REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHERS' IDENTITY

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Abstract

As emerging technologies advance rapidly and shift, teachers are challenged to improve their thought and practice to instill critical minds to take an active part in the knowledge-based society. In reality, students need to learn the required skills of the 21st century that will enable them to succeed for today's economy. According to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) (2007), the learning skills of the 21st century apply to the capability of a) gathering and/or retrieving information, b) organizing and handling information, c) evaluating the consistency, importance and usefulness of information, and d) producing correct information by utilizing established tools. To this end, the identity of teachers has been further challenged, leading to debates and questions about their position. The central goals of today's teacher education are what knowledge do teachers need to learn and what their belief and how they can fulfill their professional development are. In order to help teachers and educating students understand their role and conception of learning in education in the 21st century, this article aims at exploring teachers' identity.

Keywords: *beliefs, knowledge, professional development, teacher identity*

Introduction

Since teaching is focused on interpersonal relations and relationships with others begin through self-knowledge and comprehension, it is considered crucial to teachers to explore the personal self and the professional self in linguistic creation. In reality, such an analysis would probably demonstrate what types of teachers we are, where we are in the learning process, and what still needs to be done to strengthen our practices. We can create a positive future, when Csikszentmihalyi (1993) knows what we are made of, what motivates, what goals we are working for and how we have become human.

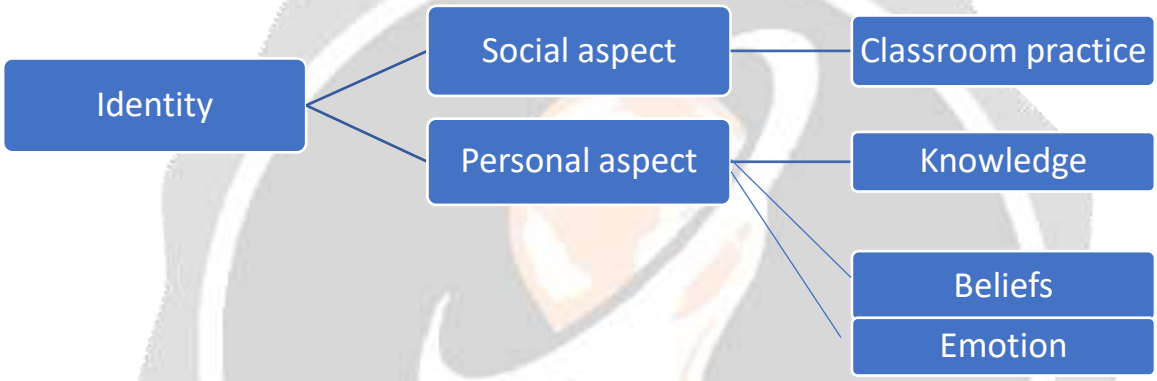
Palmer (1998), who insists that good teaching is focused on the identity (self) and dignity of the teacher (what contributes to the selfhood), also stresses the importance of understanding the "who" or the teacher's personality. The study of the professional selves of teachers was seen as an integral part of the continued development of the profession "as a teaching method is linked to the manner in which teachers see themselves" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 47). Teacher identity can actually be a useful research tool for teacher development.

Teacher identity is useful for research as it considers teachers as entire individuals within and through social contexts who constantly recreate their own perceptions of others, their job characteristics, their professional goals, and their teaching cultures. It is also an instructional resource that teachers and specialists in professional development can use to imagine various comprehensive and situated structures of teacher development. (The City of Olsen, 2008, p. 5) Much of current research on the identity of teachers focusses on teachers ' professional identity creation and growth (e.g., Kelchtermans, 1993), teacher perceptions of their professional roles (Beijaard et al., 2000; Roberts, 1998) and the connection between teacher perceptions about their roles and self-images (Ben-Peretz et al., 2003; Day & Kington, 2008). Nonetheless, more clarity is required concerning the nature and creation of teacher identities in the course of teacher careers.

Further describe this definition, this article attempts further follow a holistic approach. Since Palmer (1998) believes that the inner plot of the learning individual must be completely defined by embarking on three journeys - intellectual (how we and teaching and learning are designed), emotional (as we and our students feel about learning) - and spiritual - and none of them can be ignored. Practices, knowledge, beliefs and emotions of teachers are considered to be part of this professional identity. Since teachers ' professional development is not static but evolves through time, along with some potential ways of flourishing in the language teaching context is addressed.

Teacher Identity

Teacher identification in teacher education has been used and conceptualised in different ways. It is called personal identity, situational identity or occupational identity. Different conceptual frameworks, methods and instruments have been used to explore it, and a number of definitions of its main aspects have been provided. The social and personal aspects as illustrated in Figure 1.



