

Exploring the Construction of Professional Selves of Non-native EFL Teachers at a Saudi Arabian University

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the factors that develop the professional identity of Pakistani English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Saudi Arabia. This study is unique in the sense that there has been hardly any systematic investigation that has considered the professional identity of Pakistani EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. This study has two considerations: the way EFL teachers' selves evolve and the personal, professional, social and pedagogical factors constructing a teacher's professional identity. This study was conducted at the English Language Institute of Saudi Arabian University and the study employed a quantitative survey method. The quantitative data was collected from 41 Pakistani EFL teachers by using an online questionnaire. The findings from the research revealed that a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors develop the professional identity of Pakistani EFL teachers. Among these factors are the participants' pre-Saudi Arabia lives and the decision to become EFL teachers, the decision to come to Saudi Arabia, the impact of their overseas EFL experience, and the social influence on their own professional identity. Moreover, other factors that develop these teachers' professional identities are: being non-native, their views on continuing professional development (CPD), interaction with other EFL teachers, and their professional futures.

Key words: constructing teaching selves, NNEST, Pakistani EFL teachers, professional identity, Saudi EFL context

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Introduction

There has been a tremendous amount of research done on teachers' professional identity around the globe to explore the forces that shape the teachers' sense of self. Identity is a unique set of characteristics a particular individual possesses against the perceptions and characteristics of others (Pennington, 2015). Professional identity emerges out of social, cultural and personal discourses (Marsh, 2003,) and these discourses lead to a holistic professional identity construction. Furthermore, teacher professional identity development has attracted a good deal of research interest (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) as identity is a lens which reflects teachers' professional achievements and aspirations. The professional identity of an EFL teacher basically draws from extrinsic and intrinsic forces. Extrinsic forces are determined by external rewards whereas intrinsic factors reflect "personal desire" (Claeys, 2011, p. 4) for professional and identity development. Yet there is another altruistic factor, according to Claeys (2011), that influences identity shaping and reshaping and that is altruism which is defined as the tendency to serve society.

Teacher professional identity refers to the professional self of someone in his/her role as a teacher, as Pennington and Richards (2016) maintain that language teachers continue to develop the pedagogical skills as language teaching professionals as well as to construct their identity as language teachers. There is a burgeoning emphasis on teacher professional identity globally, with increasing focus on the development of teacher identity over the span of a career (Lamote & Engels, 2010). However, not enough attention has been paid to the ways a non-native EFL teacher's continued identity evolves beyond specific teacher professional development and the actual teaching-learning experience. Teachers of English tend to mostly explore ways to enhance their professional identity with the help of improving classroom practices and socio-cultural engagement which further improves their job efficacy and satisfaction. This view point is in line with the recent research conducted by Nguyen and Bui (2016) which contends that in search of identity, English language teachers undertake different pursuits which cross the boundaries of their typical classrooms.

Due to the rapid growth and expansion of English language worldwide, EFL teachers have become globetrotters in the pursuit of better teaching opportunities as well as enhancing their travelling experience. As a result, the teachers of English from the outer circle (Kachru, 1986) along with those of the inner circle have been serving the English language since the onset of globalization. Similarly the number of expatriate EFL teachers from different nationalities around the globe is growing rapidly in Saudi Arabia, like in other parts of the world. Even though the teacher self-construction has gained importance in the literature on teacher self and identity development, the EFL teachers in Saudi context have been ignored. This study will investigate how non-native EFL teachers at a Saudi Arabian public university perceive the formation of their professional identities and how various intrinsic and extrinsic factors have led them to develop their professional identities over their career. As teachers' professional identity is a critical component of their identification, the teachers need to be aware of the multifaceted factors and their relationship among these factors. Thus this study will highlight the elements that influence the non-native EFL teachers' perceptions of their professional identities and will further provide guidelines for the novice and prospective teachers who envision their career in TESOL. Its distinct contribution to the field comes from the fact that there is hardly any research on EFL teachers' identity in Saudi Arabia and particularly studies pertaining to EFL teachers' identity development.

Also, the results of this research may be useful for administrative decisions regarding educational policies and the training of EFL practitioners. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will also contribute to the general understanding of what it is like to be an EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia where teachers face multiple socio-cultural challenges and how they cope with them.

This research intends to contribute to the discussion on how EFL teachers' identities are developed. The aim of the research is to widen the existing knowledge of the influence of personal, social, and professional factors on the teacher's self. This study aims to answer the following question:

What factors develop the professional identity of non-native EFL teachers at a Saudi Arabian public university?

Literature Review

The nature of identity

Identity researchers have used different theoretical positions such as psycho-social, socio-cultural, structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives to explore identity, and have focused on various facets of identity such as social identity, cultural identity, gender identity and professional identity, etc. For the purposes of this research, the working definition of "identity" is "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5).

