English Language Teacher Agency in Classroom-based Empirical Studies: A Research Synthesis

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Abstract

This research synthesis analyzes a selection of classroom-based empirical studies on language teacher agency within ESL/EFL/bilingual contexts. Comprehensive analyses of the selected research center on several respects: theoretical frameworks, contexts, methodologies, major findings, methodological and ethical issues as well as implications. In doing this, this paper aims to present ESL/EFL/bilingual teachers' roles as legitimate and agentive actors in their contexts of work, to offer pedagogical implications for teachers and teacher educators, to better inform researchers of current literature and future research directions, and to support possible collaborations among different educational stakeholders.

Keywords: research synthesis, classroom-based empirical studies, English language teacher agency, ESL, EFL, bilingual

Introduction

A growing body of empirical studies centers on "teacher agency" in language education in recent years (e.g., Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017; Kang, 2017; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Teacher agency has been theorized regarding the activities teachers do in schools (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2013) as an "important dimension of teachers' professionalism" in response to curriculum or institutional changes (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015, p. 625). Moreover, Priestley, Edwards, Priestley, and Miller (2012) state that teacher agency is "largely about repertoires for maneuver, or the possibilities for different forms of action available to teachers at particular points in time" (p. 211). Drawing upon previous scholarship, the current investigation aligns with the notion that teacher agency could be mediated within specific sociocultural contexts (Lasky, 2005), and within this framework, teachers have "the socially constituted capacity to act" on educational changes (Barker, 2008, p. 234).

Although the concept of agency has attracted attention in the education literature in recent years, teacher agency still remains understudied in the field of language education, particularly in classroom-based ESL/EFL/bilingual contexts. Among the limited research, a relatively large amount of studies have engaged in discussions of factors that affect teacher agency, such as teacher belief and perceptions (Shabir, 2017; Tang, Lee, & Chun, 2012) and social environment (Meierdirk, 2018). Little attention, however, has been paid to document teachers' enactment of change situated in language classrooms. In response to this, this study employs research synthesis as theoretical framework to offer major insights from the studies on teacher agency and identify literature gaps in the field for further research. Research synthesis, a "relatively sparse but rapidly growing literature" (Suri & Clarke, 2009, p. 397), is a "contemporary framework for reviewing" (Norris & Ortega, 2007, p. 806) that investigates and evaluates "past findings in a systematic fashion, always explicating the methodology followed in the review so as to enable replication by other reviewers" (Ortega, 2015, p. 225). To do so, research syntheses pay attention to relevant theories, critically analyze, and "attempt to identify central issues for future research" (Cooper & Hedges, 2009, p. 6). This research synthesis takes the epistemological stance of interpretivist that recognizes "the inevitable subjectivity in a synthesist's interpretive constructions" (Suri, 2013, p. 897) and attempts to identify the "plausible patterns" (Suri, 2013, p. 897) of teacher agency research across different empirical studies.

Guided by the framework, this synthesis aims to present ESL/EFL/bilingual teachers' roles as legitimate and agentive actors in their contexts of work, to offer pedagogical implications for teachers and teacher educators, to better inform researchers of current literature and future research directions, and to support possible collaborations among different educational stakeholders. In order to realize this, we attempt to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the

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nature—concerning theoretical frameworks, contexts, and methodologies—of language teacher agency research in ESL/EFL/bilingual contexts up to 2018? (2) What are the major findings, methodological and ethical issues, and implications discussed in the selected articles? (3) What are the future directions for research, teacher education, and professional development drawing upon the existing scholarship in teacher agency?

Literature Review on Teacher Agency in ESL/EFL/Bilingual contexts

In the context of language education, "learner agency" has been more frequently studied than "teacher agency;" however, the importance of which has been acknowledged (Biesta et al., 2015), particularly in the past two years (2017 and 2018). A cursory review of current literature reveals that language teacher agency, discussed in ESL/ EFL/ bilingual contexts, has been associated with other concepts, including beliefs (e.g., Ollerhead & Burn, 2016), autonomy (e.g., Hoang & Truong, 2016), identity (e.g., Dantas-Whitney, Clemente, & Higgins, 2012; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a), emotion (e.g., Benesch, 2018), language use in bilingual spaces (e.g., Henderson, 2017), (de)motivation (e.g., Song & Kim, 2016), and language policy (e.g., Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). Before proceeding to the discussion of differences among ESL/EFL/bilingualism on teacher agency, we first clarify that the distinction of language teaching and learning between ESL and EFL is not completely straightforward as Shin (2018) clearly states that "the often made distinction between [ESL] and

[EFL] is blurred for an increasing number of **transnational migrants** who cross and re-cross national boundaries" (p. 27, emphasis is in the original). Although this is true, research on teacher agency in ESL and EFL contexts shows different tendencies, scrupulously discussed in the next section. Related to ESL education is bilingual education, referring to learning contexts that involve two languages, oftentimes educating emergent bilinguals who are linguistically diverse (García, 2009; Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Wong, Athanases, & Banes, 2017). Commonly found program designs of bilingual education include dual language or immersion programs, in which two target languages are used in learning various content areas with the purpose of learners becoming bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural. Due to its dealing with linguistically and culturally diverse learners, bilingual contexts pose unique challenges and demands to teachers and teacher education. This synthesis focuses on the studies that are conducted in bilingual contexts and including English as one of the two languages.

In literature, studies on teacher agency in ESL contexts are much fewer than relevant studies in EFL contexts. Based upon extant literature, possible differences between EFL and ESL contexts reside in student population and constructs associated with teacher agency, including teacher roles or identities. We found studies on ESL teacher agency in contexts of Australia and the United States. For example, Ollerhead and Burns (2016) report two ESL teachers' response to policies in Australian adult ESL literacy classroom in which most students were refugees from Africa or Asia. The study explores the interaction of teacher roles, beliefs, and teaching approaches to uncover how those factors influence their exercise of agency. Besides, it is found that teachers' agency was affected by their own backgrounds and the institutional culture where the "one size fits all" policy compromised teaching efficiency (Ollerhead & Burns, 2016, p. 113). Furthermore, studies on teacher agency in ESL contexts also include teacher candidates. For example, Kayi-Aydar (2015a) investigates a teacher candidate's negotiation between her identity and her agency across time and space.

In addition to the aforementioned aspects, K-12 ESL teaching as language support for students who have limited English abilities is not part of mainstream education or academic discipline in most ESL contexts, such as the US, U.K., and Canada (Tyack & Tobin, 1994). In US contexts, for instance, pullout, push-in, and co-teaching models are mostly implemented in ESL. In a full pull-out model, a designated amount of time is given to ESL teachers or specialists to help English learners with explicit instruction each week; yet, push-in and co-teaching models require collaboration between ESL and grade-level teachers in their planning and instruction (Ovando & Combs, 2012). With this being said, ESL teachers are found marginalized, ignored, and invisible in schools. However, certain studies (e.g., Trickett et al., 2012) also demonstrate that despite the marginalized status, teachers counteracted the marginalization that they and their students experienced, became advocates of educational equality, interacted with content teachers, and built up relationship with administrators to influence class placements of their students.

In EFL contexts, teachers' exercise of their agency in the implementation of macro-level language education policies in local contexts has started to receive important consideration (e.g., Bouchard, 2016; Glasgow, 2016; Talalakina & Stukal, 2016). In many Asian countries—like China,

Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea—a global trend is that English was introduced earlier in curriculum and adopted as a medium of (higher) education (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016, pp. 26-27). That said, teachers have to prepare students for traditional examinations, easily resulting in test-driven approaches; yet at the same time, teachers need to provide students communicative resources to facilitate their participation in the globalized world, which entails Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Hamid and Nguyen (2016) report that "it cannot be taken as a given that teachers will embrace the policy whole-heartedly and work towards policy goals. They may resist the policy in a covert manner if policy intentions do not reflect their interests, beliefs and realities" (p. 31). Under the tension, teachers' agentive action in policy implementation might be compromised by a series of factors, including teachers' communicative proficiency, pedagogical skills, their responsibility for students' performance on designated tests, institutional support, teacher professional development, teachers' interpretation of those policies, and other social pressures from parents and media.

