Building Teacher Personal Identity: An Autobiography of an Indonesian Non-native English Teacher

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Abstract

This research explores the professional identity formation of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) from a personal viewpoint, an area not extensively covered in existing literature. While there is a wealth of discussion on teacher professional identity, the subjective experiences of NNESTs in shaping their own identities are often overlooked. This autobiographical narrative study addresses this gap by examining my own experiences as an NNEST, integrating reflections from my time as a student and my practice as a teacher. Employing thematic analysis, this research scrutinizes reflection data and artifacts gathered throughout my academic and professional journey. This method allows for a comprehensive examination of how various experiences influence professional identity formation. The findings reveal that an NNEST's professional identity is significantly shaped by the professional context, which includes direct teaching experiences and teacher education, as well as the external political environment, such as government policies and efforts to improve educational quality. The study is particularly relevant in the context of developing countries like Indonesia, highlighting the intricate relationship between personal experiences, professional settings, and the wider political context in the development of NNEST identities. This research contributes a unique perspective to the field of teacher identity and underscores the distinct challenges and influences that NNESTs encounter in their professional growth.

Keywords: Autobiographical narrative inquiry, identity, NNEST

INTRODUCTION

The formation of the professional identity of a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) has been widely discussed (Daud, 2021; Li, 2022; Lim, 2011; Widodo et al., 2020; Yuan, 2019). The discussion on the formation of NNEST identity extends beyond tasks involving teachers and students or assessing the development of this identity based on predetermined professional standards. Instead, the formation of teacher identity is closely related to teachers' perspectives and how they view their own teaching practices (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Arvaja, 2016; Cohen, 2010). Furthermore, teachers' views about

understanding their teaching practices often stem from perceptions of school and education rooted in the teacher's own experiences as a student in the past (Chen et al., 2022; Lortie, 1975; Sakamoto & Furukawa, 2023; Teng, 2019). In essence, it can be concluded that the formation of a teacher's professional identity is significantly influenced by their personal experiences (Mockler, 2011). These personal experiences are closely related to various aspects, including social and cultural dimensions (Holland et al., 1998; Widodo et al., 2020).

Understanding the formation of teacher identity also delves into how language teachers shape their identities in teaching. Notably, Sachs (2005) and Pennington and Richards (2016) emphasize the significance of a teacher's identity as the pivotal element in "determining how language teaching is played". Various studies explore the formation of language teacher identities, with Hsieh et al. (2022) examining the identity formation of NNESTs. Their research reveals that social interactions during study abroad significantly contribute to the development of this identity, influencing the teacher's perspective and teaching approach in the classroom. Furthermore, Pennington and Richards (2016) discovered that teacher identity is cultivated through experience, with these experiences expanding through social networks wherever teachers are located. This continuous process leads to the evolution and alteration of their identities over time. The findings highlight that factors such as learning experiences and social interactions play a crucial role in shaping one's identity, emphasizing that a teacher's identity holds the power to construct professionalism.

In the context of a teacher's journey toward becoming a professional educator and its mediation, Mockler (2011) provides clear insights. He elucidates that a teacher's professional identity is forged through diverse experiences, encompassing 1) personal history, 2) professional context, and 3) the external political environment. Mockler explains that personal experience includes aspects of teachers' lives outside their professional context (e.g., personal history, family life, ethnicity, and gender). With this, personal experience can provide a framing construct for determining one's decisions and actions throughout life. Regarding external factors such as the professional context, Mockler explains that it includes aspects of a teacher's life related to their profession, such as pre-service education, socialization into the profession, and the context of the school, the system, and the culture in which they work. Moving on to the external political environment, Mockler explained that this aspect includes dimensions outside the field of education, such as policies governing education and discourse related to teacher education and work. Although this aspect is not directly related to the two aspects mentioned earlier (e.g., personal experience and professional context), the role of the external political environment aspect is very important in the construction of education itself, as well as framing and shaping the area where the teacher's work is carried out.

Discussing the formation of an NNEST identity cannot be separated from the teacher's journey itself, a process influenced by culture (Holland et al. 1998 and Widodo et al. 2020), as well as the professional context and external political environment (Mockler, 2011). These factors shape the implications for how teachers perceive themselves and their status (Lortie, 1975; Mockler, 2011). Therefore, residing in a multicultural country is significantly influenced by the policies that govern the surrounding environment. Recent studies demonstrate the influence of the environment on the formation of NNEST

identities, particularly in expanding circle countries, as illustrated in the research conducted by Daud (2021). Daud's study delves into his experience as an English teacher, revealing several factors that influenced his decision to become an NNEST. These factors encompass both internal elements, emerging from personal experiences, and external factors, including socio-cultural, economic, and teacher-political factors. Additionally, Hsieh, Gao, and Bell (2022) explored how NNEST identity formation occurs through personal experiences and social context. Their research analyzed the identity changes of a Taiwanese international student before, during, and after her overseas education in Australia. The findings indicate that her professional identity as an NNEST developed through daily involvement on and off campus, motivating her to become a proficient English speaker. Consequently, upon returning to Taiwan, her teaching ideology shifted, aligning more with teaching functional English rather than standard English in Taiwan.

Another research study was conducted by Li (2022), where he explored the complexities of identity formation in two English teachers or private tutors in different courses in China. Utilizing a synthetic perspective that encompasses three dynamic interactions: identity, beliefs, and emotions. This narrative study sheds light on the difficulties and challenges faced by these tutors in their professional lives. It also unveils the intricate connections between teachers' identities, beliefs, and emotions. This aligns with Wolff and De Costa's (2017) examination of how teachers' emotions impact their identity as teachers and NNESTs as a whole. The findings of this research indicate that the trajectory of (positive) emotions and teacher identity can serve as a novel pedagogical model to assist teachers in developing reflexivity and navigating various challenges that may arise.

This is different from Yuan's (2019) review of research related to NNEST identity during the decade (2008-2017). Yuan's research aims to interpret and re-synthesize previous findings on the identity of NNESTs, providing practical implications for improving teacher identity and professionalism. Additionally, it identifies gaps and suggests directions for future research. The results reveal that over the last decade, NNEST identity research has not solely focused on linguistic identity in terms of origin, race, and accent. Instead, it has also delved into the complexities of NNEST identity, including ongoing experiences influenced by history, personal beliefs, and various external factors (e.g., culture, exam-oriented approaches, school policies, and collegial relationships). In summary, although the previous studies have demonstrated how teachers' professional identities are shaped, drawing on learning experiences (Daud, 2021; Hsieh et al., 2022) and teaching experiences (Li, 2022; Wolff & De Costa, 2017), there has been limited exploration in previous research on how teacher identity formation is examined through the dual lenses of learning (as students) and teaching (as teachers). Apart from that, a few previous studies have adopted autobiographical narrative inquiry as a research method and utilized the narrative nature of autobiography to collect information from an insider's perspective.

The primary aim of this research is to explore the intricate process of identity formation, particularly in the context of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs). This exploration is anchored in two theoretical frameworks. The first theory, as articulated by Holland et al. (1998), delves into the dynamics of identity formation through personal experiences. This theoretical lens guides the investigation into how an individual's past experiences, particularly those as a student, influence and shape their identity as an

NNEST. The second theory, proposed by Mockler (2011), examines the construction of teacher identity. It posits that the development of a professional teacher identity is not a solitary process but is significantly influenced by a triad of factors: personal experiences, the professional context within which the individual operates, and the broader external political environment. Under this framework, the research seeks to understand the role these three aspects play in molding the identity of a professional NNEST. Through these lenses, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the identity development of NNESTs, thereby offering insights into the multifaceted nature of teacher identity formation.

METHOD

This research employs an autobiographical narrative research design as the main research methodology to reveal in depth the formation of professional teacher identity from an insider's perspective (Barkhuizen et al., 2013 and Dyson, 2007). This approach provides an alternative understanding of the challenges faced during the process of shaping a non-native English-speaking teacher's (NNEST) identity into that of a professional teacher. Additionally, this study is valid because, in this research, the researcher attempts to reveal the formation of my own identity as a professional NNEST by reflecting on my academic journey and career as a language teacher.

