

Editorial

Although identity-based research has a long tradition in the field of education, it is only the past two decades that have yielded an increasing strand of publications among applied linguists. Journal articles (including those in two special issues of *TESOL Quarterly*, 2016 and *Modern Language Journal*, 2017), book chapters (e.g., Clarke, 2018; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2017), edited books (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2017, Cheung, Ben Said & Park, 2015; Kalaja, Barcelos, Aro, & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2016; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018); monographs (e.g., Block, 2007; Ciepiela, 2013; Clarke, 2008; Deters, 2011; Gray & Morton, 2018; Kiernan, 2010; Menard-Warwick, 2014; Nagatomo, 2012; Nagatomo, 2016; Norton, 2013; Werbińska, 2017) have been acknowledged to such a degree in the field of language teacher education that language teacher identity has become a separate area of study. Researchers have looked at teacher identity in terms of teachers' own viewpoints and others' recognitions of them (Gee, 2001), teachers' stories about their teaching lives (e.g., Alsup, 2006), their communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), positionality (e.g., Ciepiela, 2013; Gray & Morton, 2018), native-speakerism (e.g., Park, 2017), race and/or ethnicity (e.g., Deters, 2011), mobility (e.g., Arber, Blackmore, & Vongalis-Macrow, 2014), content and language integrated learning (CLIL) (e.g., Morton, 2016), gender (e.g., Nagatomo, 2012, 2016), spirituality (e.g., Wong & Mahboob, 2018), sexuality (e.g., Nelson, 2016), etc. All this research is important because teacher identity provides the basis for teachers' decisions, their meaning making and information about who they are, who they are not, and/or who they could still become. Therefore, the significance of the topic was the major decision why this special themed issue of *Konin Language Studies* is devoted to language teacher identity.

Despite different conceptualizations of teacher identity, there seems to be agreement about its main characteristics: (1) teacher identity is socially constructed, (2) teacher identity is constantly being shaped and reshaped, (3) teacher identity consists of many interrelated sub-identities, and (4) teacher

identity is blurred, elusive and often confusing. These characteristics make it challenging to offer one overarching definition of teacher identity. Despite this, the study of teacher identity prospers and new territories are being discovered.

The aim of this special issue is to showcase some of these “territories” presented in a set of five articles investigating language teacher identity. The first article by Joanna Rokita-Jaśkow is of theoretical nature and discusses language teacher emotions. Drawing on the 3A Language Teacher identity Framework (LTIF) (Werbińska, 2017), the author cogently argues for more stability in the teaching profession if quality teaching is to be pursued. This contribution may somewhat clarify the ground for the whole collection, but also sets a new tone, as its value lies in the author’s call for teacher emotions to be considered in any frameworks on teacher identity. Rokita-Jaśkow also draws readers’ attention to language teacher resilience and vulnerability, both of which have not been much discussed in TESOL literature so far.

The next three articles deal with staking out new teacher identity territories in the context of university teacher education programs. Melanie Ellis’s contribution provides an example of new research opportunities for constructing teacher identity in computer-mediated asynchronous online forum discussions in one MA class on EFL teaching methodology. This article illustrates the potential for using multimodal approaches in learning to become a teacher and offers a realistic proposal for ways this could be achieved. Evidence was found that most teacher-learners participating in this class seemed to perceive themselves as teachers.

The subsequent article by Iwona Dronia and Aleksandra Szymańska-Tworek concerns multiple identities displayed by English majors (both full-time and extramural) doing an MA course, most of whom are already working as English teachers. On the basis of a quantitative study aimed at investigating the participants’ construction of multiple identities (personal identities, teacher identities, language teacher identities, student identities), the authors find that playing multiple roles, or “skill flexibility”, as they call it, results in more drawbacks than benefits. This contribution may pose a number of questions that could be worth further investigation. The differences in attitudes to English teaching offered by full-time students who are inexperienced, yet enthusiastic, and extramural students who are more experienced teachers but focused on control, the sense of studying teaching and working as teachers at the same time, or the general optimism and positive self-esteem exhibited by practicing teachers who are simultaneously losing patience and enthusiasm in the language classroom, are only some of the cases in point.

In contrast to Ellis’s and Dronia and Szymańska-Tworek’s studies conducted on teacher identities in the Polish context, Oleksandr Kapranov’s study refers to the preparation of future teachers at a Norwegian university. His

contribution focuses on primary school teacher candidates' framing the identities of teachers of English as a foreign language which is compared with the framing of teacher identities offered by a control group of non-teacher students from the same university. The novelty of Karpanov's research project is, as the author claims, twofold: (1) the study uses reflective essays as a qualitative instrument to investigate the identity of the primary school teacher in the Norwegian context, and (2) the study applies the framing analysis to a corpus of reflective essays produced by the participants on the topic of teacher identity.

Finally, the article by Işıl Erduyan, Dorota Werbińska, Burçak Yılmaz Yakışık, Luis Guerra and Małgorzata Ekiert, a group of researchers from Turkey, Poland and Portugal, is a contribution on language teacher identity mediated by teacher mobility. Remembering that mobility is what Blommaert (2014) considers a key term which captures the shift from the local to the global, or from the stable to the changeable, teacher mobility may also stand for a shift from belonging to displacement, or even from the past to the future, as thanks to new encounters and cultural experiences, teacher identities are reconstructed and redefined. In short, the article draws attention to in-service language teacher transnational mobility and the impact this has had on teacher identities of the participants. This last article focuses on in-service language teachers who have been far less frequently investigated in term of identity than pre-service teachers.

Overall, the intention of this special issue was through a set of articles to reflect upon how the construct of language teacher identity can be conceptualized and studied, and produce a clearer picture of who and what a language teacher is. The discussions in these contributions are by no means sufficient to consider all aspects involved with language teacher identity. Yet, it is hoped that the topics raised here will become an inspiration, and suggest new lines of enquiry which may be useful for future research on language teacher identity.

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