



"Writing Became a Tool for Self-Discovery" How Intercultural Experiences Shape EFL Instructors' Evolving Identities and Pedagogies: A Qualitative Inquiry

Mansoor S. Almalki

Foreign Languages Department, Taif University, Saudi Arabia

msamalki@tu.edu.sa

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i4.1495>

APA Citation: Almalki, M.S.(2023). "Writing Became a Tool for Self-Discovery" How Intercultural Experiences Shape EFL Instructors' Evolving Identities and Pedagogies: A Qualitative Inquiry. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*. 5(4).111-130. <http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v5i4.1495>

Received:

05/09/2023

Accepted:

12/12/2023

Keywords:

EFL instructors,
writing, identity,
U.S. education,
narrative inquiry.

Abstract

This qualitative study delves into the experiences of three Saudi EFL instructors who pursued their postgraduate studies in the United States, exploring the relationship between writing and identity. Through the lens of narrative inquiry, the research uncovers the multifaceted experiences of these instructors, shedding light on the interplay of cultural, linguistic, and educational influences on their professional identities. The study's findings reveal that the U.S. educational system, with its diverse pedagogical approaches and emphasis on critical thinking, played a pivotal role in shaping the instructors' perceptions of writing as an act of identity expression. Furthermore, the research highlights the transformative power of foreign education as the instructors navigate through the challenges and opportunities of studying in a different linguistic and cultural environment. Their narratives underscore the dynamic nature of identity, which is continuously negotiated and redefined in response to various educational and cultural stimuli. The importance of this study lies not only in its insights into the personal and professional journeys of the three EFL instructors but also in its broader implications for the field of EFL education. It emphasizes the need for educators and institutions to recognize and value the diverse backgrounds and experiences of EFL instructors as well as learners, as these play a crucial role in shaping pedagogical practices and beliefs. In essence, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on the nexus of writing, identity, and foreign education, offering a nuanced understanding of the challenges and rewards of cross-cultural educational experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

The intricate relationship between language, identity, and education has captivated scholars and educators for decades, leading to a rich tapestry of research that delves into the nuances of these interconnected domains (Sithole & Maseko, 2021; The-Thitsar, 2022; Matras, Howley & Jones, 2020; Stella & Gawlewicz, 2021; Poyas & Lehman, 2022; Axelrod, 2022; Zhao, 2022; Sultana, 2022). Language, as a primary medium of communication, is not just a tool for conveying information; it is deeply intertwined with an individual's sense of self, their cultural background, and their worldview (Werito, 2023; Xu & Ou, 2022; Sithole & Maseko, 2021; Zhao, 2020; Qazi, Javid & Ullah, 2023). Identity, on the other hand, is a multifaceted construct that evolves over time, influenced by a plethora of factors including cultural memory education, cultural exposure, and personal experiences (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Norton, 2010;

For educators, especially those in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), these intersections take on added layers of complexity. EFL instructors, by the very nature of their profession, often find themselves at the crossroads of multiple linguistic and cultural landscapes. Their experiences as language learners and their exposure to various educational systems also have a significant impact on their professional identities (Favela, 2023; Colmenero & Lasagabaster, 2023; Trent & Nguyen, 2023; Seo & Kubota, 2023; Hsu, 2023; Kir, 2022; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Ellis, 2016; Rudolph et al., 2018; Sešek, 2007). This becomes particularly evident for EFL instructors who have pursued higher education abroad. The experience of being educated in a foreign country, especially one with a distinct linguistic and cultural milieu like the United States, introduces a myriad of complexities to their professional identities (Tai & Chen 2022; Pavlenko, 2003; Miao & Yang, 2022; Hyun et., al, 2023; Chen, 2022; Porto, 2021; Rivers, 2020). They are exposed to diverse pedagogical philosophies, teaching methodologies, and academic discourses, all of which can have profound implications for their teaching practices upon their return to their home countries (Kasai & Lin, 2023; Gayton, 2016; Martel, 2015; Ngcobo, 2014; Lee, 2021; Hashimoto, 2000; Hardwick, Marcus & Isaak, 2010; Larrinaga & Amurrio, 2015; Chesnut, 2020; Forbes & Rutgers, 2021; Fontana, 2019; Yang & Liu, 2021).

This current study seeks to delve deep into these intricacies, focusing specifically on the interplay of writing and identity in the case of three Saudi EFL instructors who completed their doctoral studies in the United States. By exploring their narratives, the research aims to shed light on the multifaceted ways in which foreign education shaped and influenced their pedagogical practices and beliefs, with special reference to writing. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of understanding and bringing into play the broader socio-cultural and educational contexts that the U.S. professors of these instructors interspersed in their courses on writing, making sure that the all-important skill of writing is made as personalized, localized, and native an experience, despite the distant geographical locations of the three Saudi EFL instructors, as possible. The study also investigates the pedagogical implications of the writing strategies that the selected Saudi EFL instructor experienced during their PhD studies in the United States. In doing so, the study contributes to the broader discourse on the role of foreign education in shaping the professional identities of EFL instructors and offers insights that can inform pedagogical practices in diverse EFL contexts, with a special focus on writing.

2. Negotiating Identities through Writing: The Transformative Influence of Western Education on EFL Instructors' Pedagogical Paradigms

Writing, as many scholars and educators have come to understand, is not just a linguistic act. It goes beyond the boundaries of syntax, grammar, and vocabulary. Instead, it serves as a profound reflection of one's identity (Cannell et., al, 2023; Watad, 2023; Duret & Pies, 2023; Vetter et., el, 2022). For EFL instructors, this realization is particularly poignant. Their written expressions, whether they are academic papers, lesson plans, or personal reflections, often intertwine deeply with their cultural, social, and pedagogical backgrounds (Rio & Gallego, 2023; Perez, Gregory & Baker, 2022). Canagarajah (2004), in his seminal work, posits that writing becomes a vibrant space where identities are not just represented but

actively negotiated, contested, and redefined. This is especially true for those instructors who have been exposed to diverse linguistic landscapes, where the act of writing becomes a journey of self-discovery and affirmation.

The realm of foreign education, especially when it's rooted in prominent Western contexts like the U.S., has a profound and lasting influence on EFL instructors (Budianto et., al. 2023; Yu, 2022; Seo, 2023; Siebenhütter, 2023, Sheybani & Miri, 2019; Burn, 2007; Chien, 2019). This influence permeates various aspects of their professional lives, from teaching methodologies and linguistic competencies to their broader professional identities (Diallo, 2014; Hu, 2022; Adem & Berkessa, 2022).

