Native speakerism as a source of agency-related critical incidents: Implications for non-native English teachers' professional identity construction☆

Fatemeh Ershadi [a], Mostafa Nazari [b,*], Milad Salimi Chegenie [c]

[a] Department of English Language and Literature, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran
[b] Department of English and Communication, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong
[c] Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

Despite the developments on the contributions of native speakerism (NS) for the professionalism of non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), little is known about how NS influences NNESTs' agency and identity construction. The present study draws on an ecological-poststructural lens and explores such a contribution through critical incidents that happened to 15 Iranian NNESTs. Data were collected from a questionnaire, narrative frames, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the data revealed three major themes: (1) native speakerism as a source of NNEST marginalization, (2) the role of school policymakers in NS-induced inequality, and (3) native speakerism as a source of pedagogy of doubt. The findings showed that NS not only serves as a discourse that transcends geographical borders to shape NNESTs' agency and identity, but institutional participants also add to the negative effects of NS on NNESTs' professional practice. The study concludes with implications for institutional policymakers and teacher educators to revisit their understanding of NS and the ripple effects that NS bears for NNESTs' agency and identity construction.

1. Introduction

Over the past decades, native speakerism (NS) has spanned the fields of TESOL and applied linguistics (Holiday, 2005; Lowe, 2020; Medgyes, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Rampton, 1990; Rivers, 2013). Knowledge from this progressively-expanding scholarship highlights the effects of NS on NNESTs' (non-native English-speaking teachers) professional practices, institutional memberships, and interpersonal communications with NESTs (native English-speaking teachers) (Aneja, 2017; Holliday, 2018; Llurda & Calvet-Terré, 2022). Relatedly, NS can significantly influence NNESTs' ability to show their potentials (i.e., agency) (Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018) because it can serve as a discourse that can extend to their professional work. However, the connection between NS and language teacher agency (LTA) is still under-explored. Moreover, as Kayi-Aydar (2015a, 2015b) earlier and Reeves (2022) and Younas et al. (2022) recently argued, teachers' agency is closely connected to the experiences that remain in their mindset and serve as lenses through which teachers (re)interpret their performances and identity construction processes. Such experiences are well-known as critical incidents

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(CIs), which have been regarded as useful narratives featuring teachers' identities and agencies (e.g., Authors, 2021; Sisson, 2016).

Despite the research developments on NS, language teacher identity and agency, and CIs, the intersection among these constructs has been under-researched. The central argument that justifies such research is that the literature of NS has attested to the discursive role that NS could play in NNESTs' professional practices and experiences (Llurda & Calvet-Terré, 2022). Furthermore, exploring how NS shapes NNESTs' agency and identity helps (1) teachers to understand how discourses (here specifically NS) come to feature in institutional work and shape their professionalism and (2) teacher educators to run professional development courses that enhance teachers' awareness of dealing with the negative effects of circulating discourses on their identities and agencies. In this regard, tapping NS through CIs unpacks teachers' experiences, and such exploration exposes how agencies and identities have featured in teachers' narratives. In this study, we draw on an ecological-poststructural lens and explore the role of NS (i.e., serving as a discourse influencing teachers' professionalism) in the context of Iranian NNESTs' agency-related CIs and the implications of such CIs for their professional identity construction. Thus, the study contributes to the literature by unpacking how NS transcends geographical boundaries (i.e., moving beyond the English-native countries) to result in the occurrence of agency-related CIs for Iranian teachers and how their identities are influenced by such CIs. In seeking this purpose, the study addresses the following questions.

1. How does native speakerism play a role in agency-related critical incidents that Iranian NNESTs experience?
2. How do such critical incidents contribute to the teachers' professional performance and professional identity development?

2. Literature review

2.1. Native speakerism and teacher professionalism

Holiday (2005) defined NS as an ideology that supports the superiority of native teachers/speakers as the best models of English because they represent a "Western culture" from which spring the ideals both of English and of teaching methodology (p. 6). This discursive and ideological dominance not only supports a particular vested interest in native speakers, but also promotes the so-called "native speaker" discourse in ELT (Aneja, 2017; Holiday, 2018; Llurda & Calvet-Terré, 2022; Medgyes, 1992; Phillipson, 1992). The prevalence of NS further privileges the native speaker status in regarding the west as a steward in which western individuals take on the role of caring for the non-west (Holliday, 2013).

As Holiday (2018) argued, the divide between natives and non-natives can have a huge multidirectional impact on the ideology of teachers, academics, students, and other members of the public regarding their legitimacy. In this sense, many NNESTs may see themselves as incomplete or deficit in their English proficiency due to not sounding like native speakers (Jenkins, 2009; Kamhi-Stein, 2004). Such a dominance of NS has continued its pernicious impacts on NNESTs' professional performances by casting a deterministic shadow over the characteristics of effective teaching, mostly in proficiency terms (Aneja, 2014; Fan & de Jong, 2019; Zacharias, 2019). The ramifications of such a divide between NESTs and NNESTs may also extend to identity construction in that NNESTs who identify themselves as multicompetent bilinguals or World Englishes speakers may experience a wide range of identity and emotional tensions (Cook, 1995; Jenkins, 2009; Pavlenko, 2003; Yazan, 2022).

Research on NNESTs' professional competencies, identity construction, and emotions has grown over the past decade (e.g., Cappaert & Wickens, 2022; Fan & de Jong, 2022; Li, 2022; Song, 2016; 2022; Yuan, 2019). For example, Yuan (2019) reviewed 22 studies of NNEST identity construction and identified three major themes of "(1) identity development through social engagement; (2) identity conflicts and struggle at intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual levels; and (3) identity crisis with teacher attrition" (p. 1). Relatedly, Song (2016) examined experiences of Korean NNESTs' negotiation of their non-native teacher identities when teaching returnee students from western countries by adopting an emotional lens. The findings revealed that NNESTs' identities were embodied in their emotional experiences of anxiety, vulnerability, and insecurities (also see Wernicke, 2018). Moreover, Ilieva and Ravindran (2018) discussed teacher identity and agency co-construction and the varied material effects of a TESOL program on international graduate students' possibilities to be agentive in their academic and professional contexts by tracing engagement with the native speaker ideology and tensions in reconciling teaching goals and professional contexts. Data analyses showed how engagement featured as a key component of the teachers' identity construction and agency enactment, as Haneda and Sherman (2016) also reported. However, how NS influences teacher agency is still in its embryonic stages and needs further attention.

