



Changes in Novice Teachers' Identity Construction: A Case Study of Two Novice Teachers in Central China

Xingyuan Cao¹ Lingling Liu^{2*} Rong Li³

1. School of Foreign Languages, China Three Gorges University, Daxue Road NO.8, 443000, Yichang, Hubei, PR China.
2. School of Foreign Languages, China Three Gorges University, Daxue Road NO.8, 443000, Yichang, Hubei, PR China. Email: liulingling@ctgu.edu.cn
3. School of Foreign Languages, China Three Gorges University, Daxue Road NO.8, 443000, Yichang, Hubei, PR China.

* Corresponding author: Lingling Liu

Abstract: This paper conducts a case study of two pre-service English teachers majoring in Master of English Education. By analyzing their self-reflection journals and interviews during the internship process, this paper reveals how pre-service teachers construct their professional identity during the teaching internship process. Based on it, this paper further discusses the main factors that affect the construction of their professional identity. The analysis found that the two novice teachers experienced four different stages during their internship. Besides, internal factors such as cognitive ability, professional ethic, interpersonal communication, self-evaluation, career development motivation, and external factors such as work environment and teaching guidance have positively affected their identity construction.

Keywords: novice teacher, identity construction, teachers' professional development, case study

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of foreign language teachers has always been the core issue of teaching education, and teachers' identity has become one of the research hotspots in recent years. For novice or pre-service teachers, each will go through a process from student to teacher. This change of role

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influences their identity as teachers, as well as a series of factors such as teachers' beliefs and future career development plans to a large extent. Furthermore, the identity construction of pre-service teachers will affect the outcome of English teachers' sustainability.

English, as a compulsory subject in the elementary education stage of China, stretches through the entrance examinations of Chinese students. To meet the needs of national construction and development and train high-level application-oriented professionals, the Chinese Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council set up Master's degrees in education in 1996. Over 100 colleges and universities have set up Master's degrees in English education in China. They have trained numerous high-quality English teachers who have mastered modern educational theories and have substantial teaching practice and research abilities for primary and secondary schools. From the above, we can see that our country attaches great importance to the training of teachers. Because of the specificity of English, English teachers' training is very significant. Against this backdrop, paying attention to the sustainability of English teachers' professional development is essential.

Pre-service teacher training is an essential part of teaching education and professional development and a significant stage in the growth of teachers (Chen & Sun, 2010, p.3). But a considerable number of English teachers have not received pre-service teaching training. According to a survey released by the China Foreign Language Education Research Center in 2002, college English teachers follow the traditional teaching mode. They teach students based on their own experiences without a basic understanding of current educational concepts, language learning characteristics, and teaching methods. Among the teachers who participated in the survey, 82.8% thought they could teach foreign languages well as long as they had good English skills (Zhou, 2002, p.408). Therefore, English teachers in primary and secondary schools need to urgently improve their professional quality and pay attention to pre-service practices to enhance teachers' professional development (Wang & Zhang, 2021, p.12).

Based on this background, this research conducts a case study of two pre-service English teachers, focuses on the teacher identity that novice teachers constantly develop and construct in teaching practices, and analyzes the main factors that influence the construction of novice teachers' identity. Knowing student teachers is of great importance. Through this study, teacher educators can better understand how student teachers shape their identity during education programs and factors that positively or negatively influence their professional identity. Student teachers will benefit from such a study by learning about the importance of their professional identity. They will also know how to develop teacher identity, what will impact their identity development, and what changes they will experience under the influence of various variables (Izadinia, 2013, p.695). Specifically, this research mainly involves the following research questions:

1. How did the two novice teachers construct their identities as a teacher?
2. What are the significant factors that affect the identity construction of two novice teachers?
What factors are conducive to the teachers' development of sustainability?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks, or expressions that make a person or group

