

## Profiling Academic Research on Language Teacher Identities

### Perfil de la Investigación Académica sobre las Identidades de los Profesores de Idiomas

Yi-Fen Liu<sup>1</sup>

Tunghai University, Taiwan /Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia

#### Abstract

Within the field of TESOL, language teacher identity (LTI) has been the focus of a myriad of studies in the previous two decades. Researchers need to trace back in order to move forward, it is an essential step towards a comprehensive understanding of what has been done in LTI research. This review article provides an overall literature review on conceptual approaches of how identity is defined and perceived in the context of recent history. It is then followed by an analysis of dominant trends on recent studies of Language Teacher Identity to profile what, why, when, and who constitute seminal works in LTI research by tracing scholarly literature from 1975 to the present. A dataset retrieved and analyzed from Scopus was further correlated using Vantage Point software. The findings not only revealed the conceptual approaches, dominant trends, and methodological development in LTI research, but also identified the underexplored areas in transnational teacher identities, teacher educator identities, and online teacher identities, which provided implications for future LTI research directions.

*Keywords:* Language teacher identity, research profiling, literature review, TESOL, professional identity development

#### Resumen

Dentro del campo de la enseñanza del inglés como segunda lengua (TESOL, por sus siglas en inglés), la identidad de maestros y maestras de lenguas (LTI, por su abreviatura en inglés) ha sido un

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<sup>1</sup> She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in ELT at Universidad Distrital, and a full-time lecturer at the English Language Center of Tunghai University in Taiwan. She holds a Master of Education in TESOL from the University of Sydney and has taught foreign languages in Taiwan, England, Australia, and Colombia. [lyif@correo.udistrital.edu.co](mailto:lyif@correo.udistrital.edu.co)  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0556-2163>

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objeto de investigación en las últimas dos décadas. Los investigadores necesitamos retroceder para poder avanzar, es un paso esencial hacia una comprensión integral de lo que se ha hecho en la investigación sobre LTI. Este artículo de revisión teórica proporciona un estudio general de la literatura sobre los enfoques conceptuales de cómo se define y percibe la identidad en el contexto de la historia reciente. Luego, sigue un análisis de las tendencias dominantes en los estudios recientes sobre la identidad de los profesores de idiomas para perfilar qué, por qué, cuándo y quién constituyen los trabajos fundamentales en la investigación de LTI mediante la revisión de la literatura académica desde 1975 hasta el presente. Un conjunto de datos recuperado y analizado de Scopus se correlacionó aún más utilizando el software Vantage Point. Los hallazgos no solo revelaron los enfoques conceptuales, las tendencias dominantes y el desarrollo metodológico en la investigación de LTI, sino que también identificaron las áreas poco exploradas en las identidades de docentes transnacionales, las identidades de formadores de docentes y las identidades de docentes en línea, lo que proporcionó implicaciones para futuras direcciones de investigación de identidad de maestros y maestras de lenguas.

*Palabras clave.* Identidad del docente de idiomas, perfil de la investigación, revisión de la literatura, TESOL, desarrollo de la identidad profesional

## Introduction

Professional identity is essentially about how individuals enact roles in different settings (Richards, 2008; Farrell, 2017). By this definition, the concept of language teacher professional identity can vary from culture to culture as teaching is context-specific and sensitive. Hence, there has never existed benchmark standards to clearly define or measure teacher professional identity (Varghese et al., 2005). Hsiao (2018) argues that “there are no comprehensive pictures of language teacher professional identity since there is no identity description in bilingual or second language education” (p. 64). Perhaps because of its enigmatic, puzzling, and mystifying quality, language teacher identity (LTI) has become a central topic in interdisciplinary research areas such as psychology, sociology, and education in the last five years (Toompalu, Leijen & Kullasepp, 2017). Furthermore, it has gained prominence in TESOL in recent two decades (Tseng, 2017). This review aims to provide an overview on LTI research development as well as trace out the tendencies and prominent features to identify gaps in LTI research by answering the following set of questions:

- What has been researched regarding LTI?
- Who has conducted studies on such topic?
- When and where have those studies been conducted and published?
- What are the underexplored areas of LTI research?

## Researching Language Teacher Identity Historically

Researchers need to trace back in order to move forward, it is an essential step towards a comprehensive understanding of perspectives in identity studies. The following section provides an overview on the conceptual development of how identity is defined and perceived in the context of recent history in the field of TESOL, evolving from essentialism, structuralism, post-structuralism to discourse analysis as a field for finding identities in recent decades.