The Social Aspect

In the majority of studies, the teacher identity is explicitly studied from a theoretical point of view (i.e. the creation and growth of professional identity teachers, perceptions of their professional roles and relationships between their teaching role perceptions and their self-image). Indeed, the first question in mind when discussing teacher identity is: What is the teacher's role? With challenging globalization, teacher position has changed as educational experiences broaden and new skills are sought in a globalized world and the exponential growth of education technology. Teachers are no longer the only suppliers of information, but instead serve as advocates of active research by encouraging and supporting their learning processes. They have different responsibilities, from the design of classes, to the management of classrooms, to student assessment, to teaching assessments and to collaborating with colleagues and parents.

The Personal Aspect

Palmer (1998) interprets the role of teachers in a broad way and only focuses on the technical aspects of teaching. The author maintains the integrity of the intelectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of the identity of the teacher which lead to "fresh totality." According to him, this totality does not mean perfection, rather "means truer knowing that I am everything" (Palmer, 1998, p. 13). Therefore, work has been aimed at exploring the relationships between teacher recognition and several associated components, such as teacher competence, professional development, language learning and the role of emotions. Teacher awareness, values, and feelings must be taken into account in order to examine the intimate or unseen dimension of the teacher's identity.

Teacher Knowledge

Teacher knowledge, also termed teacher cognition (e.g., Borg, 2003, 2006; Grossman & Richert, 1988; Tamir, 1988; Woods, 1996), has been considered as a valuable component of teacher identity. Johnston et al. (2005) highlight such connection claiming that “teacher knowledge is seen in relation to teachers' lives and the contexts in which they

work" (p. 54). Yet, the question that can be raised here concerns the kind of knowledge base second/foreign language teachers need to possess. Since the mid-1980s the literature on the knowledge base of teacher education has grown in general education and in second language teacher education (e.g., Bartels, 2005; Fradd & Lee, 1998). According to Day and Conklin (1992) the knowledge base of second language teacher education consists of four types of knowledge:

Teaching experience, also referred to as teacher awareness, was considered a critical component of teacher's identity (e.g. Borg, 2003, 2006; Grossman & Richert, 1988; Tamir, 1988; Woods, 1996). Johnston et al . (2005) highlighted that "teacher knowledge is viewed in relation to the lives of teachers and their contexts" (p. 54). The problem here however is that second-language teachers need to have the kind of knowledge base. In general education and teacher education, literature on the basis of teacher education has increased since the mid-1980s (e.g., Bartels, 2005; Fradd & Lee, 1998). The knowledge base for second-language teacher training according to Day and Conklin (1992) consists of four kinds:

1. *Content knowledge*: Awareness of the subject matter; e.g., teachers of the English language ESL / EFL (as illustrated by syntax, textual, phonological and pragmatic courses) and literary and cultural aspects of English.
2. *Pedagogic knowledge*: Awareness of general teaching methods and activities (decision taking, control of classes, review, etc.).
3. *Pedagogic content knowledge*: How to reflect knowledge of content in a number of ways so that students can appreciate it; how to explain the subject matter, how to interpret their answers and provide positive feedback; how to help them solve their issues are all components of knowledge of pedagogical content. (How to teach the various language skills, assessment and production of TESOL content, EFL / ESL assessments, etc.)
4. *Support knowledge*: Awareness of the various disciplines that inform our approach to English teaching and learning; e.g., psycholinguistics, linguistics, acquisition of second languages, sociolinguistics, research methods.

In addition, since educational technologies are commonly promoted and used in language classrooms, Koehler and Mishra (2008) emphasize the value of technical knowledge (TK) that includes how to use technology to enhance student learning, technological content knowledge (TCK) that covers knowledge of how to use technology to enhance the sharing of subjects taught, and tech knowledge

The focus in constructing teacher knowledge is also based on the prior experiences of student teachers and how their current knowledge affects how they learn and what they derive from the teacher education courses (Calderhead & Robson, 1991). Calderhead and Robson (1991) refer to Lortie's (1975) definition of 'observation learning' which leads to the creation of a collection of values, commitments, guidelines and practices" (Calderhead & Robson, 1991, p. 1). Similarly, Clandinin and Connelly (1999) who developed the notion of "personal practical knowledge" maintain that teacher knowledge is derived from their previous experience, it is learned in context, and it is expressed in practice.

Between pre-service teachers, the relationship between teacher awareness and identification has been investigated. For example, Smith (2007) argues that professional identity training for preservice teachers is complementary and related to the creation of teacher competence in teacher education programmes. He therefore believes that these programs will concentrate both on the identification work of pre-service teachers and on the growth of information. In the same vein, Varghese (2005) emphasizes the role of the expertise of teachers in building up their professional image by stating: "teacher knowledge is seen in relation to the lives of teachers and the contexts in which they operate" (p. 54).

