Collaborative Teacher-Students Talks on the Identity of Native vs. Nonnative English Teachers

Hadi Maghsoud[1,*]

[1]Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

*Correspondence: Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: hadi.maghsoud@gmail.com

Abstract

The rise of English as an international language and English globalization has rekindled the debate over native vs. nonnative teachers' identity in terms of their strengths and weaknesses in foreign language education. To contribute to the debate, this study explored EFL learners' and teachers' perceptions of native and nonnative teachers' identity. Six nonnative teachers and their students (N=40) participated in collaborative talks to construct teacher identity in separate discussion sessions. The conversations were transcribed to extract the main themes through content analysis. The findings showed that, from the students' point of view, nonnative teachers enjoy bilingual advantage, have a better understanding of learners' culture, and are more capable in establishing rapport with learners. Regarding native teachers, the students believed that they enjoy linguistic advantage and transfer L2 culture more competently than non-native teachers. The teachers had similar opinions about linguistic advantage, advanced/elementary level instruction, and art of teaching. However, they did not fully agree with nonnanative teachers' bilingual advantage. The findings indicated that EFL learners and teachers prefer native and nonnative teachers in different respects and that nativeness is not the sole determining factor in teacher identity.

Keywords: native teachers, nonnative teachers, identity, English globalization

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades there has been a dramatic increase in the number of studies that have focused on identity as a key element in teaching and education. Leary and Tangney (2012) define identity as an individual's awareness of one's self. Yet for Norton (2013) identity is the connection of the individual to the world, across time and space. There are plethora of studies on identity among which many have concentrated on teacher identity (e.g. Aguilar, 2013; Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Caihong, 2011; Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Cheung, 2008; Cohen, 2010; Dix, 2012; Farrell, 2011; Flores & Day, 2006; Izadinia, 2015; Kim, 2011; Lee, 2013; Norton, 1997; Trent & Lim, 2010; Tsui, 2007; Xu, 2013; Yuan, 2016). Teacher identity is a teacher's images of self (Nias, 1989) and is a holistic matter that includes different spaces of human selfhood (Alsup, 2006). Numerous studies have attempted to explain issues related to teacher identity and its construction. Many studies worldwide have been conducted on professional identity of the teachers (e.g. Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000; Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Cohen, 2008; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Lim, 2011; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Shin, 2008; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Velez-Rendon, 2010).

Despite a considerable body of literature on teachers' professional identity, the very issue of native and nonnative teachers has received scant attention. Similarities and differences in teachers' and students' perceptions (or impressions) of native and nonnative teachers regarding their professional identity as teaching agents requires further research. Moreover, few studies have taken into account professional identity construction of teachers from both teachers' and their students' perspectives. Research has mostly concentrated on students' viewpoints e.g. Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010; Walkinshaw & Hoang Oanh, 2014). Moreover, studies to date have greatly focused on history of nonnative teachers, their teaching practices, and general issues related to identity (e.g. Braine, 2005; Llurda, 2004; Llurda & Huguet, 2003; Medgyes, 2013; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Shibata, 2010; Virta, 2015). A number of studies have also been conducted on native teachers (e.g. He & Zhang, 2010; Kan Chu & Morrison, 2011; Lasagabaster &

Sierra, 2005; Nao, 2011); however, none of them has addressed professional identity construction of both native and nonnative teachers.

Among studies on native and nonnative teachers (e.g. Dings, 2012; García Merino, 1997; Jin, 2005; Labagaster & Sierra, 2010; Levis, Sonsaat, Link, & Barriuso, 2016; Palfreyman, 1993; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009; Walkinshaw & Hoang Oanh, 2014), native and nonnative teachers' identity construction from both the students' and the teachers' perspectives has largely escaped attention (i.e. none of these studies has considered both teachers' and learners' perspectives on the native and nonnative teachers' identity).

The current study investigates the ways through which teachers and L2 learners construct native and nonnative teachers' identity. It draws on both teachers' and learners' perceptions of professional identity of teachers by employing focus group discussion as a venue to (re)construct native versus nonnative teachers' identity. This study is significant in that it highlights native and nonnative teachers' strengths and weaknesses by shedding light on the professional identity construction of teachers through dialogic interaction of teachers and L2 learners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Identity

Who is a teacher? What makes a good teacher? How does a good teacher manifest his/her characteristics and self? What are perceptions of students about a good teacher? How are these issues related to identity? People often take different positions regarding these questions and provide a variety of answers based on their own beliefs. Interest in defining a good teacher and identity of a teacher has grown a great deal now. At the turn of the century, in line with advances in science and humanities, teachers' identity and the way they are engaged in teaching and education as professional entities have become the main concerns of many scholars (for instance Alsup 2006; Clarke 2008).