Wenger (1998) argues that identity construction is a mutual engagement and shared repertoire. Identity is not fixed or static, but can comprise a broad set of attitudes, knowledge and practices (Henkel, 2000). According to Wenger (1998) there are five dimensions of identity: a) identity as negotiated experience: where individuals define themselves as who they are by way of participation and by the way they and others reify themselves; b) identity as community membership: where we define who we are by the familiar and unfamiliar; c) identity as learning trajectory: where we explore where we are and where we are going; d) identity as a nexus of multiple membership: where we reconcile diverse forms of identity into one identity, and e) identity as a relation between the local and the global: where we become part of the greater whole and manifest greater styles and discourses.

Professional Identity

Hooley (2007) defines a professional as a person who has completed a program of "rigorous initial preparation involving specialized knowledge as decided by the profession, and who has been approved by the profession as a registered practitioner with the right to exercise autonomous, professional judgment" (p. 50). Professional identity is the result of a process that facilitates individuals to achieve an understanding of their profession in conjunction with their own self-image enabling them to act their role, philosophy and approach to others within and outside their own selected field (Brott & Myers, 1999; Smith & Robinson, 1995). Thus professional identity is strictly related to profession and professionals.

In Henkel's (2000) view, institutions provide a strong source of reification of a professional. Reification is the process by which a definitive value is ascribed to an abstract idea

such as identity. However, Talburt (2000) argues that disciplinary communities within institutions are not always neutral and stable and that while academics may be at the center of their discipline, in reality they play only a marginal role because of the identity that is imposed on him. Taking the similar idea further, Tsui (2007) asserts that the 'legitimacy of access to practice' is influenced by the power relationship within a community. He argues that there are two major sources of identity formation: the individual spots that his/her competence is valued in a specific community; and the individual is given the legitimacy of access to practice.

Teacher identity

According to Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink & Hofman (2012) teachers' professional identity is "how teachers see themselves as teachers is based on their continuing interaction with their context"(p. 116). Similarly, Coldron and Smith (1999) observed the tension in the formation of teachers' identity maintaining that teachers' identity was partly given and partly achieved by active social location. In addition to the context and social location, Beijaard and Verloop (2000) contend that teachers' professional identity is a combination of teachers' distinct expertise such as subject matter, didactical and pedagogical. Therefore, teachers' identity formation lies in the reconciliation of competing social and academic arenas. Moreover, along with contextual, biographical and cultural factors, the teachers' sense of their professional identity, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, professional commitment and the level of motivation shape and reshape teachers' professional selves (Canrinus et al., 2012).

Negotiation of identity is also an important part of the teachers' identity formation process; however, according to Tsui (2007) identification and negotiability may come into conflict with each other. These conflicts either lead to new forms of engagement where an individual gets ready to perform a different role and own new meaning or to marginality and thus disengagement. Sometimes the teachers are not autonomous to the point where they can build their identities on the basis of their wishes and values. Henkel (2000) believes that educational policies are heavily structured around assessment which leads to a false distinction between good and bad practitioners. Echoing the same idea, Shah & Harthi, (2014) argued that EFL teachers at a Saudi Arabian university often face enormous challenges due to institutional policies such as the practice of classroom observation.

Teachers' professional identities consist of various aspects of expertise such as subject matter, didactical and pedagogical expertise. It is a widely accepted notion that mere knowledge of the subject matter is not enough as there are more complex realities like classroom management and facilitation of learning. Deep and full understanding of the subject matter coupled with a knowledge of many concepts and their relationships are expected from an efficient teacher (Calderhead, 1996). Though we can assume that classroom skills and practices can seem rather elementary, having sufficient competence and expertise make a teacher legitimate one, as Wenger (1998) asserts that "identity is an experience and a display of competence"(p. 152).

Practical and pragmatic aspects of teacher identity

There are a number of practical, pragmatic aspects that influence teacher identity. Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) identify the occupational status as one of the extrinsic factors that affect teachers' professional identity. The recognition and esteem teachers enjoy as professional is

counted as occupational status. However, the importance given to a teacher's contributions in an institution also adds to their sense of occupational sense of a teacher (Maslow, 1954). In addition, Muller, Alliaata and Benningh (2009) assert that teachers derive satisfaction from the higher social needs like self-esteem and social relations. When teachers get opportunities to be promoted to the leadership position, their practices are legitimized and give rise to a new teacher professional identity (Nicholson and Carroll, 2013). Nevertheless, studies have found that some people come to the teaching profession as a last resort career (Ejeh, 2009); as teaching particularly ESL/EFL teaching is not among the established careers. Also, according to Alnefaie (2016), teachers in Saudi Arabia do not participate in curriculum designing which is affecting their classroom practices. Keeping in view the teachers' vulnerabilities, therefore, the CfBT (1989) warns that by the age of forty five, very few EFL teachers are left in full engagement in their career. McKnight's (1992) results echo those of CfBT's when he says that due to lack of structure EFL/ESL teachers are faced with low morale and social status, high rate of attrition and are considered underclass even by their colleagues.