2.2. Language teacher agency

Agency can be defined as "the capacity of people to act purposefully and reflectively on their world" (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013, p. 63). Such a perspective of agency situates the concept and its attendant agent in a sociocultural setting that interacts with a wide range of contextual-educational discourses (Authors, 2022; Ider, 2015; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b). Agency is thus "strongly connected to the contextual conditions within which it is achieved and not as merely a capacity or possession of the individual", which highlights the ecological nature of agency (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 197), a perspective we also adopt in this study. Indeed, considering agency as the capacity to impact systems (i.e., structural forces), Gourd (2015) added that to enact agency, teachers must be able to overcome the challenges ahead through pragmatic articulation and implementation of inclusive ideals in schools, which figures in the present study in relation to critical incidents, as detailed below.

Parallel with the growth of research on teacher agency in general education, research on LTA has witnessed a surge of interest in the last few years as a way to uncover the factors that contribute to teachers' professional sense-making and growth (Authors, 2021; 2022; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b; Mansouri & Nall, 2022; Reeves, 2022; Younas et al., 2022). Currently, several volumes have specifically

focused on LTA (e.g., System/79; Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019; Tao & Gao, 2021), which shows the increasing interest in the concept; relatedly, as Miller et al. (2018) argue, "applied linguistics researchers have become more interested in how language teacher agency can be understood, supported and promoted" (p. 2). Such a growth of attention is also rooted in the interdisciplinary nature of LTA in that researchers could study the concept in light of various theoretical standpoints, yet "[d]espite their varied conceptualizations of agency, researchers agree that agency involves doing things in the world" (Miller et al., 2018, p. 1).

Generally, LTA highlights several themes at the conceptual, empirical, and practical levels. First, agency usually provides teachers with a sense of autonomy that provides contributions to their practices and institutional membership (Authors, 2023; Vitanova, 2018; Tao & Gao, 2021). Second, agency is inextricably linked to identity formation as teachers' professional performance is strongly *related* to *the self-perceptions they construct over time* (Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b). Third, agency works concertedly with *beliefs shaped* by *teachers*' personal and professional backgrounds that may arise from their emotional experiences (Benesch, 2017, 2018; Haneda & Sherman, 2016; Miller & Gkonou, 2018). Fourth, agency is progressively context dependent and shapes teachers' professional performance and sense-making by being in constant synergy with contextual discourses, power relations, and institutional particularities (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b). Therefore, in the light of exercising agency, teachers both influence and are influenced by a number of contextual factors like institutional policies, sociocultural dynamics, and especially the teaching-learning cultures that play a crucial role in forming LTA and identity construction (Authors, 2022; Yazan & Lindahl, 2020). The discursive-cultural factor that is the focus of the present study and influences LTA is NS.

In her comprehensive discussion of LTA, Kayi-Aydar (2019) discussed three major conceptual standpoints in theorizing teacher agency in general and LTA in particular, namely, socio-cognitive, ecological, and poststructural (i.e., positioning) perspectives. These perspectives have also been discussed in Tao and Gao (2021) who add a fourth dimension to this conceptualization (i.e., sociocultural). Kayi-Aydar discusses the ecological nature of LTA, building on Priestly et al. (2012) who conceptualize agency as the "outcome of the interplay of iterational [past], practical-evaluative [present], and projective [future] dimensions" (p. 29). Our understanding of LTA in this study also aligns with the ecological perspective of LTA, but it also lays in the interplay between poststructural and ecological perspectives because we focus on how a discursive source of power (i.e., NS) comes to shape the historico-introspective-prospective nature of LTA. This conceptualization of LTA, thus, extends the discussion by capturing the ecological-poststructural nature of LTA, a point that has little been captured in previous studies.

Additionally, language teachers exercise agency to make decisions, influence, resist, or take a stand toward the circulating discourses and practices (Duff & Doherty, 2015; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). That is, teachers negotiate power asymmetries and hierarchies, constraints, conflicts, or dilemmas while exerting themselves "in terms of their desires, intentions, needs, and preferences" (Duff & Doherty, 2015, p. 55). Thus, LTA is aligned with understanding teachers' identities and what their sociocultural, linguistic, and pedagogical contexts look like (Ider, 2017). More specifically, one such sociocultural discourse that continues to dominate the TESOL field is the construct of NS (Aneja, 2016; Faez, 2011; Holliday, 2015) which defines NNESTs' professional lives, practices, and legitimacy who are classed as 'non-native' (Leonard, 2019).

Numerous studies have investigated LTA from various theoretical approaches across diverse sociocultural settings (Authors, 2022; 2023; Chen, 2022; Ider, 2015a; Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Ider, 2017; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b; Mansouri & Nall, 2022; Mufsid, 2018). For instance, Ider (2015) examined the identity (re)negotiations and agency of three pre-service teachers and found that although the teachers took on various, and sometimes conflicting, positional identities in relation to their social context, those positional identities had a crucial role in shaping their agency and emotional dynamics, a finding also reported by Kayi-Aydar (2015a, 2015b). In a similar vein, through classroom observations and interviews, Mufsid and Vella (2018) investigated the differential degrees of agency of two preschool teachers in Malta and found that factors such as teachers' background and language beliefs, the sociolinguistic context (national and local), as well as the school language policies influenced teachers' classroom agentive roles and emotional states. Furthermore, Authors (2023) reported how Iranian English language teachers' agency was significantly defined by the emotions that they experienced over time, and how such agentic and emotional experiences redefined their identities when contrasting institutional demands.

This body of knowledge reveals that agency is ecologically connected with teachers' socio-historical backgrounds and current professional performances. More specifically, agency could be immensely influenced by the critical occurrences that could redefine the way teachers approach certain pedagogical, institutional, and sociocultural particularities (see Authors, 2022; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b). One such occurrence is the critical happenings that could substantially influence teachers' professional performances and identities (Sisson, 2016), which is termed critical incidents (CIs), to which we now turn.

