Student Teachers' Initial Professional Identity: A Case in an EFL Teacher Education Program

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Abstract: Student teachers enter teacher education programs with existing values, beliefs, and knowledge about teaching. However, little is known about the significant resources that shape this initial professional identity. Additionally, there is a lack of understanding regarding how first-year student teachers depict their initial professional identity in the context of Indonesia. This case study examines the initial professional identity of 23 first-year Indonesian student teachers in an English as a Foreign Language Teacher Education Program (EFLTEP) in Indonesia. Utilizing Esteban-Guitart's Funds of Identity theory, data were collected through participants' narratives via significant circles, self-portrait drawings and interviews. Data were analysed using content analysis and thematic analysis. The findings reveal two identity-shaping trends (significant others, religion, and positive values; past experiences) and three identity portrayals (motivated-self, role-model teacher, and aspiring teacher). The study offers operational insights for teacher education in Indonesia and methodological considerations for studying professional identity.

Keywords: initial professional identity, student teachers, funds of identity, EFL teacher education program

Introduction

Teacher education programs play a critical role not only in developing student teachers' knowledge and skills related to their future profession as a teacher, but also in their professional identity as an educator (Yazan, 2017). In relation to this, professional identity has been emphasized as a critical study both in the field of education in general and teacher education field in particular (Beijaard et al., 2004; Richards, 2021; Yazan, 2018). Teacher identity is regarded as a central element in the process of becoming a teacher and an inseparable component of the teacher learning journey (Richards, 2021). In this case, the process of developing or

(re)constructing professional identity as a future educator in a teacher education program is considered a complex undertaking and a critical journey for a teacher candidate. Having a better understanding on the factors shaping student teachers' professional identity (re)construction is thus pivotal (Banegas et al., 2021).

Student teachers' professional identity formation is, however, not only influenced by their learning to teach journey in teacher education program but also their previous lived experiences. Studies reported that student teachers' former experiences become the influencing factors of their professional identity development at the later stages of their professional growth (Hahl & Mikulec, 2018; Le Huu Nghia & Ngoc Tai, 2017; Yazan, 2018). Upon starting their study, student teachers have preliminarily formed their initial professional identity; their early values, beliefs, and knowledge regarding teaching profession (Olsen, 2016; Yazan, 2018). Being conversant with this rudimentary yet essential professional identity is pivotal for not only the student teachers but also teacher educators geared towards the betterment in facilitating student teachers' professional growth during pre-service education.

Understanding first-year student teachers' initial professional identity provides insight into what they bring to the EFL teacher education program (EFLTEP). This information helps teacher educators better facilitate their professional growth. This embryonic identity is shaped by individual and social factors from their past experiences (Banegas et al., 2021), becoming key resources for their professional identity. Recognizing these resources enables teacher educators to offer suitable teaching approaches and materials to develop their knowledge and skills.

Understanding prospective teachers' professional identity is crucial given the longstanding issue of professionalism among Indonesian EFL teachers. According to Waterworth (2016), their professionalism is significantly lower than in other ASEAN countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. This low professionalism contributes to students' poor English proficiency (Muslim et al., 2020). Zein et al. (2020) highlighted the urgent need to improve teacher professionalism in Indonesian language education. Thus, investigating professional identity is critical. Although Indonesian scholars are beginning to focus on professional identity development (Afrianto, 2015; Hidarto & Christine, 2021; Kuswandono, 2013; Riyanti, 2017; Usman et al., 2021), there is a lack of studies on first-year EFL student teachers' initial professional identity. This paper aims to enhance understanding of this issue.

Student Teachers' Professional Identity

Student teachers' journey of learning to teach in pre-service education is a crucial stage in the development of their professional identity (Izadinia, 2013; Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019; Yazan, 2018). This stage includes the development of attributes necessary for teaching practice and ethics. Teacher education programs not only provide subject-oriented proficiency and pedagogical competence but also shape student teachers' identities (Yazan, 2017). As student teachers develