

Constructing identity: Experiences of Indonesian ESP teachers in a language institute

Aloisius Wisnu Mahendra

Sanata Dharma University Jl. Affandi, Santren, Caturtunggal, Kec. Depok, Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia
alouisiuswisnu.mahendra@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received 22 July 2020

Revised 10 December 2020

Accepted 21 December 2020

Keywords

ESP teacher

language institute

teacher identity

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on examining four Indonesian English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers' experiences regarding their identity construction and negotiation in a language institute. Given the concern on an analytic framework by an adapted model of TESOL teacher identity, the teachers' experiences were explored through life-history interview. The results revealed a complex process of transforming professional practices and constructing identities in relation to the struggles of becoming ESP teachers. The participants constructed ESP teacher identities through acquiring subject knowledge via professional development activities and building a sense of intrinsic fulfillment in becoming ESP teachers. However, the participants found challenge to cope with the students' demands of learning ESP. Furthermore, a need to equip the ESP teachers with ESP skills in various subject knowledge areas became the participants' concern in order to meet the students' expectancy as well as to enhance their professional development.



This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



1. Introduction

Current educational changes have become global forces affecting teachers' professional lives. In the United States, for example, Grosse and Voght (2012) found that structural changes have been employed in most language departments to embrace the notion of teaching language for specific purposes. In some Asian countries, moreover, the constitution of policies concerning the internationalization of business and education has shifted the area of English language teaching to teaching English for specific purposes (Chang, 2014; Cheng & Anthony, 2014). These emerging changes reflect priorities and current societal demands of English language learning. They directly link to the English teachers' professional lives and to the construction of their identity. A study conducted by Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) pointed out that teacher identity serves as an influential factor, both for novice and experienced teachers, to adapt to changing educational contexts. Teachers need to acquire new knowledge about the subjects taught and suitable teaching and learning approaches to enhance their teaching performance and to meet situational needs in the working environment (Xu, 2014). Therefore, exploring how English teachers cope with the educational changes essentially contributes to a growing framework of literature in relation to teacher's professional identities (Campion, 2016).

Given attention on the trends of teaching English for specific purposes, there is a complex process of becoming ESP teachers. The teachers are encouraged to transform their professional practices and construct their professional identities through subject knowledge acquisition via professional development activities and engagement with workplace communities (Tao & Gao, 2018). However, some challenges possibly occur among teachers adapting to the ESP teaching priority. A study conducted by Hoa and Mai (2016) revealed that one major challenge of ESP teaching in university contexts dealt with the quality of lectures and textbooks utilized to teach ESP.

Consequently, it affected students' readiness to acquire the new terminologies and concepts. Furthermore, Poedjiastutie (2017) pointed out that teachers' pedagogical knowledge, such as communicative skills, teaching-learning approaches, and materials development, became the main concern in managing ESP programs in Language Center (LC) of Malang State University, Indonesia. Such issues might significantly affect teachers' performance in teaching ESP, starting from developing suitable teaching-learning materials to conducting the classroom practices.

Those shifts of educational priority and several accompanying challenges are believed to influence the construction of teachers' identity. Although several studies have investigated teacher identity construction in particular teaching contexts, it should be noted that the notion of identity among ESP teachers is under-researched topic (Chang, 2014). The current study, therefore, aims to seek out the English teachers' identity mediated amid stream of ESP teaching and learning. It focuses on exploring experiences of four Indonesian ESP teachers teaching in a language institute. This context of study draws broader scope of ESP teacher identity construction within the area of English language teaching in Indonesia. It depicts how the teachers engage with their professional lives to meet the demands of ESP learning.

1.1. Teacher Identity

The notion of teacher identity has become an emerging subject in educational research and teacher development (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) highlighted four elements of teacher's professional identity, stating that professional identity is "an ongoing process" of meaning experiences that connects "person and context," consists of "sub-identities" and needs the exercise of "agency" (p. 122). In a narrower context, these four elements are constituted in Barkhuizen's (2017) conceptualization of language teacher identity, perceiving that identities incorporate teacher's "cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical" aspect depicted on the process of "being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying" how they are personally and professionally struggled in social interaction (p. 4). Essentially, teacher identity is dynamic and it is mediated through experience and the sense made in meaning that experience (Sachs, 2005). This conceptualization of teacher identity does not only emphasize on the relation between identity with the relevant experience, but it also embraces its multifaceted and person-context elements, which are reconsidered and examined as the core of teacher identity.