(Peter, 2008). Posthole (2012) proposes that self-development can gradually form identity construction. Sociological research on identity has a long history. As early as the twentieth century, identity has become an essential topic in Western psychology. Research on teacher identity has undergone significant changes in psychology, sociological, anthropology, cognitive science, and social-cultural views. At the beginning of the 21st century, to cope with the questioning of the professional status of English teaching and the threats of non-native English teachers' status, the foreign language community ushered in the rapid development of the research on English teachers' identity. Many scholars have expressed their views on English teachers' identity. For example, according to Palmer (1998), English teachers' identity is a unified whole composed of English teachers themselves. Therefore, teachers' identity results from the interaction between teaching level and teachers' personal experience, social culture, and educational environment. In a similar vein, Varghese et al. (2005) argue that English teachers' identity is closely related to the social and cultural environment and teachers' cognitive ability, which exists as individual psychology conceptualization and socialization, and has the essential characteristics of dynamic changes, contradictory intersection, environment shaping, and interactive association and discourse construction. In addition, Richards (2008, p.160) considers that English teachers' identity refers to the teaching beliefs held by English teachers and the determination and recognition of their social and cultural roles in the process of interacting with peers and students, which are different social and cultural roles played by teachers. Although the international discussion on teachers' professional identity has not agreed on a specific definition (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p.178), its importance has been widely approved in recent years. Teachers' identity, different from the teachers' role, is essential for teachers (Morgan et al., 2005). Britzman (1985, p.74) compares the vital differences between teachers' identities and roles. And he claims that novice teachers have mastered teaching skills, but identity is a continuous and changeable process of social adaptation.

The construction of teachers' identities cannot be separated from the teaching context (Meijer & Verloop, 2004, p.115). In other words, the teacher will be affected by the social environment in forming the identity. Cooper and Olson (1996, p.78) confirm the historical, social, psychological, and cultural influencing factors in teacher identification. So far, many teaching studies have focused on the teaching environment, personal experience, and biography. For example, Beijaard et al. (2000) assume that these factors affect teachers' thoughts and behaviors and finally impact their identity. The main influencing factors in the teaching context include working conditions, teaching guidance, and colleague relations.

Le Maistre and Paré state that at the same time as newly qualified teachers are learning to teach, they also go through a socialization process (as cited in Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013:120). Bliss (1999) thinks that the socialization of teachers refers to the process by which individuals become a member of teachers; in other words, it is a process of the development and growth of novice teachers. The process of teachers' socialization is also the process of professional development of teachers. Professional development means teachers' learning, how they learn to learn and how they apply their knowledge in practice to support pupil learning (Avalos, 2011). The most important study in this field is Fuller and Brown's (1975) Teacher Professional Development Theory, which demonstrates the change and development sequence of the focus of novice teachers. They affirm that novice teachers must go through five stages of development. Firstly, in the idealized stage, novice teachers position themselves as ideal teachers. The second one is the survival period. At this stage, novice teachers try to survive in the teaching environment in the fastest way. In the third stage of self-doubt, novice teachers recognize the difficulties and their limitations in teaching. Therefore, novice teachers began to doubt whether they were qualified for this job. However, in the fourth stage,

novice teachers can teach more successfully and pay more attention to classroom management, but less attention is paid to student learning. Finally, in the last stage of continuing development, novice teachers enter the phase of paying attention to the quality of students' learning and constantly improving their pedagogy. Richards and Farrell (2005) also agree that teachers will gradually pay more attention to students' learning and teaching effects. This theory was applied by Kagan (1992) in his case study. Based on Fuller and Brown's view, Maynard and Furlong (1995) point out that novice teachers need more support at the self-doubt stage; otherwise, it will affect the further development of teachers and lead to job burnout. However, not all researchers agree that teacher development has apparent phases. Most researchers think that novice teachers will undergo anxiety in their first year of employment, so they need help from experienced teachers.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Setting and Participants

This research adopts the method of the case study. The research objects are two postgraduate students from a comprehensive university in central China who are also pre-service teachers in their teaching internships. Their university has a background in normal education and enrolled the first postgraduate students majoring in Master of Education in English (M.Ed. English) in 2020. In response to the professional training programs and the stipulation of the school, postgraduate students majoring in M.Ed. English not only needs to master basic teaching theory but also needs to participate in practical teaching activities. Therefore, as the first graduate students majoring in M.Ed. English, they are arranged to go to local middle schools for a four-month internship in the fall semester of 2021. These two students are chosen as study objects because they are willing to cooperate with researchers and have good communication and expression skills. Based on this premise, this study determines two novice teachers, Li and Ning.

The two participants were assigned to do teaching internships at the same school. The middle school they worked for has pleasant scenery, an excellent study environment, a high level of teacher teaching ability, a high enrollment rate, and a unique campus culture. Both participants believe their workplace is "a school with a rich campus culture, which often organizes various activities to improve students' comprehensive practical ability."

