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Holistic Identity of Language Teachers:
A Grounded Theory Study

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Abstract

It is one of the major area s of interest within the field of educational research to examine the role of teachers, their professional accomplishment, and influential factors affecting or inhibiting the practice; of which, the study of teacher identity has taken on the fundamental property. Thus, the present study explored different aspects of a language teacher identity which led to the development of the theoretical framework of the Holistic Identity of Language Teachers (HILT) based on the grounded theory. The data were collected in semi-structured individual interviews from 64 teachers in Iran. Employing a version of Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding paradigm, emerged a framework of a set of categories in terms of 'process' (i.e., becoming a teacher) as well as the groundingecategories of 'Persona Grata' and 'Public Persona', resulted in the core category of 'Teacherality', along with three categories of 'Navigating Strategies', 'Conditional Contributors', and 'Contextual Patterns'. The final consequence of the framework is the 'Actual Teaching Approach', referring to the eventual phenomenon of the evolutionary continuum of being a holistic language teacher. The most obvious finding of the study refers to the emergent as well as the evolutionary nature of HILT. Following the interplay between self and society in the emergence of HILT, the schema was proposed to round up all revealed and unnoticed aspects of language teacher identity which can be implemented operationally to redefine, highlight, and activate its unprecedented role in an Iranian context .

evolution, Teacherality

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of language acquisition has been highlighted by scholars and educators emphasizing the pivotal role of language in producing, reproducing, and responding to the realities of human beings and the world. In this respect, language teaching is considered a complex communicative-based paradigm requires the application of an appropriate reference framework of coding, decoding, and demographic categorization (Felix, 2019). Research supports that a good teacher and actions to be taken on his part in the classroom provoke effective and efficient learning (Markley, 2004).

Initiating the profession of teaching is a lifelong experience that can be demanding, aspiring, motivating, and rewarding for teachers, while they deal with much more burdensome challenges of empowering learners to use the foreign language they are learning as well as directing them in a longitudinal learning continuum. In this respect, plenty of research on teachers' role in teaching a language has been conducted in every aspect of teacher education practice.

Being more meticulous, it is assumed that being successful as a teacher means more than being able to control the class, present the knowledge clearly, or manage the classroom. Success as a teacher is related to a sense of professional identity that integrates the intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects of the teacher's self in the core identity of being a teacher (Alsup, 2006).

The rationale of the study contains the reason as well as the need for conducting the research. The need for this study, however, lies in the fact that despite the stabilized significance of the role of teachers, to the best knowledge of the researchers, there is no holistic image of teacher identity, accompanied by several drawbacks relevant to the teaching process. With the plethora of studies on teacher identity, however, since no comprehensive

theory exists, the picture on teachers' identity comprising all the intellectual, the corporal, and the affective aspects of a teacher is not vivid, inclusive and coherent yet. On one hand, most studies consider learning achievement or proficiency as the primary outcome of a learner, rather than teaching. On the other hand, although many researchers have investigated the relationship between teachers' identity and relevant factors, though these studies have failed to recognize the definite social or environmental factors influential in the emergence of teachers' professional identity. Even the sole research conducted by Alsup (2006) taking HTI, in its general perspective, suffers a large number of gaps. As the only available source so far, in the book "Teacher Identity Discourse", Alsup (200A) resorted to experiential narratives of teaching and learning, centering on discourse to create teacher identity, with literally no focus on empirical findings regarding language teachers. Thus it is worthy of an exact investigation of the holistic framework of identity as an integrated outcome of all relevant influential factors such as factors related to society as well as the importance of the concept of the teacher's self.

This study was significant in different respects. First, the Holistic Identity of Language Teacher (HILT) is a newly introduced theme to EFL/ESL field, and research on clarifying and defining the factors is in a nascent stage. Furthermore, the examination of language teacher identity from a comprehensive and holistic perspective is a new area of research with great potential in clarifying the interrelation among myriad factors shaping HTI as well as identifying and categorizing contributing factors and variables. Additionally, by examining the HILT, EFL teachers would be informed about the evolution of a comprehensive and holistic identity with all the necessary components as well as the fully-functioning factors required in the emergence of HILT. One of the issues that emerge from the comprehensive look on identity is its explanatory adequacy in taking a holistic scheme of teaching to overcome some educational teacher-related drawbacks including unsatisfactory teaching performance, inconvenient educational circumstances, and inappropriate expectations of English

language teaching contexts (Noomura, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the field of grounded theory research was utilized in the study, bringing the "literature Review" represents a real controversy. Specifically, the matter is not on conducting a literature review, rather on schedule and range of it to avoid the problematic form of its linear format (Dunne, 2011). Although, at one extreme, Glaser and Strauss (1967) advised *against* conducting a literature review in the substantive area of research, even ignore it, as to allow categories to emerge naturally from the empirical data during analysis, uninhibited by theoretical frameworks or relevant hypotheses. Later, Corbin and Strauss (1998) advocated an early review of relevant literature as the underpinning feature. The proper form emerged as "the contextualization of the study, rather than a traditional literature review. However, detailed engagement with extant theoretical concepts was not included until after the data analysis chapters had been presented" (Dunne, 2011, p. 121).

Several studies have documented that language education becomes more critical because of providing individuals and community with various branches of knowledge by allowing them "to know, be, do, and to continue practices of knowing, being, and doing in a social and material context" (Felix, 2019, p. 6). According to Rosario, Nunez, Valle, Paiva, and Polydoro (2013), contextual teaching variables were defined as class size, perception of control of the teaching process, and relation with the students, as well as teacher variables, teaching experience, and participation in pedagogic training courses. While research revealed a variety of variables and features attributed to the teacher, including attitude, self-efficacy, motivation, discourse, authority, autonomy, and commitment, this paper is an attempt to have a comprehensive image of a language teacher. Along with increasing concern on investigating the dominant features in teaching, the concepts of self and identity have been highlighted and examined dramatically as two

basic psychological theories, which resulted in personal construct theory and possible selves theory. William James (1900) offered a view of a self as "a man's self is the sum" of all that he can call his" (p. 291). The first serious applications of self- distinctions as developing ethics, interests, desires, and reflections had been conducted by Dewey (1916) who encouraged educators to never see the self as complete, rather changing, growing, and developing. Investigating self was a continuing concern of Rogers (1961), who, as the founder of humanistic psychology, emphasized on constructing the whole person, self-actualization, discovery of self-concept, and self – understanding. Later, Bruner (1996) theorized the "cognitive revolution" a where the a study Oof a "mind" became t importantc as ite containsr culturalg influences and is shaped by external forces: "the role of schools in 'self' construction, it is very much a part of education" (Bruner, 1996, p6 13). Drawing upon previous strands of research on the concept of self, Berger, and Luckmann (1984) categorized self as a social construction, while at the same time, as the mediator of the social construction of reality.

At the heart of self in psychology, lies possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), as Dornyei (2009) proposed a new theory of second language learner motivation known as the *L2 Motivational Self System* (L2 MSS). Dornyei's model is the most commonly applied framework in studies on L2 teacher self (e.g. Hiver, 2013; Kubanyiova, 2009; Kubanyiova, 2012). It seems that the concept of teacher identity has been used in different ways in the domain of teaching and teacher education. Several studies have been attempted to explain teachers' professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Walkington, 2005). While other studies have documented and highlighted disciplines and schools of thought from different perspectives leading to relatively different theoretical or operational implications (Loseke, 2007). In various studies, the concept of professional identity is connected to teachers' concept of self (Knowles, 1992; Nias, 2002). In other words, as Giddens (1991) states, the concept of self- identity is not a distinctive trait of a person, rather, it is reflexively understood by the person. Moreover, as the

relevant meanings ascribed to identity are numerous, so any sense of self, identity, or community triggers some temporary, partial, or arbitrary meanings as well (Barker, 2012).

The role of identity has been widely investigated across different academic domains, including personal identity, professional identity, and teacher identity (Abdolhasanzadeh, 2018), the importance of supporting the teacher identity (Nias, 2002), the relationship between teacher identity and professional teacher identity (Hong, Greene, & Lowery, 2017). Additionally, Nias (2002), suggest the need for a quantitative instrument for assessing teachers' professional identity. Interestingly, about 20 instruments have proposed in the last two decades (Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens, & Zijlstra, 2019), while seeming less suited to assess the professional identity of primary teachers' teachers (Hanna et al., 2019a).

Despite the abundant research on teacher identity, regarding professional identity and the importance of teachers, particularly language teachers, little research has addressed the emergent issue and fairly comprehensive dimensions of teacher identity. In general, "whereas different meanings of teacher identity have been distinguished, it is not clear to what extent they are related to and collectively represent the second-order construct teacher identity (Hanna et al., 2020, p.2). Thus in recent years, there have been elaborate attempts to bring into a comprehensive framework encompassing concepts and findings derived from different areas of research investigation encompassing the individual personality, social interaction, and society. In this respect, the research on holistic teacher identity focuses on the process of identity construction as being "the process through which personal and collective identities are aligned, such that individuals regard engagement in movement activity as being consistent with their thoughts and actions" (Snow & &cAdam, 2000, p. 49).

Investigating teacher identity is a continuing concern within Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens, and Zijlstra (2019) who revealed six domains represent the set of meanings for teacher identity: (1) motivation, (2) self-image, (3) self-efficacy, (4) task perception, (5) commitment, and (6) job satisfaction.

Preliminary work on HTI was undertaken by Alsup (2006), who has been the first – and to the best knowledge of the researchers, the only – researcher to propose and define Holistic Teacher Identity, as a transformative type of teacher identity, reflecting a view of teacher identity that is holistic—inclusive of the intellectual, the corporeal, and the affective aspects of integrated human selfhood. She pointed out that identity is not singular or unchanging; instead, it can shift over time and vary depending on context (Alsup, 2006). The most recent prominent work on identity has been conducted by Hanna, Oostdam, Severiens, and Zijlstra (2020), which set out to design and validate the Teacher Identity Measurement Scale (TIMS) as an instrument to measure the professional identity of primary student teachers.

Grounded theory has been generally designed to identify and explicate contextualized socialized processes through techniques for data-gathering and analysis to emerging concepts and categories. When there is no explanatory theory, researchers can use 'Grounded Theory' to offer a micro theory based on lived experiences rather than adopting existed macro theories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The main goal of grounded theory analysis is to produce theories that are truly *grounded* in the data, so it was considered appropriate for conducting the present study to create a theoretical model of HILT, through integrating its grounding, overcoming, contextual and conditional factors, as to dimensions of HILT formation, development, construction, and manifestation, through an evolutionary continuum of being a teacher. The logic of justification for adopting grounded theory is realistic and relativistic, while the developmental entity of the study. Although there are many studies on identity employing various research techniques, grounded theory has been used in the present study. The researchers consider these four reasons in choosing grounded theory: (1) there are many factors shaping teacher identity, which is difficult to study holistically through traditional hypothesis testing; (2) grounded theory can be used the empirical data-driven from the interviews to propose the theory; (3) the influencing and inhibiting factors of teacher identity

construction need to be adequately examined; and (4) the theoretical framework of HILT is complicated, involving multiple interrelated factors. Furthermore, grounded theory accommodates any type of data and has no difficulty with verbal reports; can be generally regarded as the preferred method (Rennie, 1998). Therefore, grounded theory is suitable for the present study to systematically collect and analyze data, conducive to the emergent of a multi-dimensional schema. Likewise, experts in teacher education feel the need to incorporate a teacher's multiple subjectivities or identity strands, including "personal educational experiences, core cognitive and affective features, and educational ideologies as the philosophical foundations for classroom learning, at the levels of both curricular planning and daily practice" (Alsup, 2006, p6 1.1). Such integration is vital for developing a Holistic Teacher Identity (HTI) continuum, negotiates subject positions (self and society), and their dimensions while creating a professional self (Alsup, 2006) through gaining teaching experience.

