



Second Language Teacher Identities of International MSc TESOL Students in a UK University

Ammar Tekin*



Moray House School of Education and Sport, the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK

Article Info

DOI: 10.14812/cufej.540115

Article history:

Received 14.03.2019

Revised 15.04.2019

Accepted 17.10.2019

Keywords:

Teacher identity,
Second language teacher
education,
Language teacher agency,
Communities of Practice.

Abstract

Teacher identity studies are now an important part of second language teacher education research, following the sociocultural turn in the 1990s. Second language teaching continues its development as a research area on its own and exploration of teacher identity comprises a substantial research field, from many aspects. How international post-graduate students adapt to educational settings is considered to be important for their academic development. Accordingly, this current study explores the second language teacher identity constructions of six international MSc TESOL students at a United Kingdom University, by means of semi-structured interviews with a qualitative interpretative approach. The findings indicate that, although they first go through a learning shock and difficulties in adapting to the academic environment, the student teachers accommodate well into the collegiate setting. They make valuable comparisons between their lives and studies in the UK and their own contexts. It can also be seen that they consider themselves more theoretically equipped for their future teaching careers.

Bir Büyük Britanya Üniversitesinin Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programı Uluslararası Öğrencilerinin Öğretmen Kimlikleri

Makale Bilgisi

DOI: 10.14812/cufej.540115

Makale Geçmişi:

Geliş 14.03.2019

Düzeltilme 15.04.2019

Kabul 17.10.2019

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Öğretmen kimliği,
Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce
öğretimi,
Yabancı dil öğretmen iradesi,
Uygulama toplulukları.

Öz

Öğretmen kimliği çalışmaları, 1990lardaki sosyokültürel dönüşümle birlikte yabancı dil öğretimi araştırmalarının önemli bir kısmı haline gelmiştir. Yabancı dil öğretimi müstakil bir araştırma alanı olarak gelişimini sürdürmekte ve öğretmen kimliği çalışmaları da birçok yönden önemli bilimsel araştırmalara konu olmaktadır. Uluslararası lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eğitim ortamlarına nasıl uyum sağlayacakları akademik gelişimleri için önemli sayılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, mevcut çalışma Birleşik Krallık'ta Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programı'nda öğrenim gören altı uluslararası öğrencinin öğretmen kimliği inşalarını yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat yöntemiyle niteliksel olarak incelemektedir. Bulgular her ne kadar öğrenci-öğretmenlerin ilk başta bir öğrenme şoku ve üniversite çevrelerine uyum sağlamada sorunlar yaşasalar da, akademik ortamlarına iyi uyum sağladıklarını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar, kendi ülkeleriyle Büyük Britanya'daki yaşamları ve çalışmaları arasında değerli karşılaştırmalar yapmakta ve gelecekteki meslek yaşamları için kendilerini teorik olarak daha donanımlı gördüklerini belirtmektedirler.

Introduction

This interpretative research originates from my educational sojourn in the United Kingdom (UK) where I stayed for a year for a master's of science (MSc) study at a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program as an experienced teacher of English, yet a novice international postgraduate student. Quite naturally, as a teacher of English who had never been to the UK before, let alone studying, there were differences that I observed in the country. These differences were not only

* Author: ammartekin@gmail.com

visible in everyday culture but also in the educational setting. I wanted to explore how my colleagues, who are teachers of English like me, reflect on their experiences of coming from different international backgrounds to a Western, an inner circle country* (Kachru, 1992). This study is part of a larger qualitative study, my unpublished master's dissertation.

Teacher identity research is a developing field since the early 1990s (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Yet, before delving into deeper, it could be helpful to explore the reasons behind the focus into identities of teachers first. Accordingly, it is possible to claim that closer attention into identities of teachers is the result of a broader sociocultural turn in education in the last few decades of the 20th century. (Johnson, 2006). Especially after the 1980s, "increasing attention was given to the person of teacher" (Johnson, 2009, p.13), with a shift from taking teaching as a solely procedural, technical issue to viewing it as a situated and social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Since then, there have been more attempts to understand the teacher as it was not just about delivering some information and teacher acquiring it or not anymore, but rather accepting the teacher as a complex social being who is unique with individual differences (Burns & Richards, 2009).

