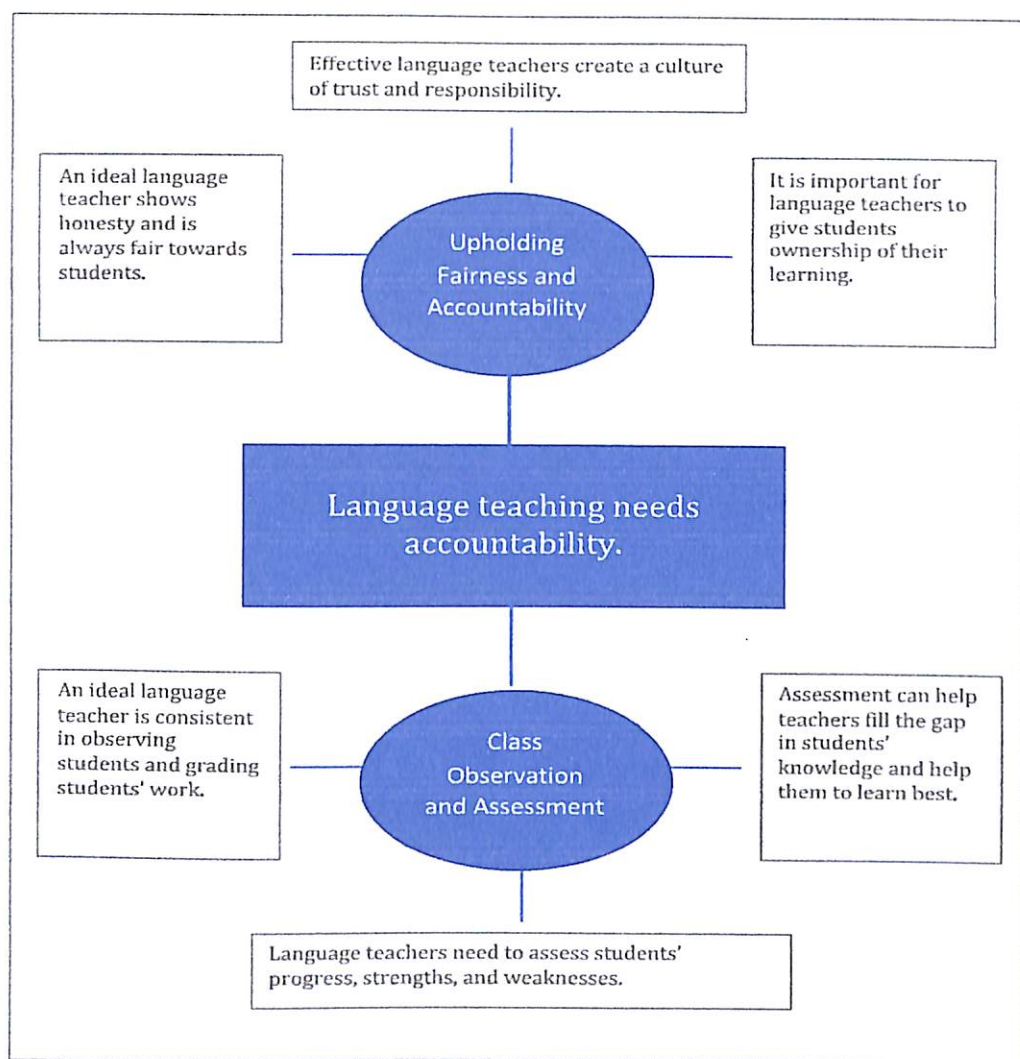


Figure 2. Thematic network for 'language teaching needs accountability'

2.1. Organizing theme: upholding fairness and accountability

I have always thought that accountability should not be synonymous with state assessments. Accountability reaches much deeper than test scores and public recognition. Accountability is the effort teachers make in implementing and utilizing strategies in and out of the classroom that provide all students academic success and affords them an equitable education. It is ensuring all students the opportunity for a meaningful educational experience. In my classes, students are held responsible of their own learning. I try to emphasize

all the time that they are earning their grade, and that their development and progress largely depend on how much effort they put in everything we do in class. I always remind them that I can give the tools and support they need, but it all boils down with their motivation.

(JE- October 10, 2018)

An 8th grader who has been in our school since she was an elementary student came to me and asked me to revise her essay. I gave her some advice and was trying to help her improve her thesis, but she wanted me to tell her exactly word by word how to reformulate her thesis. I did not agree. Instead, I tried to instruct her to rewrite it by herself. She flew into a rage and shouted, "When my previous ELA teachers said my thesis was wrong, they showed me the correct one." I knew what "previous ELA teachers" exactly meant. She was comparing me with her white and native English-speaking teachers, so she was judging me as compared with them who she thought as legitimate references. I told her that different teachers had different styles and approaches and that I could only offer her suggestions but could not write the thesis for her.

(PL- Parent 4)

Dear Mr. Dionson, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for all you do. We've witnessed all your efforts during this tough time - from your genuine interest in each child, their well-being, arousing curiosity, encouraging involvement, and upholding a standard that students learn, accountability and responsibility...

Apart from students' motivation, I also treat each student equally. I think that it is important for teachers to uphold fairness in the classroom. Having taught for many years now, I have realized the importance of building a classroom where students feel supported. I believe that the more I can manage my classroom to be a supportive environment, where students are encouraged to take risks without fear of being put down or teased, the easier it is to involve them with challenging activities without feeling that I am setting them up for failure.

(SE- Student 8)

He inspires his students to work harder. He guides us steadily and corrects our mistakes frankly. He believes in upholding fairness and thus he allows each student to voice out ideas confidently.

(SE- Student 9)

You listened to every student, no matter whether or not they are doing well in class or otherwise...I find that you have been a really fair teacher when it comes to grading your students. You grade students based on their participation and the overall performance of the student itself, and not based on any stereotypical thinking that might have been built up in your mind when you taught the class...

(SE- Student 10)

...You may be nice and all but if the students don't do any of the compulsory assignments..., you will mark accordingly. I find this to be fair and unbiased and I acknowledge this.

Another important point that fosters engagement in the classroom is dealing with students who are struggling and providing students with various participating or learning opportunities. I particularly care about those students who are falling behind, and one way to manage them is by designing lessons that are comprehensive even for low achieving students.

(SL- Student 5)

I am thankful you are always there when I am struggling in ELA. I appreciate how you always give us chances to speak and how when we do not know the answer you do not judge us for us being confused. Thank you for being a good teacher and helping me when I need it.

(SL- Student 6)

Hi Mr. Dionson, thanks for your guidance this year. It was great having you as my teacher. I have read the email that you have sent me and the class and I really appreciate how much you actually value every one of your students...You will bother to ask questions and pay attention to every single assignments that we made...I see that you do pay attention to every single detail that we give. On top of that, you do give us a chance to speak up. For instance, when a student is quieter in a group, you would pose a question to him or her...I feel that this is a very good approach in encouraging all the students to participate in the group discussions...

(SE- Student 11)

You have a friendly tone and you really try your best to treat every student equally. There are many teachers out there who focus on only the good students but you focus on all equally and sometimes even help out the weaker ones. I feel that there are no "dumb" student in your book, and there are only slow and fast students.

2.2. Organizing theme: class observation and assessment

Class observation and appropriate assessment are necessary in measuring students' growth. Observation makes teachers effective when they teach with their eyes, ears, and mind open to what is happening around them. Observations help the teachers to get to know the children, gather evidence about students' progress, and get information to make wise decisions about what and how to teach their students.

(SE- Student 12)

I think that he is very good in observing everyone in the class because the comments he always gives are really true and that it really happened. He is also very concerned if we understand the lesson and the things that we are doing. He will encourage us if we have doubts.