But, as Richards and Lockhardt (1994) put it, "what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe" (p.29). Indeed, research results show that the values of teachers have a greater impact than the experience of the teachers on how they schedule their classes, on the types of decisions they make, and on their general practice in the classroom (Pajares, 1992). Therefore, the beliefs teachers hold are responsible for shaping their identity and need to be considered here.

Teacher Beliefs

For Borg (2001), "a belief is a mental condition that has as its substance a proposition recognized as valid by the person holding it, although the person must acknowledge that other people must hold alternative beliefs" (p.187). Growing instructor holds a collection of values that define pedagogical knowledge goals, and how students continue with their learning. Those are called pedagogical principles, i.e. a common form of conviction that teachers hold regarding the essence of teaching, and how to execute guidance in the classroom (Chai, 2010). Some of the most common distinctions made between beliefs and knowledge, according to Pajares (1992), is that beliefs are correlated with subjectivity and emotion while knowledge appears to be more objective. Such subjectivity is illustrated in Richardson 's concept of teacher beliefs which states that "the beliefs of teachers are the psychological understandings, assumptions, or propositions that are believed to be valid" (cited in Tondeur, 2008, p. 2543). Since pedagogical beliefs appear to be large, they are "too context-free" (p. 316) as Pajares (1992) says.

Teachers' value systems are embedded in various sources: their own experience as language learners, teachers, educational or research-based values of personal causes, and beliefs derived from a methodology or method of instruction (Richards & Lockhardt, 1994).

Indeed, a general opinion exists that beliefs depend on the experience of teachers and are valid for the person who holds them (Freeman, 2002, p. 11; Kasouta & Malatmisa, 2009, p. 69). In addition, "they can be modified or reoriented as a result of feedback from other practitioners and interventions form of operation" (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 12; Díaz & Bastías, 2012, p. 248).

There were suggestions of various forms of pedagogical values. For example, Pajares (1992) cites four key categories of educational beliefs, namely teacher effectiveness (affecting student success); epistemological beliefs (related to knowledge); success of teachers or students (related to the various motivational spheres); and self-efficacy (confidence in performing a task). Kumaravadivelu (2012) makes a distinction between "central and peripheral beliefs" (p.67). The former are more influential in influencing instructional strategies for teachers, while the latter may create divergence between what teachers claim to be doing and what they are actually doing in the classroom. This distinction between central and peripheral values reflects the diversity of teachers in their practices.

As aforementioned, teachers' beliefs are —far more influential than knowledge in determining teachers 'planning, decision making and attitudes in the classroom thus influencing students' learning as Davis and Andrzejewski (2009) state that their beliefs guide their decision making, behavior, and interactions with students and, in turn, create an objective reality in the classroom, what students experience as real and true. For example, from their research, Melodie Rosenfeld and Sherman Rosenfeld (2008) say that successful teachers operate on the premise that all students should learn, meet the needs of diverse learners and believe that teachers should intervene to make a difference. Badizadegan (2015) found that the pedagogical values of teachers affect their attitudes to the introduction of technology into their classrooms. Research also provides overwhelming evidence (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 86; Masuda, 2012, p.239) indicating the link between beliefs and practice in teacher education which is central to understanding the standard of language teaching and learning.

Furthermore, beliefs research indicates that "teachers who have explicitly established theoretical beliefs teach in a way that reflects those beliefs" (Youngs & Qian, 2013, p.251; Zhang, 2013, p.71). Therefore, it is important to be conscious of one's pedagogical values in order to align them with our activities and to prevent any form of discord. This can be achieved through systematic reflection as Farrell (2013) maintains “the systematic reflection of the alignment between beliefs and practices can help teachers develop an understanding of both what they want to do in their classrooms and the changes they want to implement to their approaches to teaching and learning (p.14). To this end teacher education systems need to provide teachers with opportunities to focus on and surface their values.

Teacher Emotions

Different emotions represent various theoretical perspectives including physiological, metaphysical, social, sociological, feminist, organizational, anthropological and psychological perspectives (Oatley, 2000). However, there is a general opinion that emotion is multi-componential; that is, each emotion consists of a number of more or less unordered component sets, jointly triggered by how an event is evaluated and by the propensities of components (Scherer 2000). Sutton and Wheatley (2003), for example, refer to components of emotion as assessment, subjective

experience, physiological transition, expressions of emotion, and impulses for action. Izard (2010) uses the terms neural systems, response systems, feelings or a feeling state, expressive behaviour, antecedent cognitive assessment and cognitive interpretation while referring to similar components. Thus, emotions are the basis of feelings that are "mental events that form the foundation of our minds" (Damasio, 2003, p. 28).

