

## A Grounded Theory of Indonesian English Teacher Educators' Professional and Identity Development in a Blended Professional Development Community

Faishal Zakaria

Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia

Email: [faishalzakaria.ftk@ar-raniry.ac.id](mailto:faishalzakaria.ftk@ar-raniry.ac.id)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore engagement that shows evidence of the professional development of Indonesian English language teacher educators converging in a blended learning community pseudonymously called the PL community. Further, the study seeks to explore how professional identities, which are also part of the professional development of teachers and teacher educators, are negotiated and claimed. The data was collected through (1) participant observation (participation in Facebook discussions), (2) interviews, and (3) documents (e.g., Facebook interactions or dialogs, workshop materials, or published papers). Grounded theory was used to analyze the data and to theorize emerging themes. Here, three layers of coding (open, axial, and selective) were done. Data analysis suggests that, by actively interacting in the PL community, members experience professional development activities, particularly in teaching, research, and publication. How professional identities were negotiated and claimed was also discussed.

**Keywords:** *English teachers; blended learning; grounded theory; identity development; professional development.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Much research and literature have focused on teachers' professional development (e.g., Crandall & Christison, 2016; Elsheikh, 2016; Mokko & Pawan, 2021; Yumarnamto, 2017) and it has been commonly agreed that professional development (PD) has been and will be constantly needed by teachers (Johnson, 2015; Johnson & Golombek, 2016; Pawan et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers are prompted to pursue PD. Professional teachers or educators from various contexts can choose to be involved in many PD activities such as professional conferences, professional learning communities, workshops, teacher study groups, teacher research groups, and many others. Here, it is paramount to explore further how professional teachers continuously develop and sustain such development while in the profession.

Contemporary internet and information technologies and infrastructures have allowed teachers and educators to continue to be involved in PD activities without leaving their jobs or attending in-person PD events. For example, teachers can continue developing by participating in virtual learning communities (Hollins-Alexander, 2013) or learning through various blended learning approaches. Blended learning (a combination of online and face-to-face learning) remains relevant as it could balance in-person and online teaching strategies (Bouilheres et al., 2020).

In this sense, some Indonesian EFL teachers and EFL teacher educators have joined the bandwagon and participated in an informal blended professional development community by meeting face-to-face over scheduled workshops and continuing to discuss through a Facebook group or other social media groups on a daily basis. This present study focuses on such a community. The community is deemed informal because membership in such communities is voluntary. In such a community, teachers can also be learners. For instance, teachers can learn from and share in these blended communities. However, the members usually refer to members who have expertise in certain topics whenever they encounter something new and puzzling. In this sense, Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) assert that "effective professional development involves teachers both as learners and as teachers and allows them to struggle with uncertainties that accompany each role" (p. 82).

A few studies have indeed focused on the teacher professional development through various blended learning means. For instance, Aritonang (2016) and Widodo and Riandi (2013) found that blended learning is viable for teacher professional development. However, limited studies have focused on English language teacher educators involved in informal blended professional development communities in Indonesia. Thus, we still do not know much about the contributions of informal

blended professional learning communities to Indonesian English language teacher educators' professional development. It is also not fully clear how active participation in such communities results in continued development. We also still lack knowledge of whether their professional development will result in their identity development. Therefore, this study attempts to answer the following research questions: how does active participation in a blended professional learning community contribute to Indonesian English teacher educators' professional development and identity development?

This study aims to explore engagements that show evidence of the professional development of members in an Indonesian blended professional learning community called the PL community (a pseudonym). Further, the study aims to seek instances of professional identities and agency in these engagements, changes to which also contribute to teacher development.

### **Professional Development**

Understandably, there might not be a single agreed-upon definition of professional development. For instance, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) assert that, for a PD activity to be effective, it should be "structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes" (p. v). Likewise, Richardson and

Maggioli (2018) also agree that PD should improve students' learning outcomes. Therefore, we can conclude that teacher PD can come in any form as long as it results in better teaching practices and student learning.

As has been said, PD can simply happen in many kinds of formal and informal training, conferences, workshops, face-to-face, online, and blended courses, professional learning communities, or in any other kind of professional learning. Such professional development activities aim to help teachers develop and improve their professional knowledge, competence, pedagogic skills, and professional identity and agency. In addition, continued PD would usually be positive for teachers' professional identity development (Trent 2017; Yazan 2018), which usually results in their professional agency and agentic acts (Kayi-Aydar, 2017; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). Here, it can be concluded that when teachers showcase their professional identities, they enact their professional agency.

A professional identity and agency will potentially be manifested in professional conduct. In this regard, Tao and Gao (2017) assert that "teacher identity mediates and shapes the practice of teacher identity particularly manifested in their classroom practices ..." (p. 347). In this regard, it is paramount to understand how teachers claim, construct, or negotiate their professional identities because this could

shed light on how they learn and develop professionally.

