

Book Review:

The Identity of Language Teacher Educators¹

Reviewed by

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During the past decades, the notion of language teacher identity has received great attention among scholars worldwide. Understanding teacher identity is crucial as it has implications for curriculum design, classroom practice, and teacher education programs.

The book entitled *Language Teacher Educator Identity* (2021) by Gary Barkhuizen examines a wide range of language educators working in numerous professional and institutional contexts. He also analyzes reflection groups of well-experienced English teachers from Colombia and how they were admitted to a doctoral program to pursue their professional development. The book includes a personal narratives from language teacher educators, specifically related to the aspects of pedagogy, research, and leadership at the community and institutional levels

The book emphasizes the need to study language educator identity in various contexts such as teacher education programs, schools, and universities. Thus, understanding language educator identities could provide a framework for designing teacher education curricula that accommodate various individual identities.

Chapter 1 (*Who are language teacher educators?*) presents the notion of language teacher educator identity and the work of professional teacher educators, including fourteen roles (e.g., academic leader, academic position, academic teacher education position, and other roles). Barkhuizen studies the three core aspects of teacher educators, including the teachers who are learning to teach or who are continuing their professional development, the content and pedagogy of language teacher education, and the experience of teacher educators. In addition, he provides an operational definition of teacher educators from numerous experts such as Amott and Ang (2020), Lunenberg et al. (2014), Moradkhani et al. (2013), Peercy and Sharkey (2020), and Yazan (2018). Amott and Ang (2020) argue a teacher educator is "any education professional working to support the professional learning of teachers, whether they be student teachers, newly qualified teachers, or experienced teachers" (p. 1). Drawing on this definition of teacher education, the Chapter embraces all the levels of the teaching experience and the teacher educators as the supporters of the teachers' learning, which Barkhuizen calls 'professional learning.'(p.15)

Chapter 2 (*Teacher educators reflecting on their identity*) presents data from a study investigating the identity experience of seven teacher educators (four males, three females) who were admitted to the doctoral program in a public university in Colombia, South America. Drawing on the teacher educators' experiences, the reader can perceive how the group of teacher educators constructs their identities during their studies and professional work. One of the seven teacher educators talked about the challenges he faced while working as an English teacher and pursuing his doctoral degree at the same time. He believed that by having those experiences, he was able to begin to form his identity as a professional English teacher. Barkhuizen also includes the statements of teacher educators which emphasize the critical incidents/moments that constructed and are now reflected in their identities The teacher educators' reflections illustrate who they are and what they do as teacher educators. For example, one of the participants reflected that he had obtained a comprehensive view of teaching and education by pursuing

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doctoral study and as a result has a multifaceted career involving managerial responsibilities in the areas of linguistics and education. In other words,

teacher educators work to support the professional learning of teachers; support could be in the form of coaching, training, mentoring, or formal academic instruction; the teachers could be at various stages of their careers, from pre-service, to novice and early career, to in-service; teacher educators are teachers and scholars and are typically active in research; teacher educators' practices usually occur within or are affiliated to institutional contexts. (p. 30)

Chapter 3 (*What do language teacher educators do?*) examines the formation of language teacher educator identity from teacher into a language teacher educator. Some processes are seen from the pedagogical side as proposed by Johnson and Golombek (2020) and the learning process described by Hacker (2008). They list eight steps to build work identity in language teacher education including 1) an awareness of working contexts to reflect their own teaching practice and continuing development 2) self-recognition in the present or future, 3) the skill to share goals and ideologies in education pedagogy, 4) strategies to internalize new concepts applicable to their work. 5) focus on their teaching to emerge teacher identities, 6) emotional self-management, 7) self-reflection, and 8) promotion of language learning to student teachers. They list eight steps to build work identity in language teacher education including:

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- self-recognition in the present or future;
- the skill to share goals and ideologies in education pedagogy;
- strategies to internalize new concepts applicable to their work;
- focus on the teaching to encourage their students teachers enabling 'try out emerging teacher identities, alternative instructional practices, and new modes of engagement in teaching' (p. 123);
- emotional self-management;
- self-reflection;
- promotion of language learning to student teachers

The image of a language instructor shifting to the role of language teacher educator is that of moving from a comfort zone into a position where everything is suddenly unpredictable. Constructing the work identity of language teacher educators covers pedagogical mastery, research and scholarship, administration, and community service.

Chapter 4 (*Further professional development of language teacher educators*) presents how teacher educators' identities evolve from their continued professional development. Drawing on narrative interviews from seven Colombian teacher educators revealed numerous reasons they undertake further study such as staying up-to-date with current research and trends in the field. In addition, expanding knowledge and developing new talents can greatly improve their professional practice, which results not only in a rewarding career but also in better general welfare. Getting further education boosts teachers' knowledge and gives them a more confident outlook in their work.

All of the participants in this study see a "gap" between who they are now and who they want to be as future English teacher educators. In order to bridge the gap, they must make an effort to invest in their identity construction and pursue goals of investing in further professional growth, which can be described using the following five categories of project development:

1. Personal focused development
2. Doctoral students' personal development.
3. Academic-focused development
4. Practice-focused development
5. Student teacher-focused development

It can be concluded that investing in continuing professional development is the key to career growth for language teacher educator.

Chapter 5 (*Future research on language teacher educator identity*) is the final chapter of this book and it is divided into four main topics (beginning language teacher, conceptualizations of language teacher educator identity, community service and leadership, and a conclusion). This Chapter highlights the notion of the future researcher who is researching language teachers and how they can shape their identities as professional teacher educators and language teachers. This part illustrates how identity conceptions develop and how they relate to the teacher educators working in Colombia. It also stresses that teacher educators must be professional in interacting with their students and colleagues.

Conclusion

This book presents an excellent and comprehensive explanation of language teacher educator identity. Discussions and findings are devoted to the integration of the theory and practice of teacher identity from a wide range of perspectives and emphasizes the need for continuing professional development for teacher educators. This book also provides numerous research topics on language teacher identity, which can inspire teacher educators to conduct their own research. By reading this book language teacher educators worldwide can have a better understanding of to grasp the current issue of identity and learn how a group of Colombian teacher educators construct their identity.

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