During their work teachers experience that emotions (Keller, 2014), which are caused by several factors and their interplay (Schutz, 2014). Researchers' emphasis on examining the role of emotions in teaching and teacher identity formation has been on exploring teacher change and teacher identity (e.g., Day & Leitch, 2001; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; O'Connor, 2008. Empirical studies have shown that while teachers communicate with various people (colleagues, parents, etc.), their experiences with their students tend to be the most effective in terms of evoking positive or negative emotions (e.g., Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Negative teacher emotions (e.g., rage, disappointment, etc.) have been found to be triggered by a lack of control in the classroom (Tsouloupas et al. 2010), while their positive emotions can be related to positive experiences with students, such as expressing appreciation of the teacher's work and being actively engaged in learning (Hargreaves 2001).

Emotions from teachers play a key role in the learning process. Research findings have shown that emotions can affect teacher motivation and cognition (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Being nervous, frustrated or tired, a teacher is likely not to concentrate on communicating, losing control of the classroom and being demotivated to achieve his / her intended goals. Emotions may also have an effect on memory. Memory study shows that emotional stimuli are often more reminiscent than unemotional stimuli (Mogg & Bradley, 1999). Emotions have also been found necessary for sound decision-making (Damasio, 1994); and good clinical practice (Goleman, 2005).

It follows that, emotions are central to teacher identity building. They contribute to shaping the state of mind and behaviors of teachers in the classroom and thus affect the standard of teaching and the learning of students. Accordingly, the emotional aspect of teacher identity will give the teacher himself a richer understanding. Therefore, it is important that teacher education systems allow teachers to develop their own teaching emotional experiences, to inform their pedagogies. Through this they will establish 'philosophies and emotional backgrounds' (Woodward, 1991; Rousmaniere et al., 1997). Teachers also need to understand how their feelings influence their activities by constantly focusing upon them.

In conclusion, identity as a teacher is a dynamic concept of personal and social aspects. The practices, knowledge, beliefs and emotions of the teachers must be bound to their identities. Yet, teacher identity is not a fixed property of a teacher, but rather a process that changes as teachers gain experience from classroom practice. Still, experience alone is not enough to achieve their professional growth. To this end, professional development opportunities are critical for teachers to counteract the issues facing their profession.

Professional development

Several words have been used to define the professional development of teachers such as in-service teacher education, personnel development, teacher development, professional development, professional growth, and change of teachers. Technical growth as per Day (1999) applies to:

> The process by which teachers evaluate, renew and expand their dedication as agents of change to the moral intent of teaching, alone and with others; and through which they acquire and grow critically the information, skills , and emotional intelligence necessary to good professional thought, preparing, and practice with children , youth, and colleagues during their teaching lives (p.4).

This notion of acting to bring about change is also underlined by Guskey's (2002) interpretation of this concept: "systematic attempts to bring about improvement in teachers' teaching activities, in their attitudes and values, and in students' learning outcomes" (p. 381). Being implemented by the teacher or the school system, professional development includes the encouragement and ability of the teachers to learn and obligation to implement change.

As the concept of teacher learning is considered a life-long learning process, the notion of continuing professional development in education (CPD) is gaining traction. Indeed, there is a common belief that the active role of professionals in their own growth processes is beneficial (Hill, 2000; Stuart & Thurlow, 2000; Crookes &

Chandler, 2001). A growing number of studies have shown that successful career growth increases the quality of education (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Hixson & Tinzmann, 1990; Sander & Rivers, 1997). This is by enhancing the teaching competencies of individual teachers and the organizational structure as a whole.

Within professional growth, teachers "seek to restructure their knowledge and beliefs, and incorporate their new information into their practical knowledge on the basis of teaching experience" (van Driel et al., 2001, p. 140). This experience needs to create positive feelings among teachers to attain this goal. Harland and Kinder (1997) maintain that the excitement and satisfaction arising from the activities are high-quality CPD indicators. This was supported by the finding by Edmonds and Lee (2002) that teachers thought that the most successful CPD was that which led to increased trust and enthusiasm.

In fact, the literature has proposed multiple CDP models. Freeman (1991), for example, agrees that the expertise of teachers is due to their career experiences which range from professional to personal perspectives. Compared to him, the stages of these experiences are: the experience of imitation, the experience of control, the experience of competence, the experience of humanness, and the experience of balance. In the Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) model , there are two domains: *the teacher's professional world of practice* that includes the personal domain (teacher knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes), the domain of practice (professional experimentation), and the domain of consequence (salient outcomes); and the external domain (including sources of information, stimulus, or support) that is outside the domain.

Conclusion

The definition of what constitutes the identity of teachers has also been the topic of study and discussion between scholars and educators. While there is no specific definition of this term, there has been a general consensus on its holistic existence, in addition to the need to pursue it to promote teacher education and vocational development programs. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this article to explain this kind of professional identity by taking into account the social and personal dimensions including: teachers' practices, knowledge, beliefs and emotions.

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