Non-native English language teachers' identity

The debate of native and nonnative English teacher is as old as the notion of teacher identity, but has gained prominence in the recent literature. Canagarajah (1999) points out that 80% of EFL teachers worldwide are non-native speakers of English. When native teachers and non-native teachers work at the same place, the non-native teachers have a feeling of inferiority due to having insufficient sense of English language proficiency and insufficient knowledge of the teaching practices prevailing in the Western EFL/ESL teaching context (Richards, 2008). He also maintains that these facts negatively affect the non-native teachers' performance and thus hampers their professional identity. Fichner and Chapman (2011) explain how foreign language teachers come into contact with multiple cultures and how the resultant cultural identity impacts their classroom practices. Kim (2011) proves how the self-esteem of EFL teachers affects their identity and how non-native teachers see themselves as compared to native teachers. Similarly, Demirezen (2007) points out the identity problems faced by nonnative teachers and how they build a different perspective about their identity as an EFL teacher. However, this view is being disputed by Velez-Rendon (2010) by suggesting that both native and non-native teachers could be effective provided they gain proper training. Li (2009) suggests that non-native EFL teachers are not considered inferior by the students as long as there are no communication issues between the teacher and the students. Medgyes (1992) suggests that non-native teachers are often more proficient in teaching methodologies than native teachers while Daif-Allah (2010) and Zughoul (2003) suggest they are often more qualified since they struggle to keep their jobs and to achieve this objective they get involved in professional development more than the later.

EFL teachers' professional identity

Numerous factors contribute to the identity development of EFL teachers: contextual factors, such as work places (Xu, 2013); policies (Varghese, 2006); intrinsic factors, such as motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009); agency (Gao, 2010) as well as conflicts and interactions between individual's multiple identities (Tsui, 2007). Kong (2013) identifies three comprehensive themes for the investigation of the experiences of TESOL professionals. These three themes define identity being: a) multiple, subject to conflict and change, b) closely linked to context, and c) connected to discourse and power relations. Firstly, identity being multiple and subject to conflict

and change refers to the view that vagaries of life, social complexities and geographic relocation might give an individual multiple identities (Kramsch, 1998). Moreover, the different needs of an individual fluctuate and may give rise to contradictions and inconsistencies (Miller, 2000). Secondly, identity being linked to context implies that identity is influenced by different contexts in different situations. Different social settings demand different use of language and might influence the types of identities an individual can have (Lee, 2003). EFL teachers as global careerists expand the horizons of their expertise in a foreign context, as the overseas experience gained help the expatriate workers to look at their professional career and identity from a broader angle (Nasholm, 2011). According to Johnston (1999) expatriate [EFL] teachers embrace diversity and seek out new voices and new cultural values. However, identity formation can become complex for EFL teachers when the English language is considered a threat to the established values of a particular society. For example, a segment of Saudi Arabian society seems to think that English leads to Westernization (Al-Haq & Smadi, 1996, as cited in Mahboob & Elyas, 2014).

Methodology

This study was conducted in the positivist paradigm which regards human behavior as passive and determined by external factors, as Al-Bargi and Shah (2013) notice that "positivist methodology is concerned with explaining relationships among various phenomena"(p. 255). Therefore, this study sought to dig down into the teachers' selves and ascertain the external and internal factors that impacted EFL teachers' professional identity.

Method

This study employed a quantitative data survey method in order to probe the identity of EFL teachers accurately and objectively. The quantitative method was used for two purposes: firstly, the measurement of the teachers' identity should be reliable, valid and generalizable (Cassell and Symon, 1994) when it predicts the causes and effects of various factors that construct teachers' identity; secondly, the subjectivity of judgment on part of the teachers should be eliminated or minimized (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996). In addition, in order for the survey questionnaire to be uniformly understood by the vast majority of the participants, the survey questionnaire was totally self-explanatory and not too time-consuming (Blair and Blair 2015).

The Research Context

The venue and context for this study is the English Language Institute (ELI) of Saudi university. The ELI provides general English language courses to over 13,000 students enrolled annually in its foundation year program. To cater for these high numbers, the ELI currently has over 600 male and female teachers from various nationalities across different campuses.

Participants

For this study, the participants were 50 Pakistani EFL teachers working at the ELI. After giving them the details about the study, they indicated their willingness to participate in the study. The responses were collected electronically. Prior to sending them the survey link, I called all the participants and informed them about this research project. Furthermore, all participants were male since the research was conducted at the male campus of the ELI. The vast majority of participants (n=22) were in the 35-44 age range.

Before sending out the questionnaire to participants, the questionnaire was pilot-tested for reliability. For the sake of anonymity and convenience, the questionnaire was delivered via SurveyMonkey. 41 respondents completed the questionnaire.