Over the past several decades, we have seen a growing amount of literature on teacher professional development (e.g., Afshar & Doosti, 2022; Crandall and Christison, 2016; Elsheikh, 2016; Johnson & Golombek, 2002, 2011; Johnston, Pawan, & Mahan-Taylor, 2004; Sadeghi & Richards, 2021; Yumarnamto, 2017). The research on teacher professional development is of course, very diverse. Avalos (2011), for example, surveys the topic of teacher professional development in research articles published in the *Teaching and Teacher Education Journal* from 2000-2010. She concludes that there were at least three general research themes on teacher professional development. The themes are:

- a. The learning of practicing teachers: how they learn, what they bring to their learning efforts, and how these efforts are reflected in changes in cognition, beliefs, and practices.
- b. The embedded or situated nature of teacher professional learning and development: within the school environment and its culture, and with how educational systems and policies affect their work lives.
- c. The role of mediations in the quality of their learning: external facilitation of learning processes provided, for example, by school-university/researchers collaboration or by other teachers as collaborators, informal and teacher-

formal networking, and the use of specific teaching tools as sources for self-analysis and change (p.13).

Also, Crandall and Christison (2016) pinpoint “the areas of research in English language teacher education and professional development” (p.6) since the 1990s. The areas of research are:

1. Language teacher cognition, teacher expertise, and novice teacher development.
2. Teacher identity, globalization, and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs).
3. Reflection and reflection teaching.
4. Classroom research, action research, and teacher research.
5. Language teacher learning, collaboration, communities of practices (CoPs), and professional learning communities (PLCs).

Regarding the diverse nature of teacher professional development, Avalos (2011) argues that teacher PD is a “complex process, which requires cognitive and emotional of teachers individually and collectively ...” (p. 10). This indicates the importance of teacher collaboration in teacher professional development. Teacher collaboration “enables teachers to learn together through a process of increasing participation” (Crandall & Christison, 2016, pp. 17-18). Thus, it makes sense that many teachers and teacher educators nowadays engage in various CoPs or PLCs.

In this sense, Wenger (1998a, 1998b) has long asserted that participation in a CoP is possible because teachers have mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. With such commonality, CoP members would usually remain active. Current internet technologies allow online and blended communities to be easily formed. For example, teachers can now join online CoPs because studies have also shown the positive contributions of online CoPs on teacher professional learning/development (e.g., Cho, 2016; Hou, 2015), or they can choose to participate in blended CoPs.

### **Blended Learning**

The notion of blended learning is not new, and it has lately seemed to be a popular type of learning involving face-to-face and online learning. At least, we can perceive that blended learning allows students and teachers to experience the flexibility of online learning and to enjoy the communicative aspects of face-to-face interactions (Garone et al., 2022). A significant number of research studies have scrutinized the benefits of blended learning (as compared to pure traditional face-to-face learning).

Despite concerns about the potential downsides of blended learning, some empirical research (e.g., Gecer & Dag, 2012; Bloemer & Swan, 2014; Menggo & Darong, 2022; Collopy & Arnold, 2009; Voegele, 2014; Vaughan, et al., 2014) has suggested some positive effects of blended learning

on students, teachers, and or institutions. Here, teachers, trainers, and students might have all sorts of reasons for wanting to combine both face-to-face and online learning. Long before the notion of blended learning was ubiquitous, Graham (2006) has asserted that there are at least three reasons why people pick blended learning. Blended learning is believed to help improve pedagogy (e.g., there will be more active learning strategies), increase access and flexibility (e.g., students can pick flexible learning options), and increase cost-effectiveness (e.g., more audience can be reached with much lower cost).

Studies have also shown that blended learning potentially promotes teachers' development (e.g., Evans et al., 2019; Phillipsen, 2019). A study by Collopy and Arnold (2009), for example, suggests that face-to-face learning promotes team development, team commitment, accountability, and content processing, while the online learning environment promotes face-to-face learning by providing more time for teacher candidates to process, think, and build additional conversations beyond their class time. Similarly, Lord and Lomicka's (2008) study suggests that blended learning is able to promote the development of a strong sense of community among teachers. This may mean that it is very likely that teachers can possibly create and sustain active engagement in learning communities through face-to-face and online means (i.e. blended learning communities). With such

active engagement, teachers will likely be involved in active knowledge-sharing activities and discussions, potentially resulting in teacher development.

Again, through their active engagement in blended professional communities of practice (CoP), teachers with common interests can, for example, serve as a platform for advancing pedagogical knowledge, teaching and research skills (or ideas), and enhancing opportunities for academic authorship and publications. This is possible as the community members can exchange resources and engage in various knowledge-sharing and knowledge-giving activities. In this sense, Tseng and Kuo (2014) contend that “the development of online and offline social relationships among professional CoP members may help them to obtain potential resources and reliable support through their social network” (p.44).

### **Identity**

Many have asserted that teacher identity is one of the most important aspects of classroom practice (Alsup, 2006; Davey, 2013; Tsui, 2007; Zacharias, 2010). Further, the literature has indicated that teacher identity is crucial in teacher education because its construction is related to PD (Pishghadam et al., 2022; Zhang & Wang, 2022). In addition, when teachers are aware of the identities they bring into the classroom, they will be aware of their contributions to the teaching-

learning process (Schutz et al., 2018; Zacharias, 2010). In this sense, it has been argued that teacher identity is not a stand-alone professional aspect but rather a combination of personal aspects of self and professional ones (Alsup, 2006). Also, teacher identities should be viewed as something that is not static but fluid depending on the context (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Thus, it is interesting to learn how teachers negotiate their “personal ideologies and perceived professional expectations” (Alsup, 2006) as the teachers construct their identities and make sense of what it means to do or become teachers in their particular contexts.

