**SPECIAL ISSUE**

**An identity-oriented lens to TESOL teachers’ lives: Introducing the special issue**

Kristen Lindahl | Bedrettin Yazan

1University of Texas at San Antonio  
2University of Alabama

The idea of the 2019 *TESOL Journal* Special Issue emerged from a collaborative intersection panel between two TESOL International Association Interest Sections, the Teacher Educator Interest Section (TEIS) and the “Nonnative” English Speaker Teachers Interest Section (NNEST), at the 2018 TESOL International Association Convention in Chicago. One of the panelists, Juliet Langman, suggested we propose this topic as a special issue, and considering its focus on practitioner-oriented research, we thought *TESOL Journal* would be a good fit for such a themed issue. We are grateful that the Editors-in-Chief, Youngjoo Yi and Peter Sayer, agreed and provided us the space and support to bring this collection to the *TJ* audience.

Increasing interest in language teacher identity (LTI) is evident in many current scholarly conversations such as those published in two special issues of *Modern Language Journal* and *TESOL Quarterly* (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Varghese, Motha, Trent, Park, & Reeves, 2016), edited volumes (Barkhuizen, 2017; Cheung, Said, & Park, 2015; Kayi-Aydar, Gao, Miller, Varghese, & Vitanova, 2019; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018; Yazan & Lindahl, forthcoming; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018), and monographs (Clarke, 2008; Gray & Morton, 2018; Kong, 2019; Kramsch & Zhang, 2018; Nagatomo, 2012, 2016; Park, 2017; Sayer, 2012). LTI was also acknowledged as a salient topic in the research knowledge base and delineated in several handbooks, companions, and encyclopedias (Langman, 2018; Martel & Wang, 2014; Miller, 2009; Morgan & Clarke, 2011; Reeves, 2018), as well as conference strands at convenings of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL), Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée/International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA), Language Teacher Education (LTE), International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) and TESOL International itself. This ever-growing body of research on LTI has theorized and explored the nature, formation and enactment of teacher identities during initial teacher education and in-service professional development, with varying foci on intersections with social identities of race, gender, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, religion, nationality and community.

Extant literature on LTI concludes that teacher learning, practice, and growth involve identity work, and framing teacher education with an identity lens could afford preservice and practicing language teachers a space to assert their agency in creating the contours of their identity formation. This conclusion, and its corresponding implications, suggest that we reconsider the pedagogies of preservice and in-service language teacher education (LTE) to incorporate teacher identity work as the central goal in LTE. As such, the articles (in various genres) in this special issue offer an identity-oriented lens to TESOL teachers’ lives to (a) further understand the intricate interplay between
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LTI, teacher learning, and teacher practice, and (b) showcase LTE pedagogies that center and support teacher identity formation as an organizing element for teachers’ knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, priorities, and practice. Thereby, we see this special issue as a response to calls for the use of LTI as a *pedagogical intervention* (Morgan & Clarke, 2011), a *pedagogical innovation* (Martel, 2018; Trent, 2014), or a *pedagogical tool* (Olsen, 2008).

The articles featured herein further explore how teachers’ and teacher educators’ practice and ongoing learning is informed by their identities; their learning and practice involves negotiation, enactment, and (trans)formation of identities, and their professional identities are complexly intertwined and intersected with their other social identities. The contributing researchers focus on the ways TESOL practitioners respond to (i.e., maintain, question, problematize, or subvert) dominant local and global discourses and corresponding ideologies in the sociocultural, sociopolitical, and sociohistorical contexts within which their learning, practice, and identities are situated. One of these ideologies is *native speakerism*, which is reportedly significant in the ways language teachers in particular construct their identities, but also inseparable from ideologies of race, gender, ethnicity, and nationality. Amanda Swearingen’s review piece synthesizes 17 studies which examined the identities of TESOL teacher candidates (designated as non native-English speaker or NNEST) in MATESOL programs in the United States, Canada, and Australia. She finds that “(non)native” speaking ideology plays a prominent role in “nonnative” English speaker teachers’ identities but it operates in tandem with racializing and gendering ideologies, which then lead to emotionally charged acts of identity negotiation. Additionally, teachers’ transnational experiences require them to navigate the “academic identity clash” emerging because of the epistemological differences between “home” and “host” country’s educational contexts.

