EFL Teacher Identity Development during Teacher Professional Education Programme

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the development identity of teacher participants of PPG (teacher professional education programme). The development of the identity is considered urgent to explore especially because PPG is conducted fully online facilitated by an LMS (learning management system). Instructors and participants were required to conference online and did assignments online as well as teaching practice. The current study was conducted based on content analysis method involving six respondents. Data was interpreted from recordings during online discussion session. The research findings indicate that the learning experience during PPG the participants have deals with the new roles they have to perform within the area of technology, pedagogy, and collaboration. The new roles signify the participant development of identity during the programme.

Keywords
- collaboration
- role
- identity
- facilitator
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Introduction

Previous research related to the development of the teacher's professional identity (hereinafter IPG, identitas profesi guru) shows that teachers benefit a lot after participating in a professional improvement program. One of the benefits is that teachers are able to reflect before and after carrying out the learning process (Main & Slater, 2022). Another benefit is the enrichment of pedagogical knowledge and increased skills in collaborating with fellow teachers (Andersson, et al., 2022). Through collaboration, teachers can share knowledge and learning resources. Besides that, it can be medium when other teachers need help and vice versa. Nambiar and Thang (2016) also revealed that through the teacher professional development program, participants are happy to train themselves to develop collaboration skills among fellow participants.

IPG is generally constructed by both internal and external factors. Internally, the identity built by the teacher is influenced by self-confidence, motivation, personal aspirations, and mastery of knowledge related to the main task of the teacher. Conversely, an identity that is formed externally is an emblem or brand pinned on the teacher by another party. It is common to hear expressions teacher teacher as a facilitator and teacher as a learning partner. All of these are identities emerging as a result other parties' reading of teacher roles both factually and philosophically which Beyers (2019), Nakamura (2017), and Tao (2020) call 'assigned identity'. In other words, teacher identities are seen based on the roles performed. Such identities are also termed teacher role identity (Farrell, 2011; van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, & Beishuizen, 2017).

In an effort to see how a teacher performs in pursuing her profession, it is important to first understand what IPG is built by the person concerned. Empirical findings show that a teacher who has aspirations from the start as a teacher does not always develop his identity as a teacher smoothly. The identity built by a teacher is dynamic when the person concerned interacts directly with the school (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). Many teachers find in their first classroom experiences thinking of choosing between enforcing discipline rules or focusing on discussing subject matter. This one aspect is enough to influence her definition as a teacher in the classroom. This shows that the IPG is formed as a result of meaning-making of the experiences possessed by the teacher (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). More specifically, teacher identity is very much influenced by past and present experiences (Jenifer & Mbato, 2020)

From the perspective of postmodernism, identity is understood as a dynamic entity. Identity always has multi-identity properties, experiences changes, and experiences phases of discontinuity and continuity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). In the context of IPG, teachers are often identified as a profession with multiple identities (Suarcaya, 2021). The nature of multi-identity develops from the definition that humans are social beings. This means that a teacher is not only in a particular social group, but at the same time is a member of several other social groups.
Changes in identity, especially IPG always occur due to environmental demands. In a time when standard regimes did not yet exist, teachers had considerable power in designing learning materials and determining assessment tools to measure students' progress in learning (Williams, 2014). When the curriculum begins to be standardised in terms of content and assessment of learning outcomes, teacher power is disrupted and affects her identity (Cutri & Mena, 2020). A study shows that teacher identity is constructed by way of negotiating the identity in the teacher education programme (Yazan, 2017). This study finds that teacher identities constructed are dynamic.

When identity is challenged, there are two simultaneous events following it: the discontinuous phase and the continuous phase. The discontinuous phase shows that there is identity negotiation in which irrelevant identities are abandoned and experience discontinuity (Steadman, Kayi-Aydar, & Vogel, 2018). However, at the same time, relevant identities experience strengthening and sustainability. These two phases arise when teachers are faced with new challenges in their environment.

With the rapid development of information technology, professional improvement programs carried out online also have a big impact on participating teachers. Participants through online training have to be able to develop skills in using online devices and applications as well as increasing their awareness of the enormous potential of the internet to support learning (Holmes, 2013; Ally, 2019). Another study finds that teachers learn how to collaborate during teacher professional development (Main & Slater, 2022) both in school and online. Similar findings are reported by Andersson, et al. (2022) in that teachers who are participating in professional development programme are keen to experience collaborative practices with colleague at school.