When the goal of a study is theory building, as Birks and Mills (2015) claim, the grounded theory method is favored over other methods. This construct ought to include issues and actions directed to varieties like identity amplification to strengthen the present identity, identity consolidation focusing on the previously incompatible identities, identity extension of the personal identity, and identity transformation to compare two different identities (Snow & McAdam, 2000), emerging in different phases of a developmental process of HILT continuum.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The present study was an attempt to explore the Holistic Identity of Language Teachers (HILT) in a comprehensive and coherent framework under the category of EFL teacher educational research. The main detailed goal of the present study was to examine the interrelationship between teacher self and society in the emergence of HILT among Iranian EFL teachers, or, better to say, to establish the nature of HILT conceptually.

Therefore, ground-specific data about HILT were gathered based on Iranian language teachers' perception of what constitutes a holistic identity of a language teacher. This research adopts a contextual socio-cultural approach to offer a framework for addressing multiple grounding, contextual, intervening, and consequential factors forming, developing, and constructing HILT in Iran. The due struggle was to attain a holistic teacher identity derived from teacher's personal and professional identity formation, through the developmental process, benefiting from various strategies and conditions as well, and eventually, contributing to holistic teacher identity. Thus, the main research question was "what are the relevant, influential factors of HILT in the context of Iranian teachers and the conceptual relations among them in developing a language teacher identity?

METHOD

Participants

In total, 64 interviews were conducted with Iranian teachers teaching in universities (n=13), at schools (n=20), and in institutes (n=31) in Iran-including Urmia, Tehran, Tabriz, and Karaj. Teachers were generally teaching English, but with different amounts of experience- ranging from 8 to 18 years of teaching experience. Regarding gender, 30 male and 34 female teachers were the final participants. Their age ranged from 30 to 50, of whom the average age at the time of data collection was 33.2 years. As in purposeful sampling design, the target group was language teachers, mainly English teachers, via theoretical sampling, the researcher focused on the concept; i.e. HILT, and situations rather than individuals and questions. Hence, the iterative grounded theory process—constant comparative analysis— was implemented to move back and forth between the collection, analysis, and theory building, as the nature of the grounded theory requires.

Instrumentation

The collected data for the present study were analyzed qualitatively. To gather data for the present study, intensive semi-structured individual interviews were utilized. Then, to cover as many dimensions as possible until data saturation, the researcher asked focused chains of questions. Following the common data collection technique for grounded theory studies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and then subjected to the stages of open, axial, and selective coding. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) explained two steps of theoretical sampling including one during open coding which includes cyclic interviews with participants in context; and the other was discriminative sampling through the selective coding to talk with respondents with different ideas, they were re-interviewed and asked some new questions invoked by open and axial codes. Repeated interviews were not considered as separate interviews though.

Beforehand, the informed consent of the participants was taken at the start of the interview and the confidentiality of the utterances was emphasized. The researcher elicited consistent patterned responses about HILT and achieved saturation (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014) at around interview 51; however, 64 volunteers' interviews were utilized for the study to allow the model to be examined regarding possible problems, profession outlook, and other emerging aspects of identity. Notably, all 64 participants were called for the second interview about 40 participants preferred to answer the questions via e-mail or cyberspace due to their tight schedules then. So the questions were posted them. The initial interview was crafted using key concepts of self, society, and identity of teachers by questions circling teachers such as professional interests, upcoming challenges, expected support, public status, perils and opportunities to clarify emergent aspects of the theoretical model.

Data Collection Procedure

To engage in interpretive analysis of teacher identity accounts, the

researcher followed principles of systematic grounded theory introduced in the third edition of Corbin and Strauss's (2008) book and constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researchers started the data collection procedure by purposive sampling of the participants to select subjects who can maximize the chance of unfolding as many as possible aspects of the phenomenon under study (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The primary question centering the present study asked how language teachers' holistic identity (HILT) is formed and how the interplay between self and society influences the process of HILT emergence.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) speculated the summary of the procedure order in grounded theory as follows: attending the field, associating with the context of events, observing and interviewing agents, learning from participants' speeches and behaviors, transcribing interviews, coding (open, axial, selective) and categorizing transcribed texts, learning from codified interviews, forming new questions, specifying unsaturated categories and ambiguous codes, and again coming back to the field.

This approach was carried out through three main steps: First, to provide categories of information, all transcribed interviews and survey responses were scrutinizing read and engaged in open coding of the data sentence by sentence (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). While examining the data, overlaps in topics, and emergences of consistency in answers were discovered gradually, led the researcher to analyze the responses holistically, not based on questions or teachers individually. Based on initial open codes, memos were created followed by comparing the codes for any existing redundancies and contradictions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Analytic memos including key statements of the interviews, namely Vivo codes (i.e., codes directly taken from the participants' utterances), or modified and improved theoretical concepts emerged for each category. When no new open codes emerged, the next stage of data analysis called axial coding began. As a result, 23 first-order axial codes were identified. In other words, the second step was to interconnect the elicited categories and identify tentative categories by moving back and forth between the data-driven as well as the

provided literature on teachers' identities.

Then, the researcher focused on revising and refining themes by integrating categories and synthesizing the theoretical grounding of each theme thereafter, resulting in a 'story' to connect the categories, which is called selective coding step. The ultimate step involves a discursive set of theoretical propositions to establish the final embedded structure of the 'logic diagram,' or the 'integrative' diagram. The actual underpinning theory lies in the form of a visual model or framework, the elements of which are previously identified by the researcher in the axial coding step, and the 'story' proposed in axial coding resembles the narrative version of it (Kunkwenzu & Reddy, 2008).