Further complexifying the ideology of native speakerism, Quanisha Charles’s narrative inquiry examines the role of race, ethnicity, and culture in the professional identities of two Black “native” English speaker teachers (NESTs) in South Korea. Drawing upon her participants’ (Jamie and Charles) narratives, Charles discusses the manifestations of privilege and marginalization based on the native/nonnative dichotomy and explicates how these two English language teaching (ELT) professionals bring their racial and cultural identities into their pedagogy to represent the diversity of English language communities. Feifei Fan and Ester de Jong examine the identity construction trajectory of their participant, Wan, a transnational Chinese-English bilingual teacher from China. Wan received formal preparation to teach Chinese to speakers of other languages in China, completed her master’s degree in English as a second language (ESL) at a college of education in the United States, started a Chinese teaching program, and ended up teaching Chinese at a language institute in Washington, D.C. Fan and De Jong’s narrative inquiry discusses Wan’s identity negotiation grappling with native speakerism and ideology-laden U.S. teacher certification structures. Including the problematization of similar ideologies, Nugrahenny Zacharias’s autoethnography investigates her transnational teacher identity trajectory by analyzing her classroom introductions. Her account spans three different teaching contexts in Indonesia and the United States, and demonstrates “the continuity and complexities of the dynamic nature of self-presentation” as she relies on her transnational identity in teaching to complexify the notions of native speakerism, nationality, and ethnicity.

Xuan Nhat Chi Mai Nguyen and Phung Dao designed a three-dimensional narrative space (interaction, continuity, situation) based on Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) work. In their contribution to this issue, they integrate this narrative activity into teacher education practices to support identity exploration of five teacher candidates in an Australian master’s degree program. Nguyen and Dao discuss the challenges encountered by transnational teacher candidates seeking membership in a new community of practice, and note that teacher candidates find the “story-telling sessions” powerful as they negotiate professional identities relative to linguistic identities, navigating and wrestling with ideologies of native speakerism. Another perspective on how to explicitly incorporate identity and...
narrative as teacher learning is Bedrettin Yazan’s study, which analyzes a teacher candidate’s semester-long authoring of her critical autoethnographic narrative (CAN). Yazan introduces CAN as a central teacher-learning activity designed to provide teacher candidates discursive space to “analyze their lived experiences to make sense of the intricate interplay between the personal and the cultural in their identity construction.” Yazan finds Sara discussing ideologies of accentism, linguicism, and native speakerism in her stories as she negotiates identity positions as a language learner, user, and teacher. Polina Vinogradova and Erin Haskell Ross bring the focus of identity into their professional development work with volunteer teachers in adult ESL programs who have received no initial teacher preparation. The authors facilitate these teachers’ learning and identity negotiation through three different reflective activities focused on the interplay between teacher identity and practice. Teachers engaging in such professional development sessions externalize their beliefs and values about teaching and learning based on their apprenticeship of observation and engage in guided identity work. Focusing on EL teachers’ identities in the PK-12 context, Shawna Shapiro and Miriam Ehtesham-Cating discuss advocacy for EL students as a significant aspect in EL teachers’ identities. The authors theorize the concepts of “aspiration, collaboration, and transparency” as part of a dynamic model to understand teacher advocacy as “ethical care” (Hos, 2014).

In their shared narrative inquiry, Megan Madigan Peercy, Judy Sharkey, Laura Baecher, Suhanthie Motha, and Manka Varghese argue for reliance on critical self-reflexivity to analyze intersections of social identities and pedagogies of teacher education. Their article interweaves the discussion of each author’s (social and professional) identity negotiation in their work preparing teachers to work with culturally and linguistically minoritized students. The authors explicate how their identities are variably influenced by the dominant domesticating discourses in their sociopolitical contexts. Blanca Caldas’s teacher education practices address some of these same discourses by creating a translanguaging space, integrating drama-based pedagogies, and discussing language ideologies about bilingualism and bilingual education. Mexican-American/Latinx bilingual teacher candidates in her study “engaged in the contradiction of existing language orientations” and negotiated their identities and future professional practices in relation to these language ideologies. Such professional practices in action are also examined in Hayriye Kayi-Aydar and Curtis Green-Eneix’s study. The authors explore teacher and student identities through the implementation of translanguaging pedagogy in the classroom practices of Mr. Armendarez, a practicing music teacher who “perceived himself as a TESOL professional.” They discuss how Mr. Armendarez constructs identities for himself and for his students as his translanguage Mariachi classroom resists, questions, and subverts the “hegemonic language ideologies” regarding uses of Spanish and English in the U.S. public school context. In a different socioeducational and sociocultural context, Anne Feryok and Rouhollah Askaribigdeli look at an English language teacher’s identities within a conceptual framework that combines situated activity systems (Engeström, 2015) with the concept of organizational commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) and Gee’s (2000/2001) work on identity and discourse. Their case study specifically explores the ways in which Mona, “a novice Iranian woman teacher of ESOL in a private language institute in Iran,” negotiates and transforms her identities as she navigates and resolves the contradictions that have emerged in her experiences teaching English.

In closing, we reiterate that we thoroughly enjoyed curating this diverse array of manuscripts by talented scholars and practitioners, and hope that the TESOL Journal readership does as well. We remain truly grateful to all manuscript reviewers and TJ editorial staff for the support and guidance that made this special issue possible, and we look forward to the ways in which the studies in this issue will further scholarly conversations on identity, discourse, and ideology in teachers’ and teacher educators’ classroom pedagogies.
REFERENCES


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