The data for this autobiographical narrative study were gathered from accounts of my academic experiences throughout my learning journey (as a student) and my teaching experiences. Aligned with the research questions, this study collects these narratives through reflections from my experiences in learning English and teaching. In this study, reflections on the language learning journey in autobiographical narrative research utilize Language Learning Histories (LLH) or stories written about personal experiences in language learning. According to Benson (2011), Jhonsn (2019) , Whitney and Liu (2017), LLH is categorized into two types: the entire period (referred to as language learning careers) and short periods (e.g., one year/semester). Since the period in this research spans more than one year, LLH is referred to as a language-learning career. The template for writing reflections in this research was adopted from the structure of a personal recount text, commonly used to narrate personal experiences. Barkhuizen et al. (2013) note that this type of autobiographical research is part of qualitative research, which "typically recounts experiences that are set in the context of the teller's real or imagined everyday life".

Meanwhile, reflection on my teaching experience employs a narrative frame. As explained by Barkhuizen et al. (2013) and Barkhuizen (2014), a narrative frame is a template for a written story featuring a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths. The goal is to guide participants in producing a coherent story by filling in the spaces based on their experiences and reflections. The use of a narrative frame in this study facilitates my reflection process, as it provides guidance regarding the structure and content of my reflections. Thus, it can be concluded that this research utilizes two different datasets to more clearly illustrate the process of my identity formation as a professional NNEST, shaped by three factors: personal experience, professional context, and the external political environment (Mockler, 2011).

In this study, I employed thematic analysis following the approach outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to analyze the data. The data analysis process in this study involves several stages, including open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In open coding, the researcher carefully examines the data to identify ideas or themes. The coding results are then organized into minor levels, illustrating the relationships between codes, a step referred to as axial coding. Furthermore, selective coding involves reviewing the codes in the original data records to choose the most pertinent illustrations for inclusion in the final report. These stages collectively refer to grounded theory principles. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), analysis results based on coding can yield precise meanings in the investigative process, aiding researchers in mitigating bias.

FINDING
My Learning Experience in My School

This finding stems from my academic journey, which began when I started learning English in junior high school at an Islamic boarding school. My learning experiences have often been influenced by social and environmental conditions. This is exemplified by several factors, including the implementation of a language use policy in the Islamic boarding school environment that involves both Arabic and English. Although these language programs exist, in practice, the two languages do not receive equal emphasis. As a result, many students find it challenging to master both languages, with the majority mastering Arabic rather than English. Arabic is not only common in everyday conversation but is also widely used in learning, especially in religious studies. This aligns with the findings of Daud (2021), Hsieh et al. (2022), and Pennington and Richards (2016) that the social aspect plays an important role in building a person's identity.

Regarding my experience learning English in class, teachers more often used Indonesian than English to explain the material, and the teaching strategies tended to be teacher-centered. Consequently, I experienced boredom in learning English and began to consider it unimportant in my life at that time. Yamagata (2018) also found that teacher-centered teaching strategies were no more effective than student-centered teaching. This is because student-centered teaching places more emphasis on the relationships between students and their involvement in identifying problems in the learning process.

Entering the second and third years of junior high school, I began studying at a different school (a public school). The experiences I gained here are solely related to learning English in the classroom. In this context, the teacher's method of instruction still relies on the lecture approach (teacher-centered), where the teacher narrates stories (using texts from books) in English and then translates them into Indonesian. This teaching method led to boredom among us, the students, and as a result, we often did not pay attention to the teacher's explanations. Consequently, I felt unmotivated to learn English. This problem has also been researched by Upadhya and Lynch (2019), who identified that teacher-centered learning has an impact on students' motivation, leading to stability or even a lack of motivation. In contrast, student-centered learning has shown a significant increase in students' learning motivation.