Regarding the knowledge of identity and teacher identity, the researchers focused on teachers' perceptions of their profession and identity. While examining phrases, sentences, or paragraphs collected, the recurring statements and threads of meaning, as well as repetition of key phrases identified as the coding paradigm, consists of these factors: *grounding and intervening conditions, phenomenon, the context, coping strategies, and consequences.*

Data Analysis

The procedures including open, axial, and selective coding were adopted for data analysis. The data-gathering phase was a cyclic and iterative process during the data analysis. The abstraction level of the selective phase was increased because of using abridged phrases. On the other hand, open codes were more objective and longer than the other two steps, while selective codes were shorter and more abstract in nature (Shaghaghi & Vasfi, 2019). Within the naming phase of selective coding, the researcher resorted to an academic dictionary of education as well as 'The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy'. Moreover, in some cases, the exact, expressive, and remarkable terminologies employed by teachers were implemented. The process was initiated by coding all interviews, then the recommended codes

were considered. Constant coding comparison methods were utilized for assurance of coding consistency (Silverman, 2009). Then, similar open codes (1226 open codes in all) were categorized in the same groups and special terms were ascribed to them. To get the appropriate feedback or to assure the credibility of the codes, they were shared with some co-workers leading to the final axial codes, while the conceptual model was formed by analyzing the data.

Evaluation and Control

The primary aim of grounded theory, as the methodology of the present study, was to build useful theory to describe or explain a phenomenon of interest, namely the HILT here. The theory was developed through "an interactive process that involves the creation and refinement of abstract conceptualizations of particular phenomena" (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014, p. 77). Because of different principles and procedures observed in grounded theory, as a category of qualitative research, the criteria of dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability were taken into account, instead of reliability, validity, generalizability, and objectivity, as the basics of quantitative research evaluation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability refers to a qualitative criterion to assure that almost the same findings would be given in similar research conditions. To this end, the researchers controlled all transcribed interviews and then sent them to colleagues to code transcribed interviews personally. The re-coded sections were compared to identify existing conceptual agreements, while the parts of disagreement were revised to reach a compromise.

Regarding credibility as a qualitative alternative of validity, the transcribed interviews were analyzed on different levels and orders. Then the regained results were compared with the initial former codes.

The term transferability states that findings should be transferable to other selected situations. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed, it is transferred through quotations and detailed descriptions which determines

the generalizability of the findings as well.

And eventually, to assure confirmability, some transcribed interviews were sent to interviewees to confirm the codes and concluded interpretations; and as the last phase, the final conceptual model was discussed and evaluated by some interviewees for possible revisions in the codes and categories as well.

RESULTS

During the analysis of the interview data, a total of 1226 open codes have emerged, of which, 272 selective codes were shaped through the constant comparison process. Analysis of data conduced to 23 axial codes as grounding, intervening, influential and relevant factors of Holistic Teacher Identity.

The selective codes were arranged under six themes of *grounding factors*, *the core category, navigating strategies, context, conditional contributors*, and *consequences*:

Grounding Factors

Generally, these factors are the causal factors that conduce to the phenomenon, or the core category. There are two grounding factors in forming HILT:

I. Persona Grata

The category coded as 'Persona Grata' includes all underpinning intra-personal subcategories of a language teacher, namely: language commanding, corporeal state, perceptual prompt, and sense agility, while literally, it is defined as being personally acceptable or welcomed (Webster, 1828). In thisnstudy,fthe groundingofactorzofz'Persona Grata' referred to individual characteristics of the teacher as a person which form the comprehensive image of the 'self' of the teacher.

Regarding the subcategories, 'Language Commanding' is defined as

the linguistic mastery of the language in question as an inseparable qualification of a language teacher. One of the most striking features in the interviewees' responses was their emphasis on teachers' 'Perceptual Prompt', implying that the teachers should benefit from an adequate level of mentality, the power of the mind in perception, reasoning, conception, and mental equipment. The other influential sub-category represents the 'Sense Agility' of the teacher, including the teacher's sharp cognitive level, as well as their affective factors like motivation, emotions, anxiety, support, attention, recognition, and comprehension. 'Corporeal State' is the other subcategory of this factor, including all outward physical attributes and characteristics of the language teacher including posture, physical capacity, eye contact, voice projection, gestures, and body figures. It highlights the role of corporeal ability in transforming knowledge and communicating adequately while teaching.

II. Public Persona

The next grounding factor is 'Public Persona' which is referred to all the interactive, communicative-based roles that a language teacher undertakes in the society, it embraces hidden factors directing teachers' social identity, of which the subcategories including: 'Teacher Prestige', 'Public Life', and 'Media Person'.

.f this category, some of the elicited factors for 'Teacher Prestige' are individual dignity, class leadership, profession credibility, authority role, role model effect, and direct/indirect reputation. The other axial code of this category is the 'Public Life' of a language teacher which denotes the social activities the teacher accomplishes while being and acting as a teacher. One teacher said:

> To me, the most crucial shortcoming affected teachers' identity, is the fact that they don't observe the required respect and admiration of being a teacher, neither to themselves nor to their teachers. It paves the way for other community members to violate their dignity and credibility

thereafter. They should behave with a full feeling of importance and dominance. (Int. 19)

As we experience the era of great increase in technological advances these days, the teachers' keeping up with it would be an unavoidable requirement, resulting in a teacher as a 'Media Person'. Similarly, several interviewees emphasized the need to provide teachers with a better preparation on how to implement technology into the teaching practices. As an experienced teacher mentioned:

> …The next distinguished character for the teacher is being an awesome communicator who tries to make every policy as clear as possible. It is a demanding fact that students prefer the type of modern, aware, and informed teacher to learn from and imitate somehow. (Int. 26)

The Core Category

As the major focus of the study, the core category emerges through the processes of constant coding, comparison, analysis, and theoretical sampling. The core category of the present framework is 'Teacherality', as the consequence of the interplay between 'Persona Grata' and 'Public Persona', emphasizes the critical role of the teacher as well as the responsibilities a teacher undertaken by being a teacher.