B. Data Collection and Analysis

This qualitative research adopts the case study method. By reading the self-reflection journals of two novice teachers, the journals describing the representative events during the internship period are selected for analysis, supplemented by in-depth interviews, which are carried out around the issues related to the construction of teachers' identities. Through analyzing journals written in different periods, we can discover the changes in their thoughts over time and the process of teachers' identity construction (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, p.123). Furthermore, in-depth interviews further reveal the contributing factors behind these changes. Interviews are conducted in the native language of the respondents so that they can express their inner thoughts and feelings naturally and fluently. With the approval of the two study objects, the whole interview process was recorded and transcribed by the researchers. The transcripts were sent back to the respondents for verification to enhance the reliability of the study.

Besides self-reflection journals and interviews, the researchers also collected other materials, such as PowerPoint slides used by two participants in classes, classroom observation reports, etc. These materials can give researchers a more comprehensive understanding of the two novice teachers' internship experience.

IV. FINDINGS

A. *Li's Story*

Li was born in a province in Northern China. With solid professional ability and good comprehensive quality, she has successfully passed the Test for Teachers Authorization in Jinan city, Shandong province. After getting her postgraduate diploma, she will become a high school English teacher in Jinan. Li began to have the idea of becoming an English teacher in college. "When I applied for my college application after the college entrance examination, I chose English as my major in combination with my love of English, and my English scores were better than other subjects. When I became a junior in college, my career plan was to become an English teacher, so I chose M.Ed. English as my major in the postgraduate stage."

Li chooses the M.Ed. English as her major for two reasons. From the perspective of social factors, Li thinks that the profession of teachers is very selfless, which can well reflect a person's sense of responsibility. What's more, compared with other careers, the teacher has greater value, which can help students to set and achieve their ideals in life. From a personal point of view, Li likes to get along with children. She considers teachers' working environment and interpersonal relationships relatively simple and not as complicated as other careers. Li reckons that her Chinese teacher in high school has the most significant influence on her. "She is strict, responsible, enthusiastic, and concise in her lectures. In addition, she will ask questions from time to time to avoid students' distraction in class." she said. Li is adamant that after taking her Chinese teacher's classes, she has gained a lot and made progress, and she said, "In my future teaching, I can also learn a lot from her teaching style and skills."

When talking about the image of the ideal teacher, Li first mentioned that he should love his job and treat his work seriously and responsibly, whether in class or preparing lessons, correcting students' homework, or tutoring students. In addition, caring for students is another essential accomplishment that ideal teachers should possess. In the interview, Li noted: "Teachers should give care and love to students, communicate with them in time, and try to understand students' thoughts rather than punishing or discriminating against students." In Li's opinion, an ideal teacher should love his job and care for his students and be a good example to others, which can be unfolded in the proper dresses of teachers, rejection of paid tutoring, and the refusal of gifts from parents.

Li was excited and full of expectations before her internship because she had no internship experience in public schools during her undergraduate study. "All in all, my future career choice is to become a teacher, so I also want to see what authentic school life is like." Besides, Li felt a little bit nervous because she would face many tasks and challenges during her internship, and even didn't know how to deal with these complicated things properly.

B. *Li's Reflection Journal*

Both Li and Ning started their first day of internship on September 14th, 2021. Li and Ning's university have arranged for expert internship instructors to guide and assist them during the internship process.

When we came to the school, we were first attracted by the beautiful school environment. Then we walked into a classroom to observe the lesson under the guidance of our instructor, which is also the office for our interns in the future. Our instructor gave us a brief introduction to the work arrangement during our internship, which included having classes at 7:30 in the morning, supervising students' morning reading and checking students' recitation. What's more, we should listen to other teachers' classes. In

addition, we should help the instructor to correct the students' dictation assignments and provide feedback about students' performance to the instructor in time. I have a hunch that many things will be waiting for me to finish in my future internship life, which will be a big challenge, but I am still full of confidence. (Li's reflection journal, September 14th, 2021).

At the end of the first day of the internship, Li reflected that she was "too slow in correcting homework and dictation", and she "didn't grasp some grammar points and vocabulary accurately." (Li's journal, September 14th, 2021). But she is confident that she will gradually improve the speed of correcting homework in the future internship.

Novice teachers' love for education and reverence for teaching make them full of expectations for teaching. At that time, Li is in an ideal stage, positioning herself as a professional teacher. Li, who has just become an intern teacher, is full of confidence in her teaching work. However, she describes herself as "an intern," which shows that she still focuses on her student status, followed by the teacher role.

Li's second reflection journal delineates her feelings about attending classes. Their whole internship process can be divided into two stages; in the early stage, they mainly listen to their instructor's or other teachers' classes, and in the later stage, they will stand on the platform to give lectures. When observing her instructor, Miss Shi's class, Li found that Miss Shi was good at organizing students and activities, familiar with different students' situations and weaknesses, and able to help students in time. In addition, Li finds that Miss Shi is also good at classroom management.

As the head teacher, she will play her sense of humor in the class to make the boring grammar and vocabulary classes lively and active, thereby reducing the pressure on the ninth-grade students. After listening to the demonstration lessons of other English teachers, I found demonstration lessons are quite different from regular classes. Teachers will not only have attractive introductions and stimulate students' interest through pictures or videos; they will also arouse students' enthusiasm for learning by setting group competitions, debates, and other forms. In terms of language use, teachers will use the strategy of retelling to promote students' ability to use language. (Li's reflection Journal, September 23rd, 2021).

After watching these demonstration lessons, Li confirms that she should learn from these teachers continuously and integrate teaching methods used in the classroom when she teaches. Although Li has not stepped onto the platform to give lectures at this time, she is constantly learning and accumulating teaching experience.

Li's first teaching process progressed smoothly, but there were still some problems. These problems appeared in Li's first reading class. At that time, Li was going to teach an article about basketball. According to the syllabus and the process of the open class, Li arranged the picture import, pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading, etc. Although students were active in interaction, she thought that shortcomings still occurred in the whole class.

After class, my instructor Miss Shi pointed out that I should make more effort in PowerPoint Slides' production. Instead of using a single-color tone, I can attract students' attention by inserting different pictures and playing short videos properly. In addition, in the post-reading session, considering the different levels of students, retelling needs the guidance and demonstration of teachers. In addition, Miss Shi mentioned a gif in my

PowerPoint Slides near the key points that students should master. She pointed out that putting animations next to knowledge points would distract students. (Li's reflection journal, October 19th, 2021)

Li's first lecture was relatively satisfactory because she had accumulated a lot of experience in observing other experienced teachers' lectures before. This class was the first time she stood on the platform as a teacher rather than a student. It can be seen from Li's internship journal mentioned above that she uses the expression of "us as teachers" to express the change in her identity.

Teachers' work includes not only having classes but also class management. In her reflection journal on November 30th, 2021, Li recorded the class management process of the head teacher.

After this period of internship, I found that the workload of the head teacher is much more than that of other teachers. The head teacher should arrive at school early to confirm whether each student is in the classroom and always pay attention to each student's emotional and psychological condition. Moreover, the head teacher must write class journals and communicate with parents promptly. At the parents' meeting in the middle or end of the semester, the head teacher will also make PPT to analyze the students' progress or the reasons for their setbacks with the parents to keep close contact with the parents. Overall, the head teacher's work will be a big challenge in my future work. (Li's reflection journal, November 30th, 2021)

After two months of internship, Li deeply understands the teacher's work. Although Li did not take over the management of the class teacher during the whole internship, what Li saw and heard in the internship could pave the way for her real class teacher work.

At the end of the internship, every pre-service teacher gave a demonstration lesson. Like her first time on the platform, Li's demonstration lesson was also a reading class. Drawing on the experience of the first class, Li carefully prepared her PowerPoint Slides and designed the course.

This time, I still made a PPT according to the standard of the demonstration lesson. During the whole class, I not only pay attention to the guidance of pictures but also set up a variety of questions, such as filling in the blanks with tables, matching lines, and answering questions according to the characteristics of reading materials. I also design class activities such as retelling and discussion in the post-reading part. (Li's reflection journal, December 23rd, 2021)

Compared with the first class, Li has made great progress in this lecture, and these improvements are mainly manifested in the following aspects.

The first is the production of PPT, I arranged the animation reasonably to attract students' attention without affecting their attention to key points. At the same time, I use various forms to deepen students' understanding of the text and use the form of pictures and keywords to connect the text clues in series to guide students to repeat, which is more effective than just listing a single word or phrase, and students can repeat it more quickly in this way. (Li's reflection journal, December 23rd, 2021)

Not surprisingly, Li's class was praised by other teachers. Li was in the fourth and fifth stages of her teacher growth as a novice teacher. She can teach skillfully, pay attention to classroom management and students, and constantly improve her teaching ability. After class, Li was not complacent, still found out her shortcomings, and was full of confidence in her future career.

