

The Negotiation of English Teachers' Identity Representation In EFL Classroom

Irene Rosalina

Universitas Negeri Surabaya

ireneroseline99@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study applies a sociocultural linguistic approach where it examined the representation of English as International language teachers' identity negotiation in their classroom interactions. The important role of the teachers involving their efforts, values, and beliefs preceded this study. Furthermore, the findings in this study indicated that the English teachers negotiate their identity as they still bring out the teaching with the reference to cultural, social, political, and religious constructs. The different ways of the teachers showing their identity infused in their linguistic use in the classroom. Moreover, the religion bounding values and beliefs that the teachers motivated to explore were shown in the connection between the English teaching topic being discussed in class and the religious concept in teaching, which in this case related to the Islamic teachings. The teachers also perceive their identities which can be assembled into four broad areas showing their understanding and the important function of their identity representations in the way of teaching. Lastly, some pedagogical implications were also found from this study.

Keywords: Negotiation, Teacher's Identity, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Usually, a class and its atmosphere reflect the true complexity and heterogeneity of society because naturally, the way of communicating in the class designates the identity of a particular community. Class interaction is usually used as an information transfer container which often refers to examples of negotiating values and beliefs as important features of identity. Besides, identity can be counterfeited in a classroom (Leeuwen, 2006). The classroom is deliberated the core meeting place for cultural interaction due to the increasing awareness of teachers that the classroom is a newly formed set of identities. Besides, a class can also build identity, class interactions are also proven to be effective in preserving values and identities (Sharifian, 2017). Then the selection of teachers' linguistic features shows their commitment to revitalizing certain values and beliefs (Hall, 2018). It can then be argued that the teacher's language reflects their identity and their linguistic features that affect the identity of their students. Student identity can be determined from the nature of power relations in class interactions involving certain social structures (Gonzales and Gabel, 2017).

In the development of English as an International Language (EIL), the formation of identity is important for teachers and students because they are faced with a

language that is very closely related to the impression of globalism and the history of colonialism. Also, teaching English always shows its cultural, political, economic, social, and cultural attachment so that the role of EIL teachers is crucial because they become agents who can filter both theoretical and pedagogical knowledge about EIL. After all, it is impossible to teach it just like that. Teachers must have a strong awareness to know and detect what will happen in the classroom with their plural culture to create a useful classroom atmosphere and provide productive negotiations and potential conflicts that EIL science and students may bring to class. On a large scale set up and training institutions can also help EIL students position themselves appropriately in specific historical and institutional contexts. With this, it will be able to support students to face issues of globalism and EIL colonialism on the identity and value transformation of students after learning English. The roles, relationships, and identities of teachers and students are built by bridging English language learning (Petek, 2013)

Several shifts in the identity of teachers from linguistically homogeneous countries of origin to heterogeneous English have increased their awareness of becoming a nonnative English teacher (NNEST) (Koole, 2015). In his studies, professional identity and building legitimacy as a quality English teacher are very important. Besides, in a study conducted by Ha, (2015), it is said that establishing the identity of EIL teachers in a personal and professional context also needs to be done. The process of reconstructing the identity of teachers by considering their experiences while studying in English-speaking countries as a starting point for the complexity of identity and how they brought the original identity of their country, Vietnam, was researched by Ha (2008). In his research, it was stated that some teachers experienced inner conflicts where they wanted to maintain their Vietnamese identity, such as when they were students, they did not directly call their lecturers by just mentioning their names because it was considered rude to them. Another study conducted by Ebtakar (2015) on how the identity of teachers as an important part of their professional work is carried out. In this study, it is also said that their identity is reflected in teaching materials and class interactions.

Meanwhile, in the Indonesian education context, some studies have also been dedicated to exploring the teachers' identity. A study done by Susilowati (2008) had figured out that the teaching materials had been selected by the teachers which portrayed how the interlocutors in the passage navigate the interchange meaning for the negotiation of identity. At her study, there was the point to be improved that was the teachers who importantly plot a route for classroom activities was not involved. Also, a study found out that when a teacher was embarked to English speaking community as well as English speaking country, she experienced some shifts of being nonnative English speaking teachers (NNEST) within their professional identity (Akiyama, 2017). The identity the teacher had brought changed during their study and

there were shifts of professional identity. A further examination done by Susilowati (2010a) figured out the perception of the teacher on the identity of them were represented in classroom settings as the students' perception on the importance of teachers' identity representation (2010b). A clear depiction of the linguistic feature as the representation of their identity was not provided in the research, even when the ways of showing their identity in the classroom have been mentioned (Gonzales and Gabel, 2018) student's identity has been explored out, unfortunately, there was not any exploration of the substantive clue for their identity representation.

Some of the previous studies above should then be improved with more empirical data as the teacher identity representation, not only as linguistic repertoires but also learning resources, could be a precedence. Thus, it is important to investigate the teacher's identity representation in the classroom.

Furthermore, from the above previous studies, a hypothesis came up that identity in classroom interactions emerged through the teachers' utterances. This was included some linguistic functions. However, the notion of this hypothesis is far-off from being conclusive which then leads the present study. This study focused on addressing that issue by investigating utterances the English teachers produced at the university level as their identity representation. Then, the discussion above leads to a derivation of a question as to the following. (1) How does the English teachers' identity represented in their utterances in classroom interactions? (2) How do the English teachers perceive their identity representation in their utterances in classroom interactions?

METHODS

To capture identity, an approach called sociocultural linguistic is used in this study, where this approach can accommodate and integrate different angles and derived from different disciplines (Hall, 2016). Negotiation of identity which is explored in the interlocutors' language choice and code-switching is also the focus of Interactional sociolinguistics (Mertens, 2009). Voluntary Content course teachers of a Private Islamic University were the subject of this study. In my preliminary observation, another language rather than English as the medium of instruction seemed to take the role in class. Even though the only medium of instruction was English, from my preliminary observation, teachers of content courses seemed more lenient to provide spaces for other languages to take place. It seemed like for the sake of facilitating language learning as well as exploring their identity, the code switch applied in the class. Thus, this phenomenon of linguistic could then become a big depiction that could be used as crucial data to indicate the representation of identity (Kinging, 2016). To capture the identity representation, this observation used video recording and field notes on the teacher subjects' classroom. Some principles of Bucholtz and Hall (2005) which were named emergence, positionality, indexicality, relationality, or

partialness were then applied to analyze the data. Lastly, to confirmed and supported the data, some Interviews with the teachers were done to explore how they perceived their identity representation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In distinctive ways, the identity of the teachers was represented in their utterances in the classroom. It can be depicted that the way of teaching which was showed in their utterance showed how deeply rooted their religious teaching was. It then became the starting point of the essential commitment of them to teaching English. Through the context and roles, the identity representation could be seen in the certain classroom atmosphere. First of all, it was exposed to their attitudes and utterances in different tenses that their immediate exposure of identity showed that they were culturally and socially bounded.

Furthermore, the power relation in such different ways facilitated them in expressing the teacher's commitment beyond their teaching objective. It was then clearly showed as the cultural value they held, that the teachers exposed the need to be respected. Moreover, the teachers' identity as the problem solver, the participant of stereotyped cultural communal, the involvement of the academic community, the evaluator of language, and the predisposition toward the youth's life was exposed through their particular role. Besides, the teachers' local, national, religious, and academic identity were displayed in the teachers' techniques of indexing to certain groups. Then, to show the cultural distinctions on different sociolinguistic functions, the cultural similarities for interactional purposes, the culture of institutionalized power, the sociocultural differences to represent social similarities and similarity of the native and target cultures of certain social status were then revealed in the teachers' ways of exploring cultures of institutionalized practice. Throughout their ideological native understanding, cultural awareness, their religious commitment, and view in maintaining interaction as well as their passion for English teaching, the hybrid identity was then exposed in their ways. In the classroom, the teachers positioned themselves as a local and overseas broad-view which then revealed their roles as an educator, critical evaluator, cultural differences explorer, and agent of identity. The nature of the identity of the teachers was derived from their personal and professional dimensions. Their identity was then displayed in the diversity, flexibility, relational, fragmented, context-dependent, context producing, and socio-culturally constructed.

Intentionally, their identity representation can be benefited as a filter of universal values from the target culture, being the third place between the native and target culture as well as delivering parental role through their strong identity. From the point of the usage of the language, they believe that language was a reflection of

their identity. The teachers' academic and personal needs could be accommodated through language with its sense. This then is the reason for the code-switching choice as the answer of delivering specific needs in the classroom that English could not cover. English was positioned as an instrumental language. Lastly, to help the students face the globalized world, the identity of the teachers is strongly displayed as the educator, filter of values, and mediating the difference between the native and target culture. The identity of the teacher was showed as a role model and taught the student not to over-value the target culture.