Subcategories of this selective code include 'Unique Entity', as well as 'United Entity', of which the first concept denotes that a teacher is unique in the sense that he/she directs the educational process, monitors what is happening in the classroom, and attempts to manipulate the upcoming situations through setting the tangible goals, planning the steps necessary, developing the routines, and implementing needed modifications. This is the whole schema of a unique director, focuses on the criteria of autonomy, agency, authority, leadership, regulation, and monitoring, while as a 'United Entity', tries to keep up with the educational, technological and professional communities, being the constituent of the society of teachers, community

and society simultaneouslyg In general, the uniformity of teachers' perception and action when taking the group-based identity of being a teacher, which is called 'Teacherality' here, has already been proposed by Varghese et al. (2005) and Pennington and Richards (2016), while a teacher's sense of being a teacher is created interactively with the knowledge base and identity even as it is itself continually redefined, developed and reshaped by the evolving, coping and mediating factors.

Navigating Strategies

As another selective code for HILT, it encompasses overcoming strategies to cope with the difficulties of teaching. Generally, there are numerous challenges, like resistance to learn, burnout, individual conflict, and incomplete teaching. The ability of the teacher in handling these problematic situations as well as their effects on teaching derives from his/her implementing appropriate navigating strategy in the case. It includes four subcategories, namely 'Conflict Control', 'Supportive Proceedings', 'Feedback Network', and 'Acquired xxperience'. The first subcategory originated from the management capacity of the teacher while facing any social, individual, and educational conflicts and tensions. The next sub-category, as a coping behavior, consists of any supportive actions to help teachers by providing necessities of their being culturally, financially, legally, socially, and individually. Some major axial codes are legislation enactments, family protection, safe job security, and monetary promotion.
The third one, 'Feedback network', includes the groups of supervisors, parents and peers is the next sub-category of navigating strategies, referring to the feedback a teacher receives from all participants of the teaching/learning process. While supervisors, as the outer specialists, assess the educational setting as well as the quality of teaching support the teachers by providing corrective feedback. Finally, 'Acquired xxperience' highlights learning and expertise acquired through teaching.

Conditional Contributors

Conditional Contributors is another selective code that intervenes in the formation/malformation of HILT. While it includes sub-categories of 'Public Look', 'Interlingual Cultural Differences', 'Economic Motivators', and 'Professional Promotion', each one is of two-folded nature referring to either constructive and facilitator nature of the above-mentioned sub-categories, or their destructive and inhibiting dimensions. For example, the dignified look on teachers of the community leads them to more prosperity, while the bothersome and cumbersome view on teachers leads to unfulfilled teaching with incompetent learning. Next subcategory, interlingual cultural difference, focuses on the important factor of the degree of acceptance of the foreign language by the learner community: if it sees the new language as a way to success, opportunity, communication, and promotion, with the least possible cultural contradictories, learning would be of no difficulty, while a huge amount of controversy in various cultural dimensions resulted in inhibited learning circumstance along with several learning difficulties. The other subcategory, economic motivators, points to the financial status of the teachers and the importance of economic support in the accomplishment of the profession. Unless teachers are monetarily supported and financially, they will not be able to perform their due expected responsibilities as their minds would concern about money-making challenges rather than educational targets. Practically, since language learning focuses on leaning another language intercultural difference can be either reinforcement or an obstacle, depending on the existing differences or similarities. It won't be an easy job to teach the learners with hostile feelings against the country of which they are learning the language. The other factor considers professional raises as a motivational source in improving all related features, otherwise, keeping teachers away from career-relevant motivations can suppress their efforts in identity development as well. The last conditional contributor refers to the promotion of encompassing knowledge, experience, and skill increase affecting the teachers' performance and the required

ability to manage to teach as well.

Contextual Patterns

The preliminary fact is that there should be an educational system through which the teaching process emerges, develops, and becomes fruitful. Hence, another category of HILT, entitled 'Contextual Patterns', revealing itself in various settings surrounded teachers, highlighted the sub-categories of socio-cultural settings, communicative contexts, and teaching instruments through answering the questions. It includes a vast variety of issues like cultural status and background of the context, social norms governing the setting in question, and the hierarchical position of the context in the order support and the aid teaching profession. The first criterion in evaluating this part is its being as updated and modernized as possible.

Consequences

The category naming 'n ctual Teaching Approach (ATA)' is considered as the 'Consequence Phenomenon'. Teachers' produced and visible consequence and the actual result of an action, which is assessable, is the class performance and teaching act accomplished. The first subcategory of ATA is 'Facilitated/Impeded Teaching Atmosphere' as an overarching code for several open codes such as class management, instructional techniques, institutionalizing of learning behaviors, planning appropriately, and cultivating external motivation to study and learn. 'Professional xx pertise', as the second sub-category, is about strategy use as well as teachers' experienced behavior in class or outside. The educational view of teachers considers the setting of a class whether at school, university or in the institute as a research education processU Ultmately, 'Whole Teacher Being' is the eventual phase of an accomplished facilitated interaction between teachers, learners through the use of technology, an abundance of various distractors, practicing appropriate coping strategies, benefiting from the

senses of cooperation, motivation and mutual understanding while teaching and learning in a proper educational context. As a faculty member declared: "I think teachers are created by the educational system itself. Teaching will have never happened without considering society, family life, and psychology. If the system takes the teachers important, the students will have a different future in every respect. Effective teachers need to work in a constantly evolving environment and adjust their teaching along with the latest technologies, based on the age of the students, the resources available and changing curriculum, practices, and requirements". (Int7 17)

Table 2: Open codes of eight axial codes

Axial Codes	N of OC	Open Codes (OC)
Language Commanding	35	speech performance/writing proficiency correct spelling
Corporeal State	46	posture/physical capacity/eye contact voice projection
Public Look	21	dignity/role model/social status/agreeableness/culturally-bound
Feedback Network	19	supervisor/parents/peers/learners/school principals
Socio-cultural Setting	48	school/classroom/language institutes/conferences
Media Person	38	technophile/social networking cites/media support
Unique Entity	18	teacher autonomy/teacher agency/localized teaching/teacher commitment
United Entity	12	teaching methods/ universal approaches