In Ng and Boucher-Yip's (2016) edited book, several chapters address this phenomenon in EFL contexts. For example, in Hoang and Truong's (2016) chapter, in order to facilitate Vietnam's socio-economic development, the government aimed to profoundly improve English abilities of young graduates from all educational levels. Nevertheless, the pressure of restandardization which jeopardized many teachers' job security, the lack of power as well as professional and geographical constraints crippled the participant's agency to resist or mitigate the policies. In another chapter, Osman and Ahn (2016) explore a less studied context—a private university in Kazakhstan—to uncover English language teachers' response to the changes in light of new policies which aimed at the modernity and internationalization of its education. They report that the existence of local teaching teams, within which the teacher interviewees can interpret new changes to their colleagues and implement those changes, allowed the teachers' voice to be heard and exercise their agency; however, for the policies initiated outside of the teaching teams, there was less space for negotiation. The common theme across the aforementioned literature is that language policies in EFL contexts were related to the countries' socio-economic development. Those top-down policies were developed without participation of the teachers who were the agents, and factors like institutional contexts, teacher identity, power, and realities of local conditions have created a web of complex relationships for English language teachers to initiate their agency.

A recent trend of US bilingual education is a move towards additive bilingualism (Flores, 2001; García, 2009; Hopkins, 2013; Lambert, 1975; Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Ruiz, 1984; Wong et al., 2017). Additive bilingual programs are connected to language ideologies (Henderson, 2017; Palmer, 2011) that affirm "language as a resource" rather than "language as a problem" (Ruiz, 1984). Dual language programs are complex and dynamic, experiencing many tensions stemming from language hegemony in creating equitable learning opportunities to help students become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural (Babino & Stewart, 2018; Henderson, 2017; Palmer, 2010, 2011). Bilingual teachers also face various challenges such as accountability demands and high-stakes testing in their efforts to connect with their students through culturally relevant pedagogy (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2012; Babino & Stewart, 2018; Wills & Sandholts, 2009; Wong et al., 2017) and linguistically responsive pedagogy (Lucas & Villegas, 2011).

In reviewing the spaces that teachers assert agency for bilingual children, Palmer and Martínez (2013) underscore the fact that teachers "acknowledge these constraints and honor the tremendous efforts sometimes required of teachers to provide authentic learning opportunities to bilingual children in school" (p. 270). Therefore, there is an increasing need for "critical orientation toward the challenge of educating bilingual students in the United States" (Palmer & Martínez, 2013, p. 274). Moreover, Bartolomé (2004) argues that teachers and educators who work in multilingual contexts need political and ideological clarity to "interrogate potentially harmful ideologies" (p. 98) for teaching is "not an apolitical undertaking" (p. 115).

Studies on teacher agency in bilingual contexts explore teachers as language policy makers (Henderson, 2017). Bilingual and dual language teachers achieve "varying degrees of agency" (Babino & Stewart, 2018, p. 274) based on their contextual experiences (Edwards, 2015). Dubetz and de Jong (2011) reviewed 30 research articles on bilingual teacher agency, and a common thread among their definitions of agency is a critical lens and a social justice orientation as a call to create equity for those who have been marginalized. In defining agency, they put an emphasis on "acting on behalf of others and encompass[es] individual and collective efforts to shape public policy in ways that ensure that individuals are treated equitably and have access to needed resources" (Dubetz & de Jong, 2011, p. 251). Thus, teacher agency in bilingual contexts presents complexity on

decision-making related to language policy implementation based on their language ideologies.

Methodology

Data Collection

The process of article selection was not linear but iterative and constantly refined, and the entire selection process was comprised of three major rounds. The first round started in March 2018, and then we met every month until April 2019 for data collection and analysis. In the first round of selection, we used the guiding keywords—"teacher agency," "language," and "classroom research"— and manually searched the literature in Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, and ERIC. 53 articles were found relevant to the study, including journal articles and book chapters. In the second major round of selection, we undertook a focused selection procedure following the criteria:

1. "Teacher agency" and/or "agency" mentioned in "Abstract" or "Research Questions"
2. "Teacher agency" in the analysis
3. Classroom-based research
4. Empirical studies
5. Peer-reviewed journal articles
6. ESL/EFL/bilingual (bilingual when English is the target language) contexts

In the last round of selection, additional sources were identified from the lists of references in the selected articles during the initial stages of review process. We excluded several articles that were originally included because they do not emphasize "teacher agency" in classroom practices (e.g., Benesch, 2018; Dantas-Whitney et al., 2012; Hamid, Zhu, & Baldauf, 2014; Kayi-Aydar, 2015a). As a result, the article selection result was narrowed down to 32 articles. Among the 32 studies, 18 of them were published in 2018, followed by five studies published in 2017. Three studies were published respectively in 2015 and 2016. One source was published in 2009, 2010, and 2012 respectively. This indicates that research on teacher agency has only received attention recently. More detailed information about the focus of the studies and their research questions are presented in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously. When selecting and filtering articles, we also analyzed different components of the selected articles. Once we completed the collection of the 32 articles, we started intensive and systematic data analysis, using both top-down and bottom-up coding systems. According to the research questions we broached, we listed different categories, including theoretical frameworks, contexts, methodologies, methodological challenges, ethical issues, major findings, and implications (Appendix B). This coding system was generated through top-down process to focus on certain aspects of each article. During the process of sorting out different components of each article, we further added and revised (sub)categories that emerged after we read each article. For example, originally we only listed context regarding national settings. After reading each article, we became more specific about the context to not only include national settings but also K-12 as well as rural/urban settings. Upon completion, we arranged several meetings to collaboratively analyze the data and discuss findings. During these meetings, we talked through what we had found and commented for further revision.

Findings

In this section, we mainly focus on answering the first two research questions, namely, (1) What is the nature—concerning theoretical frameworks, contexts, and methodologies—of language teacher agency research in ESL/EFL/bilingual contexts up to 2018? and (2) What are the major findings, methodological and ethical issues, and implications discussed in the selected articles?

RQ1: What is the nature—concerning theoretical frameworks, contexts, and methodologies—of language teacher agency research in ESL/EFL/bilingual contexts up to 2018?

Theoretical Frameworks

A variety of theoretical frameworks and concepts have been applied to the study of teacher agency. Two essential themes have emerged among the 32 studies. First is that in most studies, the concept

of agency is employed to conceptualize teacher agency. For example, in Glas' (2016) study, literature on agency is reviewed first and then followed by the discussion on teacher agency. According to Glas (2016), agency, drawing upon sociocultural theory, is "mediated through psychological (and material) tools that were acquired culturally, through human interaction" and in relation to teacher agency, "the mediational means refer to their repertoire of motivational strategies, their teaching materials, or other tools that help them engage their students" (p. 444). Ilieva and Ravindran (2018) point out that agency is enabled only through the complex interplay among various affordances and constraints emergent in daily practices, and teachers' agentive action is performed in micro-level of activity and constrained by their social-professional environment (pp. 8-9).

Second, among the 32 studies, sociocultural theories and ecological perspectives are the two dominant theoretical stances in the analysis of teacher agency, in addition to "a number of perspectives including Bakhtinian, poststructural, ecological, and postcolonial thought" (Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018, p. 8) and positional theory. Concerning sociocultural theory, Feryok (2012) brings up that what distinguishes different branches of sociocultural theory is "how mediation is conceptualized" (p. 97). For example, Huyen Phan and Hamid (2017), relying on Cross' (2009) policy-as-tool within an activity system, claim that their freedom was constrained by factors like time, resource, and other social factors, even though the lack of implementation schemes granted the teachers freedom to develop their own teaching techniques (pp. 43-44). Newcomer and Collier (2015) perceive agency as a sociocultural concept defined by Barker (2008). Through the lens, agency is explored to understand how values, beliefs, knowledge, and experiences can affect a teacher's act within various contexts (Newcomer & Collier, 2015, p. 163). Feryok (2012), taking Leontiev's (1981) activity theory which addresses the gap between personal meaning and social reality (p. 96), considers how social forces and roles of personal experiences influence a language teacher to develop a sense of agency (p. 95). Activity theory is also applied in studies by Yang (2018) as well as Yang and Clark (2018) to analyze teachers' action within social and historical context of certain activity system and illustrate the interrelationship between belief, agency, and action.

Ecological perspective is evident in several articles (e.g., Glas, 2016; Haneda & Sherman, 2018; Hirver & Whitehead, 2018; Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Leal & Crookes, 2018; Mifsud & Vella, 2018; Vitanova, 2018). In current literature, although agency has been conceptualized as variable, capacity, or phenomenon/doing (Haneda & Sherman, 2018; Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015) in ecological perspective, agency as phenomenon or doing is more widely adopted in the exploration of internal and external factors on teachers' enactment of agency. For instance, Glas (2016) explores both internal and external constraints such as teachers' knowledge, family background, classroom dynamics, teachers' lesson plans and materials, professional support, and more in shaping, enabling and limiting teacher agency. Vitanova (2018) argues that "agency [in ecological perspective] is more of a relational phenomenon and is both positioned within an environment that is occupied by other individuals and is marked by temporality" (p. 28). In other words, an individual's degree of agency relies on situational contexts and different temporal frames. In the study, Vitanova (2018) explores how gender and race as identity social markers shape not only teachers' personal experiences but also their interactions with others and mediate their emerging professional agency.

Contexts

The contexts where these studies were conducted present a diverse picture. Among the 32 studies, 14 situated their investigations in EFL contexts with 11 focusing on participants from South and East Asia (e.g., Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017 in Vietnam; Ishihara, Carroll, Mahler, & Russo, 2018 in Japan; Kang, 2017 in South Korea; Liyanage, Bartlett, Walker, & Guo, 2015 in China) and one from Western Asia (Feryok, 2012 in Soviet Armenia). Studies that are set in other continents are Glas (2016) in Chile and Tutunis and Hacifazlioglu (2018) in Istanbul, Turkey. Additionally, 10 other studies are ESL classroom-based research in English-speaking countries. It is noteworthy that seven of these studies were conducted in the US (e.g., Christiansen, Du, Fang, & Hirvela, 2018; Leal & Crookes, 2018; Newcomer & Collier, 2015) whereas the other ones were located in Australia (Ollerhead, 2010), New Zealand (White, 2018), and Canada (Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018) respectively. Also included in the current investigation are another eight studies centering around bilingual contexts/dual language programs mostly in the US (e.g., Palmer, Henderson, Wall, Zúñiga, & Berthelsen, 2016; Ray, 2009; Wong et al., 2017) with only one exception that is situated in Malta (Misfud & Vella, 2018).

In addition, participants in the identified research include non-native speakers (e.g., Kang, 2017; Nguyen & Bui, 2016) as well as American-born teachers (e.g., Feryok, 2012; Ray, 2009). With

regards to years of teaching in the aforementioned contexts, it ranges from limited teaching experience (e.g., three months in Newcomer & Collier, 2015; little or no teaching experience in Illieva & Ravindran, 2018) to more than 30 years (e.g., Feryok, 2012). Among the selected studies, a majority of the studies specify that the teachers had received certain training of second language teaching by the time of research or were receiving training in teacher preparation programs by the time of data collection (e.g., Varghese & Snyder, 2018).

The school settings also vary across the selected empirical studies. In the dual language/bilingual contexts, most research is administered in kindergarten, preschool, elementary, and secondary classrooms (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Ray, 2009; Varghese & Snyder, 2018). Among these studies, Newcomer and Collier (2015), however, recruited participants both from second to eighth grade and universities. In the ESL contexts, five studies were conducted in university settings, such as a community college in Leal and Crookes (2018), a vocational training college in Ollerhead (2010), and tertiary institutions in Miller and Gkonou (2018). In contrast, some studies in the dual language/bilingual cluster conducted their research in elementary schools (e.g., Colegrove & Zú ñ iga, 2018; Haneda & Sherman, 2018; Kayi-Aydar, 2015b). Note that some studies did not specify the school settings but highlighted the demographics of the language learners in their studies. For instance, in White (2018), even though it is unclear as to what school context in which this study is situated, it identifies that the student group is comprised of immigrant /refugee learners of English. In the EFL contexts, nearly half of the studies were conducted in elementary and secondary schools (e.g., Hiver & Whitehead, 2018; Ishihara et al., 2018; Kang, 2017; Palmer et al., 2016) whereas the other half are college-based (e.g., Feryok, 2012; Tao & Gao, 2017; Yang, 2018; Yang & Clarke, 2018; Zhang, 2018). In addition, Liyanage et al. (2015) examine both secondary school and college settings in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region in China. The geographic environments where these schools are located are mixed, such as urban district (Ray, 2009), remote mountainous area with many ethnic minority groups in Vietnam (Nguyen & Bui, 2016), outskirts of a major Australian city (Ollerhead, 2010), and a suburban context (Zhang, 2018). Note that a few studies highlight the economic and cultural dimensions of the settings, such as the marginalized communities in Colegrove and Zuniga (2018), the disadvantaged Istanbul neighborhoods in Tutunis and Hacifazlioglu (2018), and the high-performance school setting in Ray (2009). Finally, a few studies conduct research in multiple school settings (Liyanage et al., 2015; Newcomer & Collier, 2015; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Palmer et al., 2016).

Methodologies
Research Design

In terms of research design, all the selected studies pursue qualitative inquiries. 25 studies further identify the types of qualitative study. Specifically, 16 of them are qualitative case studies, while five of them are qualitative ethnographic studies (e.g., Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Palmer et al., 2016; Varghese & Snyder, 2018) and three studies use narrative inquiry (Ishihara et al., 2018; Liyanage et al., 2015; Vitanova, 2018). Two studies (Kang, 2017; Tutunis & Hacifazlioglu, 2018) are qualitative study in nature but also utilize quantitative approach in data analysis. For example, Kang (2017) utilizes both interview transcripts and classroom observations to analyze his data, but he also employs quantitative approach "to determine whether the students' learning outcomes in classes where the LP [language play] was constructed were significantly better than those in classes where LP was not constructed" (p. 88). Mifsud and Vella's (2018) study is the only ethnography in research design which is different from qualitative ethnographic study in terms of the "degrees of orientation to theories from anthropology" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 121).

Data Collection Method

Regarding data collection methods used in the selected 32 studies, 25 studies are multi-method in nature, which should be considered as a positive feature as researchers can triangulate their data in different ways to enhance the validity of their studies. Interview is the most common strategy, appeared in 30 studies (in most cases an open-ended, semi-structured format); several studies also mention the language used in interviews (e.g., Feryok, 2012 in English; Glas, 2016 in Spanish; Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017 and Nguyen & Bui, 2016 in Vietnamese). Second most common strategy is classroom observation (n=17), followed by artifacts/documents (e.g., course syllabi, class handouts, students' assignments, curricula vitae, lesson plans, and posts) (n=7), and focus group discussion (n=6). Both field-notes, taken beyond classroom contexts, and survey are used in five studies. Informal conversations, written or digital narratives, journal entries and other (including

meeting or portfolios) are used in fewer than five research studies. Another point worth mentioning is that although various methods are used in the studies, not all of the studies clarify *how* and *why* interviews, classroom observations, and other methods are selected. Some excellent examples (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018) show how this can be achieved.

Most studies used one-on-one oral interviews with their participants to understand their decision-making process and factors influencing their decisions, which in turn is relevant to their exertion of agency. In Feryok's (2012) study, except for oral interviews, he also used semi-structured email interviews although how email interviews were conducted was not explained in the study. Six studies used interviews alone as their data collection method (Glas, 2016; Ishihara et al., 2018; Liyanage et al., 2015; Newcomer & Collier, 2015; Ray, 2009; Venegas-Weber, 2018). In Liyanage et al.'s (2015) study, eight teacher participants were interviewed individually for around 30 to 45 minutes. The interview questions are about those teachers' "(1) experiences of English testing; (2) perceptions of how testing was impacting on them professionally and personally as they dealt with demands of the examination-oriented education system; and (3) beliefs about what effective teachers do" (Liyanage et al., 2015, p. 255).

In Nguyen and Bui's (2016) study, although data were collected and analyzed from both interviews and classroom observations for its larger study, mainly interview data were used for this study. As the authors point out, a variety of topics were explored in interview, including:

> participants' views on the current English LPs [language policies], curriculum, and teacher training, along with students' performance; their own proposals for new or modified policies; their understanding and application of a linguistically and culturally responsive teaching approach; the role of the English language in the province; the roles of students' native languages and Vietnamese; and the influence of English on students' lives, education, and socio-economic opportunities. (Nguyen & Bui, 2016, p. 92)

Salient in these studies is that reflective interviews were used to probe and understand teachers' experiences and decisions they made.

Another finding is that in some studies situated in EFL contexts, interviews were conducted in participants' first languages, and later, interview transcriptions were translated into English. For example, in Kang's (2017) study, "the transcriptions were in Korean, translated into English for reporting" and "[a] professional Korean-English translator confirmed the translations done by the researcher" (p. 87). Similarly, in the study by Huyen Phan and Hamid (2017), the interviews with university English teachers were conducted in Vietnamese, indicating that original interview transcripts were in Vietnamese; nonetheless, the researchers did not clarify how they confirmed their English translations. In other studies, also in EFL contexts, like Liyanage et al. (2015) in China and Feryok (2012) in Armenia, interviews were in English for reasons including participants' advanced English proficiency and researcher-participant not sharing the same first language.

The next popular method used in this body of literature is classroom observations. Nevertheless, compared to relatively richer information about interview data, less information is provided about classroom observations. In many studies, classroom observations are mentioned as part of data collection; nonetheless, details on this data collection method vary across the selected articles. For example, in Ollerhead's (2010) study, classroom observation as a method of data collection was not discussed. Kang (2017) provides a brief introduction about classroom observations with respect to its frequency, "[o]bservations of the classroom were made eight times, once biweekly" (p. 87). More details were not found. An exception is Huyen Phan and Hamid (2017), which is straightforward about the purpose of classroom observations and provides detailed descriptions regarding types of data collected in observations, "[d]ata were gathered on the physical setting of the classes, the people being observed, and teaching and learning activities including the resources, pedagogic styles, curricula and their organisation...These data were descriptive fieldnotes" (p. 45). In analysis, the researchers incorporated data from both interview and classroom observations to support their argument.

Other methods such as survey, documents, focus group discussion, and more are used to collect supplementary data. For example, in Palmer et al.'s (2016) study, the researchers also observed Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE) and State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) related trainings. Through participating in the training along with the teachers, the researchers understood better on the resources teachers received and the potential pressures imposed on them (Palmer et al., 2016, p. 397). A very interesting data collection approach is introduced in Colegrove and Zúñiga's (2018) study in which the researchers used a multivocal, video-cued ethnographic method. Using this method, the researchers experienced several phases of

data collection. First, they had to record videos of their interest; second, they had to edit the video or several videos into a short film around 20 or 30 minutes with subtitles; third, the film was shown to multiple participants, including their teacher participant, students, and parents from the research site to collect interview data. Last, the researchers showed the video to participants from various external sites through focus group interviews. The benefit of this method lies in its involvement with different stakeholders whereas for researchers who are not familiar with technology, it might be a challenge.

Data Analysis

Regarding data analysis in those selected studies, a large portion of the studies emphasizes the iterative and comparative nature of data analysis in a qualitative fashion. To name a few, Feryok (2012) constantly compared the collected data related to the research topic. The author specifies that salient information was identified and (re)organized (p. 99). Nguyen and Bui (2016) emphasize a recursive process that sought patterns, themes, and categories that emerged from data. Similarly, Liyanage et al. (2015) united "recurring ideas and experiences" (p. 256) and repeatedly examined the interview components. Newcomer and Collier (2015) dealt with their data sets both individually and collaboratively. Likewise, Huyen Phan and Hamid (2017) state that the data analysis focused on the (re)interpretation and practice of learner autonomy in the English Language classrooms of the four English lectures (p. 46). Babino and Stewart (2018) utilized "constant comparative method" to examine each concept which led to emerging themes. Also, Zhang (2018) dealt with the transcribed texts repeatedly until preliminary codes were ready.

With regards to the procedures of data analysis, most studies conducted data collection and analysis simultaneously and followed an inductive and interpretive process for analyzing data while some mentioned the inclusion of deductive components (e.g., Venegas, 2018). Thematic analysis with coding and memos is a prominent technique used by the selected studies for data analysis (e.g., Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Ishihara et al., 2018; Li & De Costa, 2017; Liyanage et al., 2015; Mifsud & Vella, 2018; Newcomer & Collier, 2015; Palmer et al., 2016; Tao & Gao, 2017; Varghese & Snyder, 2018; Wong et al., 2017). In particular, Newcomer and Collier (2015) identified and refined patterns and themes as local theory that revealed the constraints faced by teachers while exercising agency (p. 166). Palmer et al. (2016) and Liyanage et al. (2015) specify that their studies included a deductive process. Palmer et. al. (2016) analyzed each school's data set thematically and explored "(dis)confirming evidence" (p. 398) during the identification of possible themes. Liyanage et al. (2015) uncovered recurring themes and meanwhile checked if the evidence fits the themes well.

Notably, conceptual or theoretical frameworks were used in several studies to assist the process of data analysis. For instance, Babino and Stewart (2018) employed theoretical propositions (Yin, 2013, cited in Babino & Stewart, 2018, p. 280) and grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, cited in Babino & Stewart, 2018, p. 280) for guiding their analytic procedures. For another, using activity theory as theoretical framework, Yang and Clark (2018) and Yang (2018) scrutinized the interactions of different activity systems. Similarly, Ray (2009) employed template analysis with *a priori* themes drawing from Bandura's (1989) notion of human agency (p. 126), which allowed the researcher to compare data under a framework.

Discourse analysis is also another analytic tool that appears across several studies (e.g., Christiansen et al., 2018; Colegrove & Zuñiga, 2018; Glas, 2016; Yang & Clark, 2018). Taking Christiansen et al. (2018) as an example, the study utilized "narrative inquiry" to uncover participants' nuanced reflections on their agentive work. For another, in White (2018), data was analyzed relying upon the notion of narrative accounts and stance as "emergent product" through social interactions (p. 582). Similarly, Leal and Crookes (2018) employed a model of teacher agency for social justice for guiding the analytic procedures.