2.3. Teachers' critical incidents

The CI technique was initially projected by the Aviation Psychology Program of the US Air Force about 70 years ago in order to select and classify aircrews (Gkonou & Miller, 2020). This technique was later extended to the American Institute for Research. Brookfield (1995) defines CIs as natural occurrences that are evidently recollected and might happen in the class, outside it, or over teachers' professional career. Moreover, CIs can be ordinary happenings, yet what makes them critical is the transformative schema that they create in individuals' sense-making by changing their thought processes and practices (Farrell & Baecher, 2017; Tripp, 2011). Reflection over CIs can lead to a reconsideration of expectations, principles, and practices, which facilitates teachers' professional growth (Authors, 2021; Atai & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Hall & Townsend, 2017; Nejadghanbar, 2021).

The contextuality of CIs has been documented by numerous research studies (Authors, 2019; 2021, 2022; Chein, 2018; Nejadghanbar, 2021; Sisson, 2016). Drawing on the cultural model theory and positionality, Sisson (2016) explored the role of CIs in one teacher's (CeCe) identity and agency. The results indicated that CIs had influenced various personal and professional dimensions of

CeCe's identity and agency, including her worlds of home and school, and her agency in relation to curricular, interpersonal, and instructional aspects. Moreover, Chien (2018) explored six Taiwanese EFL student teachers' writing and discussion of CIs with their cooperating teacher. The results showed that student teachers learned four important lessons from this approach, which included individual learners' differences, classroom management strategies, instructional strategies, and solutions to incidents and reflection. In a similar vein, Authors (2022) explored the language teacher identity development process of 10 teachers before, during, and after a course by exploring the contributions of a Telegram-based professional development course framed around CI storying. The findings suggested that although CIs negatively influenced the teachers' agency and emotions before the course, participation in the course contributed to the teachers' enhanced agency and greater emotion regulation. The findings further revealed that emotion and agency are two significant identity aspects that are profoundly influenced by and influence CIs, and are in dialectic interaction with the sociocultural-educational dimensions of teachers' professional work. However, the potential of CIs and agency has little been *explicitly* addressed, a point that we explore in this study in relation to the discursive effect of NS on Iranian NNESTs' agency-related CIs.

2.4. Theorizing native/non-native speakerism, agency, and critical incidents

NS, LTA, and CIs are conceptually connected in significant ways. First, NS could function as a discourse that can traverse inter-contextually and inter-continentally to significantly define NNESTs' professional work, either in social (e.g., advertisement, media figuration, or public view) or educational (e.g., superiority, modelling effective teaching, or (il)legitimacy) representations, a point also emphasized by Wernicke (2018). Second, such a discourse could, thus, extend to the way teachers view the discourse itself and how it features in their professional work. In her discussion of LTA, Kayi-Aydar (2019) emphatically notes the discursive nature of agency in that teachers' sense of agency is largely influenced by and influences the existing discourses in terms of facilitating or limiting agentic actions. Such agentic actions come to further define the identities that teachers construct in that by exercising agency in response to structural forces (i.e., power-related and external factors), teachers' identities are renegotiated and restructured in helping teachers adapt to the existing narratives (Hiver & Whitehead, 2018; Tao & Gao, 2021; Wernicke, 2018). Methodologically speaking, a useful instrument to capture teachers' narratives of agency and identity is exploring the CIs that teachers have experienced because such narratives hold the potential of entailing the textures of identity and agency sense-making (see Authors, 2021; Sisson, 2016), features that are explored in the present study as well. Thus, the three constructs are theoretically resonant, yet how they inform each other, how they define NNESTs' work, and how these teachers respond to NS is a question open to further exploration. This study seeks this purpose by examining how NS, as a strong ideology also shaping Iranian English language teachers' work (e.g., Alemi & Rezanejad, 2014; Marefat & Heydari, 2016; Tajeddin et al., 2019), play a role in the occurrence of agency-related CIs and the associated implications for their professional identity construction.

3. Method

3.1. Context and participants

This study was conducted in an Iranian private language school in which the government has little control on the selection of teachers and on the content of textbooks, the latter being from international publishers. Using the communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching approach, the curriculum of the school was structured around teaching materials organized by native speakers (e.g., Speak now, Speak out, American English File, Headways, Mindset, Complete IELTS, etc.), which could add to the bar of effects of NS on the participant teachers' professional performances. That is, the teachers were expected to respond to learners' needs and do so in the face of methodologically heeding NS standards. Each educational semester of the school lasted three months and the lessons aimed to enhance students' proficiency level across the skills and sub-skills of English. Moreover, the school did not mandate a specific teaching methodology, and it required the teachers to be responsive to the learners' pre-defined and ongoing needs.

Table 1
The teachers' demographic information.

Teacher	Age	Experience	Degree	Education	Gender
T1	37	13	MA	TEFL	Male
T2	35	10	MA	TEFL	Male
T3	34	11	PhD	TEFL	Male
T4	32	12	MA	TEFL	Male
T5	48	20	MA	English Literature	Male
T6	50	20	PhD	English Literature	Male
T7	40	15	PhD	TEFL	Male
T8	38	8	MA	Translation	Male
T9	42	16	PhD	TEFL	Male
T10	36	14	PhD	TEFL	Male
T11	50	20	PhD	English Literature	Male
T12	30	7	MA	TEFL	Male
T13	35	9	MA	TEFL	Female
T14	22	5	BA	Translation	Female
T15	31	6	MA	TEFL	Female

This issue, when interpreted in light of the preference for NESTs in this context, could in turn influence teachers' professional sense-making in that need could be largely defined in meeting the NS standards, one which could negatively influence teachers' agency and identity.

Convenience and purposive sampling methods were used to select the participant teachers because they were willing to participant in the study and were geographically proximal to the researchers. We aimed to select experienced teachers as they had been under the influence of NS for years. The participants of the study were 15 teachers (T1 to T15). Table 1 illustrates the demographic information of the teachers. The criteria for selecting the teachers involved (1) having the experience of communicating/working with native speakers and of pressure from their discursive presence (obtained based on personal communication), (2) being experienced and could effectively unpack the sociocultural-educational ramifications of NS, and (3) being eager to share their ideas concerning the study constructs.

3.2. Research design

Our understanding of agency and identity aligned with the literature (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2016; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b; Varghese et al., 2005, Varghese 2016; Yazan & Lindahl, 2020) in that both constructs are significantly influenced by the discourses that circulate in the research setting (i.e., NS) and shape teachers' professional practices/experiences. In line with this understanding, we adopted a qualitative and case-study approach (Stakes, 1995) in exploring the role of NS in the focal teachers' agency-related CIs and identity construction. Because case study enables understanding phenomena in depth, which "cannot be done adequately in any other common research practice" (Van Lier, 2005, p. 195), this approach completely suited our purposes in that we could gain a qualitatively deep understanding of how NS serves as a discourse profoundly shaping NNESTs' professionalism, here agency-related CIs and identity construction.

It must be mentioned that we defined agency-related CIs as narratives that featured the role of power (i.e., NS) in teachers' agency (i.e., professional practices, resistance, developing collegiality, and any other temporal manifestation) and identity (i.e., self-perceptions situated in individual and collective work), in line with the ecological-poststructural standpoint we discussed earlier. From this perspective, the teachers' narratives, as collected through narrative frames, showed how their past experiences have been imbued with the role of NS in their agencies and identities. Furthermore, such experiences informed their current and future understandings of agency, identity, and NS, which was effectively captured through the interviews. Both of these methodological steps aligned with the ecological perspective of agency (see Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Priestley et al., 2012). Across this temporal understanding of agency, power featured as a central component in terms of unpacking how NS featured in the teachers' narratives and shaped their "identities in motion" (Buchanan, 2015, p. 714).

3.3. Researcher positionality

Our case-study approach also facilitated situating our positionality within a nested understanding of the teachers' meaning-making processes (Holmes, 2020). All of us are researchers residing in Iran and working with student teachers and practicing teachers in institutional and higher-education sectors. This subjectivity of being from the same context was helpful in (1) the way we framed the study in terms of observing the discursive role of NS in Iranian teachers' professional work, (2) using research instruments (see below) that not only captured the teachers' narratives but also opened the space to expand on the obtained data, (3) engaging in peer discussions in coding and thematizing the data at the data analysis section, and (4) interpreting the CIs in terms of the complexity of agency and identity in light of the discourse of NS. Furthermore, since we have taught English in the Iranian context, we have in tun been influenced by NS and the standards that language schools promote in terms of favoring NS norms. This background was also helpful in better making sense of the teachers' shared narratives, adding to a more rigorous understanding of the teachers' lived experiences.

We should also acknowledge that such a positionality of being influenced by NS could in turn shape our own interpretation of the teachers' narratives, which could be a source of bias in making more objective judgements about the teachers' experiences. We attempted to minimize such a bias through peer discussion and analysis of the data. In terms of data collection, the first researcher could establish further familiarity with the teachers to unpack their agency-related CIs and how NS comes to serve as a discourse in shaping their professional understanding and identities. This issue enabled all of us to engage deeply with the meaning of each case (i. e., teacher, professional experiences, and CIs), which facilitated obtaining a neat understanding of our research focus and analyzing the data paradigmatically, as we explain below.

3.4. Data collection

Data were collected from three research methods: Open ended questionnaires, narrative frames, and semi structured interviews. It should be pointed out that temporality was a significant dimension of data collection, especially in the interviews, in that (1) the questionnaire tapped into past and present experiences of the teachers, (2) the teachers' narratives bore features that necessarily rendered their experiences as past events, (2) the interviews provided a space in which we expanded on both past and present, and went through how such experiences shape teachers' prospections.

Since we aimed to examine how NS, as a strong ideology shaping Iranian English language teachers' work, serves as a site of agency-related CIs and the associated implications for their professional identity construction, we designed an open-ended questionnaire that involved queries about the impacts of the presence of native speakers and NESTs on their professional performances,

memberships, and ability to teach effectively (i.e., agency). The teachers were invited to respond to the questions either in Persian or English, and they did so in Persian. Afterwards, they were translated into English by the researchers for further exploration.

We also used narrative frames to expand on the data gathered from the open-ended questionnaire. The narrative frames were contextualized based on agency-related CIs and their contributions to the teachers' identity construction. According to Barkhuizen and Wette (2008), narrative frames provide guidance for teachers in sharing a story that involves their lived experiences. More precisely, in this part, the teachers should fill out incomplete lines that target a concrete experience on the presence of native speakers or native teachers and the negative or positive effects that this presence may have had on their agency as NNESTs and their identity construction. Narrative frames provide guidance not only to explore teachers' narrated identities but also to narrate the details of the teachers' experiences (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008; Kayi-Aydar, 2021). Indeed, narrative frames "provide guidance and support in terms of both the structure and content of what is to be written" (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008, p. 376). In this sense, they provide teachers with opportunities to reflect on and recollect their CIs in detail and in relation to their agency and identity. It must be pointed out that a difference between usual challenges and CIs is that the latter create a turning point in teachers' cognitions, identities, and agencies (see Richards & Farrell, 2008). We ensured the criticality of the shared narratives in the interviews as well and all of the stories were argued by the teachers to have created such a turning point in their professional growth. The teachers were invited to fill out the frame either in Persian or English, and they did so in English.

In order to uncover the teachers' narratives and questionnaire responses in greater depth, a semi-structured interview was also conducted with them. Semi-structured interview is one of the most common types of interviews used in qualitative research (Knott et al., 2022). The interviews with an average duration of 30 min per teacher were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researchers. The teachers responded to the interview questions in Persian. Later on, we translated them into English and checked the translations through peer discussion. Furthermore, to protect the teachers' privacy and establishing trust and rapport with them, they were requested to use pseudonyms. The teachers were invited to answer questions about (1) their understanding of native speakers and their strengths/weaknesses, (2) the effect of native speakers/teachers on their professional work, (3) effects of native speakers/teachers and their discursive presence on teachers and the role schools play in this regard, (4) effects of this discourse on teachers' ability to teach agentively, (5) effects of this discourse on their identity construction at personal, institutional, and social levels, and (6) expanding on their questionnaire and frame responses to gain a deeper understanding of their responses.

3.5. Data analysis

In analyzing the data (i.e., 15 narratives, 15 questionnaire responses, and 15 interviews), we adopted a mixture of thematic (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and paradigmatic (Polkinghorne, 1995) analyses. Since we had data that could be analyzed both inductively and categorically, a mixture of these approaches would better help. That is, each of the data sources, especially interviews, could be analyzed inductively to extract themes, and using the paradigmatic approach not only helped us to "discover or describe categories that identify particular occurrences within the data but also to note relationships among the categories" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 14). Such a paradigmatic perspective, as Polkinghorne argues, is more resonant with capturing the temporality of events vis-à-vis traversing between past and future to make sense of present in greater depth, a perspective that is closely relevant to our theoretical stance. In analyzing the data, we persistently maintained how NS could create agency-related CIs and how such incidents could influence the teachers' identity construction.

Based on this understanding, we engaged in thematizing the data sources separately to prepare them for the paradigmatic analysis stage. Thus, we read the data iteratively and developed familiarity with how NS influences the teachers' agency-related experiences and their identity construction. On this path, we coded the data so that the relevant themes could be developed. For example, when the teachers referred to how NS has influenced their agency in implementing their ideas and resulted in their marginalization, this was coded as "NS as a source of marginalization". This procedure was followed to the extent that we could exclude certain codes and come up with a set of themes per source. Separate analysis of the data sources was helpful in developing a series of codes that could be sought for overlaps among them in order to develop the relevant themes. It must be mentioned that although we adopted an ecological-poststructural perspective in capturing the teachers' narratives, it was not possible to find all of the past, present, and future dimensions in the shared experiences. Thus, our analysis focused on experiences that featured the role of NS in the teachers' agency and identity at the temporal manifestation of these key constructs, with temporal being defined as at least two of these time dimensions. Moreover, since we expanded on the narrative frames (i.e., CIs) in the interviews, we ensured the criticality of the narratives based on their own sense-making of how change has happened to them and thus coded the data as CIs.

Then, we analyzed the codes and themes integratively through constant comparison. In this regard, we sought intersections among the codes and themes to reach higher-level categories, as indicated in Table 1, the first column. Relatedly, the codes and themes were primarily concerned with the role of NS in the teachers' agency-related CIs and identity construction, and the categories served as how these processes shaped the teachers' professional performances, understandings, and sense-making. For example, when the teachers shared a narrative about the role of policymakers in promoting NS and limiting their agentic actions, this role was sought across the questionnaires and interviews to see how policymakers play other or similar roles in teachers' impeded agency and constructed identities, and how these shaped their professional understanding as teachers. It was, however, necessary to put the codes and themes against the main data to cross-reference the accuracy of the data and reach more inclusive codes, themes, and categories. Thus, we engaged in peer discussion of the codes and themes, and finalized the thread that could inclusively explain the contributions of NS for NNESTs' agency and identity construction. These discussions were helpful in enhancing the trustworthiness of the analyses because they improved the accuracy of the analysis. After several rounds of code and theme refinement, we developed three categories that could define the findings in relation to NNESTs' marginalization, the role of policymakers, and teachers doubting their pedagogy.

4. Findings and discussion

This study explored how NS could result in the occurrence of agency-related CIs and how such incidents shape Iranian English language teachers' professional identity construction. Thematic analysis of the data resulted in the following three core themes of (1) native speakerism as a source of NNEST marginalization, (2) the role of school policymakers in NS-induced inequality, and (3) native speakerism as a source of pedagogy of doubt. These three themes are detailed below in relation to agency-related CIs and the associated contributions for the teachers' identity construction. Table 2 shows the impacts of NS on the teachers' agency-related CIs and identity construction.

4.1. Native speakerism as a source of NNEST marginalization

The NNESTs shared their experience of how NS resulted in their marginalization. One of the key issues concerning NS was related to the increasingly standard teaching preferences of NESTs, which obstructed teaching creativity among NNESTs and led to their marginalization. In other words, both the presence of NESTs and their teaching were assumed to not only disturb NNESTs' indigenous teaching methods and curricula, but also depreciate and marginalize their skillfulness, issues that show the experiential nature of complicating agency and how this issue could probably last over time as long as such preferences exist. The outcome of this situation was relegating NNESTs to an unimportant and powerless position.

For example, T5, T8, and T13 contended that their exposure to NESTs has repulsed them as they had no choice but to reluctantly imitate NESTs' established teaching methods, which made them feel marginalized. For example, T5 heatedly reported the following CI, highlighting how his professional identity and agency were questioned throughout exposure to NESTs when the superiority of native teachers had threatened his professional identity and limited his agency in stepping toward trialing new techniques, which acted as a source of his professional marginalization. T5 shared the experience of denigrating behaviors that targeted his professional identity and agency by stating that "I was not allowed to question his syllabus design and teaching materials", attesting to the discursive role of NS in his professional sense-making as an agentic professional. Besides, T5's assertion exhibits that NESTs' command in English dominated his professional work and gradually peripheralized him as a less competent teacher. Interestingly, it is perceptively observed that T5, somewhat, hypocritically, admonished NESTs for various manifestations of their teaching tendencies by stating that "The teacher needs to take initiatives and use indigenized methods that are appropriate for specific learners":

> One of my most memorable experiences when I felt that the presence of native speakers or native teachers had a negative effect on my ability to teach the way I wanted was the imposition of written teaching methods under the supervision of a native speaker colleague of mine in an Iranian private language institute. As an Iranian nonnative English teacher, I was not allowed to question his syllabus design and teaching materials. This has caused me to lose my sense of innovation and creativity in teaching. Therefore, I had to imitate his approved teaching methods against my inner desire. However, I believe that in many concepts, including grammar, the teacher needs to take initiatives and use methods that are appropriate for the specific learners [Narrative frame].

Moreover, T4's responses featured the marginalization that he experienced regarding students' views over the globally-acknowledged empowerment of NESTs as legitimate and qualified English teachers by stating that "language learners had no desire to participate in the classes of mine and other non-native teachers any more" (Interview). Obviously, this statement offers an account of T4's certain amount of animosity toward his native counterparts and marginalization in relation to students. He then added that "The mentality of language learners was always inclined to the superiority of native teachers" (Interview). He made such a remark, seemingly to share that he is being marginalized as he was viewed unfavorably, and he realized that the students no longer approved him compared to NESTs. T6 made a similar point in challenging the notion of NS from a marginalized perspective and stated that this native/nonnative dichotomy totally denies the legitimacy and qualification of NNESTs. In the following extract, T6 uses "devastatingly harmful" to highlight how NS leads to NNEST marginalization in professional identity and agency terms. She strongly opposes NS by highlighting how preference toward NESTs makes NNESTs marginalized, which bears direct consequences for the latter group's agency and professional performance. Furthermore, the linguistic modality (i.e., is, can, will) she uses to characterize professional work shows that she builds on previous experiences to highlight the harmful effects of NS on NNESTs' present and future agencies and identities:

> In my opinion, the concept of native speakerism is devastatingly harmful. For short, the existence of NESTs can be a way to provide real context exposure to natural English to the students. In the time to come the students' language expectations in

Table 2
Contributions of NS to the NNESTs' agency and identity construction.