Some social and cultural theories have framed teacher education as a means of developing teacher identity in which identity references teachers' knowledge and is a tool by which they are known to other people (Clarke, 2008). Professional identity, then, is a construct which develops through different stages of a teacher's career and it is affected by different contexts such as cultural, educational, ethnic, and political ones. It is then shaped and reshaped as a result of being exposed to these contexts (Flores & Day, 2006). It can be summarized as teachers' perceptions about their roles as a teacher (Goodson & Cole, 1994). Ushioda and Dornyei (2009) see identity as a central factor in forming motivation. In their view, motivation is related to theories of self and identity and one's motivation is shaped and maintained in relation to personal and social perceptions of self.

Poststructuralists (e.g. Block 2007; Norton, 2013) consider identity as a dynamic construct which vacillates from time to time and manifests itself differently based on the context of use. It is a 'multi-faceted' and rather complicated construct; therefore, research on identity and teachers' identity seeks more in-depth investigation and the term should be defined based on a framework (for instance structuralism, post-structuralism, sociocultural view, etc.).

In many contexts, there is high dependence on teachers as a prerequisite for learning. This attracts attentions to multiple roles and identities teachers could take in learning and education. To understand the processes through which learning and teaching take place, and to understand who a teacher is, one should gain insights into teachers' identity—to learn about teachers' selves.

Many studies to date have been conducted on teachers' identity in different countries. Farrell (2011) explored professional identities of three experienced teachers in Canada. The teachers communicated in regular group meetings. Three main role identities emerged in group discussions namely, teacher as a manager, teacher as an acculturator, and teacher as a professional. The themes revealed teachers' preferences and perceptions of their role identities. Another study was conducted in Canada by Chang-Kredl and Kingsley (2014). They examined early childhood teachers' identity expectations. The participants wrote biographical narratives and explained their reasons and motives for choosing teaching as a profession. The results indicated that the pre-service teachers expected teacher educators to pay attention to their emotional dimension, help them access their expectations about teaching, address images of teachers as role models, and pay attention to political aspects of teachers' convictions.

In a study which was conducted in Hong Kong, Lee (2013) used identity as an analytic lens to find out EFL teachers' development in a writing course. In her study, Lee (2013) examined four teachers to find out how they discursively constructed their identities through negotiation. She highlighted a number of factors that influenced teachers' negotiation of identities and found that identity is a dynamic concept and noted that teacher educators should encourage pre-service teachers to be more cognizant of their professional identities. Amongst the studies which were

done in Hong Kong Yuan (2016) reported on identity construction of two prospective teachers who constructed their identities through interaction with mentors and university supervisors. Yuan (2016) concluded that negative teacher mentoring dismantles student teachers ideal identities. The implication of the study was to facilitate student teachers pedagogical education and to help positive identity formation through effective mentoring.

Haniford (2010) demonstrated the process of discursively constructing teachers' professional identity through written plan and portfolios. A case study was conducted in an undergraduate teacher-training university in the United States. Throughout the study, the participant who took part in a teacher education program, held different beliefs regarding using students' knowledge in guiding a lesson. Haniford found that students' interests were of insignificant value. The findings had implications for how teacher educators should work with prospective teachers. Hong (2010) examined pre-service teachers' professional identities and their perceptions about quitting the profession in the United States. Pre-service teachers demonstrated naïve and idealistic identities and the ones who were dropped out of the profession showed emotional burnout. Also, their perceptions of teachers' identity differed in various stages of the study. In a study, Kim and Viesca (2016) investigated three urban middle-school teachers in the United States regarding motivating and engaging emergent bilinguals in reading through teachers' identity positioning. The study had sociocultural and sociopolitical implications in that the findings indicated that teachers should critically use identity positioning to motivate their students.

Xu (2013) reflected on professional identity change of four teachers in China. During a longitudinal study, participants developed their professional identities and some changes emerged, as they were involved in teaching practice. "Teachers' cue-based and exemplar-based imagined identities formed in the pre-service stage transformed into rule-based and schema-based practiced identities in the novice stage, mediated by the mixed influences of the institutional contexts of school and the dynamic educational contexts" (Xu, 2013, p.79). Tsui (2007) reported on complexities of identity formation of a teacher in China using a narrative enquiry. He examined learning and teaching experience of the teacher over six years by investigating an interplay of negotiation of meaning and reification in constructing multiple identities. The results revealed that there is a complex relationship between competence, membership, and access to practice.