As a language teacher, I also take pride in keeping appropriate records to track students' strengths and weaknesses. Dunkin (1997) stated that efficiency of an ideal teacher is determined by the degree to which they achieve the desired effects upon students. It is considered important for ideal language teachers that through their day-to-day behavior with their students, they achieve their desired set goals and try to materialize the objectives which have been set to solve the language problems of their students.

(CL- Administrator 3)

He evaluates his students' academic and social growth, maintains appropriate records and progress reports, and communicates regularly with parents regarding each student's progress. His integration of assessments and interventions help to maximize student achievement.

Being the only English teacher at our school was a huge responsibility since it is the only class aside from Math that students are tested on at the end of each school year to determine school's performance. Fortunately, my

teaching strategies, which didn't work well during the first few months, became increasingly refined, creative, and challenging to my American students. As a language teacher, what I put in my effort the most is to let my students achieve their goals and test proficient in standardized tests. My students and I are doing our best to achieve these goals, and I think every teacher should think this way and try to do their best in helping students. Teachers must take a great amount of responsibility for students' success.

The success of different techniques and strategies I employed in my classes was immense. I was surprised at myself because at the end of the year, more students got tested proficient and highly proficient in the statewide testing for English language arts. I was also stunned that our school was given a letter grade of A from D because of the students' score growth from state testing. The impeccable state test results, impressive school letter grade, and increased student enrollment at our school boosted my confidence towards myself and my students as we have achieved so much in just two years.

(CL- Administrator 4)

Mr. Dionson has shown improvements in his teaching of the Language Arts and it shows through the growth of his students on their Benchmark Testing and AzMerit which we complete three times a year at our school. He is working hard to achieve a school goal of having more of our students test proficient along with showing growth.

3. Third global theme: Language teaching entails engagement and practicality.

The third view "Language teaching entails engagement and practicality", which is based on the third global theme, comprises two organizing themes and five basic themes. This network represents an exploration of my dialogues with

students, parents, and colleagues in the context of the broader discussion on responsibilities of a language teacher. The thematic network (Figure 3) illustrates concisely the key themes on which the third global theme was anchored: ‘steadfast engagement with the lesson’ and ‘simplification of ideas’.

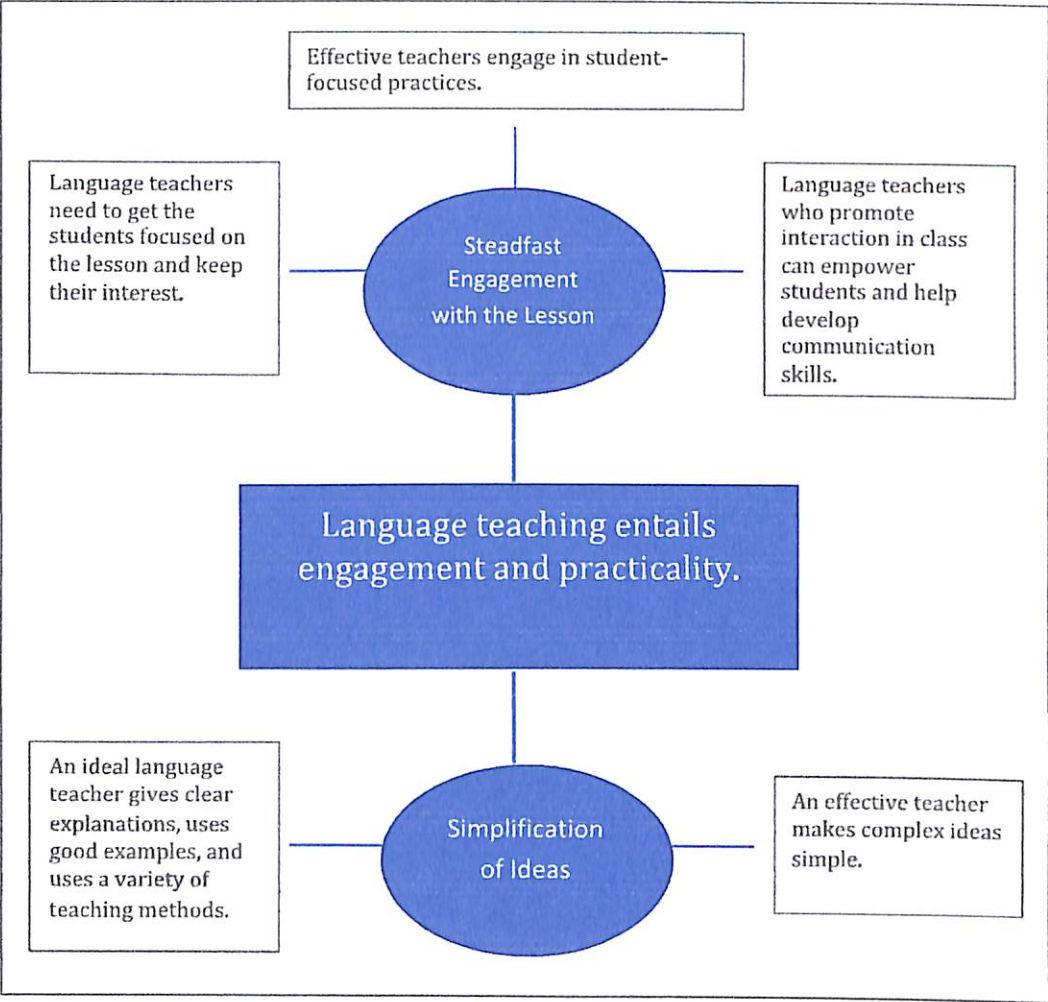


Figure 3. Thematic network for ‘language teaching entails engagement and practicality’

Blömeke and Delaney (2012) stress the importance of the knowledge teachers hold, highlighting that in addition to assimilating academic knowledge, teachers also need to incorporate knowledge derived from experiential and practical experiences in the classroom. In my experiences, changing a culture

is inherently difficult. The unique challenge that this social context provided was for me to find the delicate balance between two teaching styles that were very divergent. One teaching style was very authoritarian in nature and driven by procedures and rules (*US*). The other style of leadership was very lenient, relaxed, and laissez-faire (*Philippines*). While both approaches worked well in different settings, it was the conflicting nature of the teaching styles that was problematic. Without a transition process in between, it was a difficult conversion for me.

3.1. *Organizing theme: steadfast engagement with the lesson*

In my experiences, I have learned that it is incredibly necessary to give students signals that it's time to face the front, listen to instructions, and start learning. When students are focused, they are engaged and ready to dive deep into the lesson. Over the years, I have built some activities to engage students. One of them is building a daily routine wherein one student is chosen per day to present a word and explain its definition, share an inspiring quotation, and share a piece of news article together with his/her personal insights. This has proven to be a good activity to enhance students' communication skills while learning new vocabulary and encouraging reflection. This was difficult to employ in class at first, but surprisingly, students get to know the strategy and look forward to it. I find this activity to work at the beginning of class to calm students down and energize them to refocus.

(SE- Student 13)

Before every class, he would spend the first 10-minutes discussing current events. With a warm smile and a light in his eye, Mr. Dionson would enthusiastically ask us to share a story that we had read in the newspaper. It was a brilliant way to get us reading, get us talking, and ultimately get us thinking critically. He lets us have a voice, gave space for opinions without being wrong or right. He engaged us with

leading questions, showed us that that were two sides to every story, and demonstrated with his actions the power of compassion and understanding. It all tied beautifully into his ELA classes.

During class discussions, I use strategies to engage students in whatever we do in class. From an instructional viewpoint, I use teaching methods wherein I utilize pair and group activities, set short activities so that students do not get bored, scaffold and set reachable goals, and incorporate topics that students are interested in. I also provide relevant examples, personal insights, and keen observation on students' learning. This is similar to the findings of Barnes (2010) wherein he investigated students' beliefs about the qualities of effective English teachers and concluded that the participants of the study considered those teachers ideal who are "enthusiastic about lecturing, give clear explanations, use good examples, use a variety of lecturing methods, correct all errors, use group work, and encourage student participation in class".