There have been numerous studies on this issue, and teacher identity will continue to be researched as it has been a popular topic for the last 20 years (Zhang & Wang, 2022). Elsheikh (2016) studies how four Sudanese EFL preservice teachers construct their professional identities discursively. Interestingly, the findings reveal that only two of these four preservice teachers aspire to be English teachers. Sociopolitical and economic discourses influence the preservice teachers’ views of their identities in their context. Elsheikh argues that “the participants’ discursive constructions and experiences of teaching impacted how they view themselves as future teachers or professionals”. In other words, these preservice teachers built and claim their

identities based on different discourses around them.

As professionals, it is understandable if teachers discursively construct and negotiate certain professional identities. The question is then, what professional identities are. There might not be easy and clear-cut answers. Because the term *professional* can be problematized and is open to a wide of range of interpretations (Servage, 2009), there is no single agreed-upon definition for the notion of professional identity. To define professional identity, Davey (2013) draws on the perspectives of psychological, sociocultural, and post-structural theories of identity and social identity. He writes that professional identity is "the valued professional self" and he proposes that we take this viewpoint when examining the professional identity of teachers as "a distinctive professional group." Davey argues that we need to try to go "beyond stories" told by teachers to better understand their professional identity.

Many scholars have addressed the issues of teacher identity formations. For example, over a decade ago, Devos (2010) discussed the effects of the Teacher Mentoring and Induction Program on the discursive construction of professional identities of novice teachers in Victoria, Australia. Devos particularly pays attention to how the mentoring program forms the construction of "new teacher identity" as the novice teachers move from university to teaching setting. According

to Devos, every new teacher teaching in Victorian schools was required to participate in the mentoring and induction program, or else they may not continue working. Even though the mentoring and induction program is gate-keeping, Devos does not challenge such a program but rather studies how the program shapes the ways the novice teachers make sense of their new profession. What Devos finds here invokes the notion of the fluidity of teacher identity (i.e., contextual circumstances very much influence how identity is negotiated and claimed).

Also, Trent (2010) reports and discusses the findings of a qualitative study that explores the discursive construction of identities of six preservice English teachers in Hong Kong. According to Trent, many preservice teachers regard their professional identities as "rigid" in nature (such as the universal depiction of "good" teachers). Trent challenges the notion of the universal depiction of a good teacher because meanings can have multiple interpretations and be contested. Also, in this study, Trent adopts Fairclough's (2003) framework for discourse analysis to understand the discursive construction of identities of Hong Kong preservice English teachers. By drawing on Fairclough's framework, the researcher asserts that one's commitment to something relates to how one identifies oneself. As per the linguistic discourse analysis tool, such commitment can be seen through modality

(modal verb usage) and evaluation (usage of “good” or “bad”).

This qualitative study involves six preservice English teachers (ethnic Chinese-speaking Cantonese). The research participants were individually interviewed through a semi-structured interview. Trent claims that his interviews adopted a narrative approach with which he tried to see the connection between the preservice teachers’ stories and experiences with their development of professionalism. According to the researcher, the research data suggests that the six preservice English teachers held “rigid” views on what makes someone a good or bad teacher and the kinds of teaching approaches they want to adapt or avoid (traditional and modern approaches). The participants nonetheless had opportunities to challenge their perceptions and reflect on the construction of their identities.

In another qualitative study, Trent and Lim (2010) explore the experiences of two groups of secondary English teachers who got involved in school-university partnerships in the context of Hong Kong. By drawing on a number of theories of identity construction, such as Varghese et al.’s (2005) identity-in-discourse and identity-in-practice, Wenger’s (1998) negotiation of meanings, and Fairclough’s (2003) model of identity formation, this case study showcases how the teachers’ identity construction was shaped by their participation in the school-university partnerships.

In this study, six teachers (three teachers from each participating schools) were invited to participate in a semi-structured focus group interview. The interview was audiotaped and transcribed. The teachers from both schools were involved in the school-university partnership because this was deemed important by education authorities in Hong Kong as an effort to reform its education. It is interesting to see how teachers from both schools have different responses towards their involvement in the school-university partnerships. Some teachers positively welcome the “assistance” provided by the consultants sent by the university but others display some resistance to these consultants.

This makes much sense due to the imbalanced power relation of such a partnership. Trent and Lim say that school-university partnerships “was an important source of teacher identity construction because it allowed ... teachers to experience and display competencies valued within different contexts ...” (p.1616). All in all, the participants clearly indicate that their participation in the partnership is very much related to constructing their identities. Therefore, as Alsup (2006) has long argued that teachers would usually negotiate their personal beliefs and professional expectations, I think exploring how these teachers construct their professional identities and make sense of doing or becoming teachers



in their teaching contexts is very interesting.

## **METHOD**

This qualitative study emphasizes exploring the nature of a particular socio-institutional phenomenon – i.e., the nature of dialogic interactions implemented by the in-service teachers/teacher educators in their Facebook discussions and face-to-face workshops. The grounded theory approach was particularly applied. According to Charmaz (2006), the grounded theory method consists of “systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves”. As described by Charmaz, the data was the footing of my theory and my analyses of these data would support the production of the concepts I was trying to develop. It can be said that the goal of the grounded theory approach is to “develop an explanatory theory of basic social processes, studied in the environments in which they take place” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). In other words, my data analyses helped me to understand and theorize the professional development experiences of Indonesian English teacher educators as they actively engage in the PL community.