The need for more collaborative opportunities and practices from participants of a teacher professional development is also reported by Navidinia (2021). The teacher participants are aware that collaboration with other teachers is the gate to successful teaching. The key to the successful collaboration is the opportunity for the constructive dialogue to take place in a professional development programme (Prestridge, 2018). She further suggests that a teacher professional development should adopt on three basic principles: investigation, reflection, and constructive dialogue for the programme to take effect. Other study further shows that continuous teacher professional development programs remain attractive to teachers as a means of personal and professional development (Dasoo & van der Merwe Muller, 2020).

The studies above show that teacher professional development programs have been largely needed by teachers in improving their qualifications at teaching. The findings above also signs that teachers when given a chance are willing to collaborative and seem to be aware that individualism reduces chances to make progress (Hongboontri & Jantayasakorn, 2016). Participants also increase their confidence in carrying out their duties. Unfortunately, studies that explore the progress of identity development mostly involve beginning teacher and teacher candidate (Aneja, 2016; Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013; Steadman, Kayi-Aydar, & Vogel, 2018; Yazan, 2017). Furthermore, studies on teacher identity during teacher professional development program have not been well documented in the literature. For this reason, this study is proposed to explore the development of participants identity during the teacher professional education program (hereinafter PPG).
Specifically, this study aims to look at the identity that teachers build as a process of learning during the PPG programme.

**Method**

This research was designed based on the inductive content analysis model (Bori, 2020) by focusing on data in the form of data transcript. Based on this model, the implied meaning can be understood and interpreted through sentence-by-sentence analysis (Simons, 2014). Meaning can be made holistic by considering the contextual aspects of the text itself.

Respondents to this study were six English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers who had participated in 2021 PPG programme. The respondents, for the sake of maintaining their confidentiality, are coded as AB, AN, AR, DM, DU, and ET. They have teaching experiences ranging from 3-7 years at either junior or senior high school. Before pandemic, the schools where they taught relied very much on face-to-face teaching. When pandemic was taking place, teachers and student were made to activities online despite limitation in terms of communication infrastructure. This experience was very much influencing their readiness and confidence in the PPG programme.

Discussions via video conferences during the programme were recorded. The records become data to reveal the teacher identity development during the programme which was conducted fully online.

Data collected from recordings were transcribed and analysed. Focus of the analysis was on the roles of teacher emerging in the data (Farrell, 2011). The following are stages of the analysis based on Simons’ (2014) three main activities: sense making, theme identification, and examination of patterns.

1. The data in transcript form was read carefully to feel or gain an understanding related to the meanings stated by respondents (Saldaña, 2014);
2. The data was read again, phrases that have the potential to lead to teacher roles are underlined and marked for easy tabulation;
3. The data that has been underlined is transferred to table and codified by topic;
4. The same topics are then synthesised into themes;
5. The themes that were successfully synthesized were presented in the findings.

**Results**

The purpose of this research is to explore the teacher's identity which is reflected in the role performed (Farrell, 2011) that is constructed and demonstrated in carrying out her activities. Understanding the identity built by the teacher is very important in order to find out whether the teacher can carry out his duties as he should. Although identity is theorised as a construct of various elements, in this study teacher identity is focused on professional roles embraced by the respondents.

The results of the data analysis show that the teacher identity is characterised by the roles using technology to facilitate learning and roles related to pedagogy.

**Teacher Identity Developed during PPG**
Data related to the research question 'What identity is developed during PPG?' shows that the majority of respondents experienced a period full of obstacles in their capacity as teachers. Various obstacles were encountered in trying to catch up with the participants' pace with PPG activities. Respondents were struggling to develop skills dealing with technology-mediated communication.

**Roles Dealing with use of technology**

The main obstacle is developing skills in the use of information technology. The use of this technology started with their participation in PPG. The roles built dealing with technology during the PPG programme are online teacher, video maker, video editor, and content maker.

Considering that PPG was carried out online, respondents were experiencing virtual interactions in cyberspace for the first time, working on certification program assignments, and also conducting online teaching. Most of the respondents were initially unfamiliar with the Google meet, Zoom, Whatsapp applications.

Previously I also didn't know what Zoom was like, what Google Meet was like, and also Whatsapp. By participating in this activity, I also gained new knowledge here, sir. So by taking advantage of this IT, I think this makes it easier for me as a teacher to deliver material [besides] making it easier for students to get material (AR).

In one of recordings, one respondent stated that PPG had forced participants to be able to use the video conferencing application both in the capacity as a participant and as a host. With the experience of using this video conferencing application, participants can use it in the online learning process at school.