In the third year, especially during the second semester, I had the same teacher. However, during this time, I noticed a change in the teacher's teaching strategy. This shift occurred because, in the third year, we were preparing for a national exam, and English

was one of the subjects tested. Consequently, the teacher modified their teaching methods, placing greater emphasis on practicing previous years' National Examination questions and providing tips and tricks for answering them. During this period, I perceived learning English as necessary solely for passing the exam and nothing beyond that.

Continuing to the next level, in high school, I began to encounter different nuances in learning, especially in English. In this case, the teaching method employed by the teacher became more interactive, as the teacher frequently utilized a discussion method. Assignments were given, and we were tasked with completing them in groups. However, the assignments were solely based on exercises from the textbook. The teacher never connected the learning material to phenomena around us as discussion material. As a student who wasn't proficient in English, I found it challenging to comprehend the material and struggled with the assignments. Although I found this teaching method interesting, my lack of proficiency in English at that time led me to act passively during discussions. Consequently, it did not significantly impact my development in English during that period.

In my second and third years of high school, I underwent what I considered to be a normal learning experience that had no significant impact on increasing my motivation to learn English or improving my English language skills. However, upon graduating from high school, I discovered many things that filled me with regret due to my inability to master English. This regret became evident when I aimed to pursue higher education, specifically an undergraduate program. During this time, I frequently encountered English tests required for college admission. Due to my lack of proficiency in English, I often struggled and failed these tests. Not only were English skills crucial for college entrance exams, but they were also a requirement for applying for jobs in better positions. These experiences of failure led me to realize the importance of English in my life. Consequently, after graduating from high school, I made the decision to study English intensively.

Table 1. My identity construction in my school

Social Environment	Cultural Form	Learning Experience	Identity Construction
• Language practice in the Islamic boarding school environment	• Language practices that have been passed down from generation to generation are used between students and students and students and teachers. • English practice is still lacking. • The practice of Arabic is more dominant in daily communication.	• Teachers' teaching strategies were less effective.	• Can only use Arabic • Not motivated to learn English
• Government policy	• Results-oriented learning	• Teacher's teaching strategies were less effective	• Lack of motivation to learn English

• Relating to the status of English as an international language and relating to policymakers (government) who make English one of the requirements that must be mastered.	-	• Lack of motivation to learn English • Failure to obtain something	• I started to be motivated to learn English from this failure.

My Learning Experience in the English Courses

After facing setbacks in my career, I dedicated nearly a year to intensive English studies through various English courses. Throughout this journey, I acquired extensive knowledge and experiences that served as strong motivation, particularly to delve deeper into the study of English. While enrolled in these diverse courses, I gained valuable insights, especially in a supportive and enjoyable learning environment. The instruction I received was tailored to my language proficiency level. Consequently, during this learning journey, I acquired foundational knowledge in English, starting with the basics such as memorizing everyday vocabulary, learning fundamental tenses, and practicing speaking in English, among other skills.

Apart from engaging and enjoyable learning strategies, I also encountered a unique teaching approach during my studies there. I had numerous experiences, with some being particularly memorable, and to this day, I vividly recall and have even memorized the 16 tenses. The teaching strategy employed was based on drilling, practice, and memorization, where all students were required to memorize and understand these 16 tenses. One distinctive aspect of teaching tenses was the use of a single sentence/example that was simple yet applicable to all 16 tenses. For instance, sentences like "*I give you a pen, I am giving you a pen, I have given you a pen, I have been giving you a pen*," and so on. Because of its uniqueness, this teaching method has stayed with me, and I continue to incorporate it into my lessons whenever I teach tenses.

Apart from that, the policies implemented in the courses motivated me to continue learning. Among them is the English policy, where all students must use English in designated areas. Violating these rules results in punishment, which is not only interesting but also challenging. The penalties include speaking up in public areas and in front of many people. This approach aims to enhance our speaking skills and build our mentality in practicing English. Another impactful policy is the oral assessment, which fuels our enthusiasm for studying. In our view, this assessment demands thorough practice. As a result, it is not uncommon for me and my peers to frequently collaborate and compete with each other to enhance our English skills by interacting in English wherever we are. From these experiences, I became motivated to major in English education and pursue a career as an English teacher. From the policies implemented and the social interactions that occur here, it is evident that these are factors influencing a person's identity. This aligns with the discussions by Daud (2021) and Hsieh et al. (2022), who have explored the influence of personal experience and social context in the formation of a person's identity.