In Australia, Devos (2010) considered mentoring in the process of shaping teachers' identities. She found that there is a relationship between mentoring and constructing new teacher identities and highlighted that being a good teacher is culture-bound. Izadnia (2015) conducted a similar study in Australia. She examined the role of mentors in shaping pre-service teachers' professional identity in detail. She concluded that when the mentoring relationship was positive, it boosted pre-service teachers' confidence. However, when the relationship was negative, it decreased prospective teachers' self-esteem. She pointed out that there is an urgent to analyze the role of mentors in constructing pre-service teachers' identity critically.

Teacher identity is a broad term and widely used in different sciences and programs but compared to its broad nature, it is rarely debated. Despite a large body of literature on teacher identity, there are still many areas that have scarcely been explored. There is still more room for investigating teachers' identity formation as it has a dynamic nature.

2.2 Native and Nonnative Speaker Teachers

Native and nonnative speaker teachers' identity is considered an important issue in teaching foreign language learners. Although this issue is widely discussed, it is not studied sufficiently. Doing research on native and nonnative teachers, the following question arises. Who is a native speaker teacher? Medgyes (2013) argues that "[a] native speaker of English is traditionally defined as someone who speaks English as his or her native language, also called mother tongue, first language, or L1" (p. 430). Davies (2004) rejects the notion of semilingualism and argues that "everyone is a native speaker of his/her own unique code" (p. 434). Medgyes (1992) also differentiates between native speakers and nonnative speakers and contended that nonnative speakers never achieve a native-like competence. In spite of their hard work, they won't be an original speaker by merely copying native people. Native and nonnative speaker teachers are different in their ways of teaching and linguistic competence. Despite some linguistic "discrepancies' in nonnative teachers, they compensate for this shortcoming by alternative methods (Medgyes, 1992). Medgyes also states that an ideal native speaker teacher is the one who has reached to a high proficiency level in learners' mother tongue, or L1. Whereas, an ideal nonnative teachers is the one who has a native-like level of proficiency in English.

Recent evidence suggests that being a nonnative teacher brings some promising advantages. Medgyes (2013) compares native speaker teachers with nonnative speaker teachers and concludes that nonnative speaker teachers are superior to native teachers in in that they

1. provide a better learner model;

2. teach language-learning strategies more effectively;

3. supply more information about the English language;

4. anticipate and prevent language difficulties better;

5. are more sensitive about their students;

6. benefit from their ability to use the students' mother tongue (p. 436).

Taking into account recent research on native and nonnative teacher, the myth of native teacher superiority has dwindled away to highlight the fact that nonnative teachers can be as good as, or sometimes better than the native teachers. (e.g. Garcia Merino, 1997; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005).

Several attempts have been made to explain native and nonnative speaker teachers' characteristics and identity. Llurda and Huguet (2003) investigated self-perceptions of nonnative speaker teachers regarding their "language proficiency, teaching views, and the NS-NNS debate" (p. 220) and concluded that nonnative speaker teachers differ in their degree of self-awareness and perceptions regarding each of the above aspects. The findings imply that nonnative speaker teachers have different needs from those of native speaker teachers and also face more challenges in their teaching.

Garcia Merino (1997) used Medgyes' (1983, 1986, 1992) three-dimensional framework and drew a comparison between native speaker teachers and nonnative ones. He concluded that nonnative speaker teachers can compensate for deficiencies in areas such as pronunciation, L2 culture, fluency, and linguistic competence by employing experience, motivation, charisma, training, etc.

Labagaster and Sierra (2005) investigated students' perceptions of native and nonnative speaker teachers. They found that the students preferred native speaker teachers in areas such as pronunciation, culture, listening and speaking but gave credit to nonnative speaker teachers for their grammatical competence. Labagaster and Sierra (2010) performed another study on students' preferences for native or nonnative teachers and found that students preferred a native speaker teacher or at least a combination of native and nonnative speaker teachers in their classes.

Walkinshaw and Hoang Oanh (2012) carried on a study in Vietnam to elicit students' perceptions of native and nonnative speaker teachers. They recurrently found that students placed more value on factors other than nativeness of teachers. The factors included friendliness, enthusiasm, qualifications (in teaching and competence of the teacher), experience, transferring L1 local culture, establishing rapport with the students, and communicating effectively. However, pronunciation still remained a brilliant qualification possessed by native speaker teachers. The findings also implied that nonnative teachers were able to become successful teachers by gaining the aforementioned qualifications.