Although it is very difficult to say that there is a consensus on the definition of identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), certain characteristics of identity with a sociocultural lens could be defined as "the 'kind of person' one is recognised as 'being' at a given time and place [that] can change from moment to moment in varied interactions, can change from context to context and, of course, can be ambiguous or unstable" (Gee, 2000, p. 99). Here, it is essential not to take identity as a deterministic concept, or a finished product, but an ongoing process.

In a similar vein, Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) define the four features of teacher identity in their review study. Accordingly, professional identities of teachers is; (1) an ongoing construction and reconstruction, (2) involving not just the person but also the context, (3) consisting of sub-identities, which more or less harmonise and (4) with agency as an essential part of identity construction, which means that teachers should be active agents of the professional development process. Teacher identity studies within second language teacher education echo this perspective. When it comes to the second language teacher identities research, Varghese et al. (2005, p. 35) highlight that there are three leading discussions within the field: "Identity as multiple, shifting, and in conflict; identity as crucially related to social, cultural, and political context; and identity being constructed, maintained, and negotiated primarily through discourse". Among these, this study focuses on the multiple, shifting and in conflict aspects of second language teacher identities.

When similar studies are examined, it is not difficult to notice that there are only a few studies on the identities of international teachers of English. Pavlenko (2003) compares non-native English speaking language teachers with their native peers, who are all enrolled in an MA TESOL program at an American university. Her research shows that, although the students previously group themselves into two main camps as native and non-native before the program starts, when they are provided with an alternative imagined community of multi-competent speakers of two or more languages, their identities positively shift from being failed native speakers of English to legitimate second language users (Pavlenko, 2003). Golombek and Jordan (2005) work with two Taiwanese MA TESOL student teachers in another American university and reach similar results. Having multiple and conflicting identities regarding their linguistic proficiencies at the beginning, the student teachers' ideas about native speakerism and the whiteness associated with it changes after taking courses that challenge their situated ideas. Tsui (2007) explores the professional identity development of a Chinese EFL teacher for six years in a longitudinal case study with a narrative inquiry approach. Based on Wenger's (1998) social theory of identity formation, the research is insightful, in terms of showing the teacher's struggle with multiple identities throughout the period first as an English learner, then a teacher of English and finally a non-native postgraduate student. Cho (2013) examines three Korean MA TESOL students in the US and

* Kachru (1992) divides the world into three circles in terms of the spread of English: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle. The inner circle is where English spoken as a first language and consists of UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

their disciplinary enculturation experiences. Focusing on social participation influencing academic engagement, the study reveals that non-native student teachers participate in different modes, by negotiating their new social identities in their academic communities of practice. Multiple factors affect their identification, including supportive networks and institutional support. In her longitudinal narrative study, Ortactepe (2015) identifies two Turkish EFL teachers' language socialisation as PhD students in the US, the result of which is an identity reconstruct. She states that both of the participants reflect on their three identities as experienced EFL teachers, L2 users and prospering scholars. In studying the experiences of Asian women, Park (2012) focuses on one of her participants and explores her trajectory as a Chinese MEd TESOL student. Her study reveals that what the student goes through in China is quite different from her experience in the US. These academic and professional experiences initially cause disconnectedness, but she eventually transforms herself and embraces her nonnative speaker identity.

This study is hoped to bring a fresh perspective into the area by including participants from different parts of the world and also focusing on more experienced student teachers, with different expectations than novice ones, as for whom, dealing with tension of starting a career and classroom management stand out as primary concerns (Alsup, 2006).

Within this scope, the study aims to answer the research question below:

- *How do international MSc TESOL students at a UK university (re)construct their second language teacher identities during their study transition?*

Method

The study aims to seek the perceptions of the participants about a one-year period of study through their own reflections on their experiences. Therefore, I adopt an interpretative qualitative research design (Gray, 2014). I collected the data via semi-structured interviews with six participants, which enabled me to achieve thick descriptions of the interviewees' provisional experiences and perceptions (Thomas, 2013). For the interviews, I prepared a dozen questions in hand and asked these questions to all six interviewees. In addition, however, taking advantage of conducting a semi-structured interview, I came up with different questions for each interviewee during the interview process (Bryman, 2012). It was not difficult for me to come up with tailored questions for each person, as I had known all of the participants beforehand, who were my fellow MSc TESOL student-friends. That is why, it was not an issue to build a rapport with them, as an established rapport was already there before the interviews. Having gone through similar experiences myself was also helpful for the interview question design process.