Correlations between the above-mentioned selective codes framing a conceptual model of research on HILT shown in Figure 1. The model includes the basis of the theoretical narration circling the concept of HILT, comprising seven selective factors. While Persona Grata and Public Persona are the grounding factors of HILT that conduce to 'Teacherality', it emerges in the Contextual Patterns, through implementing Navigating Strategies and along with Conditional Contributors. The framework leads to the ATA eventually.
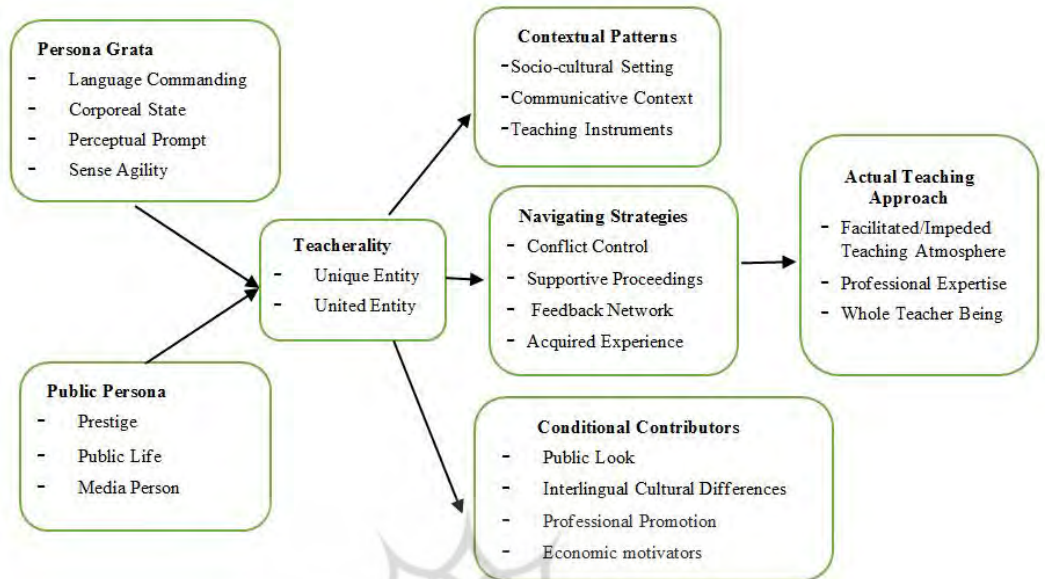
Figure 1: The Theoretical Model of HILT

DISCUSSION

The initial objective of the study was to identify the concept of HILT in a comprehensive and coherent framework, so interviews with language teachers were conducted regarding different aspects of their conception of language teacher identity. Taking grounded theory methodology, without directing to any particular theoretical views, the researchers analyzed the collected data through a constant-comparative method resulting in HILT. The emerged framework encompasses being a teacher as the core category, as well as its grounding basis of self and society, its consequences, and the navigating strategies. The results led to the emergence of novel and newly-brought categories and concepts, as most previous studies investigated some discrete-point aspects of teacher identity like personal identity (Bullough, 2019; Giddens, 1991; Kubanyiova, 2009), professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Babai Shishavan, & Sadeghi, 2009), even they ignored the

social identity of a language teacher despite emphasizing on the social nature of language learning (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Felix, 2019).

Proposing an evolutionary dimensional analysis on HILT, as a multidisciplinary theoretical framework, HILT was illustrated as a four-dimensional pyramid, the ultimate result of an evolutionary continuum on language teacher identity, including dimensions of HILT Formation, HILT Development, HILT Construction, and HILT Manifestation. The metaphor, "triangle-pyramid" is employed to refer to the set of grounding, intervening, conditional and consequence factors resulting in the existence of HILT, which is a unique, yet united entity resembling as a language teacher identity, which is formed, developed, constructed and manifested through an evolutionary continuum. The evolutionary feature refers to the developmental process of HILT emergence through teaching experience, initiating from the self of the teacher, contextualized in the society, benefiting from strategies and conditionals, and eventually manifested through teaching. Venerable insights into the sense of self, their various identities, and how the identities have been developed over time, further support the idea of the evolutionary nature of HILT (Murray & Fujishima, 2016). The continuous nature of the HILT developmental continuum, as iteratively developing, was further supported by Valiavska (2019) proposing everything is interrelated, with interconnecting and reinforcing parts, developing in all directions to create a limitless whole.

The significant point attributed to the present study is that despite several interpretations of identity were explored partially through some previous studies, none captured them in sequence, in an evolutionary procedure, nor internalizing the categories and factors in their emergence. Therefore, the most significant aspect of the present study with others was proposing the theoretical framework that encompasses the above-mentioned shortcomings, while explaining the continuum of the evolution of HILT, comprising all relevant, influential, and grounding factors.

1. HILT Formation
2. HILT Development
3. HILT Construction
4. HILT Manifestation
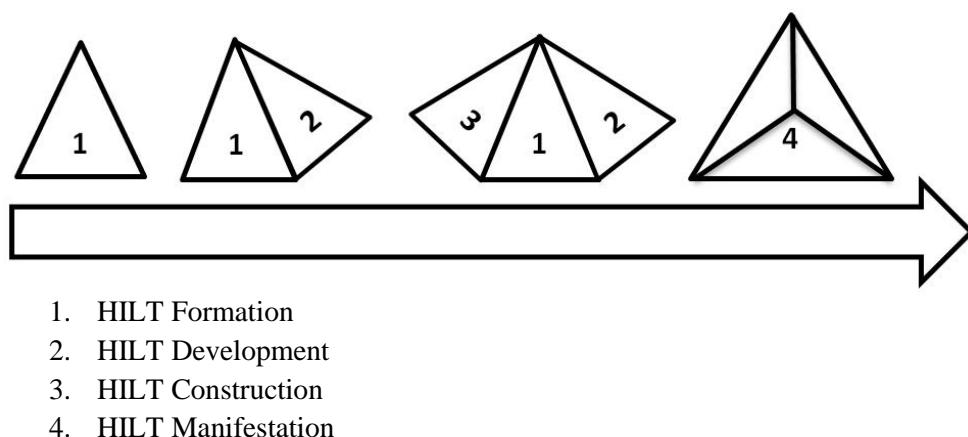
Figure 2. The HILT Pyramid Continuum