To some extent, language teachers construct multiple identities when they shift their identity from being a learner to a teacher (Tsui, 2007); and when they position and involve themselves in different social agents (Whitsed & Volet, 2013). The multiple identities negotiation, then, involves interaction between the individual and the community (Bukor, 2015). Some studies have revealed that teacher identities are constructed through social discourse on teachers and the teaching profession (Gu & Benson, 2015), the educational discourse on internationalization (Whitsed & Volet, 2013), and the school culture in particular institutions (Buchanan, 2015). These interplay between individual and context in term of instructional practices raise tension in relation to how teachers mediate their identities in order to fit to the contextual needs. Thus, by positioning ESP teachers as the subjects involved in the different layers of identity construction, this study aims to explore a more contextualized picture of ESP teachers' professional identity through their life experiences.

1.2. TESOL Teacher Identity Framework

To investigate ESP teachers' professional identity manifested in changing contexts, a model of TESOL teacher identity was adopted as the framework of analysis (Pennington, 2014). This model allows the researcher to draw a comprehensive picture of teacher's identity within professional practices in particular contexts. The original model consists of two frames, namely practice-centered and context-centered frames (Pennington, 2014). The practice-centered frame is derived from five elements, including instructional, disciplinary, professional, vocational and economic frame. The *instructional* frame demonstrates the classroom persona and the roles enacted by teachers in classroom practice, including instructional content and methods (Pennington, 2014); the *disciplinary* frame reflects specific fields where teachers engage with, covering knowledge and research; the *professional* frame describes individual teacher's beliefs, knowledge and engagement in a particular field; the *vocational* frame includes affective aspect of teacher identity encompassing a teacher's commitment and attachment in a specific field of practices; and the *economic* frame addresses a

teacher's academic and economic position in a specific occupational field. These five frames, moreover, are negotiated by different frames of context: global, local, and sociocultural. The *global* frame is perceived as global trends of teaching and learning English; the *local* frame draws a context of teacher's engagement in the workplace and community; and the *sociocultural* frame refers to the linguistic, ethnic, and gender identity of a teacher, as perceived by people in contextual interaction. These multi-faceted elements were employed to capture ESP teacher identity in which ESP teachers possess a wider range of roles compared to their general English teaching (Dudley-Evans & St. Johns, 1998).

Furthermore, this study adopted a new model of TESOL teacher identity framework proposed by Tao and Gao (2018). The model emphasizes on the adjustment of *contextual* frames to the contexts of the study. The coverage of *local* frame is considered too broad to break down the influence of different contextual forces on ESP teachers (Tao & Gao, 2018). The *local* frame, then, is constituted into *institutional* and *societal* frame since both of which have been proven to have consequential effects on teacher identity construction (Varghese et al., 2005; Layder, 1993). The *sociocultural* frame described in Pennington's (2014) is included in the *societal* frame as it focuses on the linguistic, ethnic, and gender, in which are they contribute limited relevance to the study.

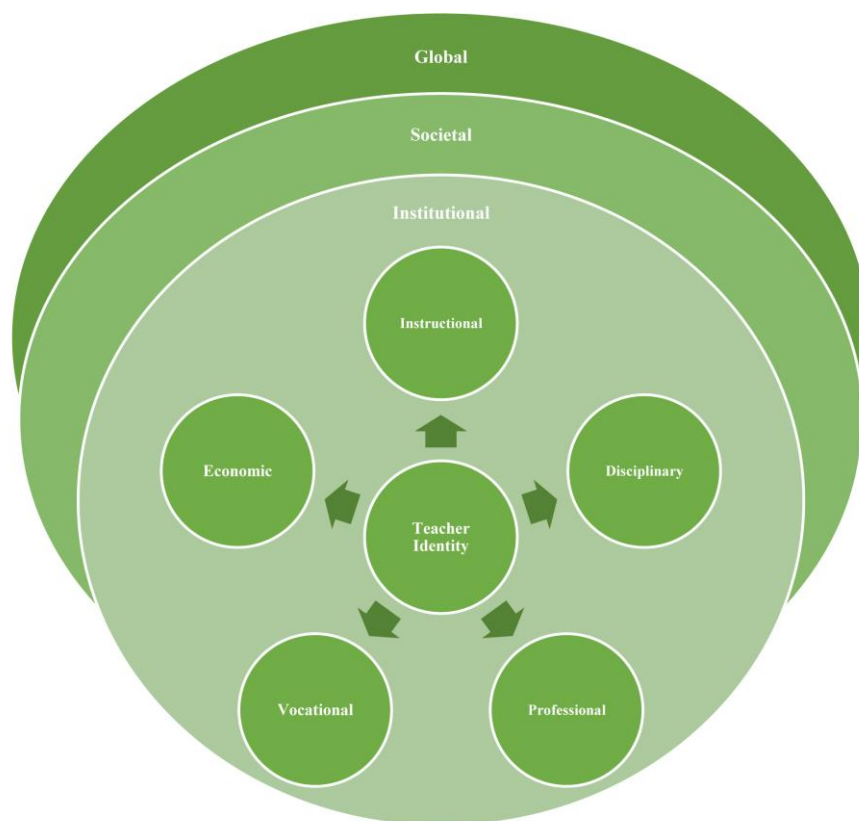


Fig. 1. An Adapted Model of ESP Teacher Identity Frames (Tao & Gao, 2018)

The current study aims to shed light on ESP teachers' identity construction. A life-history interview based on Pennington's (2014) TESOL teacher identity framework was employed to explore the experiences of ESP teachers teaching at language institute. There are five frames examined to answer how the English teachers constructed their ESP teacher identity, namely instructional, disciplinary, professional, economic, and vocational frame.

2. Research Method

2.1. Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted in a language institute managed under a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2019. This language institute used to be Language Center since it was

founded in 1992, and developed into a bigger unit named LISDU (Language Institute of Sanata Dharma University) in 2005. There are four major division in the institute, namely Asian Language Center, English Language Center, Language Testing Center, and Translation Center. The English Language Center consists of the Center of English for International Communication (CEIC) and the Center of English for Specific Purposes (CESP). CEIC offers General English (GE) courses, focusing on developing students' communication skills. The courses consist of several levels (beginner up to advanced level) and they are conducted in terms. On the other hand, CESP offers customized courses. The courses are designed based on the students' needs and wants. In addition, the course participants, both in CEIC and CESP, are adults. They are mostly university students and working people around Yogyakarta, Indonesia, who need English skills to support their study or their performance in the workplace.

To begin ESP courses, a diagnostic test and need analysis are conducted to measure student candidate's initial language proficiency and to identify and analyze their strengths and weaknesses in using English regarding their needs. The results, then, become considerations for designing the course syllabus and the materials. Moreover, the ESP courses designed are commonly related to academic purposes such as English for academic reading, writing, and speaking, and occupational purposes such as English for business communication, for missionaries, for teachers, for medical doctoring, and other professions requiring English as the language communication. As these courses serve as customized course, the language levels may vary (beginner up to advanced level) depending on the student candidate's results of the diagnostic test and the need analysis.

Furthermore, the teachers teaching ESP courses are those who involve in teaching the general English course. They began their career with teaching the general English and they were promoted to teach ESP after they got an ESP training. The training aimed to equip the English teachers with knowledge about ESP and the roles of ESP teachers (Dudley-Evan & St John, 1998), including the experience of course and materials development. Importantly, the participants involved in the study were four English teachers teaching ESP in the language institute in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, namely Christine, Dion, Rebecca, and Stella (names were pseudonym). They were invited to participate in the study through inform consent given. Christine, Dion, Rebecca took English Education major in their bachelor program, while Stella took non-English Education major. However, they had finished their graduate study majoring English Studies and had more than five-year-experience of teaching General English and ESP since they they began their career in the language institute. Dion and Stella were the ESP course coordinators as well as teachers in the language institute. Rebecca managed the Language Testing Center but she had many experiences teaching ESP. While, Christine was an English language and Indonesian language teacher. Like Rebecca, she also experienced in teaching ESP, specifically for English academic writing and public speaking. For some ESP courses, the teachers were required to develop the teaching materials based on the topics constituted in the course syllabus. Additionally, the researcher acknowledged the participants' role as language instructors at the intended language institute. However, in this study the term 'teacher' was applied to refer to 'instructor'. Both teacher and instructor are assigned to conduct teaching and to achieve educational goals. This reference, thus, would not affect the intention of achieving the purpose of this study.

2.2. Data Collection and Analysis

This study employed life-history interview in order to explore and to elicit each participant's life story. The focus of the interview was on teachers' learning, teaching, and working experiences which were critically believed to construct teacher identity (Olsen, 2008). The adoption of life-history interview allows the researcher to understand the participants' professional experiences through their respective accounts (Gao, 2008). The interviews embraced the idea of guide approach and informal conversation where the researcher utilized interview protocol, which was in form of open-ended questions, to explore the participants' experiences, and led them into deeper discussion (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The participants were also encouraged to raise their own topics related to ESP teacher identity construction. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian—the participants' first language—in order to avoid language barriers in communication. Thus, all interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