It is worth noting that a few studies used data analysis programs to assist their analysis procedures. For instance, Ray (2009) states that Super Hyper Qual was utilized to analyze a clean data set (p. 120) for a systematic analysis based on the teacher agency template drawn from its theoretical framework. Likewise, Kang (2017) indicates that the statistical procedure of the repeated measurement design was used to determine whether the students' learning outcomes in classes where the LP was constructed were significantly better than those in classes where LP was not constructed (p. 88). Miller and Gkonou (2018) involved qualitative data management software Atlas.ti to inspect the data. Additionally, Tutunis and Hacifazliogulu (2018) conducted analysis of each questionnaire partly from a quantitative analytic tool named Statistical Package for Social Sciences (p. 111).

RQ2: What are the major findings, methodological and ethical issues, and implications discussed in the selected articles?

Major Findings

Through iteratively and comparatively examining the sections of findings in these articles, five thematic categories emerged. Note that in several studies, findings entail aspects that go beyond the realm of teacher agency. For instance, in addition to focusing on teacher agency, findings regarding identity formation are also important in Hiver and Whitehead's (2018) research. In the current investigation, however, only findings that are closely relevant to teacher agency will be addressed. Also important is that the categories proposed by this synthesis may overlap with each other in the sense that some studies cover multiple themes. For instance, Zhang (2018) focuses on teachers' professional development but the findings are partly generated from teacher reflections. As the professional development portion appears more prominent, the current investigation decides to include this article in the category of professional development and agency instead of the teacher reflection category. The following discussion will provide more details concerning the thematic categories and highlight exemplar studies conducted in different language contexts.

Among the 32 studies, 11 explore policy constraints and enactment of teacher agency in classroom practices (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Haneda & Sherman, 2018; Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017). In other words, the participant teachers' adjustments and resistance owing to the constraints of language policies are the major findings in those studies. For instance, in an ESL context, Ollerhead (2010) reveals that policy conditions constrain one participant teacher's "ability to act agentively as a teacher" (p. 616) while the other teacher has more freedom to make pedagogical decisions without receiving training and materials concerning the policies. Along with the same line of research but under a different language context (dual language program), the findings in Babino and Stewart (2018) reveal that the teacher participants who were pressured by the program climate that English is considered as the hegemonic language tried to collectively remodel their language programs in the best interest of their students. Similarly, in Huyen Phan and Hamid (2017) which is under an EFL setting, the findings uncover that teachers, motivated by their sense of responsibility, could empower their students by promoting learner autonomy in micro-level classroom practices under the circumstance of no explicit strategies provided by the macro-level policies.

10 studies focus on factors related to agency and how these factors are translated into classroom actions (e.g., Colegrove & Zúñiga, 2018; Feryok, 2012; Glas, 2016; Kang, 2017). These factors include previous personal experiences in the sociocultural environment, individual characteristics, teacher reflections and perceptions, and teacher and student attitudes and motivations. For instance, Feryok's (2012) study shows the personal experiences of the participant, Nune—as a student, a teacher, and a teacher trainer—deeply influenced her teacher agency and guided her individual actions in her local EFL context (p. 99). Several studies in this category show interest in the interplay of teacher reflections (or perceptions) and agentive actions. In a bilingual context, Ray (2009) examines the characteristics of teacher agency and reveals that teachers' sense of agency—such as mastery and vicarious experience—translates into instructional behaviors as manifestations (p. 128). Focusing on an ESL context, Colegrove and Zúñiga (2018) illustrate that teachers could create spaces for agentive classroom practices for marginalized students when they are not afraid of failures in implementing "dynamic teaching practices" (p. 188). In an EFL setting in Japan, Ishihara et al. (2018) discover that teachers' translingual practices (involving Japanese and Japanese cultures) could be used as a mediational tool to support their "agentive acts" (p. 89) in classrooms.

Discussions in another nine studies are concerned with teacher identity and agency (e.g., Hiver & Whitehead, 2018; Kayi-Aydar, 2015b; Leal & Crookes, 2018). Most studies have unveiled the interactive nature of professional identity development and teacher agency. For instance, Kayi-Aydar's (2015b) study, situated in an ESL context, finds that positioning and repositioning identities play crucial roles in shaping teachers' agentive acts in classrooms. In an EFL context, Li and De Costa (2017) discover that through constructing a teacher identity as someone who focuses on students' knowledge and career needs instead of simply preparing students for tests, teachers are able to exercise their beliefs and make decisions in classroom practices (p. 281). In a dual language context, Venegas-Weber (2018) suggests that developing "linguistic and cultural identities" (p. 165) potentially creates spaces for implementing agency in classrooms.

Two studies—Christiansen et al. (2018) and Zhang (2018)—discuss the interactions of professional development and teacher agency. Specifically, Christiansen et al. (2018) seek to

investigate the relationship between agency and expertise among graduate teaching assistants who teach ESL writing courses. The findings illustrate that professional learning community helps to make strong connections between expertise and teacher agency. Zhang (2018) explores an EFL distance education teacher's agency as a case study and reveals that the teacher copes with the challenges of professional development in the teaching context by developing academically in writing.

Methodological and Ethical Issues

Among the articles selected for analysis, almost half of the studies analyzed (*n*=15) do not explicitly mention any ethical or methodological limitation. The challenges and/or limitations mentioned in the studies are first categorized into ethical or methodological issues. Methodological issues include challenges or limitations encountered *during* or posed *in relation to* data collection, analysis, and reporting of the findings. Some studies (*n*=18) do not mention any methodological limitation or issue. The methodological issues mentioned in the studies are as followings: (1) small sample/data size or short time period, (2) "generalizability" (Yang & Clark, 2018), (3) limitation due to the type of data collected (i.e., data consisting of only self-report without any observation), (4) participant recruitment—recruiting those who showed to be resourceful, (5) limitations of the focus, (6) constraints in data collection, (7) missing themes that are outside of the theoretical framework, (8) decontextualization of data while coding, (9) time lag between the time of event and the interviews, and (10) challenge to report in a coherent and compelling manner "based only on selected excerpts from a fairly extensive dataset" (Hirver & Whitehead, 2018, p. 5).

One key limitation that affects studies on teacher agency is limited sources of data. The limitations on size and/or scope of data are mentioned more often than the others; those limitations relate to issues on generalizability, because the studies involve a relatively small number of participants or are conducted as a case study. Moreover, most of these studies employed interviews as a main method of collecting data. For instance, a number of articles (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Christiansen et al., 2018; Glas, 2016) collected data only from methods that involve self-reports such as interviews, focus groups, journal entries, or surveys without observations, and this poses a challenge that the responses from interviews may not fully portray their agencies as teachers and may not align with their actual performances. Another methodological limitation identified is from transcription. Feryok (2012) pinpoints that all transcription involves omission, and especially due to focusing on content analysis, not many conversational details such as intonation and pauses are included (p. 98). Most of the limitations stated in the studies are not exclusively applicable to research on teacher agency; yet these limitations do relate to research on the topic, especially considering that many of the studies on teacher agency used classroom observation and interviews for data collection.

Ethical issues are not explicitly mentioned in most (*n*=29) of these studies. The studies that mention ethical issues are Feryok (2012), Ilieva and Ravindran (2018), and Kayi-Aydar (2015b). For instance, Feryok (2012) was an instructor of the participants, which could have affected their responses. In order to minimize the effect, Feryok (2012) intended to conduct research as a "private individual" (p. 98), not as how she had been known as the spouse of a Western diplomat. Similarly, Kayi-Aydar (2015b) had the role of a professor of the participants and, thus, the participants could have attempted "to perform particular identities to please" (p. 102); to reduce the effect, the research was conducted *after* the semester was over. Another related limitation is with the recruitment of the participants. Ilieva and Ravindran (2018) explicitly state their "ethical dilemma" (p. 16), that the goal of social justice and equity—the stances that are enacted as a center—is "unstated in materials inviting applicants" (p. 16) to the program.