Todd and Pojanapunya (2009) conducted a similar study to elicit implicit attitudes of Thai students towards native and nonnative teachers using Implicit Association Test. They explored students' preference for native speaker teachers and concluded that students did not have any good feelings towards nonnative speaker teachers. Todd and Pojanapunya stated that the feelings were complex. They used the Implicit Association Test and a questionnaire to investigate explicit attitudes towards native and nonnative teachers. The results indicated that native teachers were superior to their nonnative counterparts. Similar findings were also reported on students' preferences regarding native/nonnative dichotomy (Diaz, 2015; Labagaster & Sierra, 2010). However, Jin (2014) found that Chinese students preferred a Chinese teacher to a native one, which was contrary to previous findings.

Ma (2012) conducted a study to find out about advantages and disadvantages of having native and nonnative speaker teachers. She extracted students' perceptions through semi-structured group interviews and concluded that both native and nonnative speaker teachers had some advantages as well as disadvantages. Native speaker teachers were preferred for their good level of proficiency and their ability as a facilitator of students' learning. On the other hand, nonnative speaker teachers were favored by students for their proficiency in students' L1, their good rapport and communication with the students. Students felt more comfortable in nonnative speaker teachers' class and had more tension in native speaker teachers' classes. The advantages of one group of the teachers were disadvantages of the other group. The findings revealed that both groups of the teachers benefited learning in different manners.

Moussu (2010) conducted a study to find out about the effect of different variables such as the teachers' contact-time on students' attitudes towards native and nonnative speaker teachers. Moussu stated that students' overall attitude towards both native and nonnative teachers were positive. She found that some variables such as students' L1 and their level of proficiency affected their attitudes towards the respective teachers. She also concluded that teachers'

competence in English was just one factor that influenced students' attitudes and many other variables other than being a native or nonnative speaker teacher could shape students' attitudes towards teachers. Faez (2011) also argued that native and nonnative speaker dichotomy falls short of explaining different linguistic identities of teachers. She asserted that linguistic identity is a dynamic notion and should be defined in different relevant contexts rather than merely relating it to nativeness.

Previous studies on native and nonnative teachers have focused on the students' attitudes toward native and nonnative teachers and have not addressed the issue from both teachers' and the students' perspectives. Moreover, previous findings are somehow controversial which prompts the need for further research on the identity of native and nonnative speaker teachers.

Based on the previous findings, this study aims to extract both teachers' and students' attitudes towards native and nonnative teachers through focus group interaction among the students and their teachers. The current study also investigates the probable (mis)matches that exist in the students' and the teachers' perspectives.

The implications of this study can be used to highlight strengths and weaknesses of both the native and nonnative teachers and help them be more successful in future.

In order to carry out this study the following research questions arise:

1. How do EFL students (re)construct native/nonnative teachers' identity in interaction with their teachers?

2. How do EFL teachers (re)construct native/nonnative teachers' identity in interaction with their students?

3. What are the (miss)matches in students and their teachers perceptions of native/nonnative teachers' identity?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Two groups of teacher and learner participants took part in the present study. Teacher participants were six male and female teachers. They were within the age range of 22 to 40 with different levels of experience ranging from novice to expert teachers. A total number of 40 female participants, who were the students of the six teachers, formed the learner participants group; hence, six focus groups. Students' levels ranged from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate. The students were from the same language educational and cultural backgrounds with trivial differences.

3.2 Instrumentation

The purpose of the current study was to find out how EFL learners contributed to (re)construction of EFL teacher identity in negotiation and interaction with EFL teachers. In accordance with the goal of this study, data was collected through focus group interactions. There were six sessions of dialogic interaction with pre-determined topics between the six teachers and their learners in each focus group about native and nonnative speaker teachers. However, the process of the discussion was not structured and had an emergent nature.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, teachers' and students' consent was obtained in compliance with the ethics in research. Participants' names were kept anonymous to build an atmosphere of trust between the participants and the researcher. It was for the sake of assuring them of not being judged based on their answers so that they could express their ideas freely. For each teacher and his/her students, there was a session of focus group discussion. Each episode lasted from 10 to 25 minutes. Before the discussion, the teachers were instructed to seek students' opinions and express their own views (e.g., regarding strengths and weaknesses) about native and nonnative teachers. The whole discussion was recorded and subsequently transcribed by observing transcription conventions outlined by Tannen (2007). In order to keep the discussion focused and to avoid unwanted deviations from the topic, the researcher assumed the role of a moderator throughout the discussion.