In addition to using the video conferencing application, respondents must also make and edit videos, and upload them to the PPG system. All participants did not experience any problems when making videos because all participants' cellphones had video-making and camera applications. The obstacle faced was when they had to cut and reduce the duration of the video from 2 hours of lessons to only half. Video editing skills became a challenge for all participants because these skills required specific applications and were usually not available built-in on cellphones. Editing video was the most challenging task faced by participants. Respondents had to learn from the beginning how to edit a video. Some participants were willing to learn from Youtube and shared their new information to other participants as stated in the following script.

The first cycle of the teaching, my video was edited by my colleague from Manggarai Mr. R. But in the third cycle, there were enough time for me to learn video editing. Finally I could make it in the third cycle of teaching. (AN)

At the end of the third teaching cycle, the role of becoming a video editor was successfully built by AN who was struggling in the beginning. In the first and second cycle of practice teaching, he had to rely on a colleague assistance in editing his videos.

Another respondent, DM, learned how to be a content creator in by uploading video to one of the social media platforms.

[PPG’s experience] was invaluable to me because before that I didn't know how to edit a video then how to add that video to my YouTube account. (DM)
DM, a participant in the PPG admitted that he was eventually able to edit a video and to be a content maker at Youtube. He informed in the discussion that he was also able to make an account and upload teaching videos to Youtube as his contents.

**Roles Dealing with Pedagogy**

Data also shows that respondents can create learning content using Google Forms. In the context of pedagogy, respondents built their roles as a learning material creator, project-based learning designer, and learning assessment analyst.

PPG allows participants to experience working with online application to create learning material. AB learned implicitly that the material created needed some adjustment for online learning.

> I create materials with learning applications such as Google Forms and use Google Classroom to teach online. That's because I know the app from the lecturer's guidance. (AB)

This script shows that one participant learn new things from the instructor, the tutor, who guides them when creating the material.

This script shows that one respondent designed her teaching on the basis of project. Yet she knew that she could not let her students work independently without her virtual facilitation.

> In my worksheet there are project-based learning activities. The activity is a guided activity. So students cannot do it alone because there must be a teacher's role in the process of working on the project (DU)

PPG focused on teacher's practicing project-based learning. DU responded this by designing her learning on the basis of project. She knew the limit when to let her students work independently in group and when to facilitate them.

The last role built by respondents during the PPG programe is the role as an online assessor, to assess student learning by determining preconditions which should be fulfilled prior to assessing.

> While at the previous school, we had never done an assessment plan beforehand. But at PPG, we have to do a needs analysis before the assessment is carried out. (ET)

ET experienced that he had to conduct a need analysis prior to assessing his the result of his student learning. The analysis had never been practiced before at his school.

**Roles Dealing with Collaboration**

Data also shows that there is collaboration activity recorded in the discussion. Online teaching required by the programme made situation difficult especially for DU. Yet at the same time she utilised the benefit of online teaching by using a group of students from Bali as her potential students for her practice teaching.

> Because it's online I can't use my students to make learning videos. They are constrained by a budget and internet connection. So I discussed with Mr. D and I agreed to use his students in Bali as a substitute. (DU)
The discussion between DU and D resulted in a solution to use D’s students for DU’s student in her practice teaching. The collaboration has widened DU experiences with teaching online.

At the end of the reflective discussion session prior to conclusion of the PPG program, one respondent stated in confidence that the programme has enabled him to catch up his skills and competence in using technology to support learning.

After learning all [online applications to support learning], I feel that our abilities are the same as teachers in Java and in Bali. (AB)

Such expression was the one showing teacher confidence after having successfully performed roles as video maker, video editor, content creator, and online learning manager during the programme.

**Discussion**

The findings presented above indicate that in the beginning of the programme respondents were beginners in terms of using information technology for learning. They positioned themselves as students who were new to information technology dealing with several applications such as video conferencing, video makers, material sources, and test applications. Respondents also struggled to be able to use the application in practice in class. This struggle is not only struggle in effort but also struggle to redefine and claim their identity (Beucher, Handsfield, & Hunt, 2019).

Because they were new, the respondents were trying hard to integrate learning support applications in their learning designs. From discussions with lecturers and tutors, they got new insights regarding the use of these applications. Thus, the role they built was that of a novice user for an online learning application. This shows that respondents have utilised the community of practice for constructing new roles (Wenger, 1998).

The data shows that the pressing issues the teachers faced are related to the use of technological media to support online classroom learning activities. The results of the analysis provide an overview of the respondents having to adapt to current conditions and adjust their role as teachers (Steadman, Kayi-Aydar, & Vogel, 2018; Yazan, 2017).

So far, the respondents have mostly worked with laptops to prepare learning materials, such as lesson plans and learning media. The respondents' roles as a technology user to prepare learning tools, make media presentations, search for and select multimedia, and use online applications have become an integral part of the teacher herself and characterise them as the future digital teacher (Ally, 2019).