### **Participants**

All members of the PL are the participants of this research (48 members in total). These members are either in-service

English teachers or teacher educators from various educational institutions throughout Indonesia. All the PL members have at least Master’s degrees and have been in the profession for a number of years. Some members are working towards their doctoral degrees, and only a few have earned them in ELT or related fields.

Meanwhile, the founder of PL, Dr. Hendri (a pseudonym), earned his Ph.D. in Australia in 2015. During this research, he was serving as a Professor in Mainland China. Dr. Hendri has been a teacher and teacher educator since 2001. His professional expertise and research areas lie in language curriculum and material development, methodology in TESOL, Teaching ESP, teacher professional development, and systemic functional linguistics in language education. He has extensively published his scholarly works in these areas. Since 2009, he has trained and mentored a wide range of teachers and teacher educators throughout Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and Mainland China.

### **Data Collection**

For this research, the empirical data were collected through (1) participant observation (the data would be the Facebook group interactions/discussions among members) and (2) interviews.

I have decided to particularly observe and analyze interactions and discussions happening during the month of November 2017. Because PL members can discuss unlimited topics when online on

Facebook, I decided to capture only important discussions (the ones that would directly correlate to the focus of this research). I have more than 600 screenshots, which I later categorized based on the emerging themes during the data analysis process. These screenshots were deemed the main data sources, depicting interactions between members and the group founder (leader).

As for the interviews, for this project, I interviewed particularly the founder of the PL. This founder also serves as the expert member as well as the administrator of the group. In general, this interview aims “to gain knowledge of a person’s perceptions, feelings, or emotions, or to study complex individual or social behavior” (Krathwohl, 2009). For this project, I only aim to further understand the contributions of membership and engagement in the PL towards professional and identity development of the members from the perspectives of the PL founder and expert members. Later, I would contrast this with participants’ interaction in the community.

I initially intended to do a semi-structured interview with some pre-assigned questions through Skype and I would audiotape the interview process. Because of my participant’s busy schedule, we could not find a time that would work for both of us. My participant and I finally decided to do an email interview instead. In total, I engaged in two emailed interviews with the participants. The

second interview helped me confirm some unclear or vague meanings in the initial written responses provided by the participant.

While there are debates about whether face-to-face interviewing is better than email interviewing, some have resorted to email interviews when face-to-face interviews are not possible. For instance, Cook (2012) conducted in-depth interviews with 26 women diagnosed with viral sexually transmitted diseases. She concludes that, despite its limitations, email interviewing enables the researcher to provide more reflexive responses and rich data collection.

Similarly, Krathwohl (2009) also asserts that face-to-face and telephone interviews may yield more spontaneous responses, but email and instant messaging interviews would be “less intrusive and self-transcribing”. Thus, email interviews can be more comfortable for the interviewees and less costly for the interviewers. In this regard, I emailed my initial questions to the group founder and sent a few instant messages through Facebook when I needed further confirmation of his previous answers. This whole process could actually allow me to obtain a deeper understanding of his written answers so I could limit my biased interpretations.

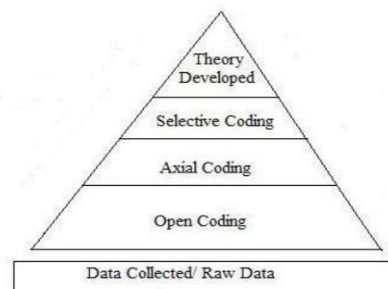
### **Data Analysis**

From a grounded theory perspective, I deem the data collection

phase to be the start of the data analysis (Backman & Kyngas, 1999). Here, I did multiple comparisons of codes. In general, as suggested by Starks and Trinidad (2007), the data analysis happened in three stages: “open coding (examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data); axial coding (reassembling data into groupings based on relationships and patterns within and among the categories identified in the data); and selective coding (identifying and describing the central phenomenon, or “core category” in the data”.

I could go through such activities back and forward (or until the saturation level is reached) to allow for an emergent, careful, and detailed data analysis. Thus, as seen through grounded theory interpretive analysis, empirical evidence can be connected to relevant theories and previous studies in such a way that the findings can be interpreted whether they support, complement, or expand the existing theories and previous empirical.

Below, a simple pyramid that I adapted from Mullanpudi and Tadipharti (2012) explains my data analysis process. The theories (or perhaps findings) are developed after the three-stage coding process is completed or when the saturation process is reached (starting from open coding up to the developed theory).



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the data were so rich that they could be interpreted differently, I, therefore, sought to analyze them from the perspectives of my research questions to help me focus. After I came up with many codes during the open-coding phase, I did multiple comparisons of codes during the second of the data analysis. After several comparisons, I finally arrived at a saturation point where some general themes consistently appear. I argue that these themes can help theorize the contributions of the PL towards its members’ professional development.