### *The Essentialist View on Identity*

Block's (2007) work on identity highlights important shifts of identity research dating back to the last three decades involving several disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology, among others. In his view, biological approaches to understanding identity first emerged aiming at understanding individuals from their biological determinant factors such as genetics and physical characteristics. In this view of things, biological characteristics would be accountable for human behavior. Based on this approach, claims that individuals were highly determined by their genetic predisposition and physical capabilities were commonplace. Nevertheless, social aspects would often emerge in this approach, consequently, creating a hybrid concept in the study of identity referred to as 'essentialism'. It operates under questionable assumptions such as practical delimitation of human groups and that those groups have identical standards universally (Bucholtz, 2003, as cited in Block, 2007). Common degrees or analysis at this level are related with "race, ethnicity, nationality, migration, gender, social class and language" (Block, 2007, p. 14).

### *Structuralist & Poststructuralist Perspectives on LTI*

Consequently, a shift from researching identity was observed moving from essentialism into structuralism and post-structuralism. Common degrees or analysis at this level are related with "race, ethnicity, nationality, migration, gender, social class and language" (Bucholtz, 2003, as cited in Block, 2007). Structuralist perspective on identity emphasizes on the boundaries and constraints set by the determining social structure. In other words, structures limit and influence the individual agency of those participating in interactions because human actions and practices are constrained by structures of society and culture (Ortner, 2006). In this regard, teaching can be seen as structured practices and teaching performance is regulated by principles and bound by materials and class conditions. Teacher identity is impinged by social systems, educational customs, and cultural tradition. Block (2009) explained that "social constraints are at work at every juncture in their activity" (p. 223), individuals are all guided by socialized structures and representations deeply rooted within individuals, beyond comprehension. Even until today, English language teacher identity is still being

judged and evaluated by macro features of society such as race and ethnicity, which draws upon structural influences on identity. This phenomenon of dominant racial ideology and racialization of English language teaching was reflected and unveiled in recent studies in the TESOL field (Gomez-Vásquez & Guerrero Nieto, 2018; Khan, 2018; Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Trent, 2015).

Poststructuralists explore identity regarding dynamic change, hybridity, fragmentation, and multiplicity (Dolby, 2000; Hall & Du Gay, 1996; Woodward, 1997). In this view, identity involves 'becoming' rather than 'being'. Identities are formed and transformed; it is an ongoing process. Poststructuralism received criticism for lacking a proper definition by its same tenets promised to explain the multilevel complexities of human life itself.

### *Discourse Approach and Complexities of LTI*

In view of the complexities of the world, discourses are introduced in identity research as those areas of encounter between values, beliefs, lifestyles which complement one another and dictate certain expected modes in which language use and behavior are shaped among other complexities. In the light of this approach, discourse interactions are seen as a source of identity constructions. Scholars ascribed to identity as a discourse-based concepts date back to the late 1980s and it remains as the steady stream of discursal output on LTI until present (see Danielewicz, 2001; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Varghese et al., 2005).

As a matter of fact, tendencies over the last three decades have evolved into more complex aspects of identity. As seen in Table 1 below, the latest studies in this construct have originated into analyzing individuals within their social networks and the positions they hold. Norton's (1995) work first attempted to encourage scholars to include all symbolic representations into the study of identity. That attempt has replicated in various studies now resorting to more complex units of analysis within social networks. Hadi Tabussen (2006) observed that even though several studies have adopted multileveled varieties on analysis, there are still studies resorting back to poststructuralist approaches.

Table 1 exemplifies several of the shifts adopted by the study of this construct historically as per Block's (2007, 2009, 2015) work on identity research.

By scrutinizing the historical development of identity research, it can be seen that as of the beginning of the year 2000, identity research has proliferated and taken many different directions. In fact, the nutshell of identity research in the mid-1990s began to analyze discourse as a field for finding identities. Despite some opposition, especially as posited by biological determinism, discourse analysis inclusion from the 1990s led to the inclusion of social variables in the next decade to the extent that those variables were considered in terms of time, and even positioning, leading to the notion that identity tends to be pluralized