(JE- November 12, 2018)

During our class today, a 7th grader told me that he liked my way of asking many questions in class. I was surprised to find out that some students, including him, appreciate my questioning style. I always ask plenty of questions in class because I want my classroom to be student-centered, and I want my students to be engaged in critical thinking. I also make every effort to involve as many students in my class as possible, so that they have a chance to say something on top of the pair or group work that they do. Knowing that my questioning style makes my students engaged, I will surely continue to employ this in my classroom.

(CL- Administrator 5)

His students are actively engaged throughout the day. Mr. Dionson uses creative methods and websites to teach the Arizona State Standards for all his grade levels. He creates a functional learning environment by using the knowledge he has gained through his professional development courses, from websites, and other educational resources. Technology is integrated into many of his lessons.

(CL- Colleague 1)

Mr. Dionson is one of the most creative and innovative forces in teaching that I've worked with. His classes are fun, memorable, and engaging—everything that a good lesson should be.

(CL- Colleague 2)

Mr. Dionson is one of those rare individuals who is able to create content that students enjoy so much they often don't realize how much language they are learning.

In my school, I am exposed to many students who had various levels of motivation, academic skills, aptitude, and so on. Therefore, it is important to have diverse strategies. I also try to interact with my students because I believe that one-on-one interactions with students is effective.

(SE- Student 14)

He is engaged with his students during the discussion. He presents with all his heart and he never does it the easy way.

(SE- Student 15)

... Secondly, you keep the class interactive and there wasn't a moment where you let the spirit down. I have experienced teachers who end lessons early and let the class do what they want but you always keep the class going.

(SL- Student 7)

He is engaged with the class. He always tries to encourage us to speak up more. He is well-liked by my class and I definitely enjoyed his lessons.

(PL- Parent 5)

I want to thank you for your commitment and passion as a teacher. My child is very lucky to have you. Thank you for keeping her engaged and learning, even in this crazy time! She enjoys school and you are a big part of that right now...

3.2. *Organizing theme: simplification of ideas*

Although there have been many definitions of learning strategies, I am especially fond of how Wenden and Rubin (1987) define learning strategies as particular actions which are used to simplify the learning and recollection of one or several elements of competence. Medgyes (1994) added that simplification of a process does not only mean finding an easier learning method, but to find a method that will be faster, more pleasurable, more self-directed, more

effective, and able to be transferred to different situations. As such Medgyes (1994) suggests that non-native speaking teachers, like me, are more strategy conscious, and thus they are more successful in finding a more appropriate learning strategy for the learners.

Non-native-speaking teachers have a deeper insight in what language difficulties are. Based on my experiences, it is easier for me to spot the troublesome places where a student can possibly trip, and thus to avoid grammatical problems. Due to the fact that I went through the learning phase myself, I think I possess better knowledge about the English language, and while native-speaking teachers have better feeling of what is correct and what is not correct in the way the language is used, non-native speaking teachers like me have better knowledge of the potential difficulties in language learning. The following excerpts showed that students and colleagues acknowledged how I simplified complex lessons in my classes.

(JE- February 21, 2019)

During our essay writing today, one student just stared at his paper and did nothing for about half an hour. I was thinking that the student was brainstorming for ideas; however, it seemed to me that he was not interested in doing the work. I approached the student and asked, "Is there something wrong? Do you need help?". The student hesitantly answered "yes". When I asked him what it was about, he said that he did understand what thesis statement is, but he didn't know how to compose one. He added, "Even if I understand the assignment, when you have to write an essay, it's very difficult for me to put your flow of ideas into a thesis form. It's hard to put my thoughts in the paper. For instance, if I read something, I'll read until I understand. That's fine. I'll put it aside, but when I come to writing, I find it more difficult because you need to make sense for others to read it and you need to put your ideas in a way that does make sense." Knowing his frustrations, I made the concept of writing a thesis easier for him by giving him guide questions. When I went back to check his work, I was glad to see how he was doing it correctly. I realized that sometimes guide questions can simplify confusing concepts like thesis statements.

(CL- Administrator 6)

Mr. Dionson is unique in his ability to make difficult stuff look easy. While other teachers complain about having "the wrong students", he becomes the right teacher for today's students and wins their hearts and minds.

(SL- Student 8)

Hi Mr. Dionson! Just wanted to drop you a note of appreciation and let you know that you're an amazing teacher. (-: You're organized, responsive, patient and able to clearly explain complex topics and nuances.

(SE- Student 17)

He explains things that students find it hard to understand and simplify them so that we could understand better. He is also good at making the lesson more fun and interesting, keeping us interested.

(SE- Student 18)

I think you have a great teaching style in which you used stuff from different sources and combine them into a simplified version which will help us in easier 'digestion' of the knowledge.

(SE- Student 19)

He elaborates during his presentation and gives sufficient examples, using graphs and pictures to illustrate his points.

4. Fourth global theme: Language teaching is based on teacher's personal qualities.

The fourth view "Language teaching is based on teachers' personal qualities" comprises two organizing themes and four basic themes. This thematic network represents an exploration of my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues in the context of the broader discussion on personal qualities of a language teacher. The thematic network (Figure 4) illustrates concisely the key themes on which the fourth global theme was anchored: 'amicability' and 'inspiring/motivating students'.

Aside from keeping students engaged in the classroom, which I underscored in the previous thematic network, I was much more relaxed in my approach to teaching students over time. I found myself talking to students more about their school year and personal interests than I did during the preceding months. I also engaged students about their plans for the future,

taking a sincere interest in learning about their families. I probably do a much better job of being a good listener than during my first two years teaching in the US. The energy level in our school is off the charts for students. It takes a high energy level to keep up with the school activities and a vast assortment of other imminent requests and challenges. For some reason, I realized that as an educator, I always rise to the occasion and handle these situations with great resolve and purpose.

4.1. Organizing theme: amicability

Underscoring the humanistic aspect of language teaching, I believe that teaching is not just about content and pedagogy; rather, it is about improving the quality of life inside the classroom. For me, creating a positive learning environment means empowering the students to learn at their own pace. Personal characteristics such as being understanding, caring and empathetic with the students were also revealed from the data as important elements in effective language teaching. As reflected in the excerpts below, effective teaching demands a sense of genuine care for the students and attention to things like patience, amicability, being professional, being enthusiastic and interested in class, and giving students individualized assistance.