From the analysis, the teachers' identity was influenced by the contexts which then determined their identity function in the classroom interaction. Many different contexts made different consequences of the representation of the teachers' identity. Through the findings, it could be seen that the teachers set more prominences on the interpersonal nature of identity. These generally arise in the interactions to answer to the encircled social connotations concerning other participants who infatuated social functions. It emerges also in other identity positions, which were not communally select. Furthermore, it can be outlined from the results which prominently visible the dissimilar identities as perceived from the different behaviors of identity representation. The example in the class was when the teacher showed their identity which immediately emerged in the interaction of the classroom. In this case, the teacher performed as an advisor who completed relevant ideas to the topic that was being discussed. Nevertheless, the linguistic contexts of the quotation concurrently demonstrated the teachers' authority which strongly influenced their culture.

Throughout these contexts, it presented that those identities were 'actively, ongoing, dynamically constituted in discourse and constitutes discourse' (Hopkyns, 2014) through particularly organized outlines of the languages and discursive practices to preserve the social exercise inside teaching space communications (Hui, 2015).

The contexts that emerged in the classroom devoted the teachers' identity. The teachers' identity primarily delivered their beliefs, values, and attitudes which to a certain extent showed the bounding of religious cultural derivation. The utilization of language exposed their bounded values, beliefs and showed the intimacy between the cultures in their identity representation. The use of their native language as a choice of code shift, whether in Javanese or Indonesian or both was as a vehicle of showing their identity. The intended messages they wanted to deliver were deployed and weight on more as a cultural representative implicitly or explicitly through the code-switching in the classroom interaction which contained values, attitudes, beliefs, and other good terms. Hawkin and Norton (2009: 3) mentioned that " the language the teachers employ in their classroom interactions is as the tool through which

representations and meanings are constructed and negotiated, and a primary means through which ideologies are transmitted". The attached culture could be deployed through the language itself. The language is not neutral but it is reported over meanings, variations, purposes, and norms of the culture attached to the language.

The teacher identity is remarkably moved out from code-switching (CS) where it can carry the teacher identity and escort the function of linguistic through different motivations of exposing identity (Abdely, 2016). Code-switching can take over the surrounding linguistic contexts. As (Debra Tri Ragawanti, 2009) Kamwangamalu (2010) said that code-switching could represent multiple identities when it is an exploratory choice, the condition of the teacher was as well as what that theory mentioned. The different ways of the teachers showing their identity infused in their linguistic use in the classroom. Furthermore, the religion bounding values and beliefs that the teachers were inclined to explore were shown in the connection between the topic being discussed in class and the religious concept. Which in this case related to the Islamic teachings. The integrating Islam teachings role policy into classroom activities seems to be the greatest showed up of multiple identity stimulation which enriches the teacher to include Islam teachings in their classroom interactions.

From what we could see that the way the teacher exposing their identity which was subconsciously related to their religion indicates the deeply rooted commitment in their teaching, although they teach the English language which is a global language. The foundation of Islam which was shown in their way of teaching showed their identity representation resistance within the English as an International Language in the classroom interaction. The teacher utilizes their religious teaching to enrich the way of teaching which then appeared as a fundamental judgment and values to shape their identity. This marked in their evaluative of the moral statements in their classroom interaction and showed diffusion of religion in their identity representation. At the moment we took a look at the trajectories in their identity, the point of the identity starting point related with the construction, negotiation, reconstruction, depiction, and dissemination which were all based on religion. As Ha (2008) revealed that religion was the key to the moral carrier, however, the teachers in this study brought the position of religion in the "being" fixed position into "becoming" position because of the flexibility for the teacher to progress their identity over space and time. It was also well known that the teacher depicted their identity with the sense involving their power relation. The power domination with a different degree of seriousness was shown in the classroom interaction. Power relation is utilized by the teacher to deliver the message. The power relation which was imagined to give a negative result for students in the classroom was unavoidably requested the teacher power relation. Making a "punishment" statement can be beneficial in giving the teachers' "punishment" to the student as targeted. The

teacher statement here was used to stimulate the return of the teacher's talk from the students by delivering such a repeated utterance without any serious and furious tone in the classroom interaction.