3.4 Data Analysis

In this study, Block's (2007) framework was used for data analysis. Block, in a poststructuralist approach, considers identity as a dynamic entity which changes from one situation to another and from time to time. This is different from a structuralist view that takes identity as a constant notion which is inherent in individuals.

First, the data from the focus group discussions were transcribed and the themes were extracted and codified through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The content analysis of transcribed data revealed the teachers' and

their students' perceptions of native and nonnative teachers' professional identity. To address research question one, the themes relevant to the students' perceptions were stratified and analyzed. In order to answer research question two, the focus was on the parts where the teachers expressed their professional identity. Regarding the third research question, the students' and the teachers' perceptions were compared and contrasted.

4. Results

This research investigated the professional identity of native and nonnative speaker teachers by taking into account both teachers' and their students' perceptions. Consequently, the (mis)matches between the teachers' and their students' perceptions were identified. The results revealed that students constructed native and nonnative teachers' identity in unique ways. The teachers shared most of the students' opinions but they also had some ideas of their own.

4.1 Students' Perceptions

Four major themes, i.e. linguistic advantage, L2 culture, advanced levels, and motivation were extracted from the students' opinions about native teachers. The students' views on nonnative teachers were divided into six main themes namely, bilingual advantage, L1 culture, rapport, art of teaching, diligence, and elementary levels. The following sentences represent some pieces of speech by the students that carry the emerged themes.

"*I think, both of them are good, but nonnative teachers I think are better than native teachers. Because they can understand us and can explain to us in a simple way*". (bilingual advantage)

"*We can have a better relationship with a nonnative teacher*". (rapport)

"*They can say some cultural points that they have in their countries and we learn*". (L2 culture)

The extracted themes and their frequency are presented Table 1.

Table 1. EFL Learners' Perceptions of Native and Nonnative Teachers

	Themes	N*	Percentage
Native teachers	Linguistic advantage	40	100%
	L2 culture	32	80%
	Advanced levels	18	45%
	Motivation	10	25%
Nonnative teachers	Bilingual advantage	40	100%
	L1 culture	34	85%
	Rapport	24	60%
	Art of teaching	15	37.5%
	Diligence	11	27.5%
	Elementary levels	8	20%

N*= number of students

Linguistic advantage was considered as the main component of native speaker teachers' identity. All of the students (100%) agreed on linguistic advantage of native speaker teachers over the nonnative ones. Majority of the students (80%) believed that native speaker teachers are able to transfer L2 culture more efficiently owning to growing up in the L2 culture. Meanwhile, only less than half of the students (45%) agreed that native teachers are better at teaching advanced students. Finally, a few students (25%) considered native teachers as a good source of motivation.

Regarding nonnative teachers, all of the students agreed on bilingual advantage and stated that since nonnatives can understand learners' L1, they are more familiar with language learning problems. In addition, most of the students (85%) told that nonnative speaker teachers are members of the same culture and can understand students better than natives. More than half of the students (60%) believed that nonnative teachers can establish a rapport more

successfully with their students. However, views on art of teaching, teaching at elementary levels, and diligence did not seem to reflect an edge for nonnative teachers over natives.

4.2 Teachers' Perceptions

The emerged themes from teachers' views were linguistic advantage and advanced levels for native teachers and art of teaching, bilingual advantage, and elementary levels for nonnative teachers. To attribute art of teaching and linguistic advantage to nonnative and native teachers respectively, for example, one of the teachers stated, "*I would pick the nonnatives to teach me and the natives to practice my speaking*". The extracted themes and the number of teachers with perception in line with them are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Native and Nonnative Teachers

	Themes	**N***	**Percentage**
Native teachers	Linguistic advantage	4	66.6%
	Advanced levels	1	16.6%
	Art of teaching	3	50%
Nonnative teachers	Bilingual advantage	3	50%
	Elementary levels	1	16.6%

N*=number of teachers

As illustrated in Table 2., most of the teachers (N=4) agreed on linguistic advantage of native teachers. However, they did not feel that native teachers can teach advanced levels better than their nonnative counterparts.

Half of the teachers (N=3) believed that nonnative teachers enjoy art of teaching and bilingual advantage. Only one of the teachers referred to the superiority of nonnative teachers with respect to teaching elementary levels.

4.3 (Mis)Matches in the Students' and the Teachers' Perceptions

The teachers shared most of the students' perceptions about native and nonnative teachers. Both groups admitted to the linguistic advantage of native teachers and did not believe that features such as art of teaching and the ability to teach at elementary and advanced levels distinguish between native and nonnative teachers. However, all the students agreed with the bilingual advantage of nonnatives while only half of the teachers held such a belief. Moreover, L1/L2 culture, motivation, rapport, and diligence were qualities that were only referred to by the students.