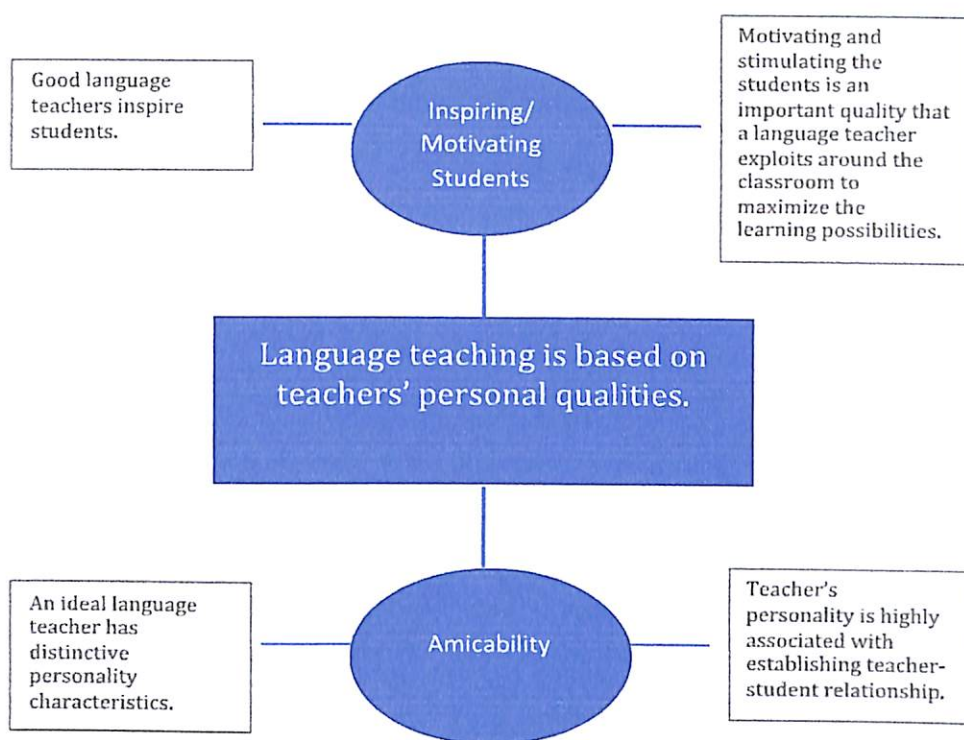


Figure 4. Thematic network for 'language teaching is based on teachers' personal qualities'

Establishing a good rapport with students often meant overcoming fears of how students might behave in the classroom. Teaching American students, who are native English-speaking speakers, was a little intimidating at first, but I have learned the importance of imposing my role as a teacher. In my opinion, the building of relationships is the catalyst for success in language teaching. When a teacher makes a continuous effort to hear all the voices of his or her students, communities can be created that acknowledge and promote difference, work in better ways, and create learning opportunities through instructional dialogue.

(SL- Student 9)

...Thank you for also being one of the funnest/funniest teachers, whenever I'm in your class I always have fun and I especially have fun when we play kahoots. Thank you for being so nice and an awesome teacher!

(SL- Student 10)

...You are so kind and always take into consideration what your students say...Thank you for your kindness, patience, warmth, inspiration, and sense of humor. Thank you for being a great teacher (and person) and always helping me feel comfortable.

(SL- Student 11)

Thank you for all of the fun activities we would do and the joy and happiness you would spread around the classroom. I will never forget the moments you brought pure joy into the class...

(SL- Student 12)

Thank you, Mr. Dionson, for being such an awesome, loving, caring teacher for my 8th-grade homeroom class. I enjoyed attending your classes every day and I would get so pumped up when I had your next class...

(SE- Student 20)

He makes lesson enjoyable for the students. The important thing about attending his class is that we really see his personality shine through in a light-hearted lesson.

(SE- Student 21)

His cheery character makes us feel at ease and we find that we can do our work in a more cheerful manner. There is no stress, and everything flows more smoothly as everyone is happy.

4.2. *Organizing theme: inspiring/motivating students*

Cultivating student motivation is an essential aspect of teaching that teachers must kick around. In my first year of teaching in the US, I have led classes where students were distracted, disinterested, and reluctant to engage. It took me a very long time to find various strategies to raise my students' motivation and cope with the issues of learners' engagement. While there are nuances that change from student to student, I have employed numerous strategies that enhanced motivation in my classroom. I have learned that I need to not only provide the students a right track in the case of teaching learning process but also motivate them to follow their personality characteristics that paves the way of a successful life as I believe that teacher's personality is highly associated with establishing teacher-student relationship.

(SL- Student 13)

Mr. Dionson, you are the best ELA teacher I have had, and I don't mean that, just by it rolling off my tongue. I mean it from the heart. I was always one of those students that didn't really have a taste for reading and writing but being in your class this year has really changed the way I look at ELA. You make me want to learn more, and that really changed myself. You are a funny, smart, kind, and honest teacher.

(SL- Student 14)

Mr. Dionson, thanks for teaching us! You are a great teacher! I like the way you teach because you are always encouraging us and really give us comments that would drive and motivate us. There are no weaknesses in terms of your teaching style.

(SE- Student 22)

Mr. Dionson helped me tremendously by encouraging me to stretch my goals. Mr. Dionson made sure I was not lost in the crowd and I think he did that for a lot of other students as well.

(SE- Student 23)

...One day I had a problem at home, which I didn't want to share here. During that time, I felt that nobody cared to listen. But Mr. Dionson saw the sadness in me and he reached out to me. He told me to stay after class and we had a very short talk that inspired me until today. Nobody, but Mr. Dionson, was there for me. I walked home that day a little taller, my spine a little straighter, basking in the knowledge that someone cared for me. I remember promising myself I would never goof off in his class again.

(SE- Student 24)

Thank you for teaching this class. And I want to thank you for your encouragement at times when I felt discouraged. And you are a great teacher. One of the teachers whom I will remember...

5. Fifth global theme: Language teaching requires knowledge, skills, and professionalism.

The fifth view "Language teaching requires knowledge, skills, and professionalism", which is based on the fifth global theme, comprises two organizing themes and six basic themes. This network represents an exploration of my dialogues with students and colleagues in the context of the broader discussion on professional qualities of a language teacher. The thematic network (Figure 5) illustrates concisely the key themes on which the

fifth global theme was anchored: 'teaching competence' and 'excellent classroom management'.

As a teacher who used to teach in the Philippines, I could not help but compare the huge differences between Filipino and American classrooms. First is the learning style of the students. As an English teacher for second language learners in the Philippines, I employed collaboration in my classroom. I always put my students in charge of their own learning. In my experiences, I have realized that stepping off the stage and making myself as a facilitator in class discussions is very effective as I could informally assess students' understanding about the materials covered in class. However, this didn't work in my American classroom during my first two years of teaching. Students were passive, and they didn't want to participate. In most days, I needed to change my lesson plans and teaching strategies because students would prefer to remain seated and do work on their own. For me, classes were not fun and meaningful, and it gave me a lot of frustrations.

Besides the obstacles in teaching style, I also experienced the difficulties in negotiating my identity in American classroom. Immerging into a new cultural and social context, my identities and self-images constructed by my original backgrounds has started to change. As I was the only Asian and Filipino teacher at our school, I realized how hard and uncomfortable it was to become a minority in society. When I was living in my home country, I was rarely aware of my racial identity, but in an American school, I confronted racial stereotype

as I am a non-native English-speaking teacher. I normally received different reactions from my students and parents.

(JE- October 14, 2016)

It was a long day! I am glad the Parent-Teacher Conference is over. It was weird that some parents assumed I was the Math teacher saying, "Oh! You must be the Math teacher!" *(They always associate Asian people with being good at Math.)*, or thought about an English teacher from the Philippines to be rather unusual by saying, "Really? You are the English teacher? Imagine someone coming from the Philippines to teach English here." But overall, I had a great time meeting some parents. Most of them were nice, actually.

In meeting with parents, I always had to assert that I am a qualified English teacher and that, in fact, I had my master's degree in English language teaching. It was usual for me to be asked about my qualifications in teaching English. That made me realized that in coming to an American school, I also needed to perform my identity as a qualified non-native English-speaking teacher from the Philippines.

There was a time when my principal came to my classroom and casually asked about the challenges I was facing in the classroom and at our school in general. During that time, I was fed up with students' and parents' reactions about my being a non-native English-speaking teacher, so I decided to share it with him. He asked me how I responded to discriminatory comments, and I explained that I told them about my strengths (grammar knowledge, etc.), that there are different accents even in the United States, and that it is very important to be accustomed to different accents in today's multicultural world. After hearing that, my principal then shared about a complaint he got from a parent about my being a NNEST.

(JE- December 6, 2016)

Today, a parent came to school and asked our principal to have me replaced by an American teacher. This happened after her child didn't test at grade level during our benchmarking test. She said her child couldn't understand me because of my accent.