The findings from the data analysis further indicate that teachers experience role dynamics which are grouped into three major themes, namely roles related to technology, pedagogy, and collaboration. The first is technology has placed respondents with new roles in teaching-related activites. With the training experience gained at PPG, respondents can further use some applications such as video maker and editing, and learning resources. The use of video applications have been very clearly stated in the findings. The roles of video making and editing have increased respondents confidence in being a teacher. Additionally, The requirement of PPG to teach online has made respondents to learn and use learning management system,
such as Google Classroom. One of the online learning management applications is Google Classroom. In its implementation, respondents used this application to save the results of student assignments and also provide feedback. Some of the materials and assignments were also made using Google Forms.

Apart from Google Classroom, the application used to communicate directly is Whatsapp (WA). Respondents chose to use this application over video conferencing-based applications for the reason that it can be accessed using a simple cell phone and save on data packages (Holmes, 2013). The use of this app also enables the respondents to answer student inquiries timely and send assignments for learning materials (Martin, Ritzhaupt, Kumar, & Budhrani, 2019). With the activities of communicating extensively via communication app during PPG, the respondents can gain experience of how to maintain communication with students from a distance. Facilitation can be done online by the respondents to support the student learning. By managing the learning process online, teachers must add skills and broaden insights related to managing online learning (Yuliastini, Artini, & Santosa, 2021). Additionally, they must become online facilitators during the learning process (Farrell, 2011). Online teaching is a disruption which has placed teachers in a difficult position (Cutri & Mena, 2020) nd has made them to embrace new roles, managing online learning which also means being an online facilitator.

Pedagogy is the second theme appear in the findings. Some aspects which enable respondents to embrace new roles are online learning management system, online material resources, and assessment. Google classroom is the most widely used learning platform because it is so far free. The respondents practiced to use this platform and experienced to teach online. They practiced to navigate the platform and learn to know the features.

From the aspect of material development, technology also enables respondents to play a new role by working more online. Material selection is now mostly sourced from digital repositories such as YouTube and other social media. Through a digital repository, teachers can select ready-made learning materials. The only problem that becomes a barrier for respondents when choosing online media is the suitability of the content of the material with the planned learning topics. Additionally, during the online teaching practices at the end stage of PPG, the respondents provided learning materials in the form of assignments to students. The materials were partly made from Google Forms. They learned and practiced using Google Forms and then integrate the assignments in the Google Classroom.

Besides designing learning activity, respondents were challenged when doing online assessment. Apart from integrity issues, teachers use several alternative uses of online applications to assess the learning process. One of the applications used is Google Form. This application is used to assess student understanding. With some of the existing features, the teacher can make objective questions or essays depending on the purpose of the assessment. The findings show that respondents chose to use objective questions because the final test results could be directly processed by the application in the form of a number processing document. This feature is felt to really help teachers save time in conducting assessments.

The last aspect of the findings is collaboration. This theme is the least discussed in the data. With the format of the PPG, the respondents had to be online collaborators. Respondents experienced to collaborate online in every individual assignments during PPG. The most visible is what is admitted by one respondent when a
respondent, DU, has to share to another respondent her problem with teaching practice. Because of the discussion, a solution is achieved. Such a telecollaboration provides essential experience to both respondents which will influence their roles as telecollaborators (Han & Chunsheng, 2018; Çiftci & Savas, 2017).

To conclude, in the context of learning assessment, the teacher builds new roles not only as an online assessor but also as a technology user, online grade manager, and also as a technology user when checking student answers. On the one hand, the new roles make it easier for teachers to check student answers. On the other hand, the teacher's work increases because they have to re-learn using new applications and how to manage online learning documents.

**Conclusion**

This study aims to identify the development of teacher participants of PPG. The development of the identity becomes important especially because PPG is conducted fully online facilitated by an LMS. Instructors and participants meet online and do their assignments online as well as teaching practice.

The research findings indicate that the new skills acquired during PPG fall within the area of use of technology, pedagogy, and collaboration. The use of technology has increased the repertoire of teacher roles in terms of how to use new content creating application dealing with video making and editing, social media to support learning, and resources of online learning materials.

Additionally, teachers also increase their teaching roles in the aspect of pedagogy. The respondents are aware that some applications can be used to manage learning and deliver learning materials. As presented in the findings, Google Classroom is used as a learning management system by the respondents. Additionally, Google forms is used as platform to prepare materials and also assessment.

Finally, teachers also experience collaboration. This collaboration is characterized by constructive dialogue among participants. With this experience, the respondent can collaborate with other teachers to widen their knowledge and competence.

**References**