The sense of teachers' power domination was also shown as the teacher resistance identity of English teaching wherein the real English speaking country, teacher – students' relation was more flexible. Such power relation was provided relevant to the needed of the classroom instruction. But what needed to be underlined and interesting here was that the teachers used merely English in delivering their power relation rather than escorting the native language. This displays that the target language reasonably has a precise grade of conventionalism which reaches its tough effect on generating the classroom manner and can deliver the students admittance to learning and negotiate a connection with target language principles (Norton, 2011). But consequently, bringing control relation in teaching space gratifies the teacher's cautious deliberation.

However, the teacher ought to thoughtfully contemplate the students' situation in the classroom dissertation and disapprovingly make the classroom interactions to empower the students to label and struggle in contradiction of particular of disempowering predispositions of linguistic carry out of the target cultures' (Norton and Toohey, 2011: 418). It should be noticed that the students are not in the depression of the teacher under domination in delivering the power relation. This requires the awareness of the teacher that they are the agent of addressing multicultural atmosphere in the context of educational context. Necessarily it needed to prevent equality as the first impression of the marginalized members of a larger community where the students might face later on. The teachers should remember that they teach English which may work to mutually authorize and marginalize (Mappiasse & Bin Sihes, 2014).

Furthermore, the right to speak and the opportunity of the students to speak up in the classroom interaction should then be contribution the teachers motivated regarding the complexities of the L2 classroom (Sercu, et. al, 2005). What the power relation of the teachers must grant the good effect of the students in the process of learning the language. The pedagogical implications must be significantly employed for stirring the classroom interactions for more productive EFL teaching and learning had better than be the implication of the power relation the teachers showed in being the English teachers.

CONCLUSION

As the way to develop the pedagogical encouragements of this study, English teachers outstandingly utilize their classroom interactions as the prolific field for their

exploration of identity. Moreover, the results point out that the teachers' consciousness of their identity negotiation produced constructive influences which potentially enrich the students' asset on their learning. The English teachers intentionally assimilate their identity into their teaching. The teacher could be seen carefully decide on teaching materials that can be supplementary discovered to acquire the cultural, religious, and social values as boarding point of the identity representation. Furthermore, scheming transformative classroom accomplishments can be an alternative that triggers the students' sensitivity to attach their classroom activities to their actual situation of life. Lastly, further investigation needed to be done on the focus of the integration of local culture and religious values on English classroom interaction. These two features abundantly contribute to the formation of identity. Thus, reinforcing the students' identity with two of them, prominently encourage the students' readiness to face an identity crisis as well as assist them to be a respectable global language English teacher later on.

REFERENCES

- Abdely, A. Al. (2016). Types and Functions of Code-Switching in the English Language Types and Functions of Code-Switching in the English, (August).
- Akiyama, R. (2016). Language , culture , and identity negotiation: perspectives of adolescent Japanese sojourner students in the Midwest , USA.
- Debora Tri Ragawanti. (2009). Questions and Questioning Techniques: A View of Indonesian Students' Preferences. *K@Ta*, 11(2), 155–170.
<https://doi.org/10.9744/kata.11.2.155-170>
- Gonzales, S. M., & Gabel, S. L. (2017). Exploring Involvement Expectations for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents: What We Need to Know in Teacher Education, 19(2), 61–81.
- Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach, 585–614.
- Hall, K. (2016). Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach, (October 2005). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407>
- Hopkyns, S. (2014). The effect of global English on culture and identity in the UAE: a double-edged sword. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 11(2), 1–20.
- Hui, L. (2015). Intercultural communicative competence , language proficiency , and study abroad, 4(2), 57–67.
- Kinginger, C. (2013). Identity and Language Learning in Study Abroad, 46(3), 339–358.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12037>
- Koole, T. (2015). Classroom Interaction. *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118611463.wbielsi092>

- Leeuwen, V. T. (2006). *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Elsevier, (2001), 290–294.
- Lies Sercu ,et.al. (2005). *Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD. Retrieved from <http://bookfi.net/book/1161984>
- Mappiasse, S. S., & Bin Sihes, A. J. (2014). Evaluation of english as a foreign language and its curriculum in indonesia: A review. *English Language Teaching*, 7(10), 113–122. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n10p113>
- Mertens, D. M. (2009). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: integrating diversity ...* Retrieved from <http://books.google.com/books?id=m0N3tcIVds8C&pgis=1>
- Petek, E. (2013). Teacher’s Beliefs about Classroom Interaction and their Actual Practices: A Qualitative Case Study of a Native and a Non-native English Teacher’s In-class Applications. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 1195–1199. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.176>
- Sharifian, F. (2010). *English as an International Language*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters LTD.