Table 2. My identity construction in the English courses

Social Environment	Cultural Form	Learning Experience	Identity

			Construction
• English area policies that are enforced by the courses • Frequency of friends can foster enthusiasm for learning English • A social environment that supports the practice of using English • Discipline applied at the course institution • Policy for conducting oral assessments • Additional activities related to English teaching activities • English as an International Language Policy	• Culture of using English every day • Build awareness to study actively • Start to understand my own strengths and weaknesses • Begin to understand how to overcome problems and find solutions to the challenges faced	• Teachers' teaching strategies were less effective • Challenges faced when I studied. • An enjoyable English language learning experience • Fun teacher teaching strategies • Interactive and interesting teacher-teaching strategies • Unique learning strategy. • Commit to using English everywhere. • Make a target to memorize some vocabulary and then practice it through daily conversations. • Difficult and challenging exam system • Motivation to learn English	• Motivated to learn English • Motivated to continue improving my English • Motivated to become an English teacher. • Motivated to become a professional English teacher

My Learning Experience at the University

After completing the course, I felt motivated to become an English teacher and decided to pursue a major in English at college. This stage marked the initial step that would determine my career as a professional English teacher. Before reaching this stage, various factors influenced my decision to choose this major. My experiences in studying English opened my eyes to the importance of language learning, exposing me to effective English learning methods. Additionally, the environment emphasized how crucial English is for a better life, and the support from my parents strengthened my determination to select English education as my major.

Because this aligns with my desire and choice to become an English teacher, the initial feeling I experienced when studying here was comfort. At this university, I can comfortably study because the content aligns with what I learned in the English course. Moreover, the knowledge I acquire at the university can be more extensive and profound. In the English course, I focused on enhancing my English language skills. In contrast, at the university level, I delve into various pedagogical aspects, including different strategies and methods for learning and teaching English.

Apart from learning teaching strategies and methods, I was also given the opportunity to practice teaching at a school. This experience is invaluable to me because it

allows me to assess and identify my weaknesses and strengths regarding the material I have mastered and the teaching strategies (pedagogical knowledge) I apply in class. Additionally, the program includes guidance on how to prepare an effective learning plan, such as creating a well-structured lesson plan.

Table 3. My identity construction at the university

Social Environment	Cultural Form	Learning Experience	Identity Construction
• English as an International Language Policy • Family support for learning English	• Start to understand my own strengths and weaknesses • Begin to understand how to overcome problems and find solutions to the challenges faced	• An enjoyable English language learning experience • Motivation to learn English	• Motivated to become a professional English teacher

The Role of Professional Context and the External Political Environment in Forming My Professional Identity as a Teacher

In this teaching experience, I vividly recall a challenging moment when I first taught English in junior high school. I faced difficulties adapting to the classroom and the school environment. Despite having prior teaching experience from my college internship program at a school, I found that the dynamics of teaching in an actual school setting were significantly different. In addition to interacting with students, I had to navigate the rules, conditions, and overall environment of the school.

The place where I teach is a private school in Indonesia situated within an integrated Tahfidz Islamic boarding school, which primarily focuses on memorizing the Al-Quran. In this boarding school, there are no rules mandating students to use a specific language. Therefore, students are free to use any language (e.g., Indonesian), excluding regional languages due to their diverse regional backgrounds. Besides using Indonesian, they are encouraged to communicate with teachers in Arabic while at the Islamic boarding school. Interestingly, English is rarely used, although there are no explicitly stated rules against it (unofficially). The school's effort to promote the use of Arabic can be observed through several notices placed in different corners of the school, written in both Arabic and Indonesian. This factor contributes to the limited popularity of English among students.