Method of data analysis

Survey questionnaire data was analyzed with the help of the Filter and Compare functions of SurveyMonkey that allows researchers to view and analyze the responses of individuals or groups of respondents. These data analysis functions of the SurveyMonkey enabled me to tabulate and cross-tabulate different factors of the questionnaire and find out the relationships among these factors. For example, how the overseas teaching experience of one age group was different than the other age group.

Results & Analysis

Respondents' pre-Saudi professional lives

The study shows clear evidence that the teacher identity of respondents was already being shaped before they arrived in Saudi Arabia. As illustrated in Figure 1, in terms of reasons for becoming an EFL teacher, over half the respondents (51%) indicated that they became English teachers due to their interest in the subject while less than a third (17%) indicated they used English language teaching as a vehicle to teach abroad. Similarly, 11% believed that they were left with no better career option. As indicated in figure 1, the respondents' reasons for wanting to work abroad were better salaries (34%), professional opportunities (21%) and better living standard (20%).

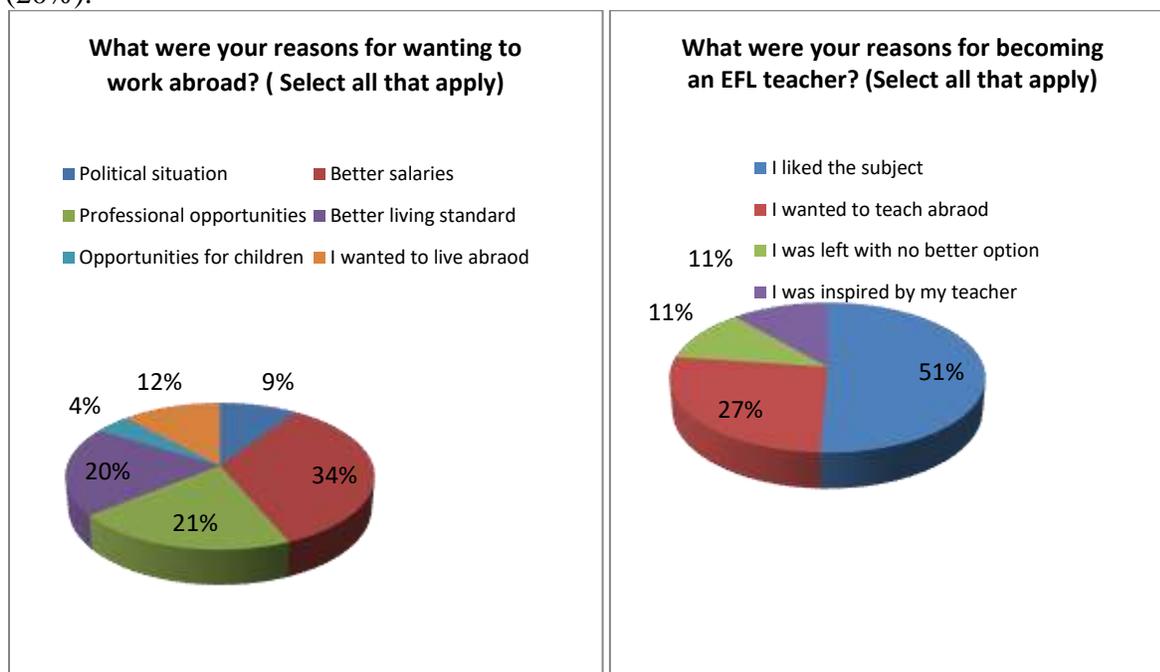


Figure.1. Reasons for becoming and EFL teacher and working abroad

Respondents' views of their overseas EFL experience and the development of their professional identity

The participants' years of service at the ELI have an impact on their views about their professional identities, as explained in Table1. The data seems to show that those with 5-9 years of experience at the ELI seem to more strongly agree with the statement than those with fewer years of experience.

Table1: Participants' length of time at ELI and their professional identity

Since joining ELI, I have grown in my professional identity.					
Answer Options	How long have you been teaching at ELI?			Response Percent	Response Count
	1-2 years	3-4 years	5-9 years		
Strongly Agree	3	1	9	31.7%	13
Agree	0	10	10	48.8%	20
Neutral	0	1	6	17.1%	7
Disagree	0	0	1	2.4%	1
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>					41

Respondents' views of the social influences on their own professional identity

The data in Figure2 show that opinions about whether EFL teachers have high social recognition seem to be quite diverse. While one third of the respondents were of the opinion that they were thought of highly by Saudi Arabian society, close to half indicated that they believed they were not respected.