Although I paid attention to combing the reading materials in this class, I didn't pay attention to a knowledge point in this class. I should emphasize the grammar point of 'past tense' in class to consolidate students' knowledge. Next, I will strive to have a good class in my future career. (Li's reflection journal, December 23rd, 2021)

During Li's internship, she converted her identity from student to teacher by constantly observing other excellent teachers' classes, and summarizing and reflecting on her lessons. At the same time, Li's instructor, Miss Shi, played an important role in Li's progress, as she promptly and clearly pointed out Li's shortcomings promptly and clearly and gave appropriate advice, which helped Li finish the transition from the ideal teacher stage to the student-focused stage. From Li's experiences, we can say that the improvement of novice teacher's teaching will never stop (Wang & Teng, 2019, p.9). Li made a lot of conclusions and wrote down many feelings in her last internship journal.

After several months of internship, my teaching skills improved. Whether in the process of attending classes or in the process of giving lectures on my stage, I realized that I should give full play to students' dominant position, stimulate students' interests, and mobilize students' enthusiasm through various teaching activities, so that they can take the initiative to participate in the classroom and apply these knowledge points well. In addition, in terms of getting along with students, as novice teachers are relatively younger, the students are close to us. However, they may still psychologically distinguish us from their real teachers. So, when we're officially working, we should have a good relationship with the students and keep a proper distance, neither distant nor too close to reducing the teacher's prestige. In cooperation with other teachers, we must be open-minded to listen to the guidance of experienced teachers, communicate with them more, work side by side, and learn from their strengths to promote the improvement of our teaching skills. In short, this internship life is a precious experience, and I will always cherish it. (Li's reflection journal, December 25th, 2021)

Li summarized her internship from three aspects: improving her teaching ability, and getting along with students and colleagues. This internship experience has become the starting point of Li's future teaching career.

C. Ning's Story

Ning was born in a province in central China. She has lived and learned in this province from elementary school to postgraduate. Ning recalled that she became interested in teaching in junior high school. At that time, when she came home from school, she would write with chalk and draw pictures on her mini-blackboard, pretending she was a teacher. "I have experienced a lot of happiness from this game of 'pretending to be a teacher'". Ning has two cousins who are teachers. "One of my cousins is a primary school music teacher. When I was a child, I went to the classroom to listen to her in class. She often shared her teaching experiences, so she greatly influenced me."

Additionally, in Ning's previous educational experiences, her primary school math teacher had the greatest influence on her. Even though it has been a long time since primary school, she still remembers the things that happened in that math class. Because the students were noisy and didn't obey the teacher's instructions, the math teacher with little teaching experience cried because she was too angry. Sitting in the first row, Ning saw the teacher standing at the classroom door and crying and wondered why the teacher was mad at them. Since then, Ning has always wondered: "If I become a teacher in the future, can I manage the classroom well?" In the interview after Ning's

internship, she said that there are many factors to be considered in classroom management. "It is not only necessary to understand some of the psychological characteristics of students, but also to continuously temper yourself, increase experience in practice and improve your ability to deal with various classroom emergencies".

When talking about the ideal image of teachers, Ning thinks that teaching and educating students are the most important thing. Not only should they complete the work of teaching tasks, but they also need to guide the students' values. In addition, Ning said that teachers need to respect and appreciate every student. "Teachers must be good at discovering students' differences and shining points and help students explore and develop their advantages and potentials. If the students have made certain achievements, the teachers will also have a strong sense of professional accomplishment." Ning said.

Like Li, Ning never had an internship experience in a public school. Ning said her inner feelings were complicated a few days before the internship. Although she looked forward to the training, she was also very nervous and confused. In addition, the type of graduation thesis of M.Ed. English students are empirical research, so these pre-service teachers must complete their own teaching research during their internship. In this regard, Ning said: "Because I came to the middle school with the task of completing my graduation thesis, I felt a lot of pressure."

D. Ning's Reflection Journal

Ning felt the task was heavy and stressful after the first day of the internship.