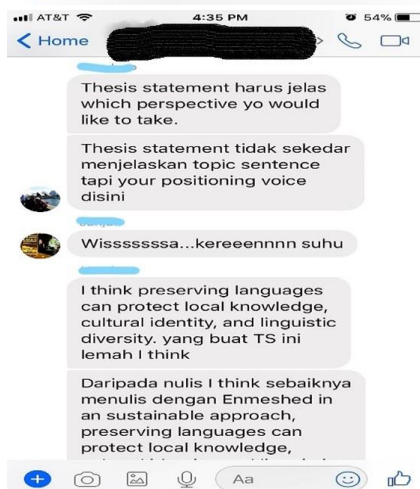
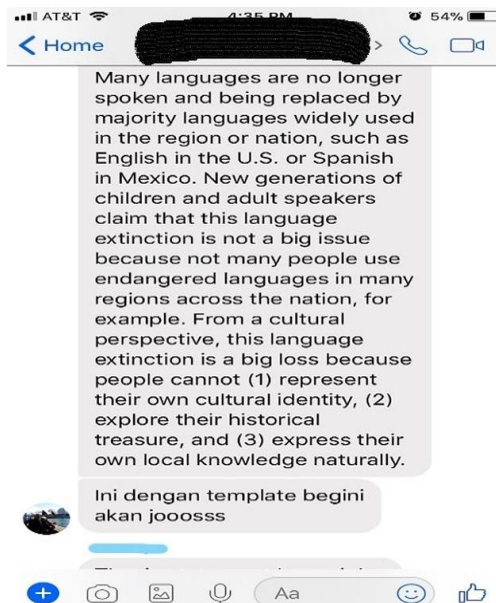
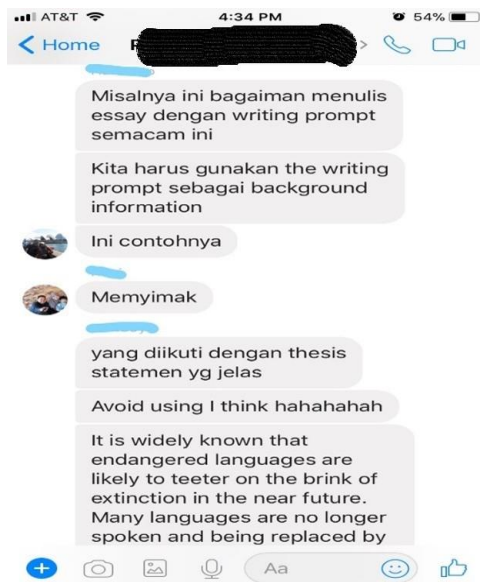
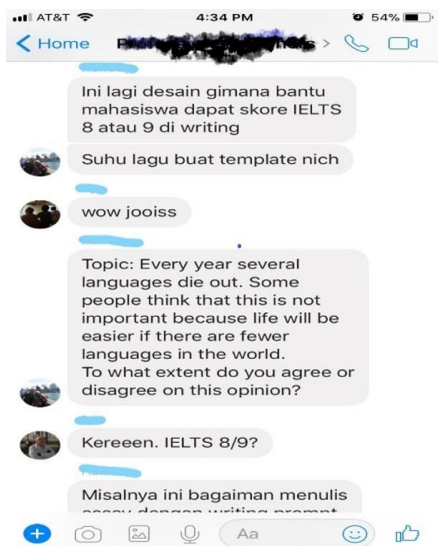
### Types of PD Experiences in the PL

When I interviewed Dr. Hendri, the founder and expert member of the PL, he claimed that PL provides a lot of professional development (PD) opportunities for the Indonesian English teachers who join the PL. The data indeed suggest that the PL community provides its members with a wide range of PD opportunities. In general, the findings indicate that the participants acquired and applied new knowledge in new ways. For PL members, the types of PD experiences

include *pedagogical knowledge and skills, scholarly publishing, and research*. These would exemplify how the community members obtain and apply new knowledge through their active engagement in the community:

### *Pedagogical knowledge and skills*

PL members engage in several discussions a day. The topic can range from teaching to personal matters. The first professional learning/development engagement the data revealed was many of the discussions pertaining to pedagogical skills. The members were willing to share their expertise and resources which could be an evidence of PD For example, in the following screenshots, we can see how the members discuss issues related to teaching.



In the first screenshot, the PL expert member, Dr. Hendri, explains that he is preparing a writing template (writing prompt) that could help students improve their writing score in the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) test. When he says, "suhu lagi bikin template nih" (*I am preparing a template now*), a PL member jumps in and says, "Wow super joss" (*Wow, this is great*) indicating that she is excited to hear. Dr. Hendri then provides a sample prompt in English, another member jumps in and says, "keren, IELTS 8/9?" (*this is cool, IELTS 8/9?*). Although this member agrees with the previous member that the prompt is great, he seems to be wondering how such a prompt can help students achieve a band score of 8 or 9 for the writing section on the IELTS test. A score of 8 or 9 is considered very high. Dr. Hendri understands the member's doubt so he provides an additional explanation (the second screenshot) when he says, "kita harus menggunakan the writing prompt sebagai background information" (*we have to use the writing prompt as the background information*) and ("avoid using "I think"). At this point, a different member joins in and indicates that she is paying attention to Dr. Hendri's explanation when she says, "menyimak" (*I am listening*). In the third screenshot, Dr. Hendri provides a complete writing template for class use. Finally, in the fourth screenshot above, Dr. Hendri explains the structure of the

writing template. He says, "thesis statement harus jelas, which perspective you would like to take. Thesis statement tidak sekedar menjelaskan topic sentence tapi your positioning voice disini" (*The thesis statement should be clear (regarding) which perspective you would like to take. The statement should explain not only your topic sentence but also your positioning and voice here*). Here, a different member jumps in and he says, "wissss.. keren suhu" (*wow, this is great, teacher/master*) to indicate his amazement. Interestingly, this member addressed Dr. Hendri with the word "suhu." In Indonesian, the word *suhu* is usually used to name a master martial art artist with many students. The skill levels of such are considered very high. Here, Dr. Hendri possesses high skills and knowledge regarding ELT.