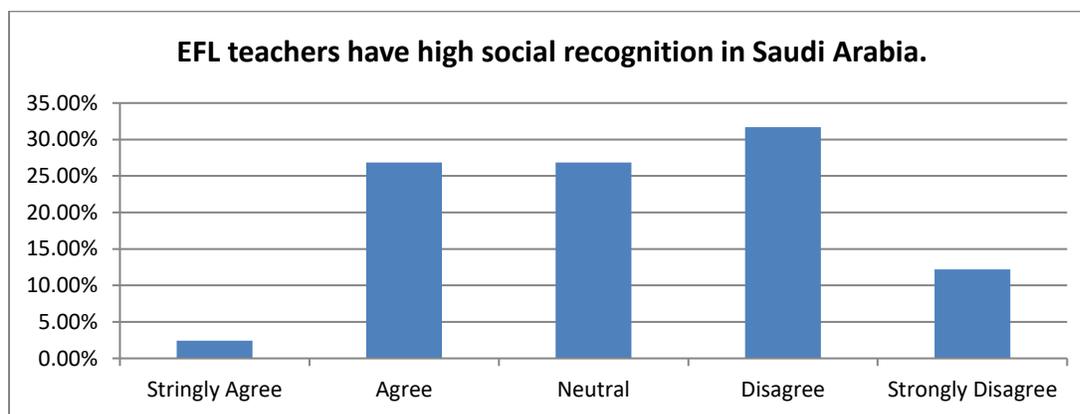


Figure.2: Respondents' views on their social status

Respondents' views of being non-native Pakistani EFL teachers

Almost half of the respondents perceive that their accented pronunciation and intonation influence their professional identity, as illuminated in Figure 3. However, more than one third of

the respondents believe that their accented pronunciation and intonation does not matter much.

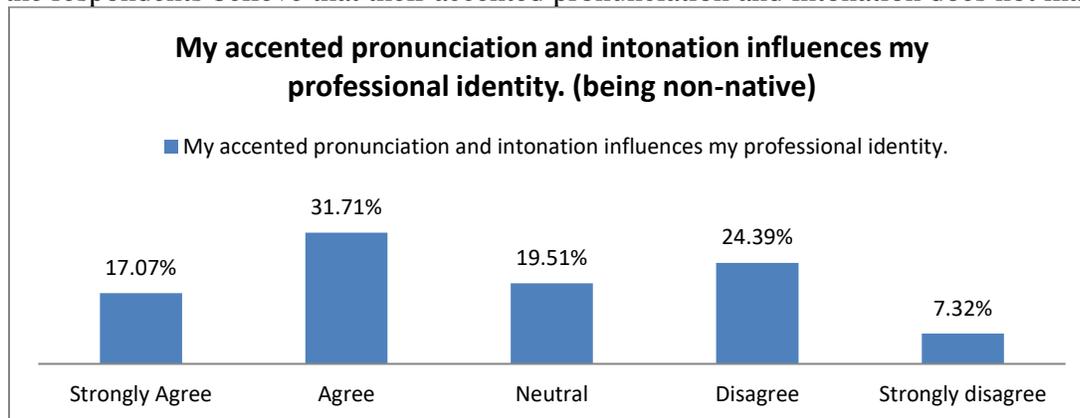


Figure.3: The influence of accented pronunciation and intonation on professional identity

Respondents' views of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities

As Figure 4 exhibits, participants deem professional development (PD) as a major component of their professional identity development. Also, the majority of the participants, as indicated in Figure 5, believe that the non-ELI PD is more beneficial than the ELI-sponsored PD.

