

## **Book Review:** **Theory and Practice in Second Language Teacher Identity<sup>1</sup>**

*Reviewed by*

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**[Sadeghi, K. & Ghaderi, F. (Eds.) (2022). *Theory and practice in second language teacher identity: Researching, theorising and enacting*. Springer.]**

Edited by Karim Sadeghi and Farah Ghaderi, *Theory and Practice in Second Language Teacher Identity: Researching, Theorising, and Enacting* is quite timely since it concentrates on the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with all its novel challenges faced by teachers globally. It is especially an invaluable resource for fledgling researchers who desire to get a glimpse of the current position of language teacher identity research, where it stood in the past, and the destination it is moving toward. It is also a must-read book for experts in the field to ponder and gain a broader perspective on language teacher identity to know where to steer their research in the post-pandemic 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The editors have divided the volume into three main parts addressing a multiplicity of constructs. These three major sections include Theoretical Stances (concepts and theories in researching second language teacher identity), Identity Development of Pre-service L2 teachers (with a more practical focus including studies on second language pre-service teachers' identities in a variety of contexts), and finally, Pandemic, Technology, and In-service L2 teacher's Identity Development (focusing on in-service teachers' identity construction and the role of technology during the COVID-19 pandemic).

After a foreword by Jack Richards, the introductory chapter by the editors highlights the growing interest in teacher identity and, more specifically, language teacher identity (differentiating between the two). Next, a systematic review of language teacher identity research categorises the primary and secondary focus of studies during the last decade, their adopted research methods, tools, theoretical framework, and implications.

Part I of the book continues with a theoretical chapter, with Chapter 3 examining local teachers' identities during globalisation. Thai teachers' role as providers of knowledge rather than scaffolders or facilitators is questioned by Hayes. Next, Thompson examines the identity formation of beginner teachers. The author introduces the context and roles of new teachers as learners in the university and teachers in school and how they intersect in a complex way to form identity. Reflections of 18 applied linguistics scholars from 15 different countries in Chapter 5 illuminate the influence of social, cultural, and political factors on identity construction. In Part III of the book (i.e., Chapters 18 and 19), Jenelle Reeves touches upon theoretical instances of language teacher agency that are investigated empirically. This first section of the book ends with an essay on the intercultural aspect of teacher identity by Lesley Harbon. The quotation from Farrell (2017), "Who I am is how I teach," clearly indicates that teacher identity is related to teachers' personal and professional lives. The Chapter proposes art-informed pedagogy in intercultural language education curricula as a way of facilitating meaning mediation and underscores the influence of contextual factors on teacher identity.

The invited chapters in Part II unravel pre-service teachers' identities in various contexts. Li Li, for example, analyses pre-service Chinese teacher identity construction using applied conversation analysis in the UK, while Ping Yang studies ten pre-service TESOL teachers in Australia who work assisting learners from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Chapter 10 relates student teachers' visualisations of their future identity in Finland, a concept that is analysed in the Iranian context in the final chapter of the book. Chapter 11 focuses on the analysis of the author's ethical self-formation. Going against resistance, Yazan analyses his own identity as a language teacher and educator. The following chapter describes a Chinese ESL teacher in the US whose identity has shifted from a focus on language proficiency (being a non-native speaker) to professional knowledge (working as an expert in the field). This change in identity coincides with chapters describing the pandemic (Part III of the volume). It seems that Australian teachers have lost their confidence with the rapid conversion to online education, and Anne Burns underscores the influence of social (e.g.,

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institute), cognitive (e.g., pedagogy, role and relationships), and emotional (e.g., role as a teacher, online medium) factors on identity. Technology integration is examined in Chapter 14, which documents the interaction between technology and identity, and stresses its impact on teacher identity.

The change in teacher identity moves beyond ethnic boundaries in the following chapter (Chapter 15), as it pictures a black American teacher's experiences during adjustment in the UAE and how it defined her identity. Chapter 16 is about researcher-participants who are engaged in a longitudinal study, examining the change in their identity over five years and how their past selves related to their present and future. Next, the graphic self-representations by Barbarroja introduce a novelty in how narrative inquiry is done and provide the readers with the visual input to focus on and visualise their professional path. Much like the other chapters in Part III of the volume, in Chapter 18, a narrative analysis demonstrates the variation in teacher identity over the years. Not only this Chapter, but also the following one, demonstrates how agency negotiations contribute to teacher identity. While Chapter 18 takes an ecological perspective, Chapter 19 adds the element of emotions to this cycle and reveals the interconnectedness of identity, emotion, and agency. Finally, visualisations from Chapter 17 are analysed and echoed from different dimensions in Chapter 20, which lists the hindering elements of vision formation and puts forth strategies to enhance vision.

The volume ends with an afterword by Peter I. De Costa. Quite similar to the extremely informative introductory chapter of the book that set the scene for the following chapters, the afterword provides a brief account of the chapters, crystallises the direction for future researchers, and paints a picture of what the future of language teacher identity might look like.

As noted, this volume is one of the few books that concentrates on language teacher identity both theoretically and empirically. One of the intriguing aspects of this volume is its multicultural representation, encompassing various reports and findings from East to West and successfully building the foundations of studies on teacher identity. Another notable feature is the emphasis on the temporal aspect of teacher identity research, considering teachers' past experiences, current situations, and future paths. Suitable for studying the teacher's trajectory is the narrative inquiry technique, employed in several chapters of the manuscript. In other words, narrative inquiry is considered the most human way of conducting research because it takes the researcher into the real world of teachers (Sadeghi & Sarkhosh, 2014), and it is still one of the most common methods of researching identity. However, the effective adoption of a host of methodologies, such as conversation analysis, journal writing, autoethnography, and visual representations, is another marked feature of the book. Moreover, it provides proof that methodological diversity is by no means limited and that future researchers can innovate methodological tools.

The volume also demonstrates the complexity of identity and how it is inextricably linked to teacher emotions (Chapters 5 and 19), teacher agency (Chapters 6, 18, and 19), and how visualisations can impact identity formation (Chapters 17 and 20), making it imperative to study teacher identity in relation to other concepts (e.g., vision, wellbeing). Furthermore, the contribution of technology to teacher identity, as stressed in this book, can be a novel line of research on teacher identity. Additionally, noticing that the volume mainly focuses on the identity of English as a foreign language teachers, there seems to be a need for studies with a broader range of participants, examining teacher identity in other modern languages (suggested by editors as well), and also comparison studies to compare and contrast the identity formation of teachers cross-culturally.

Overall, the volume emphasises that identity is not formed in isolation and clarifies the impact of various sources and factors on teacher identity, besides stressing the importance of constant interaction between an individual's various identities and the role of discourse an individual is involved with. Thus, the volume is part of an expanding scholastic endeavour to cultivate language teacher identity research.

## References

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