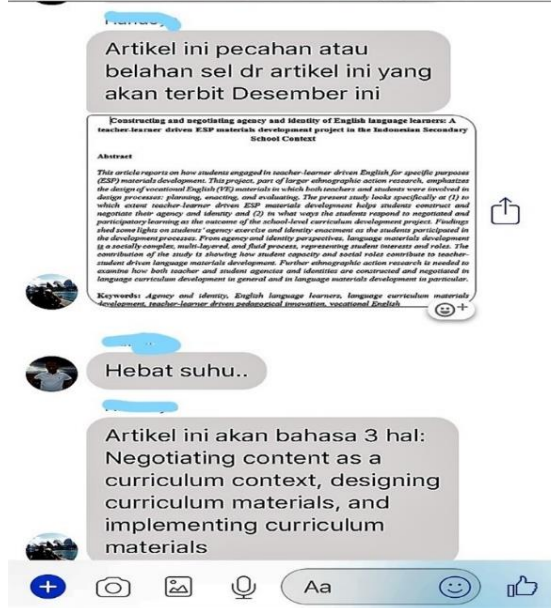
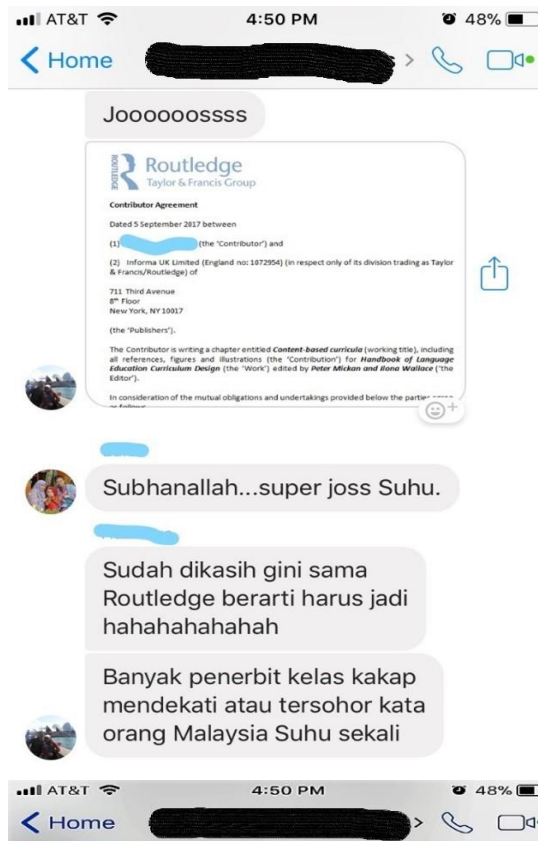
Although the knowledge sharing in the above interaction seems one-way, the members' responses indicate they could learn new things from their engagement and participation in the PL. Further, the interaction above also implied that the teaching strategy shared by Dr. Hendri helps the members improve their pedagogical skills and knowledge. There is also an indication that the members try to negotiate whenever new knowledge is introduced to them thus the interaction seems more lively and active.

The above interaction also showcases identity construction and possible identity shift as well. When a member says, "wissss... keren suhu" (*wow,*

*this is cool, master*), he not only constructs Dr. Hendri as a high-level esteemed teacher/master but also positions himself as a novice (newbie). This is interesting because all members are English teachers but they adhere to the construct that positions Dr. Hendri as an expert member from whom the group members can learn. Here, that particular member shifts his identity from a teacher to a learner within the context of the PL. Such an identity switch could be understood as the member's willingness to learn (i.e., continued learning, eventually leading to PD).

### *Scholarly publishing*

Topics of the discussions in the PL also include those on scholarly publishing. Publishing in international peer-reviewed journals is always promoted within the PL. Dr. Henri would usually "provoke" the members to write scholarly manuscripts and send them to reputable peer-reviewed journals. Oftentimes, he displays his own scholarly published works or the co-authored works that he and PL member(s) have successfully published to encourage other members to follow suit. Quite often, he challenges the members to co-author with him. In the following screenshots, we can see a sample of discussion in regard to academic publishing.





The first screenshot shows how Dr. Hendri “shows off” his contributor agreement with Routledge, indicating that top publishers like Routledge recognized his expertise. In the second screenshot, he briefly discusses his article that is going to be published in December 2017. He says the

particular article will discuss three things: “negotiating contents as a curriculum context, designing curriculum materials, and implementing curriculum materials.” Two members jump in and praise Dr. Hendri’s move by saying “*Subhanallah.. super joss suhu*” (*The God is perfect... it is superb, master*) and “*hebat suhu*” (*it’s great, master*) but, in the third screenshot, one member tries to bring Dr. Hendri’s attention to Canagarajah’s *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing* book which highlights all sorts of discrimination or difficulties writers from the periphery face when trying to publish their works with top publishers in the West (the center).