Categories	Main themes emerging	Frequency
• Native Speakerism as a source of NNEST marginalization	Marginalizing and undervaluing NNESTs	(3)
• The role of school policy makers in NS-induced inequality	Developing a sense of nonequilibrium due to school policy makers' perspective toward NESTs who are under the delusion of their language superiority	(5)
• Native Speakerism as a source of pedagogy of doubt	Developing skepticism in terms of NNESTs' potentials in teaching the English language effectively	(7)

teaching will grow exponentially and totally disregard the contribution of their nonnative English teachers, considering this view that the ideal English teacher is a native speaker of English. Sadly, this makes NNESTs feel less privileged and marginalized [Interview].

Previous studies on the NEST/NNEST divide have emphatically discussed how NS could result in various challenges for NNESTs' institutional belonging, professional performance, and belief in their abilities (e.g., Aneja, 2016; Holliday, 2018; Zacharias, 2019). Our teachers also experienced similar challenges. However, such challenges featured in the CIs that had substantially influenced their agencies and identities across the temporal manifestations (see Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Priestley et al., 2012) of NS. More notably, it was not just the point that NS had influenced their agency, but this ideology had resulted in their marginalization relationally. This novel finding shows that (1) teachers are likely to become peripheralized by discourse, which here was NS, (2) NS interacts with contextual ties and understandings to reformulate a discourse that leads to NNESTs' marginalization, and (3) such marginalization operates relationally in that NNESTs become marginalized in relation to various institutional participants, especially in the eyes of students (see Wernicke, 2018). These findings add to the discussion of NEST/NNEST by showing a new corner of the influence of NS on NNESTs' professionalism, which is the argument Llurda and Calvet-Terré (2022) proposed and was related to marginalization for Iranian NNESTs.

4.2. The role of school policymakers in NS-induced inequality

An interesting aspect of the teachers' shared experiences was featuring a sense of nonequilibrium between native and nonnative teachers in relation to their agency and professional identity, fueled by the role of school policymakers. Inequality was defined by our teachers as being mainly associated with school policymakers' preferences toward NESTs. In this regard, the teachers stated that they expect equal treatment as their native counterparts in the eyes of school executives because this issue is connected to the occupational inequalities that happen for NNESTs.

The primary point of such experiences was that the school policymakers were extremely intrigued by classes held by NESTs than those of NNESTs. This drive of policymakers made nonnative teachers think about themselves as inferior and native teachers as superior, adhering themselves to the native teachers' pedagogical guide rather than implementing their own agency in teaching. T12 referred to the negative effects of this inequality on his professional identity and showed how thinking of a native English speaker as the authority and source of correctness by the school policymakers predisposed a sense of hypocrite and jealousy in him toward NESTs. He explained how underestimating his role as a NNEST negatively affected his agency and professional identity construction. In the following narrative, T12 clearly elaborated on how the idolization of NESTs by policymakers throughout the world raised pervasive feelings of distrust toward NNESTs and how this inequal mistrust negatively impacted his professional identity, stating that "I was being underestimated despite all the struggles I made". Also, that "native teachers even without adequate expertise were truly well respected in the eyes of school policymakers" clearly exemplifies how such inequality practices threatened his job opportunity in the Persian Gulf region and confined him to just resource limited regions by their native counterparts. He then goes on saying how widespread universality of NESTs limited his agency in a way to better adjust his teaching trends with NESTs rather than implementing his own agentive roles as a NNEST. This experience further shows how T12 built on his CI to develop his then-current experiences in teaching, a repertoire that probably continued later and restructured his professional identity as a teacher:

> Once upon a time, as I was seeking an English teaching opportunity in Persian Gulf region, I could simply apply for many teaching positions because back then, hiring a nonnative English teacher was not a big deal, but nowadays the emergence and the popularity of native speakers confined the teaching activities of nonnative English teachers like me to just resource limited regions. Thinking of a native English speaker as a perfect example negatively affected me in a way that it predisposed feelings of hypocrisy and jealousy toward native language teachers. In addition, I was being underestimated despite all the struggles I made, but native teachers even without adequate expertise were truly well respected in the eyes of school policy makers. Apart from our inferiority and their superiority, for me, this experience developed an ongoing drive to better synchronize my teaching trend with those of native teachers [Narrative Frame].

Similarly, T3 described how the notion of NS as a negative source can influence different aspects of NNESTs' professional performance in a varied manner and how this kind of inequal thinking of school officials toward NNESTs is detrimental and threatens their survival. Then, he connects such inequality issues with identity, and highlights that as school policymakers view NNESTs less authentic than natives, the former are rarely keen on developing their own agentive roles and teaching approach. Additionally, in his eyes, this growing trend of NESTs' contribution to the world has the potentials to predispose a root cause for NNESTs' job insecurity in the future, as the school policymakers may only provide the NESTs with the opportunities to work: "Rising global demand for native English-speaking teachers is a source of anxiousness and generates an intense feeling of job insecurity in the future regarding the preference of school policy makers to work with NESTs rather than nonnative ones" (Interview), an extract that clearly highlights the ecological nature of NS and its contributions for NNESTs' agencies and identities. T9 also referred to the connection between NS and authenticity, and the general contributions that the discourse of NS brings for NNESTs' present and future agencies and identities. As T9 added: "As far as I am able to judge, the perception of native speakerism is unfortunately affiliated with authenticity in language teaching. NNESTs are then viewed by disfavor as being less authentic teachers than native ones in the eyes of school policy makers. In addition, this ideology behind nonnatives underestimates their instruction and language creativity, so they rarely dare to come up with teaching brainstorms and develop an indigenized teaching approach" (Interview).