Such immersive experiences in foreign educational systems often lead to a significant re-evaluation of previously held pedagogical beliefs. This introspection and external exposure foster a more integrative approach to teaching (Favela, 2023; Colmenero & Lasagabaster, 2023; Hsu, 2023; Nguyen, Trent & Nguyen, 2023; Seo & Kubota, 2023; Kir, 2022; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Ellis, 2016; Rudolph et al., 2018). This approach seamlessly combines elements from both native and foreign educational contexts, creating a rich tapestry of pedagogical strategies and philosophies (Nelson & Chen, 2023; Dhami, 2023; Dominic, 2023; Manan et., al., 2023; Monfared, 2019; Liu & Tannacito, 2013). This fusion not only enriches their teaching repertoire but also enhances the learning experiences of their students, making education a more holistic and inclusive endeavour.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The foundation of this study is rooted in the qualitative narrative inquiry approach, a methodology that prioritizes the lived experiences and personal stories of participants. This approach, as delineated by Clandinin (2013), emphasizes the importance of understanding individuals' experiences within their social and cultural contexts. By adopting this methodology, the study aimed to capture the rich, nuanced, and multifaceted experiences of the participants, providing a deeper understanding of their journeys and transformations in general and their writing practices in particular.

Narrative inquiry, as a research methodology, offers a unique and powerful lens to delve deep into personal experiences. Its strength lies in its ability to capture the nuances, emotions, and intricacies of individual journeys. For understanding the complexities of identity among EFL instructors, narrative inquiry becomes particularly apt. Through carefully crafted narratives, instructors can articulate their transformative journeys, highlighting not just the milestones but also the challenges, revelations, and evolutions in their professional lives (Barkhuizen, 2014). These narratives serve as a testament to their resilience, adaptability, and continuous growth, providing invaluable insights for both researchers and fellow educators.

For the present study, two male and one female participants, with pseudonyms, Tariq (in his mid-40s), Ahmad (in his late 30s), and Saja (in her mid-30s), were selected. Their prior consent was obtained, and they were assured that their identity would not be disclosed at any stage of the current project. The criteria for the selection of the participants were, first of all, to ensure the homogeneity of the sample. All the participants were born in Saudi Arabia, and they completed their formal education until BA in English Language in their home country, followed by six, three, and four years of university teaching experience in the cases of Tariq,

"Writing Became a Tool for Self-Discovery" How Intercultural Experiences Shape EFL Instructors' Evolving Identities and Pedagogies: A Qualitative Inquiry

Ahmad, and Saja, respectively. After this EFL teaching experience, they got enrolled in their MAs and PhDs in the United States. One of the three respondents, Tariq, completed his PhD in Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies, while Ahmad and Saja earned their PhDs in Composition and Applied Linguistics.

Each of the three participants underwent a series of two in-depth interviews, with each session lasting approximately 45 minutes. These interviews were not just mere question-answer sessions; they were designed as open-ended conversations, allowing participants to delve deep into their memories, reflect on their experiences, and articulate their insights. The structure of these interviews was carefully crafted around two guiding questions. These questions were not only pivotal in steering the direction of the conversation but also instrumental in ensuring that the core objectives of the study were addressed.

Q1. In what ways has your U.S. educational experience influenced and reshaped your linguistic, social, pedagogical, and professional perspectives, especially concerning the interrelation of writing and identity?

This question aimed to explore the multifaceted impact of their U.S. educational journey, probing into linguistic, social, pedagogical, and professional dimensions. This question was inspired by the works of scholars like Norton (2000), who emphasized the intricate relationship between language learning and identity.

Q2. As a culmination of your experiences abroad, how do you perceive the evolution and manifestation of your linguistic, social, pedagogical, and professional identities in the context of writing and its inherent identity dynamics?

This question was designed to elicit reflections on the culmination of their overseas experiences. It sought to understand how these experiences influenced their perceptions and manifestations of identity, especially in the context of writing. This question drew inspiration from the works of scholars like Pavlenko (2007), who explored the interplay between language, identity, and emotions in multilingual contexts.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The process of learning and teaching is deeply intertwined with the experiences and backgrounds of educators. This becomes even more pronounced when educators have had the opportunity to immerse themselves in foreign educational systems. The findings section delves into the reflections of the three Saudi EFL instructors who pursued their education in the U.S., exploring the profound impact of this experience on their professional identities, especially in the realm of writing. The findings are classified under two main guiding themes and five sub-themes, as shown in the following table:

Guiding Themes	Sub-themes	Definition
1. Writing as an Expression of Identity	<i>Exposure to Diverse Writing Styles and Pedagogies</i>	Delving into the variety of writing styles and teaching methods, the participants were introduced to the richness and

Rahimivand, M., & Kuhi, D. (2011). An Exploration of Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing.		diversity of their learning experiences.
McKinley, J. (2015). Critical Argument and Writer Identity: Social Constructivism as a Theoretical Framework for EFL Academic Writing.	<i>Integration of Student Backgrounds and Identities in Writing</i>	Focusing on the importance of recognizing and valuing students' unique backgrounds and identities in the writing process, ensuring that their voices are heard and represented.
Lee, I. (2013). Becoming a writing teacher: Using “identity” as an analytic lens to understand EFL writing teachers’ development.	<i>Writing as a Tool for Navigating Cultural Spaces and Challenging Stereotypes</i>	Emphasizing on how writing serves as a medium for participants to explore, understand, and challenge cultural norms, stereotypes, and misconceptions.
2. Evolution of Teaching Practices Post U.S. Education	<i>Emphasis on Authentic Self-expression in Writing</i>	highlighting the shift in teaching practices to prioritize genuine self-expression, encouraging students to write authentically and represent their true selves.
Burgess, A., & Ivanič, R. (2010). Writing and Being Written: Issues of Identity Across Timescales.	<i>Integration of Gender, Identity, and Cultural Discussions in Teaching</i>	emphasizing the integration of discussions on gender, identity, and culture in teaching, ensuring that these crucial topics are addressed and explored in depth.
Chen, W., & Yu, S. (2019). A longitudinal case study of changes in students’ attitudes, participation, and learning in collaborative writing.		

4.1.Theme 1: Exposure to Diverse Writing Styles and Pedagogies

For all three respondents, their experience of U.S. education was more of a disillusionment in terms of their writing styles and pedagogies. From grappling with the intricacies of traditional prescriptive grammar to this new experience of learning to write through reading, it was a transformational journey for them at the pedagogical level. When comparing his experience of U.S. education with his past experiences in his home country, Tariq asserted,

"For me, it was something completely different. For example, I did not have to memorize all the grammar rules by heart. I did not have to worry about the tenses any more. Quite a relief, that was (laughs). I just had to read extensively in English and then try to summarize that in my own words. Simple. Then, I needed to show that to my professor for feedback, and then I gave it another go. This was completely different from my experience here at the Saudi institutions."

The exposure of the three Saudi EFL instructors to the developed educational systems of the Global North influenced the former's outlook towards writing pedagogies. For example, Saja says,

"I'll be honest with you. The technique of skimming, scanning, and annotating impacted my writing in a very short span of time. This helped me learn how to read, understand, and digest written content in a bid to understand it. Once you start understanding things by means of reading, you start enjoying them, or, I should say, you start personalizing them. This is where the inherent linguistic structures become part of your psyche, and this is the moment when these internalized structures subsequently help you develop your own sentences, paragraphs, and chapters on the lines of those fine-tuned texts that you had been reading. *Wallahe* [by God], I used to hate writing, but now I love it because the extensive reading assignments that my professors gave me turned me into an avid reader. As a result, this extensive reading has transformed my writing skills as well as my whole persona. Now, I understand why they used to tell us that reading is a receptive skill and writing is a productive one (laughs)."

Not only the structural part of writing but also the affective domain of these productive skills underwent a considerable transformation for these graduates. They asserted that the erstwhile monolingual identity that they had before leaving for the U.S. was all of a sudden transformed into a truly bilingual persona for all of them. They further emphasized the fact that this transition from a monolingual identity to a bilingual one was possible mainly because of their ability to internalize their L2, only when they were able to feel comfortable expressing themselves in that language. The responses from all three respondents affirmed that this proved to be a paradigm shift for them in their pedagogical outlook and professional demeanour. Ahmad expresses his views in these words:

"It was indeed a paradigm shift for me when I, for the first time, found myself bringing my imaginative faculties to communicate with me in English. For most parts, this was perhaps less on account of the Anglophonic surroundings that I was living in and more due to the pedagogical techniques and strategies that played a pivotal role in transforming me into an avid writer of English. I would say it was a unique package that made such a difference to me, but still, it was the productive skills of writing that changed me inside out (laughs).

In line with what Rahimivand and Kohi (2014) assert, when social interactions occur in the academic community, text is a place where knowledge and writer's identities are constructed, negotiated, and created. The same happened to the three Saudi EFL instructors when they underwent a change on account of the changed social interaction that came up as a package of a far more improved pedagogical setting and a stronger academic fraternity. As Canagarajah (2002) recognizes text as historically and socially situated, the goal of this part of

the study was also to investigate how the three Saudi instructors made use of the EFL writing in their U.S. universities to invent and construct their personas in the U.S. academy. The aforementioned data analysis shows that the U.S. academic community played a pivotal role in their professional transition, in terms of an improved set of skills and a changed outlook towards writing. As Spivey (1997) asserted that affective and social, along with cognitive, factors are equally indispensable to the use of writing for the construction of identity, this part of the study revealed that the identity construction of the three Saudi EFL instructors took place through social interaction and pedagogic practices. The same has also been established by Ivanic (1998) through the binary of "discourse-as-carrier-of-social values" and "discourse-as-social interaction", both working for identity construction in writing. For Tariq, it resulted in his moving away from the traditional rote learning method of coping with the intricacies of grammar; in the case of Saja, the academic community made her learn the skills of writing through reading fine-tuned text; and for Ahmad, the U.S. academic transformed him into someone who was now enjoying an improved skill set for writing. All in all, their exposure to the U.S. Academy helped them learn writing-specific pedagogical skills and helped them develop into far more improved EFL instructors. Casanave (2002) established a similar postulate by asserting that entry into a new social context informs people about the new and improved styles and practices in comparison to what they have already been practicing. The same thing happened to Ahmad, Tariq, and Saja in terms of writing pedagogical skills when they entered Western academia, resulting in the improvement of their skill-set for teaching writing in an EFL context.

4.2. Theme 2: Integration of Student Backgrounds and Identities in Writing

All three graduates hailed the inclusivity on the part of their U.S. professors and credited it as an important factor in their identity construction as a by-product of the writing programs. They discussed the instructional skills that professors in their home country resorted to during their schooling and brought the same in comparison to the learner-centred approach of their U.S. professors. They welcomed their professors' interest in the learners' home culture and value system, highlighting the fact that their professors would usually ask them to write about their religious festivals, traditions, customs, marriage ceremonies, birthdays, family get-togethers, and even about the nitty-gritty of unfortunate events of mourning. They admitted that writing about their cultural memory played a crucial role in their internalization of writing in English. On the same note, Tariq says,

"We are what our roots are. William Wordsworth wrote a sonnet titled 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802', in which he praised London and the River Thames. He did a great job with it, because this was where he belonged. Similarly, learners who know London, the River Thames, and Westminster Bridge can also be expected to explain the poem and speak their hearts out about it. But, for me, the best way would be to write my feelings about something that I have seen and with which I can show some affiliation as well. For instance, Jeddah, especially the Corniche, from which I would write about its scintillating evenings, booming with an art gallery-like exhibition of multiculturalism, How can I be expected to write about the Westminster Bridge, which I have never seen and which I can hardly relate to? Isn't it? (laughs) I was so fortunate that my professors integrated my identity into the writing assignments that I was supposed to submit. This way, I started owning the

English language because it became the carrier of my cultural memory, and it started recording my home culture."

On the same theme, Saja asserts,

"Bringing into play the learners identity is more of a package than just a strategy: awareness on the part of the professor that this is important and the knowledge and skills of how to achieve this. For example, my professors at the U.S. university would also try to dispel the notion of seeing English as a foreign language. She used to say that English has borrowed words from so many languages, and then she would categorically mention the loan words from those languages, which were L1 for me and my classmates. This way, I not only started developing a personal liking for English, but I also came to know about several of these words, such as 'admiral' as a borrowing from the Arabic 'Ameer-al-bahr', 'caravan' from 'qairawan', 'cipher' from 'sifr', 'orange' from 'naranj', 'saffron' from 'za'fran', 'sugar' from 'sukkar', 'spinach' from 'isbinakh', and 'sofa' from 'soffa'. This is so much interesting to know about the roots of these words. Here, I believe, comes the skill of the professors. This multiplied my interest in this so-called foreign language (grins). My professors made my writing in English more of a home-coming kind of activity. Their emphasis on every student's cultural background in the writing activities paid the ultimate dividends."

The integration of the three Saudi respondents' culture into the writing assignments that their U.S. professors gave them had a remarkable impact on their performance. While writing the assignments about their home culture in a foreign language and at a foreign university, they thought of that piece of writing as an anchor connecting them to their home country. As McKinley (2015) advocates that the writer's cultural identity and critical argument must be embodied in the student's academic writing, which must also be socially constructed, the same was done by the U.S. professors of the three Saudi respondents, who admitted that this transformed their outlook towards writing in English. For Tariq, the impetus to write in English was to write about his native geographical locations and home culture, while for Saja, the etymology of English words with Arabic language origin was the biggest transcendence to her home culture, enabling both to link the erstwhile foreign language to their local culture and thus endeavour to excel in the writing skill of the language. The same approach has also been emphasized by Lantolf and Thorne (2006) through the Sociocultural theory, when they connect the socio-interactional constructivist theory with the collaborative learning environment of an EFL writing classroom. They advocate a due recognition of the social and cultural backgrounds and positionalities of both teachers and students in such a setting. The same has been established by this part of the study, where Ahmad, Tariq, and Saja were transposed to their local culture despite studying in a completely foreign setting, mainly by the theory-informed pedagogical skills of their professors, resulting in a marked improvement in their writing skills.

4.3. Theme 3: Writing as a Tool for Navigating Cultural Spaces and Challenging Stereotypes

The respondents highlighted the role of writing in a bid to bring forth their cultural memory. This way, they made efforts to spread awareness about their home culture, shattering the essentialist stereotypes that had become part of Western imaginaries by means of certain fictional portrayals in Hollywood movies and beyond. They brought forth the fact that writing

enabled them to not only write about their own culture in a language that was understood by their classmates in U.S. universities but also emphasized that they started owning the English language because it became a carrier of their cultural memory. This way, they navigated their way forward in foreign and local cultural spaces and challenged stereotypes. On the same note, Saja says,

"For me as a female Saudi student, it was doubly, or should I say, triply, important. Writing enabled me to express my agency as a female who travelled thousands of miles away from her country to earn her PhD in the United States. I believe writing was the most suitable venue for me to write about my agency. To share with you, I started writing little poems in English as part of my *Creative Writing* course. Can you imagine that? That was such an eye-opener for me. Writing became a tool for self-discovery. Writing provided me with a uniquely personal and immensely potent platform to express myself and my people. I wrote about the way we, as Arabs, value our values. That was, I believe, in sheer contrast to the way Hollywood movies portray us. I also wrote about my heartfelt feelings of love, affection, and patriotism. Writing provided me with this space."

In the domain of culture, the participants mentioned several variables that found a space in different genres, depending on the nature and requirements of the theme. From writing poems (as was the case with Saja) to writing a diary (as a requirement of one of the courses), translating works from Arabic to English, and writing opinion pieces, the act of writing was declared a liberating and empowering activity that provided them a space of their own, in terms of not only expression but also a space for public negotiation and consumption when it comes to sharing the written content with others.

Another respondent, Tariq, says,

"It all comes down to how writing is taught inside the classroom. Is it the traditional rote learning-centered 'write an essay on your school' type of *modus operandi*, or you, as a teacher, are ready to go the extra mile to teach your students to turn the act of writing into more of a personalized experience? For my U.S. professors, the latter was the unequivocal way forward. To share an instance with you, I have always been in love with Arabic literature, especially poetry. In one of our courses during my studies at the U.S. university, we were asked by our professor to translate a literary text of our choice from our L1. I pounced on that opportunity and started my translation of some parts of '*Qifa Nabki*' [Let Us Stop and Weep] by Imru' al-Qais (501–544 A.D.), who is also known as the father of Arabic poetry. The poem is, in fact, a description of the poet's stay in a desolate place, where he mourns the loss of his beloved, who had once lived there. The poem is an account of the poet's existential angst, caused by the hollowness created due to the loss of his beloved. As a preface to the translation, I felt that it was an apt moment to speak my heart out, and thus I opened the paragraph with the oft-quoted and much-celebrated saying, "Poetry is the Arab's book." I, then, briefly referred to the works of Ghazi Al Gosaibi [1940–2010], Rashid Al Zlami [1926–2014], and others and explained how oral poetry was used as a means of communication by Arab tribesmen to convey information of important nature. How did I do it? You may ask me. I did it because the professor took me back to my culture and provided me with the opportunity to talk to the people in the Anglophone setting of that university and tell them in their own language how poetry

was like the daily chit-chat of my people. I considered it an opportunity to present through writing the real identity of my countrymen, whose taste for literature has been overshadowed by the misleading stereotyping in Western cultural productions. This is what you can do through writing, but the condition is that the professor should be able to elicit such responses from the learners inside the class."

For the three respondents, writing became a tool for navigating through cultural spaces and breaking stereotypes. Lee (2013) advocates that writing teacher educators can encourage teachers to be cognizant of their multi-faceted identities, the factors that influence identity formation, and ways to develop more robust preferred identities, so that when they leave the teacher education program, they will be less susceptible to external threats that pose hazards to their identity development. For Saja, writing proved to be an expression of her female agency, which she announced and promoted through creative writing. In the case of Tariq, he found writing a means of showing the world the real face and history of his people. Declaring identity as an important factor in teacher development, Richards (2010) says that it "involves not only discovering more about the skills and knowledge of language teaching but also what it means to be a language teacher" (p. 110). As Lee (2013) also advocates the expression of teachers preferred identities, such writing assignments become the carriers of such identity expressions. In the case of Saja, writing became a form of self-discovery because her professor encouraged her to write about her subjectivities and agency. In the case of Tariq, in the same preface to the translation of the poem, he emphasized how poetry was used by his people as a medium through which their history was passed on from generation to generation in the form of hyperbole, beliefs, experiences, and stories. However, he regretted how writing was not taught the way it was advocated to him and his classmates in U.S. universities. He further commented that the reason why Saudi EFL learners lagged behind or found it daunting to learn English writing was because they were never taught in this manner. He also, in an emotional tone, complained that the teachers, perhaps, did not have the required training to teach writing at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education.

4.4. Theme 4: Emphasis on Authentic Self-expression in Writing

All the participants of the study confirmed that their education at the U.S. universities transformed their outlook towards writing, highlighting the fact that instead of dealing with writing inside the classroom in the old-fashioned-cum-mechanical way, wherein more emphasis is on learning the rules of grammar than the content, they made concerted efforts to make it into a more personalized affair for the learners. They reported how their professors encouraged them to write about themselves, their feelings, emotions, and the traits of their personalities, which they usually do not value that much. They emphasized how important this set of writings was for them in terms of coming to terms with the less appreciated and darker sides of their personalities, noting how this act of negotiation with their inner and mostly untouched corners of their psyche enabled them to not only accept those aspects of themselves but also helped them cure them. They acknowledged how writing became the most effective means of communication for them in their journey towards self-actualization, appreciating their professors for enabling them to achieve that. One of the respondents, Ahmad, says,

"I came to know about the therapeutic effect of writing for the first time in our 'Creative Writing' course when our professor advised us to write a 450 to 550 word essay on 'The Day

Ralph Could Not Forget'. The mantra from the professor was 'Do not hold back', advising us to learn to write about the deepest and darkest corners of our psyches by ascribing those events to Ralph and thus seeing that event as an onlooker and stating every little bit of it. The professor told us how passionate and powerful that piece of writing would be and how therapeutic its impact would be on us, mainly because we, while ascribing the event to Ralph, would be meeting heads on the darkest segment of our lives, admitting it, and trying our best to translate it into words. The moment we are able to translate it into words, we start integrating it as one of our life experiences, enabling us to come out of the state of denial and proceed on our journey towards healing. That was quite a therapeutic experience that I cherish the most in writing."

When asked about the same theme, Saja says,

"I came to know about allegories for the first time in my 'Creative Writing' course. Oh, my God! What a tool that has been for writers who have had to criticize social ills despite the curbs on free speech in their surroundings. The way this strategy in writing temporarily veils the writer's message and still conveys the message to the relevant quarters is such a potent aspect of writing itself. Our professors, if I may say, forced us to read George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Frantz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Young Goodman Brown's *The Scarlet Letter*, and, my heart favourite, *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. Writing is such a potent platform of self-expression, and, yes, I would not forget to mention John Milton's *Areopagitica*, which, though not an allegory, is perhaps the first ever pamphlet that advocated freedom of speech. What a piece it is! I would suggest that everyone read it. Our professor made us express ourselves through our own writing on the lines of these masterpieces of Anglophone literature."