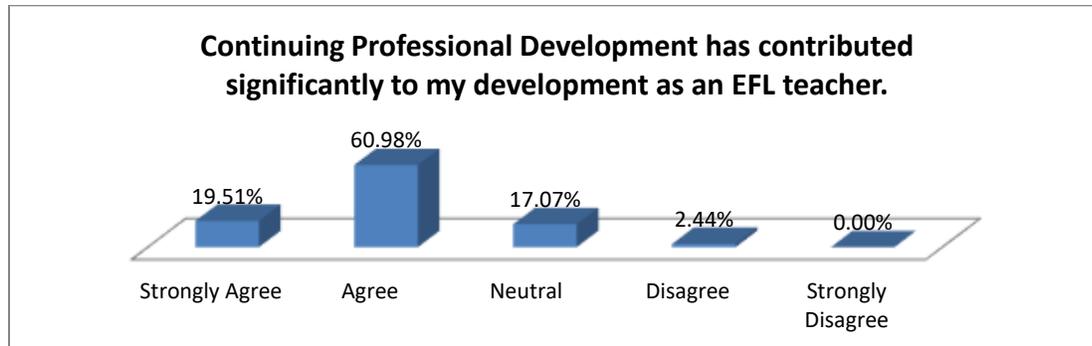


Figure.4: Participants' views on CPD

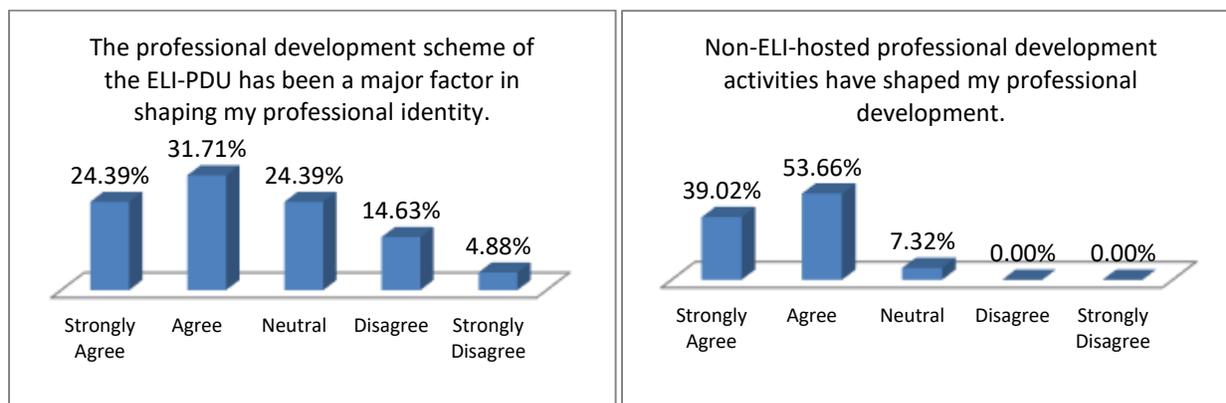


Figure.5: Participants' views of the ELI PDU scheme and Non-ELI PD activities

Respondents' views of the significance of interaction with other EFL teachers

The data in figure 6 seems to represent the pivotal importance of interaction. Almost all participants perceive collegial interaction with other EFL teachers as a very strong factor in their professional identity development.

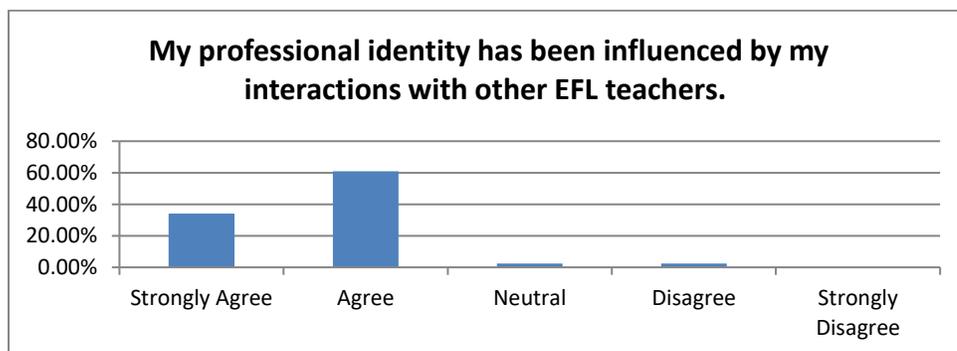


Figure.6: Interaction and professional identity

Interaction among EFL teachers with regards to their teaching has been valued by the vast majority of the participants, as illustrated in Figure 6. ELI administration has always encouraged the teachers and provided them different platforms to share their teaching techniques and classroom challenges with each other

Respondents' views of their professional futures

Future aspirations are a major determiner of their current professional practice. More than one third of the participants, as shown in Figure 7, aim to remain in teaching while more than half of the participants view their future careers as teacher trainers or administrators.

