

University of Tikrit

College of Education for Humanities

English Department

Methods of Teaching ELT



Language Teacher Identity

Prof. Nagham Qaddori Yahya, Ph.D.

2025-2026

3. Language Teachers' Identities Are Complicated by Their Own or Others' Perceptions of Their Native/Non-Native Speaker Status

Language teachers' identities are influenced by how they and others perceive their native or non-native speaker status. In the teaching profession, the distinction between Native Speakers (NS) and Non-Native Speakers (NNS) often creates challenges for NNS teachers. Many NNS teachers feel **uncertain and lack confidence** because native speakers are often seen as more **legitimate or powerful**, especially in relation to **pronunciation, intelligibility, and even race**.

To address this issue, scholars suggest empowering NNS teachers and promoting the idea of the **multicompetent speaker**, which values bilingual or multilingual abilities and helps teachers view their linguistic knowledge positively rather than as a deficiency.

NS/NNS distinction in teaching – The difference between native and non-native speakers strongly affects language teacher identity. Identity challenges for NNS teachers – Many NNS teachers experience self-doubt and struggle for professional legitimacy, **association with pronunciation, race, and power** – **Native speaker is often linked to standard pronunciation and racial privilege**. Impact on professional development – Overemphasis on native speakerness can limit the development of teaching skills and identity.

4. Language Teachers' Views of Themselves as Cultural Beings Bear Upon Their Cultural Teaching Practices

Language teachers' cultural identities influence how they teach culture in the classroom. **Teachers' intercultural experiences** and cultural affiliations shape **how they see**

themselves as cultural beings and how they approach cultural topics in language teaching. Teachers' cultural identities directly affect their cultural teaching practices.

Many teachers develop bi-cultural or multicultural identities or experiences shape **teachers' beliefs and classroom approaches** teachers often use their personal cross-cultural experiences, such as (international marriage, parenting, or living between cultures), as resources to help students understand linguistics, cultural differences and communication.

The concept of "identity as pedagogy" suggests that teachers' identities are expressed through classroom discussions about culture and are also shaped by the teaching process itself. Teaching culture is connected to the teacher's personal identity ("identity as pedagogy").

Cultural identity is an important part of language teacher identity, but it has been studied less frequently. Intercultural experiences influence teaching practices, especially how teachers present culture in language classes. Teachers often experience tension between their national identity and the target language culture. Personal cross-cultural experiences (e.g., intercultural marriage or living between cultures) shape teachers' beliefs and teaching methods.

New Debates

- the **research approaches used in studies of language teacher identity.** Most studies view teacher identity as a social phenomenon, so researchers usually use social theoretical frameworks and qualitative research methods. They collect

data through different techniques such as **interviews, reflective journals, Classroom observations, and digital tools** or technology such as (blogs, e-journals, online forums, voice recordings) These methods mainly focus on reflective practices.

Although various methods are used, most studies are **short-term (less than six months)**, and only a few are **longitudinal studies**. For data analysis, researchers frequently use **narrative analysis** because personal stories are closely related to **identity construction**. Overall, the research field uses diverse theories, methods, and analytical tools to understand the complex nature of language teacher identity. Teacher identity research is mainly qualitative and based on social theories such as sociocultural theory, activity theory, communities of practice post-structuralism, these theories emphasize that **identity develops through social interaction and experience**. these identities construction are seen as a **social process shaped by social factors**.

Research Approaches

Building upon Izadinia's (2012) recent review of the student teacher identity literature, we notice that language teacher identity scholars generally:

- frame their studies with social theoretical frameworks in qualitative paradigms, reflecting Izadinia's (2012) claim that "researchers consider the process of identity construction a social phenomenon that is largely shaped and understood in light of social factors" (14)

- use a wide range of data collection methods, including “reflective practices” and innovative techniques such as concept maps (Lim 2011)
- conduct studies over relatively short periods of time, usually less than six months
- analyze their data with a variety of analytical tools, notably narrative ones.