Our principal said that he engaged the parent in conversations about specific issues and a larger conversation about English internationally. He further explained to the parent that, "English is spoken in many different rhythms and with somewhat different pronunciation and that as citizens of the world people need to listen and adjust to speaking differences." Finally, he said, *"We hire teachers based on their preparation to teach not on whether they speak English as their native language."* After knowing how my principal responded to discriminatory complaints about me, I gained confidence because I knew that I have the support of our administration.

At the end of each day, I always tried to think positive; however, I still felt upset, not because of my interactions with students and colleagues, but I was upset of myself. I used to be a brilliant, active, and confident teacher when I was in the Philippines. But in the new classroom context, I see myself as an unconfident, insecure, and vulnerable teacher. I certainly knew that what I felt was not out of the ordinary. In fact, Liu (2001), in his study, found out that foreign teachers and students experienced some levels of identity loss: identity loss and deprivation with regard to values, status, profession, friends, and possessions; identity strain as a result of the effort required to make a necessarily psychological adaptation; identity rejection by members of the new culture; identity confusion, especially in regard to role ambiguity and unpredictability; and identity importance as a result of not being able to cope

with the new environment. There were moments when I felt isolated and disappointed about myself at school. However, as the years progressed, I was able to find my own voice and identity in our school.

5.1. *Organizing theme: teaching competence*

This organizing theme pertains to the professional skills that make a language teacher effective and efficient, as characterized by my colleagues and students. In this context, I used some letters and evaluation reports from my administrators and students that vouched my abilities as a language teacher. I chose to include some extracts here, not so much to toot my own horn, but to help me reflect on how they see me influence the way I see myself as a language teacher. Curtis and Cheng (2001) posit that ideal teachers contain knowledge, exceptional skills, and distinctive personality characteristics. Similarly, Beishuizen et al (2001) suggested that being proficient, knowledgeable, and trained are the innermost aspects of an ideal English language teacher.

Compiling these letters and evaluation reports gave me a perfect opportunity to ask myself what sort of teacher I am and why I love teaching. I realized, by looking at the letters of support, that passion for teaching and a desire to make a difference are crucial to excellence in teaching. According to Burton (2000), ideal teachers should have distinctiveness, reciprocity, required knowledge, and professionalism. Basow (2000), Radmacher & Martin (2001), and Raymond (2008) reiterated that

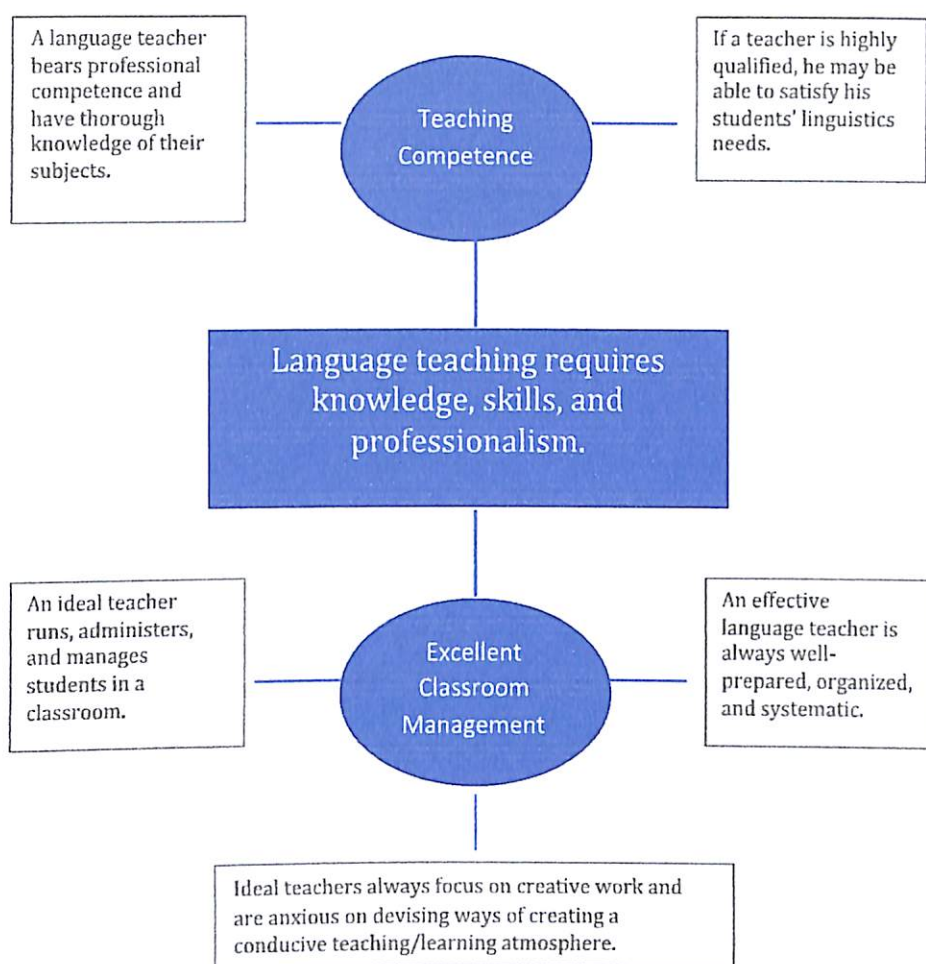


Figure 5. Thematic network for 'language teaching requires knowledge, skills, and professionalism'

professional competence is one main category of the characteristics related to ideal language teachers. They posited that if a teacher is highly qualified, he may be able to satisfy his students' linguistics needs. The following are some excerpts of the data where this organizing theme floated:

(CL- Administrator 7)

Mr. Dionson's strength as a teacher is found in his brilliant understanding of Linguistics. English is his second language, but he is so well versed in English that I find myself learning a great deal about my native language from him. Mr. Dionson is an excellent teacher and a compassionate educator.

(CL- Administrator 8)

Mr. Dionson understands students' needs while teaching expertly from the common core standards. He is a masterful teacher because he is devoted to the craft of teaching and the art of pedagogy. He betters himself everyday with experience and content knowledge.

(CL- Administrator 9)

During this time, Mr. Dionson has shown great maturity beyond his teaching experience as a Language Arts teacher. He has strong knowledge of his content area with superior classroom management skills.

(SL- Student 15)

Overall, I am very much truly satisfied with the lessons that you have provided us with. I truly thank you for teaching us useful grammar lessons. Although they can be difficult, you made them easy to understand...

(SL- Student 16)

I'd like to take this chance to thank you for being such a remarkable teacher. I'm grateful for your patience and knowledge in writing skills, which you have passed down to me.

5.2. *Organizing theme: excellent classroom management*

Based on the data, a language teacher's skill in managing the classroom was certainly seen as essential. As a language teacher, I believe that creating a well-managed classroom takes a good deal of effort. This supports the findings of Walls et al. (2002) and Kumaravadivelu (1992). Walls et al. (2002) have reported that ideal teachers always focus on creative work and are anxious on devising ways of creating a conducive teaching/learning atmosphere by exploiting their professional skills such as being well-organized, pre-planned, and understandable. It has also been reiterated that the qualities that contribute the most towards learners' learning are the ones that may be summed as being purposeful, aim-oriented, relaxed, warm, supportive, a sense of order and humor embodied in teacher to make him an ideal (Kumaravadivelu, 1992 cited in Açıkgöz, 2005). The theme "excellent classroom management" emerged from the following excerpts:

(CL- Administrator 4)

Your classroom has a pleasant and positive feel throughout; I could see the respect that you have earned from your students. Grammar and writing skills are very much needed to improve their writing skills. I also see more confidence in their faces and like the student engagement between teacher and students. Keep up the good work.

(CL- Administrator 5)

Mr. Dionson uses creative methods and websites to teach the Arizona State Standards for all his grade levels. He creates a functional learning environment by using the knowledge he has gained through his professional development courses, from websites, and other educational resources. Technology is integrated into many of his lessons. He works diligently developing lesson plans and finding resources which provide individualized and group instruction to meet the needs of all his students. His students are actively engaged throughout the day.