On the same theme, Tariq also reported the same kind of views, wherein he emphasized how he learned about the requirements of different genres of writing. He says,

"This may sound surprising, but let me tell you that I came to know, for the first time, there in the United States, how academic writing was different from creative writing. I was never told about the difference before. I had only had superficial knowledge about it, and believe me, I thought academic writing was more important than creative writing. If you ask me now, I would tell you, or rather, I would convince you (laughs), that academic writing is just a requirement of academia, while creative writing is something that carries the power to make us meet our own selves and that has the capacity to move states and nations. Yes, I believe what I am saying now, and you will have to allow this interview to continue for hours so that I may explain to you the many examples where creative writing has been used by writers to access the innermost recesses of their psyches and where they have threatened the most powerful of people through their writings. I had never seen writing play such a decisive role in our private as well as public lives."

In the case of Saja, writing had a therapeutic effect on him; for Saja, the same skill proved to be a tool of empowerment to fight social ills in his surroundings; and for Ahmad, writing enabled him to come to terms with the unpleasant experiences of his life by means of writing about them. For all three participants, writing proved to be a source of authentic self-expression in ways that were completely different for each of them. This is in consonance with the related postulation advocated by Burges and Ivanic (2010), according to whom the discursal construction of writer identity develops the categories in two ways. First, it

distinguishes aspects of writer identity according to the timescales over which they develop; second, it proposes interrelationships among the different aspects. If guided and taught well by EFL instructors, learners can be better placed to use writing as part of their identity management, as was the case with Ahmad, Tariq, and Saja. With proper training and encouragement, more learners would mean more manifestations of unlocking the potential of writing as a harbinger of self-discovery and self-actualization.

4.5. Theme 5: Integration of Gender, Identity, and Cultural Discussions in Teaching

The three participants unequivocally admitted that their teaching changed a great deal upon their return from the United States. They reported that there was a marked difference in the way they assigned writing work to their learners, ensuring that the very act of writing is transformed into more of a personalized experience for every single learner in the class. They strongly opposed the one-size-fits-all approach to writing assignments, wherein the same kind of answer is expected from all the learners in the traditional EFL classroom. The integration of gender, identity, and culture was strongly recommended by all the respondents, with a word of caution that the local value system must be taken into consideration in this process. They also pointed out that the responses of learners to the integration of the three variables have greatly enhanced the quality of their work, adding that the learners have also started taking more interest in their writing assignments. They gave credit to their U.S. education and reported that writing can be promoted among learners if teachers are properly trained on these lines. To this effect, Saja says,

"This is no rocket science. Before leaving for the United States for my MA and PhD, I taught here in Saudi Arabia the way I was taught by my teachers. My stay there was a life-changing one, let me say this. It completely changed my outlook on teaching writing. Upon my return, I started giving my students writing assignments, which made them meet themselves. For instance, I encouraged them to write a page-long assignment on "What I Like the Most About Myself and Why?" and "What Do I Want to Achieve in My Life?" in a bid to not only enable them to write about their own selves but also to let them voice their agency. This encouraged them to put into words the abstract notions of identity. This also brings into focus how the cultural memory that they have been carrying with them and that is transferred to them through oral literature, written content, and curated productions impacts their agency. The very act of writing makes them face their human condition in the given cultural milieu and transposes them to a context that is imaginary in existence but real in its focus. This process of transposing, which they reach on the exclusive wings of writing, provides them with the opportunity to navigate their agency, gender, and identity, preparing them for their future roadmap. Writing, if taught the way it must be taught, can do magic for your learners. I have been experiencing that magic happening inside my EFL classroom."

Similarly, Tariq notes,

"I have been encouraging my students to write about their cultural experiences. Using a foreign language as a medium or carrier for their native culture sounded like a strange concept to my students at the start. However, upon emphasizing the need to indigenize the English language and telling them why it is so important for them, they have been writing about their

local context now. The integration of culture and identity in their writing assignment has been paying dividends, and it is so heartening to see this."

While crediting his U.S. education for bringing a change in the way he is teaching writing in his EFL class inside Saudi Arabia, Ahmad observed that the teachers must be properly trained before they shoulder the responsibility of teaching. He says,

"It's not just at the university level. I believe all teachers at all levels must be properly trained on how to teach writing. Rote-learning must be discouraged. The examination system must be overhauled in such a way that the learners are required to write on topics that are relevant to their personalities, life events, future ambitions, and unforgettable incidents. This way, rote learning would stop being the panacea for all the exam questions. However, that will not be possible without proper teacher training. Let me say that the training must be on the lines of global standards, not just a formality. We must invest in education, and for that, teacher training is the most important variable. As they say, spending on education is not a cost of investment that pays dividends in the times to come."

The reflections of Ahmed, Tariq, and Saja offer invaluable insights into the transformative power of foreign education. Their experiences in the U.S. not only enriched their understanding of writing as a tool for self-expression but also reshaped their pedagogical practices. The sub-themes derived from their narratives emphasize the importance of identity, cultural nuances, and collaborative learning in the realm of EFL instruction. As the global educational landscape continues to evolve, the narratives of such educators serve as a testament to the importance of cross-cultural experiences in shaping holistic and inclusive teaching methodologies, in a bid to explore the essential strength of writing.

The narratives of Ahmed, Tariq, and Saja provide a rich tapestry of insights that align with the literature on the nexus of writing and identity in EFL contexts. For Ahmed, the transformative nature of U.S. education, as also highlighted by Liu & Tannacito (2013), is evident in his reflections. His exposure to diverse writing styles and pedagogies reshaped his linguistic competencies and deepened his understanding of writing as a reflection of identity, a sentiment echoed by Hyland et al. (2012). Moreover, on the personal therapeutic impact of writing, Ahmad also highlighted how writing becomes a means of self-expression when it comes to criticizing social ills in society, whenever possible. He also reported how the courses on writing enabled him to use strategies, such as converting his criticism of social ills into literary representations with fictional settings and characters.

Tariq's emphasis on a collaborative and student-centered approach resonates with Canagarajah's (2004) discussion on subversive identities and pedagogical safe houses. His experiences underscore the reshaping of pedagogical perspectives, emphasizing the importance of integrating students' backgrounds and identities into the teaching process.

In line with what Chen and Yu (2019) advocate, Saja's journey offers a unique perspective on the challenges and revelations of being a Saudi woman educated in the U.S. Her experiences align with Phan's (2008) exploration of identity, resistance, and negotiation in the EFL context. Her emphasis on the dynamics of writing, agency, and identity, especially concerning female EFL learners, underscores the evolution of her professional and social

identities. Similarly, Vásquez (2011) emphasizes the role of narratives in fostering a deeper understanding of identity among EFL learners. The narratives of Ahmed, Tariq, and Saja, when viewed in this light, offer a rich tapestry of insights into their professional identities' evolution. Their reflections highlight the interplay of cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical influences, emphasizing the transformative power of foreign education.