After a brief visit to the school, our instructor took us to the classroom. We introduced ourselves to the students and briefly talked about our situations. The students were enthusiastic; they greeted us first, which reduced my nervousness. Since the students we oversee are in Grade Nine and will conduct the senior high school entrance examination, their learning tasks are pretty heavy. Therefore, pre-service teachers check students' dictations, recitations, etc. The instructor also told us that we were supposed to participate in invigilation during their monthly exams. (Ning's reflection journal, September 14th, 2021)

As a novice teacher, Ning is currently in the second stage of novice teacher's growth, focusing on the survival stage, from this dimension reflects Ning's transformation from a student to a teacher.

Since Li and Ning's instructors are the same person, the two novice teachers will participate in various teaching activities together most of the time.

The school will randomly select a class for open class every Wednesday afternoon. And today, we attended the teacher of Class Four's demonstration lesson, which was a review class. After the whole class, I found that she has good teaching experience since she organizes many classroom activities methodically. Students are very motivated to take part in activities. (Ning's reflection journal, September 16th, 2021)

Ning's reflection journals are mainly composed of event descriptions and self-reflection. In the part of self-reflection, Ning wrote:

While listening to lectures, I realized my shortcomings. Although I haven't practiced teaching, I can still learn much from this teacher, especially the various classroom instructions. It is not easy to present such a perfect class because it requires adequate preparation, experience, and effort. (Ning's reflection journal, September 16th, 2021)

In mid-October, Ning would have her first class; unlike Li, Ning thought her first class was a failure. Ning encountered problems in the class, such as defective instructional design and unclear classroom instruction.

Because I wasn't prepared enough in the first class and wasn't familiar with the multimedia operation in the classroom, many unexpected situations happened in my class. Students are not clear about my classroom instructions, so I have to repeat my education in Chinese. After class my instructor gave me a lot of suggestions. She said I should clarify the whole class's purpose and not finish all the knowledge points hastily. (Ning's reflection journal, October 14th, 2021)

Due to various factors, Ning's first class didn't progress smoothly. At that time, Ning was obviously in the third stage of novice teachers' growth, the stage of self-doubt. However, she recognized her teaching shortcomings and realized she needed more time to prepare lessons. "I feel that my experience is very lacking; after that, I must spend more time preparing lessons and work harder," Ning said.

Ning mentioned her interaction with students in her reflection journal.

Today, I gave after-class guidance to a student in my class at noon. Since she didn't recite the text within the stipulated time, I took a lot of time on lunch time to accompany her to recite. Because she could not memorize the passage coherently, I taught her to remember some keywords and reminded her when she had difficulties. In this way, she finally recited the passage. Although the process was struggling and time-consuming, I had a great sense of accomplishment. This student is not enthusiastic about learning English, but she still listened to me when I explained the memory method and tried to recite this passage". (Ning's reflection journal, November 26th, 2021).

The small progress made by the students gave Ning a sense of accomplishment as a teacher and accelerated the change in her teacher identity. At the same time, Ning also wrote this sentence in her journal: "If teachers treat students with sincerity, they will also repay us with sincerity."

After learning the experience of the first class, Ning has constantly improved her abilities and preparing for her final demonstration class. Ning's last lesson was listening and speaking class; each activity progressed very smoothly, with good cooperation between teachers and students and students' positive performance. Finally, her tutor and instructors gave her a high evaluation. But what pleased her most was that the students took the initiative to communicate with her after class and gave thanks for her excellent class.

I feel very motivated after hearing my student's praise, and I think my efforts and preparation are worth it. Students can see all of these, and my students believe I can convey knowledge to them. (Ning's reflection journal, December 23rd, 2021)

After the successful lecture, Ning constructed her teacher identity during her internship. She has made great progress in the whole internship, improving her professional competence and getting along with students. During her internship, she constantly thinks about how she can do better.

Ning also wrote a lot of feelings in his last internship journal. Summarizing her experiences that she has learned and looking forward to in the future is Ning's portrayal as a novice teacher during this internship.

Today, the school held a completion ceremony for student teachers, at which every

novice teacher gave a summary speech. Through the internship, I learned how to give a good lesson and how to get along with others. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to stand on the platform to teach students before I became an official teacher. I think this internship is a starting point for my teacher career, and it is a meaningful experience for me. I will often think of this experience in the future. Even if I encounter more challenges and difficulties in the future, I will try my best to overcome them. (Ning's reflection journal, December 25th, 2021).

V. DISCUSSION

From the above contents, we learn about two novice teachers in pre-practice service in detail and then analyze them as novice teachers constructing their identity. As novice teachers in internships, the two participants feel the enormous pressure and gap in career transition when they first know about their teaching tasks. Teacher professional development is not only a gradual and complex process but also a multi-dimensional and contextualized process.