The six participants of the study were chosen with purposive sampling, as I identified them suitable candidates for the study with their international origins and teaching experiences (Patton, 1990). I now introduce the participants respectively, with their pseudonyms. Ayse is a female Turkish. She is in her late twenties and she has four years of teaching experience. She had never studied or worked abroad before coming to the UK. Chen is a female Chinese. She is in her early thirties with five years of teaching experience. This is not her first abroad experience as she lived in the United States for a year, where she worked as a language assistant with Fulbright Scholarship. Bulan is a female from Indonesia. She is in her mid-twenties with four years of teaching experience. This is not her first abroad experience either, as, like Chen, she lived in the US for a year, with the same scholarship. Karim is the second Indonesian of the study and the only male participant. He is in his early twenties, with four years of teaching experience. This was his first time abroad for any purposes, including holidays. Laura is the most experienced teacher among the interviewees, with seven years of teaching experience. She is a female from Brazil, in her early thirties, who lived in the United States for a year and worked as a language assistant with the Fulbright Scholarship, like Bulan and Chen. Finally, Sophia is a female from Greece, in her early twenties, with two years of teaching experience. This is not her first working experience abroad, as she taught English in Spain for a few months before coming to the UK for her postgraduate study. As clearly seen, there are participants from different parts of the world, with varying teaching and

living abroad experiences. This variation helped me to make comparisons and identify the differences as well as the similarities among the participants.

The interviews took around forty-five minutes to one hour each and they were conducted in the university library, in quieter study rooms where there were not any disruptions. In addition to informing the participants about the course of the research and providing them with the research questions in advance, I also asked the participants to sign a consent form at the beginning of the interviews, as well as underlining their rights to withdraw at any time during the process of the study (Thomas, 2013). I then transcribed the interview data verbatim (Patton, 1990), which is analysed via the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In aligning with Braun and Clarke's (2006) description, six steps of thematic analysis were followed. Namely, I first familiarised myself with the data by listening to audio-recordings and thinking of initial analytic observations. Secondly, I generated the primary codes by labelling and sorting codes and data extracts. After searching for themes, I collated the data with the identified themes. The themes were then reviewed to determine patterns, by replacing and reviewing. Prior to writing the analysis, I defined and named the themes and arranged them to tell a meaningful story before finally writing it up. Although I did not use a priori coding and the themes emerged from the data, I later searched for similar studies in the literature once more, to see if there are any. To give an example, identifying that what the participants went through was a learning shock, rather than a culture shock was something emerged from their accounts. However, I went through the literature again and it was only then I found a similar study from Gu and Maley (2008), who appropriately defined it in the same way. Therefore, I quoted them, too.

Reliability and validity are disregarded for the research, as it is a qualitative one, and, therefore, my main concern was the quality of the study (Thomas, 2013). In terms of the quality of the research, what I have taken into account at every step of the study was the rigour. As suggested by Flick (2007), rigour is a comprehensive process that encompasses the design, the implementation and the writing up of the research. While designing the research, I paid utmost attention to read extensive literature on language teacher identity in both Western and international contexts. It helped me to understand the field better as well as shaping my methodological choices. When it comes to the implementation, I aimed to apply the most suitable framework that would enable me to explore the phenomenon in a comprehensible way while being manageable and applicable in the short period allocated in the UK for the master dissertation. After deciding on the methodology, data collection and analysis methods, as could be seen in the appendix, I asked a wide range of interview questions with an aim to understand the participants in a more comprehensible and holistic way. Asking consistently similar questions to all participants while coming up with tailored questions for each was part of these rigorous efforts. Coming up with codes and themes, and then narrowing them down to three was the second phase of the methodological rigour. Yet, as a methodological limitation, it was not possible to conduct longitudinal research with several interviews throughout the year, which would have provided richer and more holistic data, resulting in a better and more overall understanding of participants' identity constructions.

Findings

Pennington and Richards (2016) determine five foundational competence of language teacher identity. First, a language teacher's identity is related to his/her language background and proficiency. The participants of this study are second language users of English, like the majority in the profession, who learn English as a second language before they teach (Matsuda & Matsuda, 2001). Therefore, how international teachers of English in this study reconstruct their identities professionally during their studies is related to their 'changing' self-perceptions in terms of their language competencies, especially with the reflections they make about their time and experiences in the UK. Second, a language teacher's identity is related to his/her disciplinary knowledge. As experienced teachers of English, the participants in the study choose to come to the UK for further expertise in the area. They discuss the changes in their knowledge in the field and the effects it has on their identities. Next is the context-related identities. Different contexts may have positive or negative effects on language teachers' identities. The participants in the study evaluate their changing contexts and the possible ways to apply what they have

learned in the UK into their own settings. The fourth competence is self-knowledge and awareness. Not just having a self-awareness already, but also learning ways to constantly reflect on themselves professionally during this study transition is quite helpful for teacher identities of the participants. Lastly, a language teacher's identity is related to competence in student knowledge and awareness. Having more experiences in teaching along the years as well as choosing to come to study in a postgraduate setting and experiencing different ways for learning and teaching have affected the language teacher identities of the participants in this study.