5. Discussion

The results of the present study indicated that the students believed that native teachers enjoy linguistic advantage and convey L2 culture better but did not they are more motivating and better teachers for advanced level than nonnatives. From the students' point of view, nonnative teachers enjoy bilingual advantage, can develop better rapport with their students, and understand them better because they come from the same culture. However, they did not consider nonnatives as more skilled teachers, better at elementary level instruction and more diligent. In sum, based on the students' opinions, qualities that distinguish between native and nonnative teachers are linguistic advantage and L2 culture for natives and bilingual advantage, L1 culture, and rapport for nonnatives.

The teachers shared the students' beliefs regarding native speaker teachers' linguistic advantage and advanced level instruction and nonnative speaker teachers' art of teaching and elementary level instruction. However, they did not believe that bilingual advantage is a distinctive feature for nonnative teachers. Themes such as L1/L2 culture, motivation, rapport, and diligence were not mentioned by the teachers.

Furthermore, the students believed that it is impossible for nonnative teachers to become native like. They stated that native pronunciation and accent is unachievable for nonnatives. However, the teachers believed that they are capable of becoming native-like by studying and hard work. Garcia Merino (1997) also stated that although there are some deficiencies in nonnative speaker teachers' competence and they lack native-like proficiency in their linguistic competence, they can compensate for these short-comings by employing useful strategies and motivating their students.

In line with the findings of some studies, the results of this study revealed that L2 learners prefer native speaker teachers in many respects such as their good level of proficiency, linguistic advantage, ability to convey L2 culture in a smooth and convenient way and go for a nonnative teacher for their competence in students' L1, employing efficient teaching strategies, ability to understand students' feelings, communicating effectively, and establishing a good rapport with learners(e.g. Labagaster & Sierra, 2005; Ma, 2012; Medgyes, 2013). However, a number of studies have recurrently reported that L2 learners favor native speaker teachers (Diaz, 2015; Jin, 2014; Labagaster & Sierra, 2010; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009).

The findings of this study show that native/nonnative dichotomy is not a determining factor in qualifying teachers since identity is dynamic in nature (Block, 2007) and situation-specific (Faez, 2011). In a recent study, Levis, Sonsaat, Link and Barriuso (2016) investigated the effect of native and nonnative speaker teachers' pronunciation on students' performance. They pointed out that although students preferred native speaker teachers, equal performance was observed regarding learning patterns of pronunciation in native and nonnative speaker teachers' classes. For the same reason, Levis, Sonsaat, Link and Barriuso encouraged employing nonnative speaker teachers. Many other studies reported similar findings (e.g. Garcia Merino, 1997; Labagaster & Sierra, 2005; Ma, 2012; Medgyes, 2013) and explained advantages of both native/nonnative teachers in detail. Moreover, Moussu (2010) contends that many variables affect students' choices of native or nonnative speaker teachers (for instance students' L1), therefore, nativeness or nonnativeness is not sufficient for defining teachers' identity.

6. Conclusion

Investigation of professional identity construction of native and nonnative speaker teachers from both teachers' and learners' perspectives revealed that both groups shared views in many cases. The findings also indicated that being merely a native or a nonnative does not necessarily translate into being a qualified teacher since both have strengths and weaknesses. This implies that both native and nonnative teachers might excel in their career if they recognize and compensate for the gaps and deficiencies. Teachers should also take into account (mis)matches between their perceptions and those of their students. It should be noted that the findings are context-bound and based on in-depth depiction of conceptual patterns of EFL students and teachers; thus, not generalizable to different contexts. It is suggested that future studies investigate both native and nonnative teachers' and learners' views on teacher identity.

References

Aguilar, J. (2013). The institutional and beyond: On the identity displays of foreign language teachers. In D. J. Rivers & S. A. Houghton (Eds.), *Social identities and multiple selves in foreign language education* (pp. 13-31). London: Blumsbury.

Alsup, J. (2006). *Teacher identity discourses: Negotiating personal and professional spaces.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Association.

Beijaard, D., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J. D. (2000). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity: An exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*, 749-764. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(00)00023-8

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*, 107-128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001

Block, D. (2007). *Second language identities*. London: Continuum.