**Table 1.** *Trends in identity research as explained by Block (2007; 2009; 2015)*

Timeframe in History	Authors & Seminal work	Tendencies
(1960s -1970s)	<p>Emile Durkheim (1964). The division of labor in society.</p> <p>Claude Levi-Strauss (1972). Structural Anthropology.</p>	Biological determinism structuralism
(1990s)	<p>Anthony Giddens (1991). Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age.</p> <p>Bonny Norton (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning.</p> <p>Paul Du Gay (1996). Consumption and identity at work.</p> <p>Luk Van Langenhove and Rom Harré (1999). Positioning theory.</p>	Structuralism and the need for including context and discourse.
(2000s)	<p>Simon Baron-Cohen (2003). The essential difference: The truth about the male and female brain.</p> <p>Samina Hadi Tabussen (2006). Language, space and power: A critical look at bilingual education.</p> <p>Bonny Norton (2000). Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change.</p> <p>Celeste Kinginger (2004). Alice doesn't live here anymore: Foreign language learning and identity reconstruction.</p> <p>Tim Murphey, Jin Chen, and Li-Chi Chen (2005). Learners' constructions of identities and imagined communities.</p> <p>Ingrid Piller and Kimie Takahashi (2006). A passion for English: Desire and the language market.</p> <p>Tope Omoniyi and Goodith White (2008). The sociolinguistics of identity.</p>	Discourse using poststructuralism. Identity conceived as a dynamic, changing and socially dependable construct.

**Note.** Table created by the author based on Block's review on identity research.

depending on the social positioning of each individual. Within this positioning, complex constructs such as power, context, and even time were part of evolution brought about by research itself.

## Profiling Language Teacher Identity Research

This section briefly summaries the foci of dominant trends on recent studies surrounding LTI by synthesizing and analyzing multiple recent studies via Scopus. It in turn identifies the gaps for future research in the field.

The profiling dataset was configured from registers taken from Scopus, 290 retrieved documents were found using the key words “Language teacher” and “identity”, 285 of them were in English and five in Spanish language, classified under the categories of Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities areas. Those research documents consist of 275 articles, 28 book chapters, and 13 books published between the time span of 1975 - 2019. Figure 1 below correlates the number of registers in the area with their corresponding publication years. It also shows that there has been a surge of literature on teacher identity since the beginning of the 21st century; it peaked at 40 publications in 2018, the most prolific year so far.

Figure 2 below demonstrates the top 10 countries by numbers of publications on language teacher identity. The United States topped the chart as the country where most of

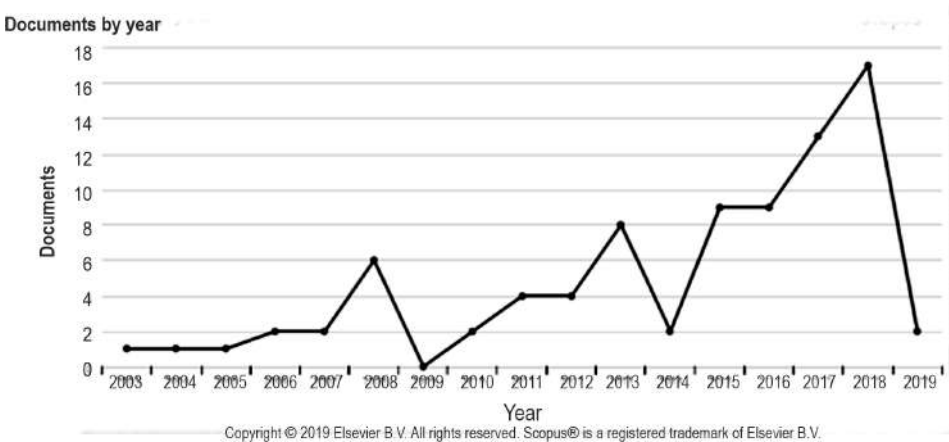
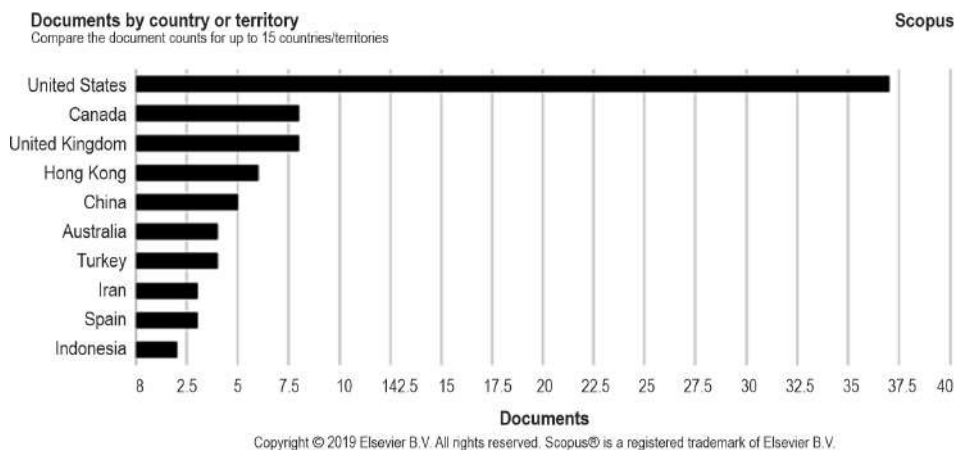