To sum up, the qualitative data from this study, combined with insights from the current research, provides a comprehensive insight into writing as a skill. The experiences and reflections of Ahmed, Tariq, and Saja underscore the profound impact of U.S. education on their professional and social identities, particularly in the nexus of writing and identity. Again, if guided and taught well by trained EFL instructors, learners can be better placed to use writing as part of their identity management, as was the case with Ahmad, Tariq, and Saja. With proper training and encouragement, more learners would mean more manifestations of unlocking the potential of writing as a harbinger of self-discovery and self-actualization.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The culmination of this research offers a profound exploration into the intricate relationship between foreign education and the evolving identities of EFL instructors. Drawing from the rich qualitative data gathered from the participants, the study paints a vivid picture of the transformative journey undertaken by Ahmed, Tariq, and Saja during their academic pursuits in the U.S. Their narratives, replete with moments of introspection, challenges, and revelations, serve as a testament to the profound influence of U.S. education on their professional trajectories and personal growth.

Delving deeper into the data, it becomes evident that the U.S. educational system, with its unique pedagogical approaches, diverse linguistic landscapes, and multicultural ethos, played a pivotal role in reshaping the participants' perceptions of writing and its inherent relationship with identity. The experiences of these instructors went beyond mere academic learning; they embarked on a journey of self-discovery, grappling with the complexities of navigating between their native cultural backgrounds and the new academic and social milieu they were immersed in. This duality, often marked by moments of tension and reconciliation, provided rich insights into the multifaceted nature of identity construction in a foreign educational context.

Furthermore, the study's findings resonate with current research trends, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between language, writing, and identity. The reflections of Ahmed, Tariq, and Saja not only highlight the personal transformations they underwent but also shed light on broader themes prevalent in the field of EFL instruction. Their narratives underscore the importance of recognizing and valuing the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds that EFL instructors bring to the table, especially when these backgrounds are enriched by experiences from foreign educational systems.

In conclusion, this research underscores the significance of understanding the nuanced experiences of EFL instructors educated abroad. Their stories, challenges, and triumphs provide invaluable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers alike, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that recognizes the intricate relationship between writing, identity, and education in shaping the professional and personal identities of EFL instructors.

EFL institutions stand to benefit immensely from instructors who have been educated and trained well, as they bring a blend of global perspectives and diverse teaching methodologies. To harness this potential, it's crucial to embed these experiences at multiple levels:

At the policy level, institutions should actively encourage the inclusion of foreign educational experiences into the EFL curriculum. This could involve incentives for instructors to integrate their overseas insights or even collaborations with foreign educational entities for exchange programs.

From a pedagogical perspective, curriculum design should be adaptive, allowing for the integration of diverse teaching methods and appropriate cultural insights. Training programs should facilitate instructors in contextualizing their foreign experiences to the local EFL teaching scenario, promoting a dynamic curriculum responsive to globalized needs.

In daily teaching practices, a culture of continuous learning and reflection should be promoted. Instructors should be motivated to weave their foreign educational narratives into their lessons, offering students a broader perspective. Tools like digital platforms can aid in sharing resources based on overseas experiences, and mentorship initiatives can support educators in blending their global insights with local contexts. For the indigenously educated EFL instructors, the educational institutions may organize professional development programs, with a special focus on teaching writing. As a recommendation of this study, trainers for such professional development programs may be carefully selected to ensure that the best possible resource is made available to the instructors. In essence, by intertwining foreign educational experiences in policy formulation, pedagogical strategies, and everyday teaching and writing practices, EFL institutions can cultivate a more holistic and globalized learning environment.

REFERENCES

- Adem, H., & Berkessa, M. (2022). A case study of EFL teachers' practice of teaching speaking skills vis-à-vis the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2087458. , DOI: 10.1080/2331186X.2022.2087458
- Ahn, S.-Y. (2019). Decoding "Good Language Teacher" (GLT) identity of native-English speakers in South Korea. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 18(5), 297-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2019.1635022>
- Axelrod, Y. (2022). "Nací Hablando Los dos": Young Emergent Bilingual Children's Talk About Language and Identity. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 1-15. DOI: [10.1080/15348458.2022.2075367](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2022.2075367)
- Barkhuizen, G. (2014). Narrative research in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 47(4), 450-466. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444814000172>
- Barros-del Río, M. A., & Terrazas Gallego, M. (2023). Irish Women's Confessional Writing: Identity, Textuality and the Body. *Life Writing*, 20(3), 473-490. DOI: [10.1080/14484528.2022.2104117](https://doi.org/10.1080/14484528.2022.2104117)
- Budianto, L., Arifani, Y., Wardhono, A., & Poedjiastutie, D. (2023). The TPACK level of in-service EFL teacher online professional training: The perspectives of teachers, students, and trainers. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 39(2), 87-101. DOI: [10.1080/21532974.2023.2167024](https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2023.2167024)
- Burgess, A., & Ivanič, R. (2010). Writing and Being Written: Issues of Identity Across Timescales. *Written Communication*, 27(2), 228-255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088310363447>

- Burn, K. (2007). Professional knowledge and identity in a contested discipline: Challenges for student teachers and teacher educators. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(4), 445–467. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980701450886>
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2004). Subversive identities, pedagogical safe houses, and critical learning. In Norton, B. & Toohey, K. (Eds.), *Critical pedagogies and language learning* (pp. 116-137). Cambridge University Press.
- Cannell, C., Silvia, A., McLachlan, K., Othman, S., Morphett, A., Maheepala, V., ... & Behrend, M. B. (2023). Developing research-writer identity and wellbeing in a doctoral writing group. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2023.2217411>
- Casanave, C.P. (2002). *Writing Games: Multicultural Case Studies of Academic Literacy Practices in Higher Education* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410612366>
- Chen, G. (2022). Utilitarianism or cosmopolitanism? A study of education's impact on individual attitudes toward foreign countries. *International Interactions*, 48(1), 110-138. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2021.1968388>
- Chen, W., & Yu, S. (2019). A longitudinal case study of changes in students' attitudes, participation, and learning in collaborative writing. *System*, 82, 83-96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2019.03.005>
- Chesnut, M. (2020). Disruptions of teachers' gendered identities through bodies and dress: 'Foreign' women teaching English in South Korea. *Gender and Education*, 32(2), 194-210. DOI: 10.1080/09540253.2018.1451623
- Chien, C. W. (2019). Influence of training on Taiwanese elementary school English teachers' professional identity construction. *Research Papers in Education*, 34(4), 499-520. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2018.1493740>
- Clandinin, D. J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Routledge.
- Colmenero, K., & Lasagabaster, D. (2023). The native/non-native teacher debate: insights into variables at play. *Language Awareness*, 32(2), 363-384. DOI: [10.1080/09658416.2022.2110253](https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2022.2110253)
- Dhami, B. (2023). 'My English reflects my identity': voices of public high school English teachers on Global Englishes in Nepal. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-13 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2234875>
- Diallo, I. (2014). English in education policy shift in Senegal: From traditional pedagogies to communicative language teaching. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 9(2), 142-151. DOI: 10.1080/18334105.2014.11082027
- Dominic, N. (2023). 'Oh No, The Poem is in Malay': Examining Student Responses to Linguistic Diversity in Two Multicultural Asian Classrooms. *Changing English*, 30(3), 249-262. DOI: [10.1080/1358684X.2023.2191834](https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2023.2191834)
- Duff, P. A., & Uchida, Y. (1997). The negotiation of teachers' sociocultural identities and practices in postsecondary EFL classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 451-486. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587834>
- Duret, E., & Pies, S. (2023). Unbound potential: identity as a process understood through creative writing. *New Writing*, 20(2), 123-134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790726.2022.2076887>
- Ellis, E. M. (2016). "I may be a native speaker but I'm not monolingual": Reimagining all teachers' linguistic identities in TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(3), 597-630. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.314>
- Favela, G. H. (2023). Native and Non-Native Teachers in English Language Classrooms: Professional Challenges and Teacher Education: by Juan de Dios Martínez Agudo,