1. HILT Formation

As the initial phase, the identity of a teacher originated from his/her 'self', leading to the personal self of the teacher. Likewise 'the theory of self' is the underlying theory of HILT formation which occurs in an intersubjective field and can be best characterized as an ongoing process of shaping and reshaping the teachers' identity. The fundamental origin of HILT is in line with what Bullough (2018) attributed to identity formation: "While the drama of identity formation and change generally takes place internally, the importance of this drama requires that it be brought forward and considered concerning how it is shaped by history, culture, and context" (p. 101).

As a person becomes a teacher, the conception of the self reflexively and discursively understood by himself forms the starting point of taking the role of a teacher.

Prior studies have noted the importance of identity, regarding identity formation as a "process 'located' in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture" (Erikson, 1968, p6 22). According to Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), teacher identity is influenced

and formed by emotions, intellects, context, and agency, which was confirmed by the present study. In the same vein, Pennington and Richards (2016) proposed that the teacher identity includes a set of competencies of the teacher, as linguistic, teaching manners, practical skills, and community membership.

These findings support the claim made by the researchers of the present study believing that one of the grounding factors in forming HILT is the collection of subcategories like 'Language Commanding', 'Perceptual Prompt', 'Sense Agility', 'Corporeal State', as they constitute the basis of a person named teacher. Some of the contributors have already been investigated, fully or partially, in previous literature. Taking the personal professional perspective on HILT, the study was in line with Kubanyiova (2009, 2012), Lamb (2012), Papi and Temouri (2012), of which the introduction to the field has also been adopted in a model to identify EFL teachers' MSS (Kubanyiova, 2009, 2012).

However, authentic complexity appears while positioning self in society, taking 'self' as a unique psychological unit as well as 'society' as the home to the amalgam of numerous interwoven collections of 'self's', reveals the need for going beyond the unidimensional look on teacher identity, led to the emergence of the next dimension of identity evolution.

2. HILT Development

Going through the formation of teacher identity as the starting phase, there would be a complicated process of identity development according to the intervening coping criteria being encountered by the teacher. Better to say, identity "goes beyond the struggles in the intersections of social and collective identities; individuals go through a complex process of privileging, silencing, and negotiating a myriad of conflicting identities in ways that are private and public" (Valiavska, 2019, p. 1), to achieve a socially-made face, which is in accordance with the next grounding factor of HILT, called: 'Public Persona'.

Taking various social factors contributing the development of teacher identity is declared by some researchers, the most recent ones are Eslamdoost, King and Tajeddin (2019), who proposed: "Dynamic in nature, teacher identity is mediated by myriad factors that are both personal and external to the teacher"(p. 1).

The constituting factors of society, or better to say 'Public Persona', derived in the present study included the categories of Prestige, Public Life, and Media Person, of which the teacher would gain adequate social identity. The grounding role of society in HILT emergence was in line with Markus and Nurius's (1986) notion of contributing factors like the linking of time, goal setting, and self-regulation to the cognitive and motivational aspects of self. The previously-mentioned focus of research on teachers' self was combined in Dornyei and Kubanyiova's (2014) work on the common core of the framework for both learners and teachers, taking learners as an outside factor. It corroborated the idea of researchers like Goodson and Cole (1994) in defining teacher identity, suggesting the development of teacher identity as a process of integrating the "personal" and 'professional' dimensions in becoming and acting as a teacher. They stated, "We take teachers as persons and professionals whose lives and work are influenced and made meaningful by factors and conditions inside and outside the classroom and school" (p. 88).

By interacting with the members of the society, a teacher can be seen as an influential basis of the community; the reputation and respect given to a teacher derive from the amount and depth of social influence of the teacher, which is called 'prestige'. Moreover, social interactions themselves, which involve being known to people, define the style of the 'public life' of the teacher. These factors confirmed the nature of several recurring characterizations of teacher identity, as Akkerman and Meijer (2011) claimed, to be: multiplicity, discontinuous, and social. The last category, calling 'media person' justifies the urgent need of the teacher to be a technologically literate, and informed person of the communication outlets, bringing out appropriate communication with the society, including the

generation owning the technology. Though working a plethora of research on the effect of technology on learning a language, the impeccable impression of technology and the following media on the social life of the teacher has been gone unnoticed in the previous studies.

3. HILT Construction

The third dimension of HILT evolution, elaborates the most distinguished finding of HILT, claiming it is constructed through time, involves various factors and strategies in the community. In addition to the personal and social aspects of teacher identity, the present study speculated the role of strategies, conditions and contextual patterns in the construction of HILT, affirming Weiland (2010) who proposed that identity construction is a situated communicative process which uses ideal selves and expectations about the self. Generally, a person constructs his/her identity through the active process including individual awareness of self-constructions on identity and the passive process through following a routine (Wieland, 2010). The theory of constructivism is approved by many scholars, namely Giddens (1991), Kuhn (2006), Kunkwenzu and Reddy (2008), Alsup (2006), and Eslamdoost et al. (2019). Hence, the most noticeable factors and variables tightly connected to HILT, are social-related or environmental features of context, facilitating or inhibiting the process of being a teacher. As the holistic identity of language teachers is formed through various social processes like supportive proceedings, socio-cultural setting, communicative context, public look, and feedback network, the teacher's holistic identity is regarded as an emergent phenomenon through the intervening processes of socio-cultural, economic and educational components of the language classroom. There is a plethora of research highlighting the social aspect of identity, namely, Berger and Luckmann (1984), Giddens (1991), Kuhn (2006), Loseke (2007), Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005), and Valiavska (2019).