Figure 1. Publication years

Note. Retrieved from Scopus. Copyright 2019 by Elsevier

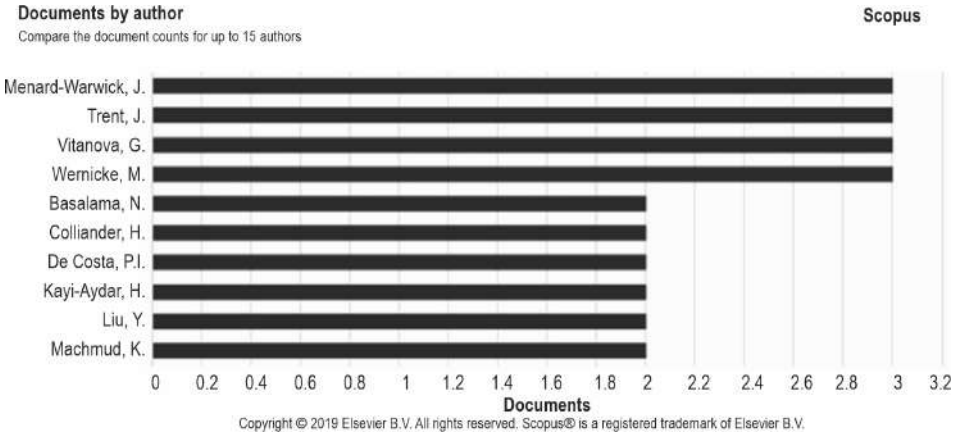
the LTI studies were published. It is noteworthy to mention that Hong Kong ranked third place. While two more Asian countries (China and Indonesia) are also in the top 10; which indicates there is a strong interest and development in these countries on teacher identity research. Further research can look into the correlation among scholarly work produced in these regions in Asia. In addition, it is worth noting that there is a marked surge of scholarly work on language teacher identity in Latin America. However, these scholars prefer using the word ‘subjectivity’ instead of ‘identity’ to explain perspectives related to consciousness, agency, reality, and power (Méndez et al., 2019), address how EFL teachers are constituted as subjects and how they experience themselves in the local TESOL contexts. Therefore, their research work might not appear under the keyword ‘language teacher identity’ on the database.



**Figure 2.** Countries of publication

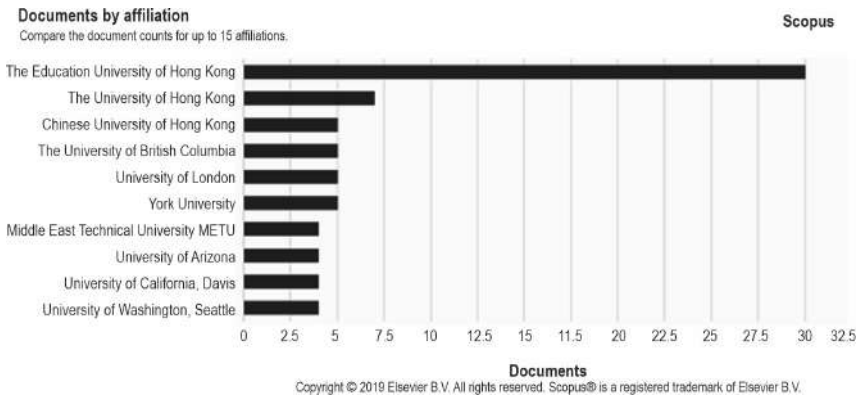
**Note.** Retrieved from Scopus. Copyright 2019 by Elsevier

Furthermore, Figures 3 and 4 reveal the ten most published authors in the LTI area in the study period and their institutional affiliation. The data show John Trent as the most prolific author with 19 documents published in this field, he and other two main authors Xuesong Gao and Rui Yuan are all affiliated with universities in Hong Kong. It can be drawn from Figures 3 and 4 that LTI is a common research interest shared by educators and scholars in TESOL Hong Kong.



**Figure 3.** Main authors of publication

**Note.** Retrieved from Scopus. Copyright 2019 by Elsevier



**Figure 4.** Affiliation of authors

126 **Note.** Retrieved from Scopus. Copyright 2019 by Elsevier

## Tendencies and Dominant Trends in LTI Research

The previous section of *Researching Teacher Identity Historically* provided a brief overview on the development of LTI research approaches evolving from essentialism, structuralism, and poststructuralism to discourse analysis as a field for finding identities in recent decades. In the following sections of this article, I will characterize the tendencies



and commonalities by highlighting significant scholarly work in second and foreign language teacher identity research generated from the dataset analysis in the following subcategories as shown in the following Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Main profiling findings on LTI research trends*