(SL- Student 3)

He guides us in the direction on how we understand class materials well. He also took a lot of effort to engage each and every one of us at an individual level or as a class. I feel that he did a really good job. He's able to make everybody feel comfortable in class and makes the effort to ensure that everybody understand the lesson.

(SL- Student 4)

I wanted to send you a teacher appreciation note because you have been such an amazing teacher to me all this time. Classes are always so much fun with you and all the activities/games you let us do...

As reflected in the themes presented in this study, my being a non-native English-speaking teacher was never a hindrance for me to be an effective language teacher, and it show that teachers do not necessarily fit into the dichotomous categories that describe teacher behaviors. As presented in the review of literature, many studies have been conducted to show that native English-speaking teachers are labeled superior to the NNESTs. Instead of accepting these ill-fitting labels, teachers should examine their own self-perceptions and make informed decisions about the kinds of teaching behaviors they currently exhibit and the kinds they wish to embrace. Rather than falling into the "native-speaker" fallacy, NNESTs can view these behaviors as being on a continuum and that the behaviors may fluctuate depending on the class, students, experience, and a myriad of other reasons.

The next section will look at how I communicatively shaped my teacher identity as influenced by the dialogues I had with my students, parents, and colleagues.

B. Communicative construction of my teacher identities

The previous section examined how I viewed English language teaching as reflected in my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues. In this section, I will look at how my views of language teaching communicatively shape my professional identity as an English language teacher. The present dissertation will also focus on the connection between my teacher identity, my classroom practices, and on how dialogues can empower NNESTs like me to strive for professional legitimacy while potentially reshaping my instruction in response to more empowering conceptualizations of self. This will address the second research question:

Research Question 2:

How does my view of English language teaching, through my discourses and interactions with my native English-speaking students, parents, and colleagues, shape my professional identity as an English language teacher?

As mentioned previously, the language and discourses I used to relate my experiences represent the primary interest of this study. Therefore, as language is the medium through which experience is recollected, this paper adopts a discourse-based (communicative) approach to the construction of my teacher identity where the enactment and construction of identity is channeled through narrative and dialogic events (Schiffrin, 1996). With this in mind, I realized that my narratives, discourses, and interactions with my native English-speaking students, parents, and colleagues have influenced me to shape my English teacher identity as a:

1. Supporter. My distinctive teacher identity is that of a supporter, specifically for low achieving students. I have cared so much about those students who fell behind, and this was revealed from the data. In my experiences, I have learned that various factors that could improve or hinder students' learning, such as motivation for their academic goals, aptitude, and home environment. I knew that those students who have been consistently tested proficient can do anything by themselves, but those students who have low proficiency cannot complete tasks by themselves, and they don't know how to deal with things. They are not even sure whether they are able to understand the topics, so I have to support them. If they can get some hints, understand the content, and realize what they are learning is fun, they might think that they want to try to do it and study for skills. They might think English is useful in the future.

My teacher identity as a supporter is shaped from the global theme "language teaching requires extra effort". This view of language teaching taught me the importance of going the extra mile and building profound teacher-student relationship. Going the extra mile means that as a teacher, I support the students by giving individual feedback, offering extra tutoring services, and providing materials/ resources that help the students succeed academically. On the other hand, building profound teacher-student relationship is achieved when I understand students' feelings and emotions in the classroom and check on them from time to time even when outside the school. These kinds of support can be used to enhance students' motivation for learning.

2. Facilitator. Adding to a role as a supporter specifically for low proficient students, being a facilitator is another characteristic that shows my robust identity as a teacher. In the teaching of English language today, the old pedagogical ideal of the teacher as an authority transmitting knowledge to students "who do not know" is in disrepute. The ideal now is for a more democratic, student-centered approach, in which the teacher facilitates communicative educational activities with students. My identity as a facilitator is revealed from the global theme "language teaching entails engagement and practicality". For a language teacher, many strategies can be done to be an effective facilitator. One is promoting interaction in class which can empower students and help them develop communication skills. Also, simplifying complex ideas is an important quality that a language teacher exploits around the classroom to maximize learning possibilities. Being a facilitator, I use varied teaching approaches such as (1) initiating cooperative learning groups, (2) using methods that simplify concepts, (3) giving clear explanations, and (4) utilizing a variety of teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and language proficiency.

Being a facilitator as my teacher identity was also revealed in the global theme "language teaching requires knowledge, skills, and professionalism". According to the data, an ideal language teacher has teaching competence and excellent classroom management. With professionalism and thorough knowledge of his/her subjects, a language teacher can effectively facilitate the flow of learning in class. If a teacher is highly qualified, he/she may be

able to satisfy students' linguistic needs. Also, a language teacher is always well-prepared, organized, systematic. He/she runs, facilitates, administers, and manages students in the classroom while creating a functional teaching-learning environment. Finally, an efficient language teacher does his/her duties and act his/her roles as a teacher such as developing lesson plans and finding resources to meet the needs of all the students.

- 3. Motivator.** Concurrent to being a facilitator, I need to be an appropriate motivator to improve their students' learning outcomes. This teacher identity was reflected in the global theme "language teaching needs accountability". Farrel (2011) included a teacher's role as a motivator in his sixteen teacher role identities and explained the significance of motivating students and keeping them on learning tasks. In my classroom, I have a strong interest in upholding fairness and observing my students in class. I want my students not only to study English to test proficient in state tests, but also to give students ownership of their own learning. As a motivator, I create a culture of trust and responsibility in my classroom. Through this, I can show honesty and fairness towards the students, which in turn the students can follow.

Over the course of five years teaching in an American classroom, I have learned to be more confident and comfortable in teaching English to my students. I describe myself as a motivated teacher as well as a motivator for students. My motivation for teaching became stronger in the US because I am a foreigner and students showed their willingness to study with me. Even in my teaching philosophy, I have observed positive attitude towards

teaching as reflected in the global theme "language teaching is based on teacher's personal qualities". As a language teacher, I present distinctive personality characteristics that inspire students. By showing positive personal traits, I am able to motivate students to learn. Every student may not end up being proficient in English during state tests, but everyone can prove and can achieve their ability level. In my years of teaching, I realized that positive personal traits are highly associated with providing the essence of teaching to mold the students to be the best versions of themselves.

The findings in this study and the use of dialogues in understanding teacher identity formation are similar with those of Van Rijswijk, Akkerman, and Koster (2013), whose data are drawn from the narratives of student teachers in Estonia. The study by Van Rijswijk, Akkerman and Koster (2013) is an interesting attempt to understand the development of the professional identity of teachers from the point of view of dialogism theory. They show that dialogue is indeed important in the development of a teacher's professional identity.

This also chimes with the findings of Arvaja (2016), who explored teacher identity in the context of a one-year program from the weekly learning diaries written by a university teacher, Anna. According to the narrative analysis, the diaries demonstrate the process of identity construction through Anna's storytelling and narrating. It can be seen that personal narratives play an important role in exploring identity formation as "individuals [are] continuously involved in production of selves,

positioning of others, revision of identity narratives, and creation of new ones which valorize new modes of being and belonging" (Pavlenko, 2007).

By reexamining my memories and dialogues through writing, I might have experienced what Erik Erikson (1968) conceptualizes in his theory of identity development. For Erikson, identity development is marked by a period where one has a strong desire to re-examine their identity to figure out who they are and how they fit into society. As they explore various possibilities, they begin to shape their identity based on the outcomes of their explorations. In Erikson's (1968) *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, his stages of personality development proved useful in helping me understand some of the challenges I had with my teacher identities. As my stories and dialogues illustrate, my identities do not always form neatly, if ever. Therefore, if identity development were continuous, influenced, and co-constructed by those around me, this would mean that as my relationship to them changes, so does a part of me.