EFL teachers' identity refers to the beliefs of English teachers in English and English teaching and their recognition of their social and cultural roles (Varghese et al., 2005; Richards, 2008). Combining the five stages of novice teachers' growth proposed by Fuller and Brown (1975), we can further investigate the mental journeys of the two novice teachers during the internship. In this process, the factors that affect their identity construction can be analyzed from internal factors and external factors.

A. Internal Factors

The internal factors influencing the construction of novice teachers' identity include teachers' cognitive ability, professional ethics, interpersonal communication, self-evaluation, and career development motivation, which are the direct force to promote teachers' development and growth.

In the first place, the two novice teachers showed positive emotions during the internship. At the beginning of being a novice teacher, teachers often put a lot of energy, intelligence, and emotion into teaching. When these inputs can enable them to gain self-esteem, self-confidence, honor, and self-worth in education, they will enthusiastically devote themselves to teaching. On the contrary, teachers will lose heart in teaching and form a vicious circle in professional development. In this case, teachers cannot have continuous professional development.

In the second place, the two respondents in this study have a lot in common. For example, in their periods as students, both novice teachers had yearned for the teaching profession, so they chose M.Ed. English as their major at the postgraduate stage. In addition, they all have clear plans for their future careers and want to be qualified English teachers. Li successfully obtained the Test for Teachers Authorization in Jinan before this interview. Besides, Ning is preparing for the Test for Teachers' Authorization. Moreover, both are extroverted, and their family background and growing environment make them more confident in interpersonal communication, and their excellent character makes them successfully pass this internship. They like to get in touch with students, get along well with the students in this class during the training, and when they encounter problems, the two internship teachers will humbly ask their instructors for advice. In addition, Li and Ning love teaching and are interested in educating. During their postgraduate studies, they learned some educational theories and theoretical principles, which are the basis for supporting them to adhere to their educational philosophy. In the early internship stage, they spent a lot of time correcting students' homework, supervising students in recitation and dictation, etc. Since the students are in grade nine and are about to take the senior high school entrance examination, they have to receive

exam-oriented education and a lot of experience. However, when the two teachers stood on the platform, they tried to change the traditional teaching concepts and guide students to find the joy of learning English in class, thereby improving students' comprehensive language ability. Richards and Lockhart (1994, p.140) concluded in their research that teachers' educational philosophy supports their classroom teaching behavior. Therefore, Li and Ning's educational philosophy and professional knowledge also encourage them to create a free and democratic classroom. Moreover, the two novice teachers actively participated in competitions during their graduate studies. Not only have they achieved in these competitions, but they also improved their abilities, which made them stand out in job hunting. However, due to the short internship period, the heavy workload of the novice teachers, and the balance between postgraduate studies and internship work, it is a pity that the two novice teachers did not have in-depth communication with other experienced teachers in the school, but only limited to the internal communication among the novice teachers or communicate with their instructors.

B. External Factors

The internal factors impacting the construction of novice teachers' identities include social, family, and other factors. For teachers' growth, the material level, system level, culture level, and value level have an influence.

Both Li and Ning agree with the campus culture of their internship school. In the interview, they mentioned that some display boards at the entrance of the internship school show students' achievements and teachers' elegant demeanor. The school is strict in management. In addition, teachers have a high professional level and will publish some research articles in different journals. During the internship, the two novice teachers also participated in the school's sports meeting and singing competition. They acted as referees in the sports meeting to fulfill their duties as teachers. In the field of teacher occupation, all teachers are in a teaching group. In this teaching group, the interaction and communication among teachers have positive or negative effects on novice teachers and affect the identity construction of novice teachers. Li and Ning got the instructor's help and other teachers' evaluations in the open class. When it is made public to other teachers, the novice teachers will also participate in lectures and evaluation activities as members of the teachers' community. This kind of collective lesson preparation, mutual assistance, and cooperation environment are conducive to the teacher identity of novice teachers.

Because the two teachers are only in the internship stage, so we don't consider that some external factors will impact the construction of teachers' identity, such as salary, promotion, etc.