Profiling Academic Research on LTI in TESOL	What is being sought when researching LTI?	NEST & NNEST dichotomy
		Emerging professional identity of pre-service teachers
		Professional identity of teacher educators.
		Transnational teacher identities in the era of globalization
		Teacher Identities and online-mediated communication.
When and where has LTI research been conducted?	Between 2016 - 2018 more prolific years in the USA, Canada, the UK and Hong Kong	
Who has researched EFL/ESL teacher identity? (Figure 3 -Scopus Document Counts 1975-2019)	Trent, J. Mienard- Warwick, T. Morgan, B. Yuan, R.	
What are the underexplored areas of LTI research?	Teacher Educator Identity Transnational Teacher Identity Online teacher identity	

## NEST & NNEST Dichotomy

Non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) Language teacher identity has been a subject of research interest in LTI for the last quarter of the century. After Phillipson's (1992) pioneering work, extensive studies and articles have been written and published by NNEST scholars (Canagarajah,1999; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005; Mahboob, 2010; Medgyes, 1992; Moussu & Llorca, 2008), who are fighting back on their subaltern position and inferior image (Kumaravadivelu, 2016) imposed by linguistic imperialism and colonial hegemonic power structure (Phillipson, 1992). Braine's (1999) work on nonnative educators in TESOL has encouraged a number of scholars to pursue further research on this issue. During the first two decades of the 21st century, five anthologies (Braine, 1999; Kamhi -Stein, 2004; Llorca,

2006; Mahboob, 2010; Huang, Huang, & Zhang, 2017) highlighting NNESTs' biographical narratives on their professional identity perceptions, challenges, and contributions to English learning and teaching were published. The latest one by Huang et al. (2017) compared and contrasted the perceptions and practices of native and non-native English-speaking teachers in China, the biggest TESOL market in present day.

Furthermore, the turn of the 20th century has seen the outpouring identity discourse focusing primarily on NESTs and NNESTs dichotomy (Menard-Warwick, 2008). Kumaravadivelu (2016) contends that the critical discourse on the native - nonnative EFL teacher dichotomy still remains mainstream in the field of TESOL and claims that decolonial 'result driven' approach is the only option to move forward the subaltern position of the NNESTs' community. It is worth mentioning that the recent surge in local research on LTI in Latin America focuses on postcolonial theories and seek to raise awareness about issues of struggle and power inequality in relation to local teachers' strong resistance to "whiteness" and "nativespeakerness" in the Global South (Castañeda-Peña, 2018; Gómez-Vásquez & Guerrero Nieto, 2018; González, 2009; Mendez et al., 2019; López-Gopar 2016; Rivera, 2018). Their work claims for the recognition of locally produced knowledge and practice; oppose the superiority of native speakerism and the imposition of language teaching ideologies and assessment policies.

Last but not the least, World Englishes (Jenkins, 2003) and English as a Lingua Franca (Seidlhofer, 2004) approaches of English language learning and teaching celebrate the plurality of the world varieties of English that focus on intelligibility rather than accent, were gaining recognition and empowering the diverse communities of English users in the TESOL arena in the last two decades.

### ***Emerging Professional Identity of Pre-Service Teachers***

Studies examining pre-service teacher's identity have moved in many directions in exploring the cognitive, social, and emotional processes of their identity construction. The bulk of these studies have been conducted over the last two decades in various educational contexts and different subject matter. Results from several of these studies (Kumaravadivelu 2012; Phan, 2007; Trent, 2010) suggest that important factors related to national /cultural identity have been found to play an important role in the construction of teacher identity. They reveal that pre-service teachers' identities may not be as dynamic and constantly changing as perceived, since fixed ethnic, gender, and geographical categories are consistently present and confirmed

Moreover, recent studies (Mugford, Sughrua, & Lopez Gopar, 2015; Trent, 2011; Tseng, 2017) have shown that pre-service teachers experienced conflicts between their desired identities and identities available to them at practicum stage, where they struggled to reconcile

the trajectories of their past, present, and future teacher identities in transition from student teachers to formal teachers in the process of moving from legitimate peripheral participation to the center (Hsiao, 2018). Common findings revealed the needs for pre-service teachers to expand their rigid view constructed under their native educational system, develop multiple identities to empower their teacher identity formation through relevant social and educational practices as well as from their service teaching experiences both in their native countries and abroad. Finally, Sutherland and Markauskaite (2012) claims that reflection processes play an important role in pre-service teachers' transition from students to teachers as they create their own professional identity through interpreting and reinterpreting their experiences.