Boylan, M., & Woolsey, I. (2015). Teacher education for social justice: Mapping identity spaces. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 46*, 62-71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.10.007

Braine, G. (2005). A history of research on non-native speaker English teachers. In E. Llurda (Ed.), *Non-Native language teachers. perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 13-23). New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24565-0_2

Caihong, H. (2011). Changes and characteristics of EFL teachers' professional identity: The cases of nine university teachers. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics, 34*(1), 3-21. https://doi.org/10.1515/cjal.2011.001

Chang-Kredl, S., & Kingsley, S. (2014). Identity expectations in early childhood teacher education: Preservice teachers' memories of prior experiences and reasons for entry into the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 43*, 27-36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.05.005

Cheung, H. Y. (2008). Measuring the professional identity of Hong Kong in-service teachers. *Journal of In-Service Education, 34*(3), 375-390. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674580802003060

Clarke, M. (2008). *Language teacher identities: Co-constructing discourse and community.* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847690838

Cohen, J. L. (2008). 'That's not treating you as a professional': Teachers constructing complex professional identities through talk. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 14*(2), 78-93. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600801965861

Cohen, J. L. (2010). Getting recognized: Teachers negotiating professional identities as learners through talk. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26,* 473-481. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.06.005

Davies, A. (2004). The native speaker in applied linguistics. In A. Davies & C. Elder (Eds.), *The handbook of applied linguistics* (pp. 434). Malden: Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470757000.ch17

Devos, A. (2010). New teachers, mentoring and the discursive formation of professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*, 1219-1223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.03.001

Diaz, R. N. (2015). Students' preferences regarding native and non-native teachers of English at a university in the French Brittany. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 173*, 93-97. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.02.036

Dings, A. (2012). Native speaker/nonnative speaker interaction and orientation to novice/expert identity. *Journal of Pragmatics, 44*, 1503-1518. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.06.015

Dix, S. (2012). Discursively complex identities of New Zealand teachers of writing in times of contestation and change. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*, 405-417. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.11.004

Faez, F. (2011). Reconceptualizing the native/nonnative speaker dichotomy. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education, 10*, 231-249. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2011.598127

Farrell, T. S. C. (2011). Exploring the professional role identities of experienced ESL teachers through reflective practice. *System, 39*, 54-62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.01.012

Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*, 219-232. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.09.002

García Merino, I. (1997). Native English-speaking teachers versus non-native English-speaking teachers. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses, 10*, 69-79. https://doi.org/10.14198/raei.1997.10.07

Goodson, I. F., & Cole, A. L. (1994). Exploring the teacher's professional knowledge: Constructing identity and community. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 21*(1), 85-105.

Haniford, L. C. (2010). Tracing one teacher candidate's discursive identity work. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26,* 987-996. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.041

He, D., & Zhang, Q. (2010). Native speaker norms and China English: From the perspective of learners and teachers in China. *TESOL Quarterly, 44*(4), 769-789. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2010.235995

Hong, J. Y. (2010). Pre-service and beginning teachers' professional identity and its relation to dropping out of the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*, 1530-1543. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.003

Jin, J. (2005). An investigation into the influence of Chinese undergraduates' developing view of world Englishes on their preference for a native or non-native speaker teacher of English. *Asian Englishes, 8*(1), 48-74. https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2005.10801154

Izadinia, M. (2015). A closer look at the role of mentor teachers in shaping preservice teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 52*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.08.003

Kan Chu, C., & Morrison, K. (2011). Cross-cultural adjustment of native-speaking English teachers (NETs) in Hong Kong: A factor in attrition and retention. *Educational Studies, 37*(4), 481-501. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2010.539667

Kim, H. (2011). Native speakerism affecting nonnative English teachers' identity formation: A critical perspective. *English Teaching, 66*(4), 53-71. https://doi.org/10.15858/engtea.66.4.201112.53

Kim, J., & Viesca, K. M. (2016). Three reading-intervention teachers' identity positioning and practices to motivate and engage emergent bilinguals in an urban middle school. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 55*, 122-132.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.003

Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. M. (2005). What do students think about the pros and cons of having a native speaker teacher? In E. Llurda (Ed.), *Non-Native language teachers. perceptions, challenges and contributions to the profession* (pp. 217-241). New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-24565-0_12

Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. M. (2010). University students' perceptions of native and non-native speaker teachers of English**.** *Language Awareness, 11*(2), 132-142. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410208667051

Leary, M. R., & Tangney, J. P. (2012). The self as a psycho-social dynamic processing system: Toward a converging science of selfhood. In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and identity* (2nd ed.) (pp. 1-18). New York: Guilford Press.