- Boston, Berlin, De Gruyter Mouton, 2017, 350 pp., \$148.39 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-5015-1211-7., DOI: [10.1080/15348431.2021.1873786](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2021.1873786)
- Fontana, L. B. (2019). Identity policies of education: Struggles for inclusion and exclusion in Peru and Colombia. *Journal of Education Policy*, 34(3), 351-373. DOI: [10.1080/02680939.2018.1535092](https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2018.1535092)
- Forbes, K., & Rutgers, D. (2021). Multilingual identity in education. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(4), 399-403. DOI: [10.1080/09571736.2021.1918850](https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2021.1918850)
- Gayton, A. M. (2016). Perceptions about the dominance of English as a global language: Impact on foreign-language teachers' professional identity. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 15(4), 230-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2016.1194209>
- Hardwick, S. W., Marcus, R., & Isaak, M. (2010). Education and national identity in a comparative context. *National Identities*, 12(3), 253-268. DOI: [10.1080/14608941003727932](https://doi.org/10.1080/14608941003727932)
- Hashimoto, K. (2000). 'Internationalisation'is' Japanisation': Japan's foreign language education and national identity. *Journal of intercultural studies*, 21(1), 39-51. DOI: [10.1080/07256860050000786](https://doi.org/10.1080/07256860050000786)
- Hsu, T. H. L. (2023). Recruiting English teachers from the Outer Circle: perspectives of Taiwanese students. *Asian Englishes*, 1-16. DOI: [10.1080/13488678.2023.2197683](https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2023.2197683)
- Hu, G. (2002). Potential cultural resistance to pedagogical imports: The case of communicative language teaching in China. *Language culture and curriculum*, 15(2), 93-105. DOI: [10.1080/07908310208666636](https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310208666636)
- Hyland, K., Bunton, D., Li, Y., & Ho, P. (2012). Generic structure and rhetorical strategy in English and Chinese research article introductions. In Flowerdew, J. (Ed.), *Academic discourse* (pp. 84-103). Routledge.
- Hyun, J. H., Chen, S. Y., Hurt-Avila, K. M., & O'Hara, C. (2023). Foreign-born counselor educators' professional identity development. *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*, 10(1), 37-51. DOI: [10.1080/2326716X.2022.2162463](https://doi.org/10.1080/2326716X.2022.2162463)
- Ivanic, R. (1998). *Writing and identity: The discursive construction of identity in academic writing*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Kasai, H., & Lin, T. B. (2023). Language education as a site for identity negotiation: The practice of new immigrant language instruction in Taiwan. *Cogent Education*, 10(2), 2238151. DOI: [10.1080/2331186X.2023.2238151](https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2238151)
- Kir, F. S. (2022). The effect of racialization on EFL learners' conceptualizations of the 'native speaker' construct. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2125000>
- Larrinaga, A., & Amurrio, M. (2015). Internationalisation in higher education and its impact in multilingual contexts: Redefining identities of Basque-speaking academics. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 28(2), 158-169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2015.1027215>
- Lee, I. (2013). Becoming a writing teacher: Using "identity" as an analytic lens to understand EFL writing teachers' development. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22(3), 330-345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2012.07.001>
- Liu, G. (2023). Interrogating critical digital literacies in the Chinese context: insights from an ethnographic case study. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-19. DOI: [10.1080/01434632.2023.2241859](https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2023.2241859)
- Liu, Y., & Tannacito, D. J. (2013). Resistance by L2 writers: The role of racial and language ideology in imagined community and identity investment. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 22(4), 355-373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2013.05.001>
- Manan, S. A., Tajik, M. A., Hajar, A., & Amin, M. (2023). From colonial celebration to postcolonial performativity: 'guilty multilingualism' and 'performative agency' in the

"Writing Became a Tool for Self-Discovery" How Intercultural Experiences Shape EFL Instructors' Evolving Identities and Pedagogies: A Qualitative Inquiry

- English Medium Instruction (EMI) context. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 1-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2023.2242989>
- Martel, J. (2015). Learning to Teach a Foreign Language: Identity Negotiation and Conceptualizations of Pedagogical Progress. *Foreign Language Annals*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12144>
- Matras, Y., Howley, G., & Jones, C. (2020). Attitudes to the language and identity of Romanian Roma migrants in a UK school setting. *Intercultural Education*, 31(3), 359-375. DOI: 10.1080/14675986.2020.1728092
- McKinley, J. (2015). Critical argument and writer identity: Social constructivism as a theoretical framework for EFL academic writing. *Critical inquiry in language studies*, 12(3), 184-207. DOI: 10.1080/15427587.2015.1060558
- Meihami, H., & Salite, I. (2019). EFL teachers' cultural identity development through participating in cultural negotiation: Probing EFL students' perspectives. *Journal of Teacher education for Sustainability*, 21(1), 115-127. <https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2019-0009>
- Miao, L., & Yang, L. (2022). Translingual identity across transnational education spaces: study on a group of Chinese students in joint education programme. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-15.. DOI: 10.1080/01434632.2022.2061497
- Monfared, A. (2019). Ownership of English in the Outer and Expanding Circles: teachers' attitudes toward pronunciation in ESL/EFL teaching contexts. *Asian Englishes*, 21(2), 207-222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2018.1554303>
- Nelson, N., & Chen, J. (2023). The interplay of critical language pedagogy and young Arabic EFL learners. *Language Awareness*, 1-23. DOI: 10.1080/09658416.2023.2206136
- Nguyen, C. D., Trent, J., & Nguyen, T. P. (2023). 'How come they struggle with such simple work?': parents' perceptions of language teacher identity and teaching practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 53(3), 275-292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2022.2094894>
- Nigar, N., Kostogriz, A., Gruney, L., & Janfada, M. (2023). "No one would give me that job in Australia": When professional identities intersect with how teachers look, speak and where they come from. DOI: 10.1080/01596306.2023.2239182
- Norton, B. (2000). *Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change*. Longman/Pearson Education.
- Norton, B. (2010). Language and identity. *Sociolinguistics and language education*, 23(3), 349-369.
- Panayiotis Persianis | John Lee (Reviewing editor) (2021) A new understanding of modern Greek history of education in light of the postmodern theoretical accounts about nationhood and identity, *Cogent Education*, 8:1, DOI: 10.1080/2331186X.2021.1932271
- Pavlenko, A. (2003). 'Language of the enemy': Foreign language education and national identity. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 6(5), 313-331. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050308667789>
- Pavlenko, A. (2007). *Emotions and multilingualism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Perez, T., Gregory, K. H., & Baker, P. B. (2022). Brief Research Report: Pilot testing an identity-based relevance-writing intervention to support developmental community college students' persistence. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 90(1), 77-87. DOI: 10.1080/00220973.2020.1800562
- Phan, L. H. (2008). *Teaching English as an international language: Identity, resistance, and negotiation*. Multilingual Matters.