Several strategies were employed by the authors to address methodological and ethical issues in their studies. Kang (2017), Kayi-Aydar (2015b), and Ray (2009) further elaborate the ways they have exercised with caution. For example, Kang (2017) was extremely careful "to ensure that the interviewees would not be influenced to provide answers preferred by him" (p. 87). Similarly, Ray (2009) indicates several times that the researcher was attentive, especially during the data analysis phase, to "determine whether themes outside of antecedent/manifestation framework emerged from the data" (p. 126). Other strategies include triangulation (Feryok, 2012) by using three sets of data collected through different methods (p. 99) and collaboration with a professional translator for translation of transcripts (Kang, 2017) to address language-related issues.

Implications

Discussions and implications conveyed by the aforementioned studies are multifold, and some prominent ones are synthesized as follows. First, it is discussed that teacher agency is affected by varying factors, including time, resources, and other social factors. Navigating among all those factors, teachers, as change agents of pedagogical reforms, should be empowered while designing, implementing, and evaluating educational policies (Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017; Liyanage et al., 2015; Newcomer & Collier, 2015; Nguyen & Bui, 2016; Ollerhead, 2010). This empowerment is reflected in several ways, such as offering specific policy implementation schemes, providing necessary professional training and teaching resources, and more importantly getting teachers' voices heard at institutional and departmental levels. These ways of empowering teachers in local contexts can enable them to better take control of their work and teach towards meaningful pedagogies (Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017).

It is argued that support from higher levels like school principals or district leadership is one of the most important factors in enhancing teachers' agency (Priestley, 2011), which is also reflected in the studies. Specifically, Babino and Stewart (2018) imply that administrators may use their own agency to enact a collective leadership with teachers to create more equitable assessment decisions. Likewise, Colegrove and Zú ñ iga (2018) suggest that district level should provide space for teachers to expand their pedagogical repertoire through innovative programs like Project-Based Instruction (PBI). These suggestions on leaving space for teacher agency from higher levels are further confirmed by Glas (2016) that "It is necessary for decision-makers at higher levels to regain trust in the capacities of the individual teachers, in their abilities to relate to their students' contexts and to find the most appropriate materials, teaching–learning strategies and evaluation procedures" (p. 459).

Second, multiple implications from the 32 articles are for teacher education and professional training. It is suggested that teacher education should provide more relevant courses responsive to teachers' local contexts and help teachers to develop teaching techniques and methods feasible in their contexts (Kang, 2017; Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Several other studies (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Christiansen et al., 2018; Haneda & Sherman, 2018) suggest that the knowledge base of teacher education should be expanded to include the discussion of teacher agency interacting with other concepts like teacher expertise, teacher roles/identities, and teacher beliefs and to provide space for preservice teachers to develop agency while engaging in reflection (e.g., Colegrove & Zú ñ iga , 2018; Glas, 2016; Miller & Gkonou, 2018; Wong et al., 2017; Yang, 2018) and critical reflection (e.g., Ishihara et al., 2018; Kayi-Aydar, 2015b). This agency-oriented approach to teacher education should "guide student teachers to become more aware of their personal resources and learn to capitalize on them to seize available contextual opportunities" (Tao & Gao, 2017, p. 354).

Third, in terms of professional development, Nguyen and Bui (2016) reveal that participants in their study made their pedagogical changes and take a critical stance as language policy (LP) implementers because of "critical conversations" and their "engagement in the discussion on LP implementation with the researchers and other teachers" (p. 101). Therefore, they suggest more collaborative discussions among teachers within school contexts or a "third space" like "critical friend groups" and "mentoring and peer mentoring" (p. 101) for "critical consciousness and work towards realizing their potential as agents of [transformation]" (p. 101). This suggestion echoes what Palmer et al.(2015) argue in their study that collaborative spaces shape decision-making process (p. 410). Christiansen et al. (2018) propose Professional Learning Community (PLC) which include both expert and novice teachers to promote bidirectional interaction between agency and expertise for professional development. Yang (2018) particularly points to in-service EFL teachers' professional development in China. Yang (2018) proposes that "institutions in China should provide teachers, especially novice teachers, with access to wider professional notions, approaches and discourses about EFL teaching" (p. 50).

Next, future directions for research are also provided. This includes how professional development promotes dual language teachers' agency (Ray, 2009) and how agency is taken among different stakeholders (Palmer et al., 2016). Several studies (e.g., Kayi-Aydar, 2015b; Tao & Gao, 2017) on the connection between teacher identity and teacher agency comment that more research should be done on this topic in the context of educational change. Ishihara et al. (2018) discuss that wider range of teacher experience should be investigated, and Kayi-Aydar (2015b), in particular, suggest that mentor teachers' voice should be heard. A couple of studies, in addition, offer implications for research design. For example, Glas (2016) indicates that teacher and research collaboration on action research and large-scale quantitative study to complement qualitative studies

is needed; Tao and Gao (2017) recommend more longitudinal ethnographic study. Similarly, Babino and Stewart (2018) and Wong et al. (2017) ask for more exploration of comparative case study. Some other studies suggest new lens and approach to research (teacher) agency and theorize teacher agency and teacher identity, like complexity/dynamic systems theory (Hirver & Whitehead, 2018) and new materialism (Hirver & Whitehead, 2018). Last, several studies involving language policies have indicated the misalignment between school, district, community expectations, and language policies, which in turn has affected teacher agency. Therefore, more communication with and coordination from different stakeholders should be established and supported (Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017; Palmer et al., 2016).

Discussion and Conclusion

Teacher agency, although has attracted attention in the education literature in recent years, still remains under-examined in general, even less in ESL/EFL/bilingual language education contexts. However, the selected literature underscores the importance of teacher agency. Nguyen and Bui (2016) point out that "[t]eacher agency is critical to the process of implementing educational changes" (p. 89), and Hamid and Nguyen (2016) claim that "agency is not exactly an exercise of free will; rather, teachers are in a way, forced to exert themselves if they wanted to help students to meet policy goals" (p. 35). Both statements indicate that teachers are essential mediators between macro and micro contexts; yet, the collection of articles in this synthesis conveys that more relevant studies should be conducted and more voices from teachers be heard. Hence, based upon the previous findings on the existing studies, we offer following future directions for research, teacher education, and professional development.

Future Directions for Research

To address the aforementioned issue, this research synthesis attempts to provide further directions for research. Based upon the analyses, several aspects on teacher agency in ESL/EFL/bilingual contexts can be further studied. First, the focus on current literature has been limited to policy and implementation, particularly in EFL contexts (e.g., Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017; Nguyen & Bui, 2016) or educational change (e.g., Liyanage et al., 2015). In bilingual contexts, according to Babino and Stewart (2018), "most bilingual teacher agency research focuses on the single acts of individual teachers at the classroom levels" (p. 273). Consequently, more studies on different topics in different contexts can offer insights to other aspects of teacher agency. Second, the range of contexts examined in those studies could be expanded. It is found that most studies in bilingual contexts have examined teacher agency in elementary contexts (Kang, 2017; Newcomer & Collier, 2015; Ray, 2009; Palmer et al., 2016), half of the studies in ESL contexts are in university level, and around half of studies in EFL contexts have investigated in elementary and secondary contexts. Therefore, little research has been conducted in settings of kindergarten and high schools. In addition, national contexts beyond Vietnam, China, South Korea, United States, and Australia could be studied for further comprehension on teacher agency in this globalized age. Moreover, for bilingual education, California and Texas are the two main contexts in which bilingual education were studied; more states which provide bilingual education should be explored. This is essential because bilingual education in different states vary according to state policy, standards, and demographics..