Based on Pennington and Richard's (2016) identity competences, the themes emerging from the analysis of the qualitative interview data are as follows: in the first subheading, 'Different Origins, Similar Answers'; I focus on the structural influences on their choices to become a language teacher in the first place. It is quite interesting to observe interwoven patterns among student teachers from different parts of the world. Then, in 'It was a Learning Shock More than a Culture Shock', I explore their experiences in the UK deeply and track the identity reconstruction possibilities it brings for them. Last but not least, in the final theme, 'Transforming Teacher Agency', I examine the reciprocal relationship between teacher identity and teacher agency. By looking at teacher agency from the language teacher and the language learner perspectives, a comprehensive understanding of the participants' language teacher identities becomes possible.

Different Origins, Similar Answers: Becoming a Language Teacher

Pennington and Richards (2016) underline that language teachers' backgrounds and language proficiencies affect their professional identities. Therefore, I asked the interviewees questions about their learning trajectories and what motivated them to become a teacher of English, as Pavlenko (2003) states that there is a direct relationship between motivation and second language identity. Interestingly, although they are from different parts of the world, I received similar answers from the participants in terms of their reasons to become teachers of English. Huberman and Grounauer (1993) determine two main categories of reasons for teachers to choose their professions. One of them is the material motivations like job security and holidays. The second one is the professional motivations such as loving the subject, working with children and a will to be helpful for others. It is possible to see that the material motivations are present in Bulan, a teacher from Indonesia and in Chen, a teacher from China:

I thought that being a teacher is a practical choice for a female, not physically difficult. (Bulan)
I feel if I can be a language teacher, I can travel during the summer and holidays (Chen)

When it comes to professional motivations, there is a rather different case for the language teachers. Kubanyiova (2011, p. 102), in her study, finds that English majors' initial motivations are "to know and use English, rather than teach it" because their positive attitudes towards English stems from a feeling of competence in the subject and a feeling of low competence, or negative attitudes towards other school subjects like maths or science. Therefore, although loving the subject and making a difference in students' lives are present, an affection towards learning as well as using a foreign language is also important for the participants, as much as teaching it. In terms of their love with English, their teachers stand out as the catalyst factor. You can see this in Ayse's and Chen's comments:

When I started high school, I loved my high school English teacher. So that was the beginning for me to learn English. Because he somehow prepared the class in a funny way and he taught some English songs as well. That was the time when I started to like English. (Ayse)

I had an excellent high school English teacher. She is around the middle ages and has a lot of experience. She explains the grammar very well, prepares well for the exams which makes me and my parents very happy. She inspired me in some ways and we all love her. (Chen)

These findings concur with Dörnyei (1994), who underlines that language learners are more motivated when they attach affiliation to their teachers and classroom learning. To conclude this part, it is possible to see that similar reasons affect international second language teachers' both learner and teacher identities across the globe.

It was a Learning Shock More than a Culture Shock: Experiences in the UK

In the United Kingdom, a research master's study takes one year. Therefore, it results in a more packed, more intense learning experience for postgraduate students. For international students, who come from different backgrounds and different learning environments, it could be quite problematic, especially at the beginning. It is more of a possibility to come across the culture shock in the studies (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004). However, based on the interview data, what the international students go through could be more appropriately called a learning shock (Gu & Maley, 2008):

So as a person, as a resident, I had some problems in adapting to the new environment but as a student, I think I had more problems because I wasn't used to this education system. Because in Turkey, it is really different. Here you have to criticise, you have to evaluate all of the data you have, but in my context, I didn't. (Ayse)

It is really challenging for participants to overcome the stress they endure while trying to adapt to the UK's academic environment:

At first, it was so difficult. But I was passionate. Still, I sometimes felt dizzy. I sometimes think I'm going to go crazy because of the readings. (Karim)