Finally, my journey as a non-native English-speaking teacher brings me to the summation of my identities as a language teacher. My identity as a language teacher is not just one principle but is a combination of many. The principles which constitute my identities as a teacher are not isolated by themselves. Each principle has its own characteristics, and each principle has a place and purpose within me. My narratives and dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues provided themes of my constructed identities. The themes illustrate how the characteristics of my identities are interwoven. In other words, the themes woven together are the sum total of who I am.

C. Theorizing identity construction

Richards (2006), in his study about the dynamic nature of identity construction and its relationship to discourses, concluded that this issue has received relatively little attention, and teacher roles have for the most part been characterized as relatively static. Based on reviewing research into professional identity in relation to teachers and teacher education, Beijaard et al. (2004) concluded that literature often lacks a clear definition of professional identity. Teacher identity construction, as examined in the literature review, has been studied under the various traditions of communication theory. However, insufficient attention has been paid to the importance of dialogues in developing identities; thus, this study aims to explore identity construction by situating this to Phenomenological Tradition wherein I applied the concept of "otherness" or discourses between self and other(s) in investigating how my teacher identity is shaped by these discourses.

Using the lens of phenomenology, this study revealed the nature and meaning of human experience (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Researchers use phenomenology to reveal the meaning people create from the perspective of someone who is knowledgeable about the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2013; Giorgi, 1997; Moustakas, 1994). Meaning, consequently, is defined as a person's intentionality. Intentionality within this dissertation begins with a concept developed by the philosopher Edmund Husserl. He defined it as the process of the human consciousness justifying why one thinks, feels, and believes the way one does about a given phenomenon (Russell, 2007). Furthermore, van Manen (1997) described meaning as the rationale for thinking something about a phenomenon. Thus, human

meaning is created through the intentional acts people associate with their experiences with phenomena.

According to Giorgi (1997), "Phenomenology always starts from the perspective of consciousness and allows that whatever presents itself to consciousness, precisely as it presents itself, is a legitimate point of departure for research". Employing a phenomenological perspective for this study allowed data to flow from my experiences. In his seminal work on qualitative research, Patton (2002) discusses the confusion and difficulties of properly defining and understanding phenomenology. He clarifies by highlighting that, at its core, phenomenology is about how people make sense of their reality and how their perceptions inform their sense-making, how people experience some phenomenon, how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. In other words, this dissertation, as a phenomenological study, revealed through my lived experience the meaning I have created for my experience.

Heidegger argued that as people engage in phenomenological inquiry, they can change their undiscovered self into explicit understanding (Levinas, 1996). That is to say, people become aware of the meaning they have created for their experiences in life as they examine their own thinking about those experiences. With these thoughts in mind, Giorgi (1997) explained the importance of Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology. He said that Husserl's description of transcendental subjectivity provided the foundation for discussing and revealing how people create meaning for their perceptions of the external world. Understanding the process of perceiving the world, performing acts of intention on one's perceptions, and formulating ideas based

on those intentional acts allowed me to describe intelligently how the mind creates meaning for my experiences. Thus, Husserl's philosophy provides a much-needed means for discussing how professionals like me might access the tacit experience we develop in practice.

In this study, discourses are critical elements towards identity development, and personal narratives were used in creating themes that were discussed earlier in this chapter. While many studies emphasize the importance of teacher identity, there is not yet one generally accepted conceptualization of teacher identity. In line with Phenomenological Tradition, Rodgers and Scott (2008) defined teacher identity: (1) as formed while interacting with others, a formation that is strongly influenced by language; (2) as changeable and complex; and (3) as constructed while making sense of who you are by means of personal discourses. Teacher identity is perceived not as a something that you have but as a process of formation and ongoing development (Beijaard et al., 2004; Cohen, 2008). As my narratives and dialogues with others developed, and I explored the data I had collected through narrative and thematic analysis, my conceptualization of self was revealed.

According to dialogical-self theory, the process of the development of identity is about self-narration (Hermans, 2003). That is, the continuous telling and retelling of one's story about whom one considers oneself to be. Narratives are a way of telling the story of who you are and therefore important to forming an identity. Self-narratives have been considered as an important tool for understanding teacher identity. If teachers are invited to narrate the experiences they come across while functioning as a teacher, they automatically engage in the process of making sense of these

experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). The situatedness of narratives is of crucial importance, particularly as it unravels contextual elements in the discourse of teachers. When teachers engage in recollecting these narratives, which are experience-based, they are negotiating their position and progressively claiming affiliation and legitimacy or credibility of voice in English language teaching (Philpott, 2011).

Van Rijswijk, Akkerman, and Koster (2013) interpreted 'dialogue' in two ways: as descriptive and as normative concepts. According to them, dialogues are descriptive in the sense that theories of dialogism, including the theory of the dialogical self, suppose that all speaking and thinking, and for that matter acting, are to some degree predicated on the speaking and acting of others, are concretely situated, and are addressed to an (real or imagined) audience. Everything we say or do is influenced by such factors as our social position and that of the individuals to whom we speak, by our understanding of the situation and its history, by cultural norms, and other such factors. Such a theoretical lens contributes to a better understanding of human nature. On the other hand, the normative side of such concepts arises from the idea that if dialogue is so central to human existence, enhancing the quality of dialogues is likely to enhance the quality of human existence and of living together.

Many authors (e.g. Holland et al. 1998) have interpreted teacher identity as dialogical, a (mostly verbal) rendition of who one considers oneself to be in a particular situation and for a particular audience. Moreover, the development over time of this picture of oneself is influenced by the dialogues in which one engages or is engaged. Constructing an identity is, in this view, an on-going struggle, in which one strives for

coherence but also continually encounters new differences and contradictions, some of them created by the nature of the identity development itself. It is a continuous learning process, in which one learns about oneself and one's relationship to others and to the world. But also, ideally, one learns to learn – to be more aware of differences, of possibilities and restrictions, and to engage in identity dialogues.

In some of the excerpts used in this study, I have used texts written by the students, prompted by teachers and/or administrators. Renshaw (2004) called this as 'internally persuasive dialogue'. One consequence of this choice is that we can only see dialogues as rendered by the students – in fact, at best we can read an internal dialogue. Given the situation in which these texts were written, however, students know that their writing will be read. The internally persuasive one is never closed, and the dialogue never completely ends. Therefore, looking at such a discourse is a good means for following the development of the teachers' identity. But what will be revealed is as much dependent on the definition of 'identity' and its development as it is on the richness of the data.

Also, I think a more encompassing view about teacher identity development is possible on two counts. In the first place, identity is not just a discourse about oneself; it is a discourse about oneself in relation to one's (personal and professional) environment. It is not only about one's relationship with students, but also about the social and institutional position one has as a teacher, about one's relationship to the academic discipline(s) one teaches, about how one values differences, and many additional aspects. This implies that internally persuasive dialogues are unnecessarily

limiting, but the texts the students wrote influence how a teacher develops his/her teacher identity.

Finally, phenomenology's assumption is that multiple realities are rooted in subjects' perspective (Ary et.al., 2006). In this study, I described and interpreted my teaching experiences by determining the meaning of the experiences as I perceived them. In phenomenology, my perspective is the reality of my situation. Each experience was viewed through the lens of the subject (me), and the subjective experience is at the center of inquiry (Ary et. al., 2006). As mentioned before, identity construction is mostly framed in other traditions of communication theory. Hence, by situating my dissertation in the phenomenological tradition, I am able to contribute a different dimension of explaining identity construction, which is to understand the formation of a NNEST's professional identity through the experience of self and others in dialogue.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary of findings

Using the methodologies of autoethnography and narrative inquiry, this qualitative research was designed to answer the research questions: (1) What is my view of English language teaching as a non-native English-speaking teacher teaching native English-speaking students? and (2) How does my view of English language teaching, through my discourses and interactions with native English-speaking students, parents, and colleagues, shape my professional identity as an English language teacher?