To analyze the data, the researcher adopted a biographic approach to obtain whole understanding or each participant's life history (Gibbs, 2008). The approach was employed to reveal a complete picture of individual's story uniting a chain of events with inherent causal relationships and an

overview of each individual's professional trajectory (Gibbs, 2008). Then, a mini-biography was composed from each participant's transcript. The mini-biography contained a comprehensive picture of the whole experiences shared by each participant. All were analyzed using data analysis technique in qualitative approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Adopting the framework of TESOL teacher identity simplified by Tao and Gao (2018), the researcher generated some categories to organize the data. The categories included *instructional frame*, *disciplinary frame*, *professional frame*, *vocational frame*, and *economic frame*. The collected data were read and reread to sort and to search for patterns so that the materials bearing on a given category could physically be separated from other data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). They were examined in the following section.

3. Findings and Discussion

The results revealed that the participants constructed ESP teacher identity through acquiring subject knowledge via professional development activities. There was a sense of intrinsic fulfillment, as becoming an ESP teacher contributed to their professional development. On the other hand, as teaching and learning ESP in the language institute served as a customized course, the participants found a challenge to cope with the students' demands for taking ESP course. To demonstrate these complex results, the five frames of their teacher identity are elaborated in the following section.

3.1. Instructional Frame

The instructional frame mainly emphasizes on the teacher's roles in regards to classroom instruction (Pennington, 2014). Through working experience, the four participants described their engagement with professional development activities. These included the development of their lesson plans and the teaching materials affecting their teaching practices. On the other hand, the participants considered the importance of acquiring related subject knowledge to support their classroom instruction, since they were only trained to adopt ESP teaching approaches in their pre-teaching qualification training. Therefore, they highlighted teaching preparation as one of the influential activities to enhance their pedagogical practices. This manifestation of the preparation of pedagogical materials serves as an essential source of mediation to support their ESP teacher identity construction.

[Christine]

To teach ESP, we need to design the materials, ensure whether the materials can cover the students' needs, and pay attention on the complexity of the activities regarding the students' language proficiency.

[Rebecca]

I always put much effort on the preparation ... I often refer to the books provided by the institute and online sources regarding the development within the students' subject areas to organize lesson plans and determine the learning activities.

[Stella]

I look for some information from articles or the internet related to the students' background (subject knowledge areas), including the specific terminologies and the recent issues happening to rise the contexts of the students' learning

Concerning on developing the lesson plans, and the learning materials and activities, the participants found that teaching ESP was more complex compared to teaching General English. They required to provide specific exposure and relevant contexts where the students might use the language to meet situational needs (Chen, 2014). These professional development activities influenced how these teachers engage to the classroom instruction. As Stella took non-English Education major in her bachelor study, she possessed limited understanding of English teaching and learning theories at the beginning of her teaching career. Nevertheless, Stella's working experience in teaching the General English positively contributed to her struggles of teaching ESP courses.

[Stella]

It looks like trial and error ... I can implement the teaching materials and monitor the teaching-learning process so that I can evaluate the students' learning and develop my teaching performance as well.

On the other hand, Rebecca constituted a narrower role in her ESP class. She believed that teaching ESP required collaboration between the teacher and the students. Creating a collaboration with the student provides an advantage for the teacher since the student is the one who generally more familiar with the target discipline (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

[Rebecca]

I position myself as a companion for the students. I think that I am not the only source of knowledge so that they should not rely on me only ... but I tend to collaborate with the students since they know better about the areas they engage with.

The participants' narratives demonstrate that their prior professional experiences became an essential source of teacher learning and authority in designing the materials and developing the learning content. As the ESP course in the language institute serve as a private program and the students taking the course are varied in terms of subject knowledge areas and language proficiency, the teachers are required to provide suitable materials with considerable complexities promoting crucial content that the students need. Given attention on authorship of teaching contents and materials, the teachers show confidence in teaching ESP as well as in constructing the instructional element of their teacher identities (Pennington, 2014). In addition to the role of a teacher in ESP class, Rebecca's narrative illustrated an ESP teacher's persona in classroom instruction. The role of being a collaborator for the students' learning enriched the teachers with various subject knowledge. This helps the teachers to draw learning contexts and to provide specific language assistance.

3.2. Disciplinary Frame

The disciplinary frame incorporates teacher identity into a specific field or discipline (Pennington, 2014). Based on the interview data, despite promoting ESP teaching and learning in the language institute, the participants successfully developed a sense of identification of ESP field into an independent course managed by the CESP division. The demands for ESP learning in surrounding society contributed to the participants' experiences interpreting the ESP courses they taught and in negotiating their professional identities as ESP teachers.

[Stella]

Teaching ESP means teaching specific students with special needs ... Of course, the course would be specified regarding the students' background (subject knowledge areas) and needs, for example, teaching English for missionaries. The context would be about Christianity and priests' life.

[Rebecca]

It is good to understand ESP as an independent course here (in the language institute) ... The course outline designed by the coordinators should represent the students' request for learning English specifically.

Drawing on these two teachers' narratives, both Stella and Rebecca were able to associate ESP with language learning in specific ways. They have the same self-positionings towards what ESP is and how it should be implemented. As one of the ESP course coordinators, Stella attempted to emphasize ESP as a customized course designed for specific individuals. She possessed an authority to design the course syllabus based on the result of diagnostic test and need analysis, and coordinate teachers in conducting classroom instruction. This demonstrates how ESP course is independently implemented as well as how the teachers' knowledge base affects the disciplinary frame of their teacher identities (Clarke, 2008).

Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the status of ESP in the language institute is influenced by demands of learning English in surrounding society. The participants recognized a shift of learning priority during their experiences of teaching ESP (occupational to academic purposes). This shift of learning priority potentially affects the participants' identity development as ESP teachers in a way that they embrace and cope with those emerging situations (Campion, 2016).

[Christine]

The demands of EAP are getting higher in the last three years. The students expect that they can use English to support their academic needs, such as seeking for scholarship, writing research paper, and speaking in a conference.

[Dion]

We need to see the reality that most of the ESP courses we designed recently focus on improving students' academic skills, specifically for research paper writing and presentation ... We (ESP teachers) also need to improve our academic skills to walk along the trends.

The construction of the participants' disciplinary frame is generally influenced by the institutional setting which has immediate effects on their professional lives (Hayes, 2008). Through their narratives, the participants showed an awareness towards the changing priority of ESP learning in the surrounding environment. This situation affects the teachers' viewpoint and action to perform their professional practices. Taken the role as the ESP course coordinator, Dion tried to cope with the societal demands by facilitating students who needed EAP assistance. In classroom instruction, moreover, Christine began to be aware of what the students expected from their course in regards to learning English for academic purposes. This potentially influences how she perceived the development of ESP in the language institute and how she conducted her classroom instruction to meet the students' expectancy.

3.3. Professional Frame

The professional frame covers teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices of a specific field, which are developed through individual's perspectives and participation in professional activities (Pennington, 2014). For these ESP teachers working in the language institute, the construction of the professional element of the teacher identity was examined through their interpretations and engagement with professional practices, as mediated by their learning and teaching experiences. The interview data illustrated that the participants formed their individualized professional practices through different ways. Rebecca, an ESP teacher who was responsible to teach other classes in English Testing Center, such as IELTS and TOEFL, and the General English, constituted a sense of 'being alert' towards the development of ESP and related subject knowledge areas to strengthen her professionalism as an ESP teacher.

[Rebecca]

I need to be aware of new changes and the development of knowledge ... I cannot just rely on what I learned ... To become an ESP teacher, I should keep learning.

Rebecca's narrative implies that being well-informed and up-to-date on changes and development of subject knowledge areas have been internalized as part of her own professional practices. This connects her identity construction to the global facet of the context (Pennington, 2014). Meanwhile, Dion developed his professional practices from his engagement with ESP discussion forum and workshop related to ESP and ESP teaching held by educational institutions in surrounding workplace. He found that these professional development activities contributed to broaden his knowledge horizon on the development of ESP in Indonesia, including the adoption of new strategies to conduct classroom instruction and understanding of challenges experienced by other ESP teachers attending the forum and the workshop.

[Dion]

I got pictures of how ESP was taught in other institutions, what the challenges were, and what techniques they (other ESP teachers) implemented to boost their teaching. It was a great experience to have sharing with them ... I guess we can make such kind of activities here.

Dion's narrative suggests the significance of joining ESP discussion forum and workshop in relation to the construction of his professional element of ESP teacher identity. Dion's participation in those professional development activities impacts on further identification of how ESP teachers working in the language institute are able to develop their ESP skills in order to enhance their performance. Additionally, Stella shared her interpretation towards the essence of conducting ESP research and participating in seminars to enrich the teachers' knowledge on issues related to ESP. She believed in the potential of ESP teachers in the language institute to develop their professional practices.

[Stella]

We have some experienced teachers and most of them have earned their master degree ... It is better for us to conduct research on ESP and we can participate in seminars to share ideas about ESP, such as the trends, the difficulties, the teaching strategies, and even exchange experiences in teaching particular ESP courses.

Stella's narrative implies her projection of the way of developing ESP teachers' professionalism in the language institute. It is believed to be clear that Stella's perspective strengthens her professional elements of teacher identity (Pennington, 2014). Being involved in the supportive environment, these ESP teachers find it easy to sustain intellectual exchanges with the other colleagues or to construct professional identities as ESP teachers in the language institute (Pennington, 2014).

3.4. Vocational Frame

The vocational frame highlights the affective element of teacher identity. It includes teaching commitment and enjoyment (Pennington, 2014). As the participants were assigned in different positions in the language institute, they felt a positive sense of teacher identity based on the shared belief in the benefits of teaching ESP. A primary theme of the narratives concerns on the relevance of ESP teaching to the participants' intrinsic fulfillment as a teacher.

[Rebecca]

I feel changes in me ... In the first year I taught ESP I felt that I was timid. I was afraid of something unexpected happened. Through the preparation, I learn many new things and I enjoy this process ... Now I just let my teaching run and I feel that I am a teacher.

[Stella]

Learning by teaching, that is the point ... I feel that teaching ESP can fulfill my personal needs as a person who likes to meet new people with different background and learn from them.

These two teachers' narratives reveal a further interpretation of becoming an ESP teacher. Both Rebecca and Stella, they believed that becoming an ESP teacher requires continual learning over life and working experiences. As Rebecca found a sense of enjoyment through her ESP teaching preparation, her vocation of becoming a teacher is constructed along with her experiences as she could interpret the benefits of teaching ESP. While, Stella expressed a sense of fulfillment through her position as the ESP course coordinator and the teacher as well. She told her experiences of meeting new students shared different subject knowledge areas, aiming at promoting intellectual exchanges. Starting from analyzing the students' needs until conducting the classroom instruction, she highlighted her inner self-positioning as a continual learner in dealing with ESP. On the other

hand, Christine formed her vocational element of teacher identity by taking another role of an ESP teacher. She pointed out her enjoyment of becoming a materials designer and evaluator (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

[Christine]

If there are two choices, teaching the students or developing the learning materials, I would prefer to develop the learning materials ... I find myself more comfortable when I deal with materials design and evaluation. Here I have experienced teaching in the classroom for eight years and now I want to try something new, which is 'working at the back stage'.

Christine's engagement with ESP field has been accumulated through her teaching experiences in the language institute for eight years. As she was responsible to develop and evaluate the learning materials for the ESP courses she taught, Christine found her comfort during the process of teaching ESP. Her experience has led to the construction of her ESP teacher identity in regards to the importance of becoming a materials designer and evaluator for ESP courses in the language institute. Above all, these self-positioning enable the participants to see alternative perspectives on what they experience that go beyond the ideological construction of ESP at the language institute. These alternative perspectives positively contribute to the vocational element of being an ESP teacher (Pennington, 2014).

3.5. Economic Frame

The economic frame connects teacher identity to the feeling of being compensated and extrinsically and intrinsically recognized in terms of both economic and academic position regarding one's work in the field (Pennington, 2014). Apart from the status of ESP in the language institute, the participants' narratives indicate challenging situation encountered by these teachers towards the students and their demands for learning ESP.

[Dion]

We should maintain the privacy of the course, meaning that we give all for our students. That is the way to promote our ESP course.

[Stella]

This is a private course and we design it for specific students ... We often face the students who are demanding on the choice of the lessons and the results of taking this course.

Both Dion and Stella, they compensated their position as the coordinators of the ESP course in the language institute, who were responsible to design a specific ESP course based on the students' needs and wants. In order to promote the course as well as the division of CESP, they provided well services to the students during the course. Those two narratives illustrate that the students possess superiority in term of economic position as they contribute to the development of the CESP division in the language institute. This might affect the students' attitudes towards the course they are taking, importantly the demanding changes of the learning topics. In line with the students' demands, Dion's narrative below would best describe his experience in responding to this concern.

[Dion]

Some lecturers taking English academic writing or public speaking course for doctoral study preparation often demanded for the lessons they expected and were instantly applicable ... Should we follow them or stick to the course outline that we have designed before? That is the question ... We open for discussion then.

The experience of dealing with students who possess superiority in terms of academic and economic positions provide Dion with space to mediate his teacher identity to come up with decision making (Toom, Pyhältö, & Rust, 2015). He suggested an alternative way by deciding to

have discussion about the students' expectancy towards the course. This raises the notion of promoting privacy for the students where the students have space to share their expectancy towards the course. Concerning on such experience, the economic frame of teacher identity could be reflected through these teachers' challenging situations towards the students' demands that provides the compensation for teacher-student economic and academic position (Pennington, 2014).

The participants' experiences illustrate a complex picture of Indonesian ESP teachers' professional lives in a language institute. Based on their life-history accounts, these teachers revealed that becoming an ESP teacher positively contributed to their instructional practices and transformed their professional lives, as captured in different frames of teacher identities. The *instructional* frame pointed out the participants' prior professional experiences. Their experiences became an influential source of teacher learning and authority in developing teaching-learning materials and adopting appropriate teaching methods in accordance with the target subject knowledge areas (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). The manifestation of these pedagogical practices serves as an essential source of mediation to support their ESP teacher identity construction. In classroom instruction, a sense being a student's collaborator was believed to provide an advantage for the participants, as they needed to cooperate with the student, the one who was generally more familiar with the target subject knowledge area (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Therefore, building teacher-student collaboration would promote intellectual exchanges to integrate the English language into the specific context that the student involves in. In addition to teacher learning, the participants suggested that becoming an ESP teacher required continual learning process over life and working experiences. This belief strengthens their *vocational* frame of teacher identity construction, as they found the relevance of ESP teaching to their intrinsic fulfillment as a teacher. Although the participants were assigned in different positions in the language institute, they felt a positive sense of teacher identity based on the shared belief in the benefits of teaching ESP. Their self-positionings, whether as a course coordinator, a classroom teacher, or a materials designer and evaluator, enable them to see alternative perspectives on what they experienced that go beyond the ideological construction of an ESP teacher (Pennington, 2014).

Despite promoting the classroom instruction, further exploration of the ESP teacher identity construction reveals that the participants successfully developed a sense of identification of ESP field as an independent course managed by the CESP division in the language institute. They were also able to associate ESP with English language learning in specific ways and how it should be implemented amid the changing priority (EOP to EAP) and the societal demands for learning ESP. Such understanding incorporates the participants' knowledge base to the projection of their professional practices and specifically affects the *disciplinary* frame of their teacher identities (Clarke, 2008). On the other hand, the *economic* frame of the teacher identity demonstrates challenging situation encountered by the participants towards the students' demands for learning ESP as the result of being customized course in the language institute. The students possess superiority in term of economic position as they contribute to the development of the CESP division in the language institute. This impacts on the students' attitudes towards the course they are taking, importantly demanding for course changes in term of the lessons that go beyond their language competence.

In line with the concerned theme about the student's superior position in the ESP course, the participants develop their *professional* frame of teacher identity by promoting teacher-student dialogue. The activity aims to evaluate the course and the students' progress during classroom instruction, and to make necessary adjustment to the course syllabus and the materials (Pennington, 2014). On the other hand, based on the participants' life-history accounts, the increasing demands of ESP learning encourage the teachers to be well-informed and up-to-date on changes and development of particular subject knowledge areas. The participants acquired sufficient subject knowledge related to the course by reading some literature to enrich their understanding on the subject area they taught, and searching for and adapting some teaching resources to develop the materials for classroom instruction. This activity has been internalized as their part of enhancing professional practices and connects their identity construction to the global facet of the context (Pennington, 2014). To promote intellectual exchanges on ESP topics, moreover, participating in ESP academic forums and internal ESP workshop were pointed out to give significant influence to the teachers' professional identity. These professional development activities contributed to broadening the participants' knowledge horizon on ESP teaching resources and strategies, and the challenges to resolve. The participants might acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to enhance

their professional lives and to cope with challenges and changes in teaching ESP. Involved in the supportive environment, thus, these participants find it easy to sustain intellectual exchanges with the other colleagues or to construct professional identities (Pennington, 2014).

4. Conclusion

The current study reveals the struggles and negotiation of ESP teacher identity construction at language institute context. It illustrates the complex interaction in the workplace community through five frames of TESOL teacher identity (Pennington, 2014). Although the number of participants was limited and merely constituted broad generalization, the findings could capture each participant's identity construction through their professional lives at the language institute context. The findings highlighted that the participants constructed ESP teacher identity through acquiring subject knowledge via professional development activities within the workplace community or surrounding educational institutions. A sense of intrinsic fulfillment also enveloped these participants, as their self-positionings, as ESP teachers in the language institute, contributed to their professional development. On the other hand, the participants showed subordination to the students' demands for learning ESP as ESP courses in the context of language institute served as an independent and customized program designed for specific students. However, this condition encouraged the participants to develop their professional practices by making some course adjustment based on the result of teacher-student dialogue, in order to meet the students' needs.