When I initially started teaching, I found myself perplexed about what materials to use because the school did not provide a handbook for me as a new teacher, and the students were also not given one. In this situation, students only possessed a handbook from their previous English teacher, which was authored by the teacher. This book exclusively covered grammar and tenses, limiting the scope of what the teacher could teach to tenses and their application in speaking. Therefore, when initiating the lessons, I opted to commence teaching English with a primary focus on tenses and their practical application in the student's daily lives.

The learning strategy I employ in class focuses on methods I acquired from the English course. Specifically, I concentrate on teaching grammar, especially tenses, through drilling, practicing, and memorizing. To teach tenses, I begin by providing an overview of the definition, followed by presenting several characteristics and time signals associated

with each tense. This approach aims to facilitate comprehension of the characteristics. Subsequently, I introduce formulas and example sentences. In crafting the example sentences, I tailor them to the student environment at the Islamic boarding school, intending to enhance understanding. Despite considering the effectiveness of the teaching strategy, it still faces challenges due to the students' low motivation to learn English, rendering the strategy less effective.

After experiencing these failures, I became increasingly aware of the characteristics and learning preferences of students. Consequently, I initiated a change in my teaching approach by encouraging students to engage in learning beyond the classroom. The learning method I adopted involved drilling and memorization using simple sentences that applied various tenses, such as "*I give you a pen, I am giving you a pen, I have given you a pen, I have been giving you a pen*," etc. By involving students in learning activities outside the classroom, I aimed to create a more enjoyable and active learning experience. This was evidenced by the increased participation of students during drilling and memorization. They showed a greater willingness to join in, in contrast to the limited engagement observed during in-class learning. Encouraged by the success of these strategies, I found motivation to delve deeper into the study of pedagogy.

Amidst my enthusiasm for deepening my pedagogical knowledge, I came across information about the Teacher Professional Program (PPG) scholarship organized by the government. This program aims to address the anticipated teacher retirement in 2024 by offering widespread PPG scholarships. The government pledges to appoint Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) upon the completion of the PPG program. Moreover, the government has established regulations, as outlined in law number 14 of 2005, which stipulates that "*Teachers must possess academic qualifications, competencies, educational certificates, and maintain physical and spiritual health, demonstrating the ability to achieve national education goals*". Attracted by these opportunities and regulations, I decided to participate in this program.

Table 4. The formation of a teacher's professional identity through teaching experience

Personal Experience	Professional Context	External Political Environment	Teacher Professional Identity Construction

• Directly related to social and cultural factors before becoming an English teacher, as explained in the first research question
• Past learning experiences can influence
	• The teaching experience of educators can enhance their sense of pedagogical knowledge to address challenges faced in the teaching process.
	• The success of teachers in solving problems in the teaching process can enhance their motivation to become even more professional teachers.
	• School situation
	  ➤ Lack of interest among students in learning English
	  ➤ Lack of support from the school
		• The need for teacher formation is still lacking.
		• The government that offers PPG scholarships and is also motivated by the assurance of employment/placement after completing PPG."
			• Becoming a professional teacher after gaining valuable experience in teaching and undergoing professional education

the way a teacher teaches.	community ➢ Inadequate learning facilities • The systems and policies in place at the school. ➢ Ineffective lesson scheduling ➢ Lack of awareness and support from teachers to promote the use of English in the school environment	• A policy that requires teachers to participate in professional programs as stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2005

My Learning Experience in a Teacher Professional Program

While participating in this program, I acquired a wealth of new knowledge that was previously unfamiliar to me. This encompassed understanding students' learning styles, discerning their emotions and characteristics, and learning diverse teaching strategies suitable for students' characteristics and current developments. As an integral part of the program, I engaged in practical teaching field experiences, providing me with the opportunity to apply the pedagogical knowledge gained during this teacher professional program. Throughout my teaching practice at school, I encountered numerous experiences that not only influenced my pedagogical development but also contributed to enhancing students' understanding and abilities. The learning techniques that I apply during my practice involve frequently adapting the material to match the learning styles and characteristics of the students. By doing so, the current learning experience brings joy to students and enhances their understanding of the material being studied. These experiences have not only fueled my passion for teaching but have also instilled a strong desire to develop as a professional educator.