For this study, I used my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues as my main source of data. I reflected, observed, and analyzed the autoethnographic data to understand how I view language teaching, and describe how these views shape my teacher identities. In seeking to unearth the themes salient in my data, I used thematic network analysis by Attride-Stirling (2001). With thematic networks, I am able to facilitate the structuring and depiction of these themes.

Looking at my narratives and the set of themes that came out from my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues, I found how I viewed language teaching:

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1. Language teaching requires extra effort.
2. Language teaching needs accountability.
3. Language teaching entails engagement and practicality.
4. Language teaching is based on relationships.
5. Language teaching requires knowledge, skills, and professionalism.

Through these views, I am able to shape my teacher identities as a (1) supporter, (2) facilitator, and (3) motivator. These findings suggest that in general the act of engaging in dialogue with others as a teacher contributes to developing new truths about oneself as a teacher. The ways in which significant others play a role and the way in which different dialogical strategies are employed may inform teachers about how their professional identities can be constructed when reflecting on their development as teachers. Using my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues, I was able to understand who I am as a teacher, or critically reflect on my teacher identities if they relate and integrate who I consider myself to be during self-reflections.

The findings of the study revealed that as a NNEST, I have my own strengths and can be a good teacher in my own terms regardless of what my first language is. Interpretation of my teaching experiences, as interpreted through dialogue with myself and others, led to understanding and knowledge about teacher identity formation. The associated idea is that dialogue, whether with oneself or other people, is a central part of the interpretation process of meanings, which are based on subjective perception and interpretation. As West and Turner (2014) puts it, communicative interactions are

at the center of direct experiences and interpretations, ensuring “production of meaning, dialogue, rhetoric, and representation”.

B. Conclusion

These findings are broadly in harmony of researchers such as Van Rijswijk, Akkerman, and Koster (2013), Rodgers and Scott (2008), Arvaja (2016), and Holland et al. (1998). They show that participating in narrative encounters as the one that was examined in this study, allows teachers not only to reflect on their classroom practice but also to develop discourses that anchor them in their professional identities. This study has also resonance value with research which explores the reflective discourses and voices of NNESTs in English language teaching industry (Medgyes, 1994; Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Liang, 2002; Mahboob, 2003; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Benke and Medgyes, 2005; Lagabaster and Sierra, 2005; Nemtchinova, 2005; Pacek, 2005; Cheung and Braine, 2007; Braine, 2010).

Although the accounts of my experiences will not exactly reflect the experiences of other NNESTs in the United States, insight into my lived experiences as a NNEST in my classroom and the larger workplace developed a better understanding of how NNESTs' identities are constructed. This supports scholars such as: Brown (2005), Brutt-Griffler & Samimy (1999), Duff & Uchida (1997), Johnston (1999), Le Ha (2008), Morgan (2004), Norton (1997), Pavlenko (2003), Tsui (2007), and Zacharias (2010) who have highlighted, within the field of ELT, the necessity of studying the notion of teacher identity. These efforts have “helped capture

the complexities of who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers" (Johnson, 2006).

Finally, the findings run counter to the conventional expressed view that teacher identities are: control systems (Cybernetic Tradition), information-processing systems (Sociopsychological Tradition), shaped by signs (Semiotic Tradition), defined as the role (or character) people play (Sociocultural Tradition); and temporary positionings (Critical Tradition). Hence, my findings are to some extent at odds with those traditions since this study revealed that teacher identity construction is produced within dialogues and interactions between NNESTs and native English-speaking students, parents, and colleagues in an English language teaching arena. This provided a path of increased knowledge about identity construction using the lens of Phenomenological Tradition.

C. Recommendations

This research has not only provided a deeper understanding of my own experience for others and myself, but I hope that it enhances the acceptance of this form of qualitative inquiry for other professionals involved in communication research. For future researchers, I would be intrigued to look further at ethnographical works of diverse NNESTs in the area of language teaching in a native English-speaking country. What are the experiences of other NNESTs from teaching native English-speaking students? As Harry Wolcott (1991) described thirty years ago in his

description of ethnography, "researchers want to have a look around at what people in some other groups are doing, or what people in their own group are doing, and sometimes even at what the researchers themselves are doing and feeling". It is in this vein that I hope my contribution supports the efforts of other researchers to look around at what they themselves are doing and feeling in a particular culture and relive these experiences to support their own growth and benefit others.

Also, it has been discussed that communication such as the "native speaker" paradigm can cause social injustice since this ideology continues to marginalize NNESTs and harm the professional lives and sense of self-efficacy of many qualified NNESTs (Pavlenko, 2003). Within this highly charged sociopolitical context, I would be interested to look further for future researchers who will situate their studies under the Critical Tradition and work to contest dominant, ideological discourses that position NNESTs as less than ideal, second-rate, or altogether undesirable or incapable professionals. I believe that it is key for NNESTs' professional development and efficacy that they critically understand and learn to navigate the many power relations in the sociocultural and historical milieu in which they live and work. NNESTs must recognize which social and material conditions work against them as oppressive forces and how, both individually and collectively, they can work to mitigate such forces.

D. Final reflection

Through this phenomenological study, I could relive, albeit through memory, past experiences that were important in shaping my understanding of what it means

to be a non-native English-speaking teacher in the US. Through writing this dissertation, I looked and relooked at these experiences to see, feel, and understand their impact on my being. What is difficult to illustrate to my reader is the continual process of writing and rewriting these experiences. Much like rubbing a piece of fabric against a rough surface and causing the threads to fray, each time I revisited these memories and put them into words, certain threads begin to emerge.

I am acknowledging and seeing how my identity is interwoven with the individuals around me. As I wrote, revisited personal memories, and began reviewing the literature, I began to see how much of my own issues with the non-native English-speaking teacher identity stemmed from unresolved questions and unchallenged assumptions I had of myself. Through writing, I began to uncover and reveal to myself how I constructed a particular idea of a language teacher. In offering these stories to my reader, I focused my attention on my dialogues with students, parents, and colleagues, and how they shaped aspects of my language teacher identity.

Also, through my self-reflections towards my dialogues with students, parents, and colleague, I am able to not only externalize my current understanding of myself in order to think and act in more empowering ways, but also (through theoretical constructs) to reconceptualize and recontextualize the development of my teacher identity. As argued by Johnson (2009), teachers' identity "emerges out of a dialogic transformative process of reconsidering and reorganizing lived experiences through the theoretical constructs and discourses that are publicly recognized and valued within their professional discourse community". Thus, my dialogues and interactions with my students, parents, and colleagues helped me to articulate (and rearticulate)

my thinking and make it explicit, thus encouraging a process of restructuring of this knowledge into deeper concepts.

What this study helped me realize is that identity development takes time. Phenomenological study is akin to sanding layer of paint off a wood table to expose the grains that hold the table together. This process of reflecting, of moving between past and present, like the sanding, takes effort, time, and openness. Through playing with the parts of my memory that I have frayed from my teaching experiences in the US, I began to see how others' lives were woven into my own. Moreover, I compare writing this study to dancing wherein I desire to offer the steps that I felt are necessary for moving forward. What I have been encouraged to do is to revisit and rewrite these memories as a way of practicing the steps to this delicate dance and to see if any of these steps need revision. Much like dancing, I can only get better at doing something such as reflection and research, by doing it.

Overall, my experiences bring a significant change in me. The American pedagogy approaches help me perceive things under various angles, think in a more critical way, and value diversity. My experiences in an American school took me out of my comfort zone, and gradually I understood that wherever we are, we are not so different after all.

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