Lee, I. (2013). Becoming a writing teacher: Using ''identity'' as an analytic lens to understand EFL writing teachers' development. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 22*, 330-345. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2012.07.001

Levis, J. M., Sonsaat, S., Link, S., & Barriuso, T. A. (2016). Native and Nonnative Teachers of L2 Pronunciation: Effects on Learner Performance. *TESOL Quarterly, 50*(40), 894-931. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tesq.272

Lim, H. (2011). Concept maps of Korean EFL student teachers' autobiographical reflections on their professional identity formation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*, 969-981. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2011.05.001

Llurda, E. (2004). Non-native-speaker teachers and English as an International Language. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *14*(3), 314-323. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1473-4192.2004.00068.x

Llurda, E., & Huguet, A. (2003). Self-awareness in NNS EFL primary and secondary school teachers. *Language Awareness***,** *12*(3-4), 220-233. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658410308667078

Ma, L. P. F. (2012). Advantages and disadvantages of native- and nonnative-English-speaking teachers: Student perceptions in Hong Kong. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(2), 280-305. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.21

Medgyes, P. (1992). Native or non-native: Who's worth more? *ELT Journal, 46*(4), 340-349. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/46.4.340

Medgyes, P. (2013). When the teacher is a non-native speaker. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, M. A. Snow & D. Bohlke (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed.) (pp. 429-442). New York: Routledge.

Moussu, L., & Llurda, E. (2008). Non-native English-speaking English language teachers: History and research. *Language Teaching, 41*(3), 315-348. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444808005028

Moussu, L. (2010). Influence of teacher-contact time and other variables on ESL students' attitudes towards native- and nonnative-English-speaking teachers. *TESOL Quarterly, 44*(4), 746-768. https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2010.235997

Nao, M. (2011). The pragmatic realization of the native speaking English teacher as a monolingual ideal. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*, 3770-3781. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.09.012

Nias, J. (1989). *Primary teachers talking: A study of teaching at work.* London: Routledge.

Norton, B. (1997). Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly, 31*(3), 409-429. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587831

Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783090563

Palfreyman, D. (1993). 'How I got it in my head': Conceptual models of language and learning in native and non-native trainee EFL teachers. *Language Awareness, 2*(4), 209-223. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.1993.9959835

Rodgers, C. R., & Scott, K. H. (2008). The development of the personal self and professional identity in learning to teach. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. J. McIntyre & K. E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions and changing contexts* (3rd ed.) (pp. 732-755). New York: Routledge.

Shibata, M. (2010). How Japanese teachers of English perceive non-native assistant English teachers. *System, 38*, 124-133. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.12.011

Shin, S. J. (2008). Preparing non-native English-speaking ESL teachers**.** *Teacher Development, 12*(1), 57-65. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530701827749

Simon-Maeda, A. (2004). The complex construction of professional identities: Female EFL educators in Japan speak out. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(3), 405-436. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588347

Tannen, D. (2007). *Talking voices: Repetition, dialogue, and imagery in conversational discourse* (2nd ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511618987

Todd, R. W., & Pojanapunya, P. (2009). Implicit attitudes towards native and non-native speaker teachers. *System, 37*, 23-33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2008.08.002

Trent, J., & Lim, J. (2010). Teacher identity construction in school-university partnerships: Discourse and practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*, 1609-1618. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.012

Tsui, A. B. M. (2007). Complexities of identity formation: A narrative enquiry of an ELT teacher. *TESOL Quarterly, 41*(4), 657-680. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1545-7249.2007.tb00098.x

Ushioda, E., & Dornyei, Z. (2009). Motivation, language identities and the L2 self: A theoretical overview. In Z. Dornyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 1-8). Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847691293-002

Velez-Rendon, G. (2010). From social identity to professional identity: Issues of language and gender. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*(4), 635-649. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2010.01113.x

Virta, A. (2015). "In the middle of a pedagogical triangle" – Native-language support teachers constructing their identity in a new context. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 46*, 84-93. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.11.003

Walkinshaw, I., & Hoang Oanh, D. (2012). Native- and non-native speaking English teachers in Vietnam: Weighing the benefits. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, *16*(3). Retrieved from http://www.tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume16/ej63/ej63a1/

Walkinshaw, I., & Hoang Oanh, D. (2014). Native and non-native English language teachers: Student perceptions in Vietnam and Japan**.** *SAGE Open, 4*(2), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014534451

Xu, H. (2013). From the imagined to the practiced: A case study on novice EFL teachers' professional identity change in China. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 31,* 79-86. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.01.006

Yuan, E. R. (2016). The dark side of mentoring on pre-service language teachers' identity formation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 55*, 188-197. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.01.012