I implemented differentiated learning, which facilitates students' diverse learning styles. This is exemplified by the inclusion of videos, images, text, and discussion activities related to the surrounding environment. By utilizing this method, I can offer easy understanding to students since they can relate to the situations and conditions presented in the examples. Consequently, it becomes significantly easier for them to grasp the essence of the material. Thus, through the experience of participating in professional teacher education activities, I have gained a better understanding of teaching strategies and began to understand what meaningful learning means.

Table 5. Formation of teachers' professional identity through a professional education program

Personal Experience	Professional Context	External Political Environment	Teacher Professional Identity Construction
• Reflecting on teaching experiences that may not have been ideal has motivated me to enhance my pedagogical skills. • Got the	• Take professional education • Gain valuable knowledge and experience by	• The need for teacher formation is still lacking • The government has opened PPG scholarships to attract young	• Motivated to become a professional teacher after gaining valuable experience while teaching • Motivated to participate in the teacher professional program due to regulations outlined in Law No. 14 of 2005 and also motivated by the assurance of employment/placement after completing PPG.

| opportunity to participate in the PPG (Teacher et al.) program | participating in PPG | people's interest in becoming teachers and fill the vacancies due to massive retirements. • Policies outlined in Law No. 14 of 2005 | • Motivated to become a professional teacher when gaining valuable experience during the Teacher Professional Program (PPG). • Increased pedagogic skills and the enjoyable sensation in teaching. • More motivated to be able to carry out and implement innovations in learning after participating in PPG |

DISCUSSION

My Personal Experiences (as a student) Impact My Identity as an NNEST

This study describes how I struggled to build my identity as a teacher through my experiences while studying (as a student) and also elucidates my efforts in constructing my identity as a professional non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST). In this discussion, I address the first research question: How does my experience as a student impact my identity as a NNEST?

Concerning learning experiences in forming my identity as a teacher, they are closely related to three aspects: personal history, social environment, and culture, as evidenced in Tables 1 to 3 (Holland et al., 1998; Widodo et al., 2020). However, social environmental factors are the initial aspects that can influence my identity as a teacher indirectly through the experiences of my academic journey as a student (Sakamoto & Furukawa, 2023). As explained by Holland et al. (1998), social aspects refer to situations or conditions that can indirectly influence a person's identity. The social aspects identified in this research encompass various situations and conditions that can influence the culture or habits within an environment, subsequently shaping my identity. These social aspects include those within the school environment, the course environment, and the general environment.

In general, the social-environmental aspect is closely related to the implemented policies, such as the designation of English as an international language that must be mastered. This decision serves as the main indicator that indirectly encouraged me to learn this language, especially after I had a bitter experience when I couldn't speak English (see Table 1). Thus, the existence of these policies and the failures that I have experienced have motivated me to learn English. Meanwhile, the social aspect of the course environment is an aspect where I can find motivation to learn English and also be inspired to become an English teacher. This is because there are several factors, such as existing policies in the English course environment, enjoyable teaching strategies, and friends who share the same frequency. Regarding my teaching experience, I often used the teaching strategies I acquired during my English studies in the course because I find them very interesting to apply in my class. This aligns with the findings of Hsieh et al. (2022), where teachers' teaching methods are often influenced by personal experiences and the social context in which teachers learn.

Shaping My NNEST Professional Identity

In addressing the second research question, we will discuss the factors that shape my identity as a professional Non-Native English Speaking Teacher (NNEST). These factors