### ***Teacher Educator Identity***

Lunenburg (2015) states that systematic research on the development of a professional identity of teacher educators is still scarce due to the diverse background, working circumstances, and the broad scope of tasks and responsibilities of teacher educators. In Swennen, Jones, and Volman's study (2010), it is revealed that the four sub-identities available for teacher educators emergent from research literature are: schoolteacher, teacher in High Education, teacher of teachers, and researcher. They further point out the common belief and understanding on the identity transformation process from teachers to become teachers in Higher Education, and then researchers of teaching and teacher education.

The results of a recent extensive review study (Lunenburg, Dengerink, & Korthagen, 2014) affirms that teacher of teachers, researcher, coach, curriculum developer, assessor, and broker are the fundamental six roles that teacher educators must fulfil. And how teacher educators handle the complexity and deal with tensions and dilemmas among the multiple roles has been a central topic for recent studies. Through systematic research, Berry (2007) identifies the dilemmatic tensions that teacher educators experience in six areas: 'telling and growth', 'confidence and uncertainty', 'action and intent', 'safety and challenge', 'valuing and reconstructing', and 'planning and being responsive for future research on teacher educator identity. Whitehead (1993) encourages teacher educators to develop their own living educational theory to better support each other in a constructive way when grappling with tension and issues, and setting a role model for student teachers.

The identity of teacher educators is a construction of multifaced aspects such as the interplay of external influences and internal sense-making in various national and institutional contexts. Hence, the feeling of belonging and affinity as a professional is not evident. Dinkelman (2011) emphasized on the importance for teacher educators to claim a sense of professional self by recognizing their agency, and working with colleagues and students to foster inquiry spaces in teacher education practice to explore what it means to be a teacher educator.

### ***Transnational Teacher Identity***

English has achieved the status of an International Language and that of a Lingua Franca, which has resulted in an increasing demand for TESOL professionals worldwide. In the past two decades, internationalization, the global mobility, contact with diverse populations and digital flows not only have increased more dimensions and complexity in the emergence of transnational migration of teachers, but also aroused a strong interest among the extended terrain of LTI theory framework as well as offered a new fertile ground for the research on transnational communities and identities in social culturally oriented linguistic reflection (De Fina, 2013; Manik *et al.* 2006; Phan, 2008).

Yeoh *et al.* (2003) note that transnationality challenges the fixed national and regional view on identity, and the bifocal categorization of identity as the local and global by breaking the boundaries and linking spaces, which in turn has given new meanings and expanded the existing narratives on place-based identity. As a result, sociocultural linguists have been involved in reshaping their theories and sharpen their tools of analysis to account for identity negotiation shaped and reshaped by the changing educational contexts and ideologies driven by forces and localization, globalization, and internationalization. (De Fina, 2013, Phan, 2008). These authors further point out that the interrelationship and interdependence of mobility, transnationality, diversity, and hybridity play a significant role as essential conceptual tools in understanding different processes of identity reconstruction and development of language teachers within the current social realities in this mobile world.

### ***Teacher Identities and Online-Mediated Communication***

As e-learning transcends geographical and communication boundaries and make the world a global village, it also creases the social and cultural complexity to the roles required for language teachers (Kitade, 2014). The recent COVID pandemic crisis has highlighted the importance and opportunity of online teaching and learning; it also brought forward challenges on our current education system, pedagogical approach, and the teaching profession. Apropos of LTI, Aboud (2000) argues that e-learning has provided opportunities for language teachers' professional identity development. However, on the other hand, it has made a considerable impact by shifting teachers' traditional role from a lecturer to a facilitator in students' learning process.

In a qualitative study, Richardson and Alsup (2015) examined how seven first time online college instructors created their online teacher identity. Their findings concluded that to shift from traditional face-to-face to online teaching setting, teachers need to re-think their behaviors and teaching roles by deconstructing their conventional beliefs and assumptions about effective learning and teaching in order to rebuild their identity as online instructors. They also provided implications on the necessity of cultivating online teacher identities not

only to provide effective and innovative teaching experiences, but also to strengthen the retention. Baxter's (2012) study analyzed the resistance discourse of teachers who teach online, which identified several challenging factors such as interacting with the students, providing feedback, planning the lessons, and managing time that have had negative impact on the formation of the participants' online teaching identities. Her findings also revealed the ways the teacher participants presented and manipulated their professional identities online. She suggests investigations on expression of resistance discourse of online teachers in order to provide interventions to better understand and support their identity formation as well as development. Thanaraj's (2016) study revealed that a new teachers' identity is built by developing new expertise, knowledge, and skills through constant involvement and examination of their new roles such as facilitator of learning, instructor of discussions, and manager of interaction etc. in online teaching environments. By the same token, Comas-quinn (2011) also argued that online teachers need special skills and personalized trainings. The findings of his study provided implication for training programs to focus less on the use of technologies and emphasize more on supporting teachers to re-conceptualize their new roles in cyber space and help them reconsider their professional identities in an online environment.