- Porto, M. (2021). Long-term impact of four intercultural citizenship projects in the higher education foreign language classroom. *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(6), 648-667. DOI: [10.1080/09571736.2019.1656279](https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2019.1656279)
- Poyas, Y., & Elkad-Lehman, I. (2022). Facing the Other: Language and identity in multicultural literature reading groups. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 21(1), 15-29. DOI: [10.1080/15348458.2020.1777868](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1777868)
- Qazi, M. H., Javid, C. Z. & Ullah, I. (2023). Representation of indigenous languages employing a religious screen for the discursive construction of students' postcolonial national identities: A curious case of 'internal colonisation' and 'cultural invasion' in Pakistani schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 49, 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3827>
- Rahimivand, M., & Kuhi, D. (2011). An Exploration of Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*.
- Rivers, D. J. (2020). Contributions of national identity and personality to foreign language communication and contact attitudes in Japan. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 19(6), 379-394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2019.1696684>
- Rudolph, N., Yazan, B., & Rudolph, J. (2018). Negotiating “ares,” “cans,” and “shoulds” of being and becoming in English language teaching: Two teacher accounts from one Japanese university. *Asian Englishes*, 21(1), 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2018.1471639>
- Sandiso Ngcobo (2014) The struggle to maintain identity in higher education among Zulu-speaking students, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 17:6, 695-713, DOI: [10.1080/13670050.2014.953776](https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2014.953776)
- Sawyer, A., & Rodríguez-Valls, F. F. (2023). 'I found comfort in Spanglish:’translanguaging and the linguistic experiences of bilingual teacher candidates in rural California. *Language and Education*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2023.2232764>
- Seo, Y. (2023). Enthusiasm, obsession, or delusion? language ideologies and negotiating identities of one non-native English teacher in an EFL context. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1-14. DOI: [10.1080/14790718.2023.2200253](https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2200253)
- Seo, Y., & Kubota, R. (2023). Exploring lived experiences of Black female English teachers in South Korea: Understanding travelling intersectionality and subjectivities. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 36(1), 21-38. DOI: [10.1080/07908318.2022.2045303](https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2022.2045303)
- Sešek, U. (2007). English for teachers of EFL–Toward a holistic description. *English for Specific Purposes*, 26(4), 411-425. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2006.11.001>
- Sheybani, M., & Miri, F. (2019). The relationship between EFL teachers’ professional identity and their critical thinking: A structural equation modeling approach. *Cogent Psychology*, 6(1), 1592796. DOI: [10.1080/23311908.2019.1592796](https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2019.1592796)
- Siebenhütter, S. (2023). How important is teacher training? Untrained community tutors and professional teachers motivation and success in online second language teaching (SLT) and implications for future online SLT. *Cogent Education*, 10(2), 2244836. DOI: [10.1080/2331186X.2023.2244836](https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2244836)
- Sithole, E., & Maseko, P. (2021). Language and identity politics in the American Board Mission church in Zimbabwe. *African Identities*, 1-18. DOI: [10.1080/14725843.2021.1947779](https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2021.1947779)
- Stella, F., & Gawlewicz, A. (2021). Social networks, language and identity negotiations among queer migrants in Scotland. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(11), 2537-2555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2020.1863203>

"Writing Became a Tool for Self-Discovery" How Intercultural Experiences Shape EFL Instructors' Evolving Identities and Pedagogies: A Qualitative Inquiry

- Sultana, S. (2022). Young professional Bangladeshi women with rebel bones: trans-approaches to language and identity. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-16. DOI: [10.1080/01434632.2022.2063298](https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2063298)
- Spivey N. N. (1997). *The constructivist metaphor: Reading, writing, and the making of meaning*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Tai, T. Y., & Chen, H. H. J. (2022). The impact of intelligent personal assistants on adolescent EFL learners' listening comprehension. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 1-28. DOI: [10.1080/09588221.2022.2040536](https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2022.2040536)
- The-Thitsar, M. (2022). Empowering or endangering minorities? Facebook, language, and identity in Myanmar. *Asian Ethnicity*, 23(4), 718-740. DOI: [10.1080/14631369.2021.1951596](https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2021.1951596)
- Ullah, I. (2020). War Memory, Psychological Trauma, and Literary Witnessing: Afghan Cultural Production in Focus. *SAGE Open*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020961128>
- Vetter, A., Lambert, C., LeJeune, M., Consalvo, A., David, A., & McDaniel, D. (2022). Asking teens about their writing lives: The writing identity work of youth. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 61(4), 315-338. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2021.2008559>
- Werito, V. (2023). "What You Know You Hold Onto It... that is Being Navajo": A Critical Analysis of Diné (Indigenous) Youth's Perspectives about Race, Culture, Language, and Identity. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 1-14. DOI: [10.1080/15348458.2022.2073887](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2022.2073887)
- Xu, J., & Ou, W. A. (2022). Facing Rootlessness: Language and Identity Construction in Teaching and Research Practices Among Bilingual Returnee Scholars in China. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 1-16. DOI: [10.1080/15348458.2022.2060228](https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2022.2060228)
- Yang, K., & Liu, S. (2021). Understanding EFL Instructor Identity Changes During Online Teaching in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study in China. *RELC Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882211066622>
- Yu, C. (2022). An autoethnography of an international English language teaching assistant's identity paradoxes in an EFL context. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2022.2061624>
- Zhao, H. (2022). *Silencing Shanghai: language and identity in urban China*: by Fang Xu, Lanham, Lexington Books, 2021, US 105.00(hardback),US 45.00 (eBook). DOI: [10.1080/10357823.2022.2113604](https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2022.2113604)
- Zhao, K. (2020). Made in contemporary China: Exploring the national identity of Chinese international undergraduate students in the US. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(12), 2451-2463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1615046>