The concept of identity construction, as the third dimension of HILT,

is in line with researchers like Soreide (2006), Rodgers and Scott (2008), and recently by Eslamdoost et al. (2019) who believed: "Identity construction is not an individual phenomenon; rather, it is done in conjunction with and through interactions and negotiations within particular contexts" (p.10). While some researchers pointed to other phrases like 'development of identity' (Flores & Day, 2006), creating' an identity (Parkison, 2008), and even to the 'architecture' of teacher's professional identities (Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2006), all refer to the professional development of the teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Additionally, the more professional factors of the findings regarding HILT, namely the contextual settings, teaching instruments, conflict control, supportive proceedings, feedback network, acquired experience, professional promotion, and economic motivators highlight the importance of interaction as well as communication of teachers, confirmed the theory that identities are discursively and narratively constructed via the way people interact and relate to the community and people, by their decision, practices, and actions proposed by Weedon (1997).

4. HILT Manifestation

The last phase of the evolutionary continuum of HILT points to the fact HILT is the product phenomenon of the process of 'Teacherality', eventuating in the 'Actual Teaching Approach', called HILT Manifestation. In this study, the term 'manifestation' surmounts the concept of forming, as it refers to the first stage of being a teacher, as well as the concept of development, as it denotes the continuous and iterative processes thereafter, ignoring the possible destructor factors, and also the construction of identity, as it focuses on the constructively shaping professional identity, ignoring other aspects, namely social and personal aspects of being a teacher. A united and unique set of the underpinning factors of teacher's identity interplay to constitute an image that the teacher has wishes to have and realizes to have through the teaching profession, which is defined as the

'Teacherality' thereafter. In the same vein, researchers like Weiland (2010), Pennington and Richards (2016), as well as Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) believed that identity construction is considered as an active process resulting in the development of a distinctive, coherent self of a teacher, which is called 'Teacherality' in the present study. The ultimate manifestation of teacher identity was mentioned by many researchers, in keeping with the process of teaching, while various concepts such as professional expertise and personal growth are addressed to construct the identity as being the teacher (Rahmati et al., 2018). Likewise, Palmer (1998) referred to the whole being, as the result of integrity between the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of teacher identity that can lead to a new 'wholeness,' i.e. 'becoming more real by acknowledging the whole of who I am' (p. 13). However, the Facilitated/Impeded Teaching Atmosphere was the influential unpaid factor.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Initiating the profession of teaching is a lifelong experience that is demanding, aspiring, motivating, and challenging for different groups of teachers. Meanwhile, being a teacher is a social concept regarding the huge responsibilities required. In this respect, HILT came to be seen as a critical and developmental emergent component in the sociocultural and educational context of language teaching.

Specifically, the present study focused on seven categories that are vital in the evolutionary emergence of HILT, comprising of two grounding factors of Personal Grata, and Public Persona, representing self and society, respectively. The phenomenon conduced is becoming a teacher, named 'Teachrality', situated in the Contextual Patterns, by the help of Navigating Strategies and Conditional Contributors, resulted in the Actual Teaching Approach (ATA), which is the consequence of facilitated teaching, learning context and coping strategies in educational, social and contextual communication.

The study is noticeable, in that case, although previous studies of identity focused on different factors and elements naming personal, professional, and social aspects, there was no comprehensive look, regarding language teachers' identity comprising grounding, intervening, and contextual factors and strategies. The next major significance of the study was the reconsideration of society in a rather up-to-date definition of identity, naming HILT, as it was not included clearly in previous studies.

Moreover, the analysis provides several theoretical and practical implications. First, this study can be helpful for the many Iranian schools, universities, and institutional teachers who struggle with the teaching drawbacks, informing them about the importance of contextual factors in the extent of HILT formation, and consequently, the quality of teaching. Therefore creating a realistic look at the teaching in context would be vital, furthermore, this would be an important issue for future research to study different pedagogical contexts. Thus, by examining the HILT, EFL teachers would be informed about the formation of a comprehensive and holistic identity with all the necessary components as well as the fully-functioning factors required in the emergence of HILT.

Next, holistic teacher identity would bring a teaching climate that results in conformity and productivity, if the conditional categories would be provided for teachers, namely: supportive feedback, public look, professional promotion, and economic motivators. Optimal teaching requires extensive support and appreciation. Moreover, contemplating HILT would be beneficial for the teacher educators, mentors, and supervisors who wish to nurture and encourage the new teachers bringing wonderful idealism and energy into their classrooms and teaching context.

Additionally, as suggested in the discussion, the results obtained have important psychoeducational implications, for officials as well as legislators to promote and modify policies that reinforce teachers' accomplishment of continued training, which could favor higher competence for the management and control of the instructional process, as

well as the possibility of focusing on the student, promoting a quality interaction (Rosario, Runez, Valle, Paiv, & Polydoro, 2013). This study's findings add to the growing literature by developing a holistic understanding of the factors that shape a language teacher identity, which indicates a possibility and credibility of language teachers to improve their performance and status.

Even though the scheme obtained in this study integrated Knowledge about teacher identity into a practical and concise framework; however, some limitations should be mentioned. Firstly, despite the proposal of a model with theoretically influential factors in teacher identity, the model could not include all contextual, overcoming, and conditional factors, which is seen as a limitation, although it does not invalidate the framework. Therefore, future research should explore other factors influential in HILT formation (i.e., more emphasized role of students, the pivotal role of the classroom as a contextual factor; other representatives of disruptive factors, more updated technological advances).

Additionally, the only used instrument to collect data was semi-structured interviews, while the need to complement data with other measures, such as diaries, hypermedia applications, and observations is recommended. Moreover, the participant teachers in the investigation were selected among teachers teaching English in Iran. Therefore, it is important to analyze the data gathered from teachers from other countries and languages to increase the reliability and validity of the findings on HILT formation. Then, the presentation of a full image of HILT, the way the relevant factors interplay and integrate with its formation, requires further research in a wide variety of contexts and circumstances.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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