## Methodological Development on Teacher Identity Research

Georgakopoulou (2007) traced identity research back from recent decades and summarized three big waves of sociolinguistic narrative research. The first wave centered around the stories elicited by sociolinguistic interviewers. These stories normally followed the prevailing model of Labov's classic structural criteria (abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result, and coda). The second wave began with the shift from stories told during research interviews to those that were told in our day-to day life, with growing awareness of the fact that the narratives that we construct or jointly construct with our family, colleagues, and friends in everyday contexts are very different from narratives emerged from a formal research interview context. In the third wave, narrative inquiry in identity focused on not only the construction but also the co-construction of identities as social practices and performances, which came to the foreground in the beginning of the 21st century. A significant number of TESOL research on language teacher identities from recent decades have employed written accounts of professional experiences with autobiographies, memoirs, life histories as well researcher elicited narratives with in-depth interviews (Casanave & Schecter, 1997; Johnson & Golombeck, 2002; Tsui, 2007). Those studies fall into the big story category and have brought new perspectives on language teaching and learning as well as contributed to collective understandings of the complex processes of language teacher professional identity formation.

However, Vasquez (2011) urges to shift the paradigm of identity research from the big story to the small story approach with a narrative analytic perspective, which will cast some light on how situated social identities of language teachers and learners are negotiated, projected, claimed, or resisted through social interaction. Watsons (2007) affirms that as educators/teachers spend most of time telling quotidian realities rather than interviewed life, the small story approach can reflect more truthful sides of who they are in comparison to coherent and polished accounts of their teaching career emerged from the big story approach.

Richards' (1999) study exemplified the small story approach that analyzed data from teachers' casual chats during work breaks to investigate ESL teachers' narratives as joint storytelling. That study highlighted common shared experiences that strengthened "personal and professional relationships and contributed to the construction of a collaborative culture" (p. 170). Barkhuizen (2011) took the lead with *narrative knowledging* which brings storytelling and research together; and in the meaning-making and experience-shaping process, both the researcher and participants are listening, living, and constructing stories and participating as characters and narrators in narrative research activities.