In a similar vein, T7 described the negative implications of NS for NNESTs' professional identity construction, and how NESTs as a

main cause of stress can create tensions for nonnative teachers' job security even despite NESTs' lack of teaching expertise. This extract of T7's interview implies the extensively worldwide dominance and superiority of NESTs, and the negative implications of this view over NNESTs' professional identity construction, "considering NNESTs as poor alternatives to NESTs" by both private school executives and English language learners just for the sake of being a native speaker of English: "For long, the so-called language superiority of native English-speaking teachers has been widely trumpeted throughout the world. Not surprisingly, it is wise then for policy makers to be keen on recruiting native teachers rather than nonnatives. This commonality shall become the main cause of stress among nonnative English teachers to be whether underpaid or fired by school officials, considering NNESTs as poor alternatives to NESTs. So, NESTs equally capture the attention of school executives and students even if they lack teaching expertise" (Interview). This statement further shows how not only does NS come to negatively influence NNETSs' agencies and identities but also their emotions as mixed with those agencies and identities.

Scholarship on NESTs/NNESTs has shown that NS always needs some contextual factor(s) to become a governing rule in shaping NNESTs' professional performances (see Aneja, 2014; Fan & de Jong, 2022; Jenkins, 2009; Li, 2022). Such contextual factor in this study was found to be institutional policymakers whose discourse and practice created inequality for the teachers. Moreover and from an agency lens, Kayi-Aydar (2015a, 2015b) discussed how institutional policymakers could serve as both facilitators and impeders of teachers' agentic roles and identities (also see Mifsud, 2018). For our teachers, policymakers worked as impeders of the teachers' agency, which rooted in their preference for NESTs over NNESTs. This finding casts new lights on the intersection between agency and identity in highlighting how a dominant discourse (here NS) transcends geographical boundaries to figure in teachers' professional practices and lead them toward feeling inequality. The implication of this condition was teachers' less confidence in their agency potentials and looking up to NESTs for showing. Thus, although the teachers could show agency when compared to NNESTs, such agency was suppressed by the discursive power of NS and in turn intensified by institutional policymakers when compared to NESTs. This finding shows clearly the role that policymakers could play in NNESTs' interpretation of NESTs, their own agency potentials, and the perceptively incompetency-invoked identities that they collectively construct across this process. Additionally, that NS influenced the teachers' agency, identity, and emotion responds to Kayi-Aydar's (2019) call for further exploration of these three constructs. Yet, our findings add to Kayi-Aydar's call by showing the temporality of emotions that have roots in inequality and negatively shape teachers' agencies and identities through institutional policymakers. This finding shows how discourse materializes in institutional work through participants that complicate teachers' exercising agency and developing the identity of equal professionals.

4.3. Native speakerism as a source of pedagogy of doubt

Most of the teachers' narrated CIs were related to the core theme of NS as a source of pedagogy of doubt. Pedagogy of doubt meant to our teachers as being unconfident and doubtful about their abilities and potentials to teach English effectively. Indeed, the teachers' capacity to be agentic was constrained by their oppressive working environment, including the beliefs of different stakeholders about NNESTs in relation to NESTs. This condition had substantially influenced the teachers' agency and professional identity in that the NNESTs were highly demoralized by perceptions of linguistic deficiency. Relatedly, as compared to NESTs, NNESTs believed that they have lower proficiency and this issue makes them doubt their instructional activities as well as marginalizes them within the general landscape of language education.[1] This issue questioned the NNESTs' agency by choosing NESTs as their role model in teaching rather than implementing their own initiatives in teaching materials. In this regard, a number of teachers (e.g., T8, T10, T11 and T15) argued that such a condition has negatively influenced their belief in their abilities to teach effectively and innovatively. Such situations made them doubt their potentials as they see that whatever they do should just be in line with NESTs' plans and pedagogical performances.

For example, T8 argued how her agency and professional identity were defined through a sense of language weakness, which was a result of NS and bore repercussions for her certainty in pedagogical terms. As the following narrative shows, T8 has faced limitations in her agency in relation to NESTs' supremacy in teaching English. The major point here is that this experience happened because of her experiential knowledge about how a particular NEST made her feel dubious in her teaching practice. This experience remained in T8's mind and bore implications for her agency and professional identity. In particular, her reference to "I always felt like I was lacking behind" in her narrative shows how she has (re)defined NS for herself. Moreover, this redefinition became a lens through which she interpreted her own identity as a NNEST and the way she engaged in NS-induced agentive performances; she stated that "I have never dared providing English teaching-related new initiatives, breakthroughs and brainstorms". This narrative clearly shows how NS has spanned T8's past (re)interpretations, present performances in not providing new materials, and probably her future pedagogical initiatives, at least in designing contents, all attesting to her suppressed agency and lack of autonomy in adopting the identity of a professional teacher:

> My first-time exposure to a native speaker brought me a lifetime hands-on experience of teaching English and of course a negative one. Further to his superiority and our incompatibility in teaching English, I always felt like I was lacking behind, and there was always a feeling of language weakness in the back of my mind. My strong and persistent desire to root out this shortage could be met if I had gone through his language pedagogy, so I have never dared providing English teaching-related new initiatives, breakthroughs and brainstorms [Narrative Frame].

Notably, T11 also viewed such experiences as discursively shaping his professional identity and agency. Such experiences had made

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[1] It should be pointed out that the institutional setting of this study and generally other schools in Iran do not hold professional development or preparatory programs that aim for enhancing (student) teachers' language proficiency.

the teachers doubt their capabilities in teaching [agency], occupying their minds in thinking whether they succeeded to meet the needs of their students [identity]. Based on T11's statement that "I (having thought a good command in English) seemed to understand nothing from their talks", it seems that he doubted his knowledge in teaching English, which has temporally made her reorient her agency in line with the linguistic dominance of English and adopt the identity of a NS-oriented teacher:

> The most remarkable experience I have ever had was an interview session I attended. There were two native speaker interviewers; they started the interview by asking questions. When they were exchanging comments and communicating to one another, I (having thought a good command in English) seemed to understand nothing from their talks. I therefore realized that my knowledge of English was rudimentary and basic. So, I felt disappointed and lost my confidence in teaching. This experience made me feel doubtful about the teaching objectives I have covered, questioning myself whether I succeeded to meet the learning needs of my students or not. Since then, I did my best to adhere my teaching methodology exactly in a similar vein to that of NESTs [Interview].