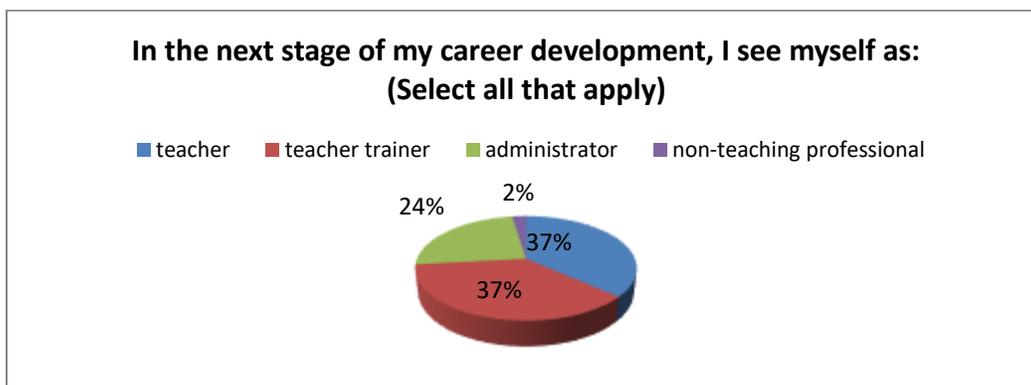


Figure.7: Next stage in the participants' career development

Discussion

Respondents' pre-Saudi Arabia professional lives

Teachers' knowledge and beliefs are worth studying as they help to understand who teachers are (Brookhart & Freeman 1992). This study examined a more specific demographic (EFL teachers at a major Saudi Arabian public university) than many of the more general earlier studies. Even studies situated in the Arabian Peninsula are generally broader in terms of the participants. This study tried to explore the teachers' reasons and motivations for becoming EFL teachers. According to Brookhart & Freeman (1992) there are three motives for selecting teaching as a career: extrinsic motives such as salaries; intrinsic motives as interest and intellectual fulfillment; and altruistic motives such as wanting to contribute to the society. This study found that the majority of the teachers' motives behind choosing the EFL career were intrinsic which means they had interest in the subject. The results agree with Watt and Richardson's (2007) study conducted on the teachers of three Australian universities which found that intrinsic desires were the highest rated motivations for becoming a teacher. Similar to the study by Özsoy, Özsoy, Özkara, and Memiş (2010) the majority of the participants chose teaching not as a fallback career, but it was their ideal to teach. However, in this study it was also found out that some teachers came to this profession accidentally as they had no better career option left. This is similar to Ejieh's (2009) study in which Nigerian students chose teaching as a last resort career. In a similar study conducted by Johnston (1997) and involving five expatriate and twelve local teachers, the teachers represented their entry into teaching as an accident rather than a *calling*.

EFL experience and the development of EFL teachers' professional identity

The vast majority of the respondents perceived their ELI experience, which was the first overseas experience for most of them, as valuable and a significant factor in the development of their professional identity. In other words, being expatriate EFL teachers added value to their experience and identity, as global careerists experience shifts in their identities development in the course of their careers (Nasholm, 2011). Defining their professional role as well as professional identities was made possible for them as expatriates, as Strubler, Park and Agarwal (2011) state that accurate perception of self and situation is a key factor of expatriate work experience. Similarly, Richardson and McKenna's (2002) findings suggest that professional experience earned abroad was valuable for expatriate workers. This finding is also supported by a study conducted

on Finnish expatriates by Suutari and Brewster (2003) who conclude that the participants' experience had a positive impact on their career development.

Social influences on EFL teachers' professional identity construction

The social status of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia has been a pressing issue and this study did not ignore it. In response to the question about whether EFL teachers have high social recognition in Saudi Arabia, the majority of respondents disagreed with the statement. The reason could be the attitude of the people towards the English language, as it is easy to see how professional identities become more complex for university teachers when the language they are teaching is considered the vessel for western ideologies; such is the case in Saudi Arabia (Reddy, 1979). Similarly, McKnight (1992) contended, "TESOL has no proper career structure and that ESL teachers suffer from low morale and low status"(p.30).

EFL teachers' selves as non-native speakers of English

The majority of the respondents agreed that their accented pronunciation and intonation influences their professional identity. Since having accented pronunciation and intonation is one of the key features of being a non-native EFL teacher (Kumagai, 2013), this question was meant to gauge the teachers' perception on their being non-native teachers in the institution. In fact, in Saudi Arabia native teachers have certain social and financial advantages over the non-native teachers; for instance, the native teachers draw better salaries than the non-native teachers. This finding seems to support Medgyes' (1992) that non-native English teachers possess a pedagogical advantage over the native English teachers because of the experiences of learning a language as a non-native speaker. In addition, Li (2009) explores in his study that the majority of the participants showed acceptance of their non-native accents, provided that comprehension is not impeded. The current study suggests that non-native teachers regard themselves as being more successful teachers than native speakers because they have far fewer job opportunities than the native teachers. As a result of these fewer opportunities, the non-native teachers take part in more professional development courses to improve their classroom delivery and enhance their job prospects. Although non-native teachers are not as competent language users as the native speakers, studies suggest that many native EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are less qualified than the non-native EFL teachers (Daif-Allah, 2010; Zughoul, 2003).

The impact of continuing professional development (CPD) on EFL teachers' identity formation

Zuheer (2013, p. 1) suggests that it is imperative for ESL teachers to have the courage, abilities and skills of dealing with the emerging issues in the field. Following this train of thought, Magno (2009) recommends that EFL practitioners need to be effective in: knowing how language is acquired, embracing strong beliefs about learning EFL, and improving attitudes towards the learning-teaching process. The majority of the respondents demonstrated that CPD has played a significant role in shaping their professional identity.

The level of satisfaction (56%) with the ELI PD scheme and the very high levels of satisfaction with non-ELI PD (92.7%) suggest that the non-ELI PD events have been more popular with the teachers than the ELI-provided PD activities. The participants indicated that the ELI-provided PD initiatives rarely addressed the real classroom issues. This finding agrees with Gilbert

and Gibbs's (1999) study which asserted that there is little evidence regarding the impact of institutional training on teaching and even less impact on the students' learning outcomes. However, this contradicts what Days and Sachs (2004) states that institution based CPD has emerged as an important feature of the educational reforms in different African and European countries. In contrast to the institutional CPD, the extra-institutional CPD such as taking courses like CELTA, DELTA, TESOL Certificate, etc., are considered the backbone of professional development in the Arab context (Shah, Hussain & Naseef, 2013). However, Khan (2011) disagrees with these findings and believes that the above mentioned courses are less effective in the Saudi EFL context because they do not match the contextual and professional demands of the teachers working in the Saudi context. Although CELTA is basically pre-service training in international contexts, in this context it is frequently considered in-service training.