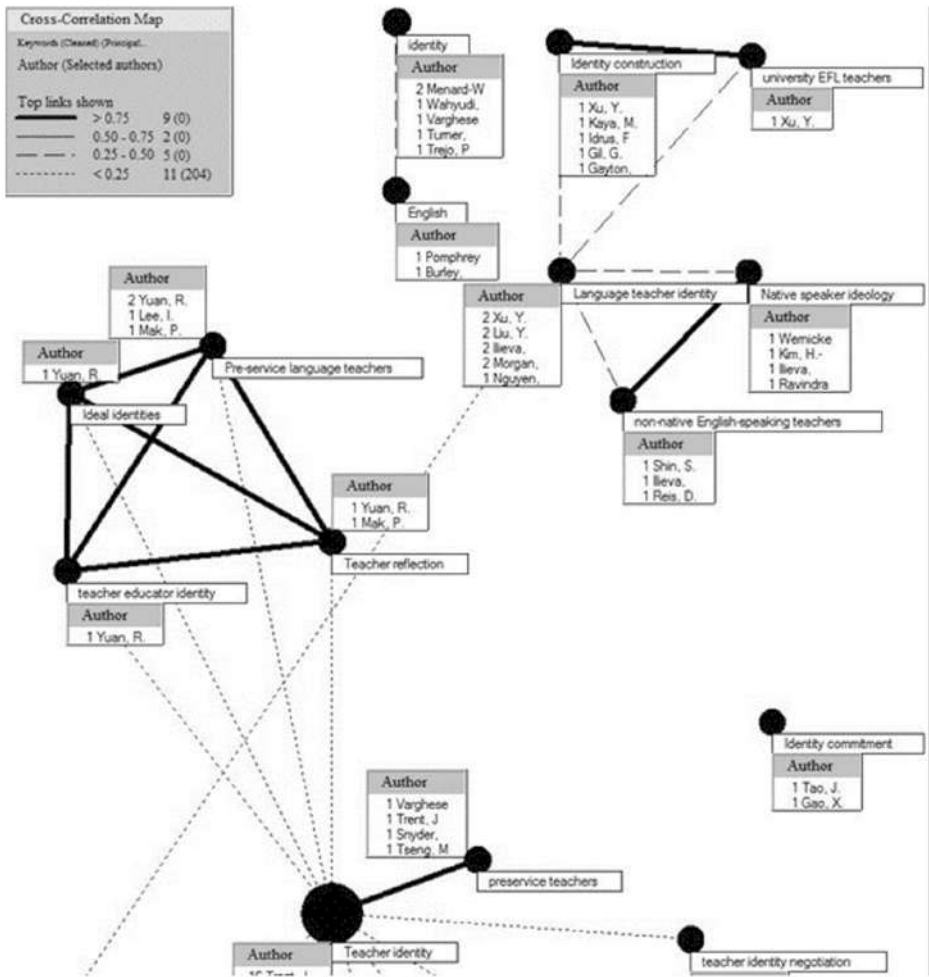
## Discussion and Final Remarks

The first goal of this review profiling article is to provide insights into the approaches, tendencies, and common features on identity research, especially language teacher identity (LTI) from the 70s until present in the field of TESOL. Figure 5 below illustrates the correlation between the 30 most productive authors and 65 relevant keywords used in the 290 registers in language teacher identity retrieved from Scopus database and analyzed with Vantage Point. The findings suggest that there is a number of close relations between the topics such as pre-service teacher, teacher educator, native speaker ideologies & NNEST identities; identity construction and teacher reflection are common interests of LTI teacher identity research among those researchers according to the analysis made so far.

As shown in Figure 6 below, there appears to be limited networking practices between experts in the field of language teacher identity despite the existence of several published anthologies on NNEST identity (as noted in the aforementioned section), which compiled chapters contributed by various educators and authors in the field.

## Under Explored Territories in LTI Research

The second goal of this profiling academic research is to identify the literature crack in LTI research, the under-researched and overlooked areas in the field. The profiling results have shown that there is a plethora of studies on pre-service teachers' identity formation



**Figure 5.** Correlation between authors and keywords in language teacher identity publication

**Note.** Created by the author utilizing Vantage Point software analysis.





or novice teachers' identity construction. However, studies on in-service teachers' further identity development in TESOL have primarily focused on the dichotomy of NESTs and NNESTs (Menard-Warwick, 2008). I cannot help but wonder if experienced teacher's identity becomes static and standardized after years in the teaching profession. In my view, the development of teacher professional identity is always ongoing and extending with the accumulation of teaching experiences and when different interactants and agents come into play.

Recent LTI research has seen propositions to move beyond the binary categorization of theorizing NES/ NNEST teacher identities for more inclusive teacher identity. It can be achieved by exploring translanguaging dispositions and making sense the sociocultural in-betweenness of translanguaging and intercultural teachers with the emergent translanguaging theoretical framework through narratives as future research directions (Ishihara & Menard-Warwick, 2018). Further narrative research needs to be conducted to better understand how translanguaging practices and intercultural experiences are reflected in language classroom pedagogies and how they help to shape teachers' identities (Lee & Canagarajah, 2019).

Within the field of TESOL, LTI has been the focus of a myriad of studies in the recent two decades. However, transnational language teachers' identity has never been part of it until recently when transnationalism is regarded as a social field under the impulse of neoliberal forces and shaped by the process of globalization (Soong, 2018). De Costa and Norton (2016) also suggest exploring the evolution of teacher identities driven by globalization and neoliberal impulses for identity research work in the future. In fact, Smith (2009) points out that transnational teaching experience, which leads to transformative professional development and provides prospective improvements on teaching practice in both the transnational zone and back home, is an under-explored territory. Eusafzai's (2015) argument support Smith's statement that there has been a scarcity of studies on the phenomenon of how transnational teachers, who across geographical and socio-cultural borders, localize their pedagogy in a foreign society to teach effectively in the wake of the post method pedagogy that emphasizes localization of pedagogy and celebrates local cultures.

Last but not the least, the current pandemic crisis has challenged the traditional concepts of education and brought online learning onto the spotlight. This in turn has had a huge impact on teachers' roles, methodologies, and identity. Richardson and Alsup (2015) state that since distant learning is becoming increasingly common and the demand of online learning in higher education continues to increase exponentially, a need emerges for more research investigating how teachers develop their online instructor identity through preparation and mentorship at college level as empirical studies in this area are still scarce up to date.

After nearly half of a century of research on identity, LTI is still an enigma, no scholar can set benchmarks or criteria to define or evaluate teacher identity. Barkhuizen (2016)

pioneered an innovative anthology engaging 41 language teaching professionals' self-guided critical reflection from multiple dimensions to interrogate the complexities and conundrums of teacher identity; it also looks into future LTI research directions. All in all, this review profiling article systematizes existing knowledge on LTI by presenting the conceptual and methodological tendencies, I hope it also provides insights on pathways for future LTI studies.

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