Apart from the internal and external factors analyzed above, teachers' self-reflection also influences the construction of teachers' identities. According to the internship requirements, both teachers will write their daily reflection journals on time. From the journals, we can see that the reflections of the two novice English teachers are positive. Based on their situation, they are thinking about how to improve themselves. Therefore, teachers' self-reflection also plays an essential role in the identity construction of novice teachers.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study mainly reveals the process of teacher identity construction of two pre-service English teachers and analyzes the factors that affect their teacher identity construction. The research results show that both novice teachers have successfully constructed their identities in this internship stage, laying a foundation for them in their professional careers as teachers. The novice teacher Li has experienced the idealized stage, self-doubt stage, plateau stage, and continuous development

stage in the process of teacher identity construction. The novice teacher Ning has gone through survival, self-doubt, plateau, and continuous development. However, there are some differences between the two teachers in their teacher development stage. Internal factors such as cognitive ability, professional ethics, interpersonal communication, self-evaluation, career development motivation, and external factors such as working environment and instructors have produced positive influences and functions in their teacher identity construction.

The findings of this study have some practical significance for teachers' educators and have made specific contributions to the study of the development of teachers' profession sustainability. For novice teachers to develop better in the future, the author puts forward some suggestions here: Firstly, the Ministry of Education and schools should strengthen the training of novice teachers and help them formulate reasonable teachers' professional development goals. Secondly, teachers should constantly improve their professional quality and pay attention to pre-service practice and training, thus improving teachers' professional development.

This study is helpful for us to understand the identity construction process of novice English teachers in the internship process, and it also emphasizes the influence of internal and external factors on teacher identity construction. However, due to the researchers' limited ability, this study has shortcomings. Firstly, the research participants do the internship in the same middle school; both female teachers, and there is a lack of research on different schools and gender differences. Secondly, this study is limited to qualitative research, so it cannot represent the identity construction characteristics of all novice English teachers. In a word, we hope this study can provide some positive guidance for beginner English teachers' identity construction research, so that novice English teachers can successfully embark on the road of English education and teaching.

APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

- 1) Please introduce yourself briefly.
- 2) Please talk about your personal growth experiences and share some memorable childhood stories.
- 3) When did you get the idea of becoming a teacher?
- 4) What are the reasons for choosing the profession of teaching? (From family factors, personal factors, and other factors)
- 5) Who is the teacher and has the most significant influence on you in your student life? How did he/she influence you?
- 6) What do you think a good English teacher should be?
- 7) How do you feel when you know that you will do an internship?
- 8) What is the ideal classroom and students in your mind?
- 9) What kind of teacher do you want to be?
- 10) What kind of tasks do you take on in the internship school?
- 11) What do you think of the working atmosphere of your school?
- 12) What changes have you made in your mental state before the internship?
- 13) Since when did you realize that you are like a teacher?
- 14) How is your relationship with students? What kind of teacher do they think you are?
- 15) What impressed you during the internship?
- 16) What difficulties did you encounter during the internship? How did you overcome it?
- 17) What exciting things happened in your class? What do you think is the most essential thing in classroom teaching?

- 18) What kind of teaching requirements does your internship school have for you? Did you do as require? Why?
- 19) What is the relationship with other teachers in the internship school? How do they affect you?
- 20) What do you find the teacher like after the internship? Why?
- 21) What kind of teacher do you want to be now?
- 22) What qualities do you think a teacher is a good teacher? What position does subject knowledge occupy in it?
- 23) What expectations and requirements do students have for you during the whole internship? How did you handle it? Can you give some unforgettable examples?
- 24) In the internship process, what aspects do you get job satisfaction, and what aspects do you want to work hard to improve job satisfaction in the future?
- 25) What style or type of teacher do you think you are now, and how were you different before and after your internship?
- 26) Please talk about the significance or influence of the internship on you.
- 27) What do you think of English teachers? Do you feel a sense of belonging now?

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摘要: 为全面深入了解学科教学(英语)教育硕士研究生的教师身份建构以及教育实习对职前教师信念发展的作用,本研究以某高校2名学科教学(英语)专业研究生为主要研究对象,通过反思日志和访谈相结合的方式展开调查。本文揭示了职前教师在实习期建构教师身份的过程,并在此基础上进一步探讨了影响其身份建构的主要因素。本研究发现两位研究对象在教学实习期间的发展都经历了四个阶段,此外内部因素(认知能力、职业道德、人际沟通、自我评价、职业发展动机)和外部因素(工作环境、导师指导)对其教师身份建构产生了积极影响。

关键词: 新手教师,身份建构,教师专业发展,案例研究