Collegial interactions and teachers' identity

Social interaction is a key principle of the identity formation. EFL teachers' interaction with other EFL teachers, students and administrators reinforces their notion of being teachers and becoming teachers. In this study, almost all the participants believed that their professional identities have been influenced by their interaction with other EFL teachers. The discussion groups are similar to the concept of communities of practice which are "groups of people who share a problem, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis" (Wenger, McDermott, & Synder 2002, p. 4). According to Wenger (2008) "collective learning' takes place in a kind of community by sustained pursuit of shared enterprise" (p. 45). However, for some participants who happened to have more than 10 years of EFL experience the discussions were not productive. This conforms to Hodkinson and Hodkinson's (2004) critique about the communities of practice being less effective for the more experienced teachers.

EFL teachers and their future selves

This study also explored how the respondents perceived their future role, whether they intended to stay in the teaching or looked forward to attain administrative or teacher trainer positions. While the participants indicated that the respondents would like to be EFL teachers; however, some participants perceive their future selves as administrators or teacher trainers. This suggests that the leadership repertoire helped the participants engage in an endeavor of undoing their previous professional identities (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013) which ultimately led to the reshaping of new professional identities.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that most of the participants became EFL teachers because they liked English language and English language teaching. It was also found out that some teachers entered into this profession accidentally or chose the teaching career as a last resort. Furthermore, for many of the teachers, their overseas teaching experience gave them a chance to gauge their EFL teaching performance and professional development. The majority of them focused on their professional development endeavors on getting trained in EFL to international standards and developed their professional identity on these newly defined pathways.

Another important finding of this study is that generally EFL teachers do not seem to have a high social recognition in Saudi Arabia which affects the professional identity of the teachers. In other words, EFL teachers do not have the privilege of enjoying a high social recognition in the country. Also, the dichotomy between the native EFL teachers and non-native EFL teachers did not elude the Pakistani EFL teachers' perceptions about their professional identity. Even when they are less-qualified and lower-ranked according to the institution, native English speaking teachers enjoy a better social and financial position at the ELI.

The findings of this paper also affirm that the vast majority of the Pakistani EFL teachers at the ELI embarked on the rigorous professional development. Also, the teachers indicated that the non-ELI professional development activities were considered more helpful than the internal ELI professional development activities. Also, interaction with other EFL teachers at the institution was considered a source of enlightenment and professional development.

Finally this study explored the teachers' future ambitions and future status in Saudi Arabia and in Pakistan. Some participants aspired to be teacher trainers or administrators in the future rather than teachers because being a trainer or administrator provides opportunities to look at the profession from a managerial point of view and provides an opportunity for the individual to further reshape their professional identity.

Implications

1. This study about the EFL teachers' professional identities has implications for in-service EFL Pakistani teachers already serving in Saudi Arabia. The Pakistani EFL teachers should steer their professional development efforts according to their future intentions. In other words, if they plan to return to Pakistan, they should engage in the academic pursuits which will increase their employability chances in Pakistan. For instance, in this study, those teachers who are currently enrolled in PhD programs visualize a better future in Pakistan than those who did CELTA, DELTA or similar courses for the requirements of the context.
2. This study also explored that teaching is a low paid profession as compared to other professions such as medicine and engineering in developing countries including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Those graduates or undergraduates who are pursuing their degrees in English language and/or literature with the intention of becoming EFL/ESL teachers should know that to become a teacher requires intrinsic or altruistic motives more so than the mastery of the subject matter. Studies indicate that prospective teachers are idealistic about their future career prior to entering their professions (Martin, Chiodo, & Chang, 2001). Therefore, good occupational choice depends on individuals' accurate self-knowledge as well as accurate occupational knowledge (Holland, 1959). Furthermore, those individuals from Pakistan who seek EFL employment in Saudi Arabia, should be aware that EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are, no doubt, financially better off than their counterparts in Pakistan but the financial betterment is at the cost of professional or academic growth which will lead to their lower job opportunities when they repatriate after a certain period of time.
3. This study has also implications for teacher educators. The CPD courses should focus considerably on beliefs, values and teachers' identities, as when a richer understanding of language teachers' selves and their emotions is fostered, an opportunity is created for richer

training. Also, the EFL teachers should be made aware of the socio-cultural norms of the intended teaching context and the beliefs of that society about English teaching and EFL teachers. This would better shape the decisions of the teachers where to teach and where not to teach.

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