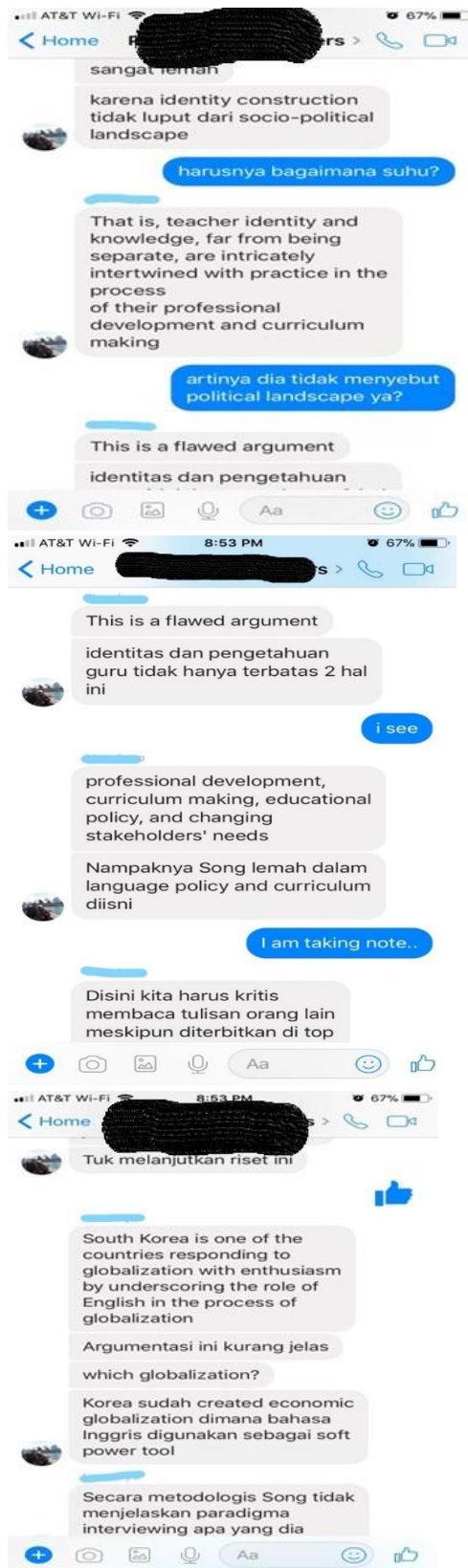
It seems that this particular PL member wants to negotiate the construct of publishing with top publishers by bringing in another scholarly work by a well-known author to pinpoint that publishing with top publishers is not free from issues. This person’s act of negotiation could be interpreted as his growing confidence to challenge Dr. Hendri, which can simply indicate an instance of development. Here, Dr. Hendri seems to acknowledge this in the fourth screenshot but also offer his view on the issue when he says, “*saya sepakat dengan Suresh. Namun dalam dunia publikasi saat ini, konsep beliau tidak berlaku karena banyak jurnal empower emerging writers. Banyak editor saat ini non-Anglophone scholars,*” (*I agree with Suresh. But, in contemporary publication world, his concept is not applicable because many journals are now empowering emerging writers. Many editors are now non-*

*Anglophone scholars*). The member who brings up Canagarajah's work into the discussion apparently accepts Dr. Hendri's rationale, but he also opines why Canagarajah's ideas might not be relevant anymore. The member says, "*betul suhu, konteks sudah berbeda. Canagarajah berbicara masalah ini belasan tahun yang lalu*" (you are right, master. The context is now different. Canagarajah talks about this issues dozen of years ago).

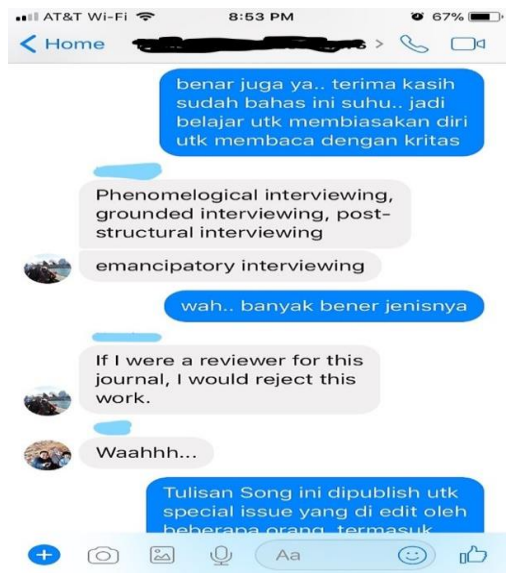
In the above interaction, we can observe how Dr. Hendri constructed his identity as a capable writer, enabling him to achieve an agency to publish with reputable and top publishers. In fact, members of PL support this construct. It is also interesting to examine how the member who discusses Canagarajah's work constructs his identity. Although he still positions himself as a "learner" (e.g., he also addresses Dr. Hendri as a *suhu*), he tries to engage in the discussion by bringing a well-known author's work to support his point. This can be deemed the member's effort to exert his identity as a learner who uses prior knowledge to negotiate new ideas.

### **Research**

Furthermore, PL members are usually discussing topics related to doing good research (including data collection and analysis). For example, we can observe how PL members criticize a research article on identity construction. This article was published in the TESOL Quarterly Journal.







In the first and second screenshots, Dr. Hendri invites PL members to learn to critically read ideas presented in scholarly works of established authors thus nothing is taken for granted. Here, Dr. Hendri quotes an original sentence that reads, "That is, teacher identity and knowledge, far from being separate, are intricately intertwined with practice in the process of their professional development and curriculum" to give an example of how a flaw in an argument can be found. In this sense, he says, "*this is a flawed argument. Identitas dan pengetahuan guru tidak terbatas pada 2 hal itu*" (*this is a flawed argument. Teacher identities and knowledge are limited to those two things*). One member seems to be paying to this discussion as he says, "I see." Dr. Hendri further explains why the author's argument is flawed. He argues that teacher identity and knowledge also include professional development, curriculum making, educational policy, and changing stakeholders' needs. The

same member shows his interest in the discussion when he says, "I am taking note."

Dr. Henry shows how readers can criticize a research methodology in the third and fourth screenshot. He particularly says, "*Secara methodologis, Song tidak menjelaskan paradigm interviewing apa yang dia pakai*" (*methodologically, Song did not explain the interviewing paradigm that she used*). PL members seem to understand this is important when reading a scholarly work. For example, one member says, "*benar juga ya, terima kasih sudah bahas ini suhu. Jadi belajar untuk membiasakan diri untuk membaca dengan kritis*" (*You are right. Thank you for discussing this, master. This reminds me to learn to read critically*). Dr. Henry then further discusses the kinds of interviewing paradigms:

*"phenomenological interviewing, grounded interviewing, post-structural interviewing, and emancipatory interviewing."* Because he believes there were so many flaws in the published work, Dr. Henry boldly says, "If I were a reviewer for this journal, I would reject this work." A member indicates her surprise by saying "*waahh..*" (*whew*); she might be surprised that the original article was published by a top-notch journal in the field of TESOL but Dr. Hendri can still criticize it.

From the above interactions, we witness how Dr. Hendri still acts as an expert member, and others merely act as novices in the context of the discussed topic. Although PL members are all

colleagues, they can position themselves as either “expert” or “novice” depending on context (Vickers, 2010). Jacoby and Gonzalez (1991) explain that the status of expert or novice can potentially change and be negotiated as members continue to interact; an “expert”, who identifies as the more knowing person at a time, can exert their “novice” status where they see it fits later. This status is established and constructed by both sides. Jacoby and Gonzales assert that learning is “not a mental event internal to an individual but as social achievement within complex framework of community, goals, tools, and activities”. Also, Jacoby and Gonzales argue that an expert is not always perceived as “all-knowing” but temporarily “more knowing”, while a novice can be positioned as the one who has “less knowing,” instead of “not-knowing”. In this regard, Dr. Henry constructs his identities as an expert, who knows and has advanced knowledge about teaching, research, and publication, it does not mean that he has “all the knowing” but perhaps he temporarily knows more all other members of the PL currently possess “less knowing.” In my interview with Dr. Hendri, he argues that he wanted to engage PL members in scholarly discussion regarding teaching, research, and publication because he believes that Indonesian English teachers or educators need to develop in these areas. Even though the members see him as the *suhu*

(master), Dr. Henry still positions himself as a co-learner.

The interactions above also indicate that identity is being co-constructed among PL members. Jacoby’s and Ochs’ (1995) concept of co-construction can perhaps explain this phenomenon as PL members play a role in creating meanings or their social identities within the context of the PL. Jacoby and Ochs (1995), however, also argue that co-construction will not happen to reach the same objective because co-construction “does not necessarily entail affiliative or supportive interactions”). Here, a disagreement between PL members can be a form of co-construction. Jacoby and Ochs (1995) then contend “everything is co-constructed through interactions ... to affirm that participants to interaction are not passive robots living out preprogrammed linguistic “rules”, discourse “conventions, or cultural prescriptions for social identity”. All in all, PL members involving in particular interactions will possibly be forced to participate actively to attain a “shared” understanding. This is true as not all PL members actively participate in every discussion on the PL Facebook group.

## CONCLUSIONS

The data reveals that the blended learning community like the PL community whose members have shared goals can potentially contribute to members’ professional development. In the context of PL, members have a lot of

opportunities to develop in terms of teaching, research, and publication although teacher professional development is not limited to these three areas. The PL founder has indeed projected three points as the key goals of PL, and the PL members seem to conform to such a projection. The data confirms that PL members can experience these three professional development activities. Elements of identity and agency shifts were also noticed.

Thus, the findings some possible contributions to the body of knowledge and research (i.e., the Second Language Teacher Education and research on teacher professional development) as they shed light on types of professional development experiences English teacher educators go through as they engage in blended professional learning communities and how such professional development experiences possibly contribute to their professional identities and agency. Here, blended communities can possibly help increase interaction among members beyond space and time constraints.

As this research only relies on interviews with the PL founders and data observation of interactions on the Facebook group, potential meanings might have been missed here. Therefore, in my future project, I would like to triangulate the data with multiple data sources, including observation of face-to-face interactions (i.e., in-person workshops). Also, I think interviewing some of the active members

will shed more light on how they perceive their engagement in the group and what such engagement means to their professional development as they teach in their unique contexts. I would like to revisit my current analyses to learn more. I might have overlooked some important themes.

Admittedly, my personal biases could potentially be present during the processes of data collection and data analysis. Such biases might have influenced my analysis, especially because I am also a member of the PL. It is therefore important to address reflexivity here (Jorgensen & Duncan, 2015). As a researcher, I tried to identify biases and pre-conceived beliefs and knowledge that could potentially influence my data analysis. For instance, as a member, I know that I can opine on the types of professional experiences that members go through, but I tried to approach the data with a blank mind by relying on what I saw emerging from the data.

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