T15 eloquently referred to feel 'empty', 'insecure', and 'demotivated' to mention the negative emotions he experienced when exercising agency with a NEST doing TOEFL courses and how this experience made him lose initiatives in promoting his own language skills due to the supervision of that NEST:

> The most unwanted memory that intrudes on my mind when thinking of native English speaker teachers is a legitimate dissimilarity between me and an American teacher doing TOEFL IBT courses I used to work with; both his high-level competence and depth of knowledge of the language made me feel insecure. I always considered his teaching methods much better than mine. Therefore, my lack of English knowledge became my Achilles heel, and I started to feel empty and demotivated. During those years, I lost incentives to promote and develop my language skills [Interview].

Moreover, T10 mentioned the same issue regarding his professional identity, arguing how competing with a NEST in his workplace made him feel embarrassed, unconfident, and doubtful about his abilities to teach English effectively. Using some negative utterances, the following extract from T10's interview revealed a negative attitude toward NESTs regarding both his agency and professional identity. For example, 'a pain in the neck', 'crushed badly', 'feeling embarrassed and unconfident' show how the presence of a NEST had limited his agency in teaching and negatively influenced his identity as a competent teacher:

> It is to state the obvious that competition is of assistance to develop your skills. But for me, competing with a native English speaker teacher was a pain in the neck. I was badly crushed by the presence of a native speaker at my previous workplace. Both her presence and her teaching performance made me feel embarrassed, unconfident, and dubious about not only what I was teaching but also how I was teaching English to my students [Interview].

That NS can significantly influence NNESTs' professional practices has been extensively discussed in the literature (e.g., Holiday, 2013; Llurda & Calvet-Terré, 2022; Lowe, 2020; Medgyes, 1994). Besides the point that NS influenced our teacher participants' agency and professional identity as a result of the discourse and practice of NS, the teachers highlighted how language weakness serves as a main factor in their agency-related CIs. Research on teachers' CIs (e.g., Authors, 2021; Sisson, 2016) has shown how contextual factors result in the occurrence of experiences that complicate teachers' meaning-making processes and agency enactment. Our teachers argued that they interpret their impeded agency and NS as sources of CIs. However, a mediating factor was at work, which was language weakness. That is, linguistic inferiority was not just a matter of linguistic competency; rather, it was a tool through which the teachers interpreted their agency and professional identity, especially in relation to how such impeded agencies and identities lasted over time. More intensely, the consequence of such an interpretation was the teachers' doubts in their agency potentials and identities as competent teachers (see Kayi-Aydar, 2015a, 2015b). Such doubt was thus sidelining the teachers into a situation that they were in a persistent limbo (i.e., doubt) regarding the correctness of their practices, experiences that at least spanned the teachers' experiences at the time of data collection. Undoubtedly, the negative emotion, agency, and identity tensions of this condition could be understood, yet it seems that NS is working more intensely among Iranian NNESTs because they are less connected to NESTs and such a connection seems necessary to reducing their opposition to NESTs.

5. Conclusion

Overall, the study findings showed that NS could make Iranian NNESTs feel marginalized, perceive the role of institutional policymakers as sources of inequality, and lead them toward doubting their pedagogical effectiveness. These effects were also interpreted in light of the teachers' inability to show agency as effective as possible, their identity as inferior professionals, and their perceptions and opposition toward NESTs and NS. Beyond highlighting the highly dominant status of NS in the Iranian context, these findings show how (1) NS depends on the strong discursive power it carries, (2) such power is enacted by Iranian institutional participants to negatively influence NNESTs' agency and identity, and (3) dimensions of NS come to function as temporal factors mixing linguistic marginalization, inequalities, emotions, and institutional participants to negatively shape NNESTs' agencies and identities.

Thus, policymakers such as teacher educators and supervisors can benefit from the study findings to revisit their role, of course if they wish so. In this regard, policymakers should develop their own awareness about NNESTs' voice and their key role in teaching EFL/ESL students, especially through partnership initiatives. Furthermore, if these stakeholders are not able to tackle the hegemonic dominance of NS in their institutions, they could run professional development courses that engage teachers in self-inquiry (e.g., reflection) approaches. Such courses could help teachers better understand how ideological sources of power feature strongly in their work, which makes it likely for teachers to promote more inclusion of diversity than mere adherence to normative dialects. Moreover,

the issue of temporality of agency that we explored in this study shows how pre-existing and contemporary discourses could be effectively employed in teacher education courses because such discourses are much likely to extend over teachers' future professional lives. Thus, embedding CIs entailing temporality of agency and identity could serve as a useful agenda to restructure teachers' envisioning of NS.

As it stands, we observe that Iranian NNESTs may oppose NESTs, which seems totally unnecessary because a large part of such opposition has roots in the discursive function of NS, and not essentially NNESTs' direct contact with NESTs and the superiority that the latter group may promote. Thus, professional development courses that are grounded in policymakers' recognition of NNEST agency and NNESTs' learning from NESTs would be helpful. Considering that personal contact with NESTs is less possible for Iranian teachers, online courses would be an effective alternative. This way, the role model that the teachers highlighted earlier (i.e., considering NESTs as their idols in teaching) can turn into a positive issue, rather than a negative source of exercising agency. Furthermore, NNESTs can engage in developing their collaborations with NESTs through social media and reflect on their transactions in order to enhance their teaching skills. It seems that such collaborations could also help teachers to comply with the demands of institutional policymakers because teachers can make their instruction more responsive to institutional needs.

We would like to explore the teachers' classroom practices in greater depth, which was a limitation of this study. This could be examined in future research on how NNESTs discursively and practically approach NS in their classes. Further, there were teachers who could engage in exercising agency to become less affected by the negative sides of NS, but due to space limitations, we could not unpack this dimension, which was also less featuring in the collected data. This point could be pursued in future studies. Nonetheless, we hope that teachers, teacher educators, and institutional supervisors use the study findings to provide a better context that facilitates teachers' effective agency enactment and identity construction, one that embraces more dialectical diversity and acknowledges the social and cultural capitals of teachers in a greater depth. Considering the more positive attitude of learners toward NESTs, it would also be helpful to run professional development initiatives in which NESTs could raise learners' awareness of NNESTs' expertise and potentials, which could be effectively sought in future research. Moreover, after the time of data collection (i.e., last year), we do not know what has happened to our teachers' agency and identity in relation to NS, which demands tracking NNESTs' agency and identity over time. Future research may longitudinally track NNESTs' agency and identity, especially through CIs, to unpack how perceptions about NS change over time.

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