Third, although interviews and classroom observation are useful methods in data collection in the study of teacher agency, other data collection methods—such as playback sessions, survey, mapping, collecting artifacts, and focus groups—can be used to triangulate and provide data from different angles. Fourth, studies (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Tao & Gao, 2017; Wong et al., 2017) suggest that different qualitative studies, like longitudinal ethnographic study and comparative case study, should be welcomed. Except for qualitative research, quantitative data "might have more persuasive power to counter educational policies that are currently undermining teacher creativity and their (sense of) agency" (Glas, 2016, p. 459); therefore, quantitative research should be encouraged as well. Fifth, although the native and nonnative teacher dichotomy in the discussion of teacher agency in the selected articles is not prevalent, this dichotomy is debated in research on teacher identity which is a construct closely related to teacher agency; therefore, this dichotomy should be discussed more in the study of teacher agency. Beyond this identity, other minority teachers (e.g., Leal & Crookes, 2018 on a queer English language teacher) should gain more attention. Last, although a variety of theoretical frameworks and analytical approaches have been drawn upon to study teacher agency, socio-cultural and ecological perspectives are dominant in research. Hence, more research on other perspectives or the mix of multiple perspectives might be

able to further contribute to the current literature.

Future Directions for Teacher Education and Professional Development

This research synthesis also offers implications for teacher education and professional development. First of all, several articles indicate that teacher education and training should take practitioners' local contexts into consideration, facilitate teachers to incorporate theories, concepts, and pedagogies from global to local contexts (Huyen Phan & Hamid, 2017, p. 52), and help teachers develop teaching techniques and methods feasible in their contexts (Kang, 2017). Second, Nguyen and Bui's (2016) study reveals the "mistrust" (p. 96) between practitioners and teacher educators due to "local and university trainers' lack of understanding of multiculturalism, multiple learning styles, and the socio-economic situations of minority students" (p. 96). To ameliorate this mistrust, teacher educators and teachers should have more communication and understanding of each other's working environment. Third, the selected studies (e.g., Babino & Stewart, 2018; Colegrove & Zú ñ iga, 2018; Glas, 2016) propose that modern educational system should afford teachers more leeway to enact their agency. To achieve the goal, all stakeholders (students, teachers, student families, and other higher levels) who care for humanizing pedagogy should participate in making the changes. For teachers, Leal and Crookes (2018) suggest that they should "develop an awareness of the contradictions between their 'sense of purpose' and the educational and social structures in which their work is located" (p. 38).

Fourth, several studies (e.g., Feryok, 2012; Newcomer & Collier, 2015; Ollerhead, 2010) are indicative of the fact that the enactment of teacher agency is dependent on teachers' experiences, ideas, and beliefs. Huyen Phan and Hamid (2017) state that the awareness of their teacher role and sense of responsibility are essential for students and academic well-being. Therefore, critical examination and reflection of their background and beliefs in teaching and learning might contribute to their awareness of teacher's role as an agent in classrooms. Fifth, adequate training in teacher education and professional development programs should be offered to equip and empower teachers with necessary guidance and support. Last, as language teachers become more professionalized in their work through exercising agency, the concept of teacher agency should be included in teacher education as part of teacher knowledge. Also, continued support for teachers from workplace should be given as agency is shaped by "social interactions and achieved in particular situations" (Mifsud & Vella, 2018, p. 273). In a word, studies on teacher agency should be continued in ESL/EFL/bilingual contexts in order to further understand teachers' agency and active participation in diverse educational settings.

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Appendix A
Focus of Studies and Research Questions

Sources	Focus of Study	Research Questions or Objectives
Babino & Stewart (2018)	Dual Language (DL) teachers enact agency among different tensions [1]as policymakers in the microsystems of their classrooms to truly accomplish DL programs' three-fold goals: bilingualism, biliteracy, and bicultural	RQ1: How do DL teachers perceive their agency as language policy makers in the classroom? RQ2: How do these same DL teachers exhibit a critical

	competence of students and advocate equity for minoritized students	consciousness by acknowledging the tensions and acting on that knowledge?
Christiansen, Du, Fang, & Hirvela (2018)	Three graduate teaching assistants' quest to achieve a desirable level of expertise in teaching second language writing became a contributing factor in their engagement with teacher agency	Within a professional learning community setting, what is the relationship between agency and expertise?
Colegrove & Zúñiga (2018)	A first-grade ESL teacher explores her agency (and that of her students) in implementing and experimenting with project-based instruction (PBI) in her economically, culturally, and linguistically diverse classroom.	How does a first-grade ESL teacher implementing PBI examine her teaching approach in a high-stakes testing environment? In what ways does a first-grade ESL teacher discover agency and that of her students while implementing PBI?
Feryok (2012)	An Armenian EFL teacher's early experiences and actions outside of the professional development classroom influenced her engagement with teacher agency constrained also by local, national, and international contexts	How does a language teacher develop a sense of agency?
Glas (2016)	Reports from 13 Chilean English language teachers' difficulties in motivating their students indicate the relevance between teachers' agency and learner motivation	RQ1:How motivated are students to learn English, according to their teachers' perception? RQ2: What are the reasons they mention to explain either the presence or the absence of learner motivation? RQ3:What contextual constraints and challenges with a potentially negative influence on learner motivation are mentioned by the teachers? RQ4: What internal constraints can be inferred from the teachers' accounts that impede their use of motivational strategies? RQ5: How do contextual and internal constraints interact? RQ6: What spaces for manoeuvre are perceived by

		the teachers that help create and maintain learner motivation in spite of contextual constraints?
Haneda & Sherman (2018)	Elementary ESL teachers' agentive action and redesigning of their work through job crafting to optimally support English learners	RQ1: How did ESL teachers act agentively through job crafting to bring their practice into greater alignment with their conceptua- lizations of what constitutes ESL teachers' work? RQ2: What factors allowed for or hindered their job crafting?
Hirver & Whitehead (2018)	Language teachers' co-construction of a sense of agency and professional identity through their classroom practice	What roles do the phenomenological manifestations of teacher agency in instructional practices play in the process of teacher identity formation?
Huyen Phan & Hamid (2017)	University English teachers' exercise of agency motivated by their sense of responsibility to their students and their academic well-being in micro-macro foreign language policy processes.	To understand how teachers (re)interpret and appropriate the concept of LA, how they empower learners in the EFL classroom through involving them in the decision-making process, creating opportunities for learners' self-reflection and optimising learner's target language use in the EFL class
Ilieva & Ravindran (2018)	International graduate students' co-construction of teacher identity and teacher agency when engaging with native speaker ideology and tensions in reconciling teaching goals and	To understand the material effects of one teacher education program on enactments of agency by program graduates

	professional contexts	
Ishihara, Carroll, Mahler, & Russo (2018)	Two former assistant language teachers' agency construction through drawing on linguistic and cultural resources from both English and Japanese	RQ1: How was teacher agency constructed, constrained, and (re)negotiated discursively in relation to their positioning by others in the local context? RQ2: How was the teachers' translingual practice related to the negotiation of their agency?
Kang (2017)	The complex bi-directional influence between teacher/learner agency and Language Play (LP) production which is related to teacher authority and inter-student power	RQ1: How do an elementary school NNEST and her EFL students construct LP in their classroom? RQ2: What are the underlying factors for such construction of LP?
Kayi-Aydar (2015b)	The influence of three pre-service classroom teachers' identity (re)negotiations on teachers' agency, interactions and classroom practice	How do teachers of ELLs position themselves and (re)negotiate identities in relation to their social context in their accounts of experiences and how do such positionings interact with their agency?
Leal & Crookes (2018)	A queer English language teacher's exercise of agency with marginalized identities for social justice and the analyses were through four aspects: "sense of purpose," "competence," "autonomy," "reflexivity"	RQ1: What is Jackson's "sense of purpose" (as defined by Pantic) when exercising agency for social justice in the classroom? RQ2: What are the conditions, as understood by Jackson (Pantic's "competence"), supportive of her exercising agency for social justice in the classroom? RQ3: How does Jackson exercise agency (Pantic's "autonomy") for social change in the classroom?