include three aspects: personal experience, professional context, and the external political environment, as evidenced in Tables 4 to 5 (Mockler, 2011). However, despite this, certain aspects have a significant influence, particularly the professional context and the external political environment.
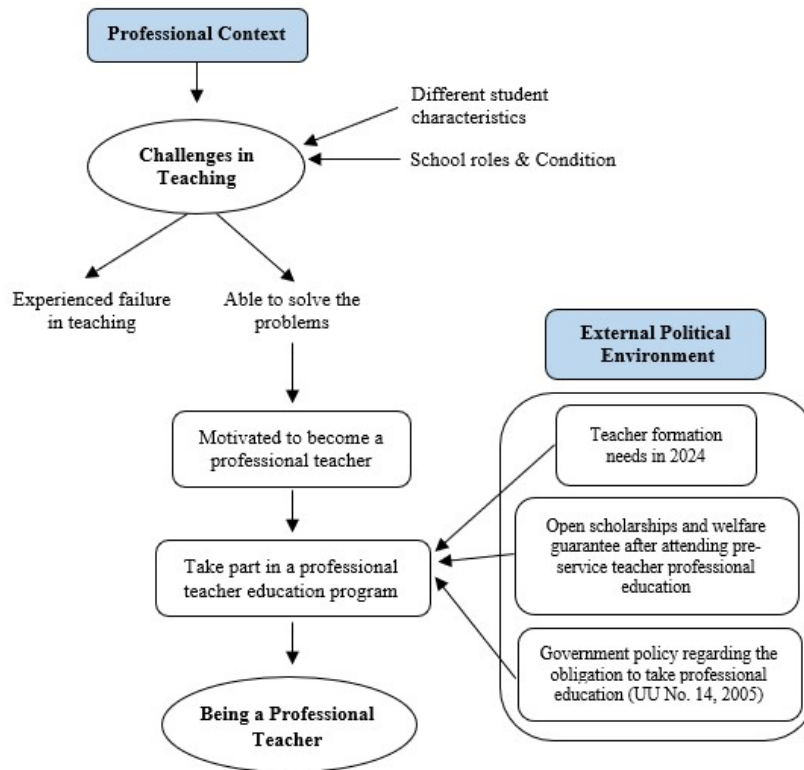
Figure 2. My NNEST professional identity construction

In the professional context, it relates to aspects of my life as a teacher concerning professional education, schools, systems, and culture where I teach (Mockler, 2011). The aspects of the school, system, and culture where I teach are illustrated in Table 4, explaining that my teaching experience is confronted with various challenges, such as diverse student characteristics, school systems, and conditions that are less supportive of enhancing students' English learning. Additionally, my teaching failures were also one of the factors that fueled my enthusiasm for studying pedagogical science and motivated me to become a professional teacher.

Furthermore, it is related to the external political environment, which includes dimensions outside the school, such as policies and discourses in which education is carried out (Mockler, 2011). The findings on the external political environment aspect this time are related to government policies that function to regulate and improve the education system. In this case, these policies have had a positive influence on the development of my professional identity as a teacher. These policies are illustrated by several cases related to the shortage of teachers in state schools due to mass retirements in 2024 and the lack of interest among young people in becoming teachers. Consequently, the government is offering professional education scholarships for new graduates with less than three years of teaching experience, encouraging them to participate and become

teachers. Then, related to policies such as the obligation for the teacher to pursue professional education. By joining the professional teacher program, I began to understand myself as a professional teacher. This is evidenced by a change in my way of thinking and my teaching approach, which is not consistent with the learning strategies I acquired during my English studies in the English courses (see Table 5). However, the strategy I used this time considered and adapted to the needs and characteristics of students.

CONCLUSION

By investigating the formation of my professional identity as a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) in Indonesia, a country with a growing circle, this research consolidates an understanding of the complex and interrelated nature of a teacher's professional identity. It begins with experiences as a student, encompassing several factors such as personal experience social and cultural elements that are interrelated, ultimately impacting the way teachers teach.

The implications of this research provide guidance for various stakeholders, including novice teachers, in constructing their professional identity and stakeholders involved in the education system implemented in schools. By presenting this identity narrative, teachers can more easily construct reflective and critical narratives about the formation of their professional identity. Furthermore, this research can offer valuable insights for policymakers in the education field, encouraging them to pay greater attention to educators' performance through various means. This involves guiding teachers to reflect more deeply on teaching practices and other aspects they may not be aware of in the early stages of their careers, implementing mentoring and collaboration programs to facilitate knowledge exchange and idea sharing among teachers, as well as conducting reflective and constructive observations to support their professional development. These measures aim to create a supportive, safe, and comfortable learning environment for students and to improve the quality of education.

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