Taken the results together, the need to equip ESP teachers in the language institute with sufficient skills in various subject knowledge areas became the concern of the participants. The teachers might struggle to sustain their teacher identities through professional development activities related to ESP and ESP teaching. Then, it is essential for the institute to provide facilitation for the teachers to conduct ESP research and training by problematizing the current ESP development and how the ESP teachers implement their classroom instruction. Creating such a supportive learning environment positively contributes to the formation of a teacher community sharing the same beliefs (Song & Kim, 2016). These professional development opportunities would increase the growing number of language teachers who transform their careers to teach ESP in a wider context in Asia.

REFERENCES

- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(2), 107-12
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Buchanan, R. (2015). Teacher identity and agency in an era of accountability. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 21*(6), 700-719.
- Bukor, E. (2015). Exploring teacher identity from a holistic perspective: Reconstructing and reconnecting personal and professional selves. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 21*(3), 305-327.
- Campion, G. C. (2016). 'The learning never ends': Exploring teachers' views on the transition from General English to EAP. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 23*, 59-70
- Chang, K. C. (2017). From EAP to ESP: Teacher's identity development. *Taiwan Journal of TESOL, 14*(2), 71-100.
- Chen, Y. (2014). English for Missionary Purpose: Perspectives from ESP Learners. *International Journal of Arts and Commerce, 3*(8), 81-94.
- Cheng, A., & Anthony, L. (2014). ESP research in Asia: Guest editorial. *English for Specific Purposes, 33*, 1-3.
- Clarke, M. (2008). *Language teacher identities: Co-constructing discourse and community*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments of English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Gao, X. (2008). Teachers' professional vulnerability and cultural tradition: A Chinese paradox. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 154-165.
- Gibbs, G. R. (2008). *Analysing qualitative data*. London: Sage.
- Grosse, C. U., & Voght, G. M. (2012). The continuing evolution of language for specific purposes. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96, 190-202.
- Gu, M., & Benson, P. (2015). The formation of English teacher identities: A cross-cultural investigation. *Language Teaching Research*, 9(2), 187-206.
- Hayes, D. (2008). Becoming a teacher of English in Thailand. *Language Teaching Research*, 12(4), 471-494.
- Hoa, N. T. T. H., & Mai, M. P. T. T. (2016). Difficulties in teaching English for specific purposes: Empirical study at Vietnam universities. *Higher Education Studies*, 6(2), 154-161.
- Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2008). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Kubanyiova, M., & Crookes, G. (2016). Re-visioning the roles, tasks, and contribution of language teachers in the multilingual era of language education research and practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 100, 117-118.
- Layder, D. (1993). *New strategies in social research: An introduction and guide*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Olsen, B. (2008). *Teaching what they learn, learning what they live: How teachers' personal histories shape their professional development*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Pennington, M. C. (2014). Teacher identity in TESOL: A frames perspective. In Y. L. Cheung, S. B. Said, & P. Kwanghyun (Eds.), *Advances and current trends in language teacher identity research* (pp. 16-30). Abington: Routledge.
- Poedjiastutie, D. (2017). The pedagogical challenges of English for specific purposes (ESP) teaching at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 12(6), 338-349.
- Sachs, J. (2005). Teacher education and the development of professional identity: Learning to be a teacher. In D. M. Pam, & M. Kompf (Eds.), *Connecting policy and practice: challenges for teaching and learning in schools and universities* (pp. 5-21). New York, London: Routledge.
- Song, B., & Kim, T. (2016). Teacher (de)motivation from an Activity Theory perspective: Case of two experienced EFL teachers in South Korea. *System*, 57, 134-145.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Tao, J., & Gao, X. (2018). Identity constructions of ESP teachers in a Chinese university. *English for Specific Purposes*, 49, 1-13.
- Toom, A., Pyhältö, K., & Rust, F. O. (2015). Teacher professional agency in contradictory times. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 21(6), 615-623.
- Tsui, A. B. (2007). Complexities of identity formation: A narrative inquiry of an EFL teacher. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41(4), 657-680.
- Varghese, M., Morgan, B., Johnston, B., & Johnson, K. (2005). Theorizing language teacher identity: Three perspectives and beyond. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, 4(1), 21-44.
- Whitsed, C., & Volet, S. (2013). Positioning foreign English language teachers in the Japanese university context. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 19(6), 717-735.
- Xu, Y. (2014). Becoming researchers: A narrative study of Chinese university EFL teachers' research practice and their professional identity construction. *Language Teaching Research*, 18(2), 242-259.