Li & De Costa (2017)	An EFL English teacher's negotiation of her professional identity in relation to the exercise and investment of her professional agency within the affordances and constraints of the given work context	RQ1: How did Ms. Q negotiate her teacher identity in relation to contextual affordances and constraints at her school? RQ2: How did Ms. Q's exercise of teacher agency affect the ways in which she negotiated her teacher identity?
Liyanage, Bartlett, Walker, & Guo (2015)	Inner Mongolian English language teachers' exercise of agency amidst the instructional demands of an exam-oriented community, and a misalignment created by an exam remaining centered on discrete skills rather than students' proficiency in language use within New English Syllabus expectations	To determine how teachers' professional practices are mediated by an examination-success-oriented mind-set of the public, curricular and policy directives, and teacher agency.
Mifsud & Vella (2018)	Two Maltese preschool teachers' agency and mediation of languages in their bilingual classrooms, which are influenced by the teachers' background and language beliefs, the sociolinguistic context (national and local), as well as the school language policies	To reflect on how two teachers of bilingual preschool classrooms in Malta were agentive in their language mediation strategies and to uncover the complex interplay of personal beliefs about language, classroom practices, and the individual needs of learners
Miller & Gkonou (2018)	Language teachers' agentive exercise of emotion and the role of emotion labor in producing emotional rewards in the teaching practice of English language teachers employed by tertiary-level institutions in the U.S. and U.K.	RQ1: What are the most common emotions experienced by tertiary-level English language teachers while teaching? RQ 2: How is teacher agency enabled and constrained in teachers' emotion labor? RQ 3: How does their exercise of agency, through emotion labor, lead to emotional rewards? RQ 4: How can teachers' reported emotions and emotion labor be understood from the perspective of ethical self-formation and teaching-as-caring?
Newcomer & Collier (2015)	Elementary teachers and teacher educators' exercise of agency in their interpretation and implementation of Arizona's model	To show how teachers exercise agency to counter some of the restrictions associated with Arizona's

	of Structured English Immersion (SEI)	specific SEI program, the 4-hour ELD model
Nguyen & Bui (2016)	Vietnamese English language teachers' agency in response to the national English Language Education Policy reforms at the local level	RQ1: What are teachers' attitudes towards the government-initiated English policies in Vietnam? RQ2: To what extent do the teachers possess the capacity for change in accordance with Fullan's (1993) theory on change agentry?
Ollerhead (2010)	Investigation of two adult ESL teachers' interpretation and response to Australia's Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Program (LLNP) policy through their diverging backgrounds and pedagogical and personal attitudes and beliefs	To examine specific policy-driven constraints and enablements experienced by each teacher in the course of her teaching work
Palmer, Henderson,Wall, Zúñiga, & Berthelsen (2016)	Two schools' teams of third grade teachers worked together to negotiate the intersection of DLBE implementation and high stakes accountability pressures	How do two teams of 3rd grade bilingual teachers negotiate the intersection of two-way dual language program implementation and high stakes standardized testing?
Ray (2009)	The characteristics of teacher agency at an academically successful Dual Language (DL) elementary school, including the identification of the factors that inform teachers' sense of agency (antecedents) and the instructional behaviors that result from that sense of agency (manifestations)	What are the characteristics of teacher agency at an academically successful dual language school?
Tao & Gao (2017)	The interaction of teacher agency and identity commitment of Chinese university L2 teachers that facilitates professional development during curricular reform	RQ1: How did teachers enact agency in facilitating professional development during curricular reform? RQ2: How did their identity commitment mediate teachers' enactment of agency to facilitate their professional development during curricular reform?

Tutunis & Hacifazlioglu (2018)	30 language teachers' reflective practices on the development of a sense of agency in disadvantaged neighborhoods in İstanbul, Turkey	RQ1: What are the initial challenges encountered by the English teachers in the first two years of their teaching to young learners in disadvantaged neighborhoods? RQ2: How do English teachers overcome the initial challenges? RQ3: What are the reflection experiences of English teachers before and after training?
Varghese & Snyder (2018)	Four pre-service teachers' development of professional identities and sense of agency as dual language teachers in the interactions with the teachers' personal linguistic,racial,and cultural backgrounds and external affordances, including their own language ideologies and those present in their contexts	To examine how four teachers in a mainstream elementary teacher education program (TEP) develop their sense of agency and figured worlds of dual language teaching
Venegas-Weber (2018)	The complexity of teachers' professional identity development and their possibilities for agency within nepantla, focusing on their negotiating of their linguistic and cultural identities as English-or Spanish-only teachers in a dual language program with a strict language separation model	RQ1: How do Chicanx/Latinx bilingual teachers' learning and development within nepantla shape their professional identity as bilingual and bi/multicultural teachers? RQ2: How does this professional identity interact with their agency?
Vitanova (2018)	ESL teachers'micro-aspects of emergent agency mediated by causative social factors, like gender, race, and culture	**Centrall question:** How do social factors such as gender and race mediate teachers' emergent agencies? **Other related questions** are: As teachers' agency emerges, how do these identity markers influence their relationships with others, for example, colleagues, students, or superiors? How does the past affect their future choicesdboth personal and professionaldas revealed through storytelling?
White (2018)	The interrelationships between emotion and agency from a dialogical perspective in multiple accounts of an incident of emergent	To examine the interrelationships between agency and emotion in teacher narrative accounts

	conflict in an L2 class for immigrants and refugees	
Wong, Athanases, & Banes (2017)	Through self-reflexive and student-learning inquiries to examine a bilingual teacher's teaching practices and agentive decision-making in a dual-language program	RQ: How, and to what degree, did one bilingual educator leverage self-reflexive and student-learning inquiry as resources for decision-making and teaching?
Yang (2018)	Teachers' agency in resolving the contradiction between their beliefs and their practices in regard to EFL reading instruction in a Chinese university from an activity theory perspective	To analyse the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teacher agency within a joint-activity system, including the activity systems of the teachers, their students and the departmen
Yang & Clark (2018).	EFL teachers' pedagogical agency in implementing College English curriculum reform from an activity theory perspective within and between the macro policy initiation level, the university implementation level, and the teacher's classroom level	To investigate teacher pedagogical agency in implementing College English curriculum reform in the wider Chinese context
Zhang (2018)	A Chinese suburban English writing teacher' s exercise of his agency while encountering multiple constraints in systemic functional linguistics-based distance education	RQ1: How does the teacher develop himself through SFL-based distance education? RQ2: How does the teacher conduct follow-up writing instruction on his own?

Appendix B
An Example of Coding and Data Analysis

Article	Theoretical frameworks	What is the Methodology?				Ethical issues	Methodological challenges
		Research design	Methods	Data collection	Data analysis		

Ray (2009)	theory of emergent interactive agency, described in Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory. Human agency means people change their situations or themselves through intentional actions determined by the interplay of behavior, internal personal factors, and external environment (Ray, 2009, p. 116).	qualitative instrumental case study approach	interview	"Data were collected through a series of semistructured interviews. Each participant was interviewed once, with interviews lasting from 1 to 3 hours" (p. 126).	"The clean data set was put into SuperHyperQual (Padilla, 2004) and analyzed using template analysis" (p. 120)	Not mentioned in the article	"A potential limitation of this style of analysis is the chance of missing themes that do not fit within the framework" (p. 126). "Although the sample size for this study is small, these findings suggest agentic factors that may be associated with high student achievement" (p. 135) "Another potential limitation has to do with the coding process itself. By removing fragments of text for use in the coding process, it is possible that the data might lose some of their meaning. This threat of decontextualization is countered by both the researcher's attention to detail and the need to amalgamate the data" (p. 136).

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