I think that it was too much pressure. You cannot just cover everything in one year. There were times that I was telling myself 'Does it really deserve all of your energy, pressure and stuff?' Because physical, emotional and psychological health is the priority. (Sophia)

This is especially evident in the participants, who had not lived in another country before, like Karim. In this regard, Laura underscores the help of having previous abroad experiences:

Maybe if I had come here without my previous experience, I would have struggled a lot more. From a personal and also a professional perspective. (Laura)

Cultural differences were also evident in relation to the learning shock the participants went through. Coming from varied learning backgrounds, some participants stated that they would prefer more support:

The hardest point for all of the courses for me was to be critical while writing the assignments. Because I wasn't used to that. So I think they should have given some kind of workshops or lectures or some articles at the beginning of the term so that we can have an idea about how to be critical. (Ayse)

However, once the participants adapt to the academic system in the country, the initial learning shock eventually yields positive changes:

Honestly, assignments were very challenging for me. Because I am not good at writing and I don't understand the whole system, how the system works; the way they give our marks and feedback. It is very different from our system. It is challenging. But, I really learnt a lot. (Chen)

It has been a very tough year for me, very tough. But now I can see that I'm much more confident than I was. (Bulan)

This system is better because, after some point, you can see that. Maybe not in the beginning but you can see that you are getting better, in terms of your personality and in terms of your professional career as well. (Karim)

As Zembylas (2003) argues in his renowned article on emotions and identity, both positive and negative emotions construct and reconstruct the teacher-self through the social interactions within particular contexts. It is possible to see that the student teachers in the study are aware of this reconstruction through their reflections on their own experiences. They are able to make insightful projections about their not just short term but also long term gains, even though it is challenging for

them at the beginning. Hamilton (2013) argues that teacher identity is made up of multiple narratives and that it is not only natural for there to be conflict across some of these narratives, but is also helpful, as such cognitive resonance can lead to critical and insightful changes and enhancement of professional identity. Although my research does not track the changes in their professional identities in the following years after they finish their studies, it could be seen that it has already made positive changes in their self-perception as well as their transformational ideas about future.

I can Now Stand up Against the Parents and Embrace my English Proficiency: Transforming Teacher Agency

Agency is the state, which “enables individuals to make free or independent choices, to engage in autonomous actions, and to exercise judgment in the interests of others and oneself” (Campbell, 2012, p.183). As Biesta and Tedder (2007, p. 132) demonstrate, it is “something that is achieved, rather than possessed, through the active engagement of individuals with aspects of their contexts-for-action”. Through taking a career development decision in certain points of their lives by coming to the UK for postgraduate study and their engagements with the program for one year, it is possible to claim that one of the major professional identity reconstructions for the participants occurs in relation to their teacher agency. Buchanan (2015) underlines that there is a mutual relation between one’s professional agency and professional identity:

An individual’s professional agency is reciprocally related to his or her professional identity. As teachers construct an understanding of who they are within their school and professional context, they take actions that they believe align with that construction. Those actions (and how the actions are perceived by others) then feed back into the ongoing identity construction process. (p. 704)

We could clearly see this with Sophia, as she reflects on her relationship with the parents, as well as the researcher skills she has gained during her study, which are crucial in terms of her identity construction and her teacher agency. Thanks to her postgraduate study, she is more confident about herself and her teaching abilities:

The experience I got here in one year will help me a lot. I have learned many things. I have learned to conduct my own research, I have learned to be an independent learner. My critical thinking skills have definitely improved. If we are talking specifically about grammar and vocabulary, I think that I had already had a good idea about it. Now that I have confirmed the idea. So now I feel more confident to implement it and to talk to parents about it. I know better how to elaborate on that. (Sophia)

In terms their agency as a language learner, thanks to their lectures on Global Englishes (Seidlhofer, 2001), which offers promising alternatives to the monolingual native speaker hegemony within the field, the participants seem to transform their self-perceptions. Rather than feeling lower, as they used to do, they now embrace their non-native teacher identities. These two examples from Laura and Sophia demonstrate how they were feeling before taking their studies, even though Laura had seven years of teaching experience prior to the UK:

I consider myself as a non-native speaker of English. I can say that this has always been a ghost in my teaching career. At the language institute I used to work, there were some native speaker teachers and other teachers who lived abroad for several years. They were not even from teaching majors. I always felt intimidated by them. I always felt that I was inferior for not being a native speaker. (Laura)

What made me come here that was the native speaker thing. I am always upset when I talk about it. In the school I worked in Barcelona, all of the teachers were native speakers of English. But they were not teachers. They didn’t study anything relevant to TESOL or teaching languages. They were just native speakers. I wasn’t very confident at the beginning. I was thinking that it was their language, not mine. (Sophia)

Despite the better qualifications they had, both Laura and Sophia had lower self-esteem about themselves because of not being a native speaker of English, as the above excerpts show. Even though the native speaker concept has long been contested, both generally and in ELT (Philipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1998), studies show that “the native speaker is still the ghost in the machine” and the course books by the big publishers still enforce the powerful and idealised native speaker (Cook, 2016, p. 187). As one of the meaningful outputs of the program, participants seem to be ready to apply their changing ideas into their teaching settings and facilitate their students in this way as well:

I am a non-native speaker and I can never be as good as a native speaker. But right now, I do feel that this is becoming less important. The training has become very helpful to improve my confidence. Intercultural speaker; this is more important than the native speaker. I want to tell my students who will go abroad that being an intercultural speaker is better than embracing everything abroad. (Chen)

I think it is good to raise students’ awareness and say that ‘You don’t need to talk in American or British way’. It gives them lighter responsibility or lighter pressure if you like. I will reinforce this idea. (Bulan)

Rather than being categorised as a non-native speaker, a foreign language learner is defined as an intercultural speaker by Byram and Zarate (1997, p. 11), who “crosses frontiers, and who is to some extent a specialist in the transit of cultural property and symbolic values”. Being a specialist who has ownership of cultural and symbolic values is empowering for both language learners and language teachers. Embracing and advocating the intercultural speaker identity as a result of the study is likely to make significant changes in participants’ future teaching careers.

Discussion & Conclusion

For an overall discussion, I adopt Wenger’s (1998) Communities of Practice (COP) theory as my theoretical framework. Becoming part of a postgraduate study program for one year has meanings for both the participants and the MSc TESOL programs across the country. For Wenger (1998), identity formation is shaped through an interplay between identification and negotiation of meanings with our participation and non-participation within the communities that we belong and it is a result of three modes of belonging: imagination, alignment and engagement. While engagement is an “active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning” through relationships and interactions, imagination is “creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience” and alignment is “coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises” (Wenger, 1998, p. 173-174).

It is possible to claim that, even though it was difficult especially at the beginning, participants still enjoyed their overall one-year trajectory. However, as some of the interviewees indicate, not paying closer attention to cultural differences in learning may have resulted in non-participation during these international student teachers’ teacher identity construction process. International student teachers from different learning cultures expect more academic support from their professors, especially at the beginning. When it comes to identification through imagination, there are various times student teachers make projections about their future teaching careers while discussing their experiences in the UK. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the MSc TESOL program has enabled means for the participants to reflect on the reconstructing their future teaching identities. When it comes to identification through alignment, student teachers underline their overall content with their participation in MSc TESOL community. However, with the learning shock they all experienced and the academic stress they still endure, their non-participation through alignment poses the most risks for their identification with their learning communities. Although it is not within the scope of this research, as it focuses on the MSc TESOL members who were on the verge of finishing their studies, it is likely to encounter student teachers leaving the program unsuccessfully because of the learning shock and the academic stress they undergo. However, to reiterate, participants of the study have aligned themselves

with their UK experience and it is clear that it has enabled them positive professional identity reconstructions.

With an attempt to address the research question of the study, second language teacher identities of international student teachers are mainly characterised by positive values. International students of the program are all open to developing themselves to be better in their profession; they build on their experiences and look for new trends in the field. Empowering themselves with new ideas about teaching methods, they are also possible future researchers of their own teaching. However, MSc TESOL programs with international students within the UK or elsewhere could take some insights from this research. A more careful look into the international student teachers' needs would mean a more culturally responsive TESOL program that promotes the particularity, practicality and possibilities of the international students (Park, 2012).

Future research could be helpful in terms of seeing the trajectories of the participants after they finish their postgraduate studies and start teaching. More research into the identity reconstructions of experienced international postgraduate student teachers would be also deemed to worth scholarly interest.

Acknowledgement

I presented some sections of my unpublished dissertation at Vth International Eurasian Educational Research Congress (EJER) in Turkish, and the abstract was published in EJER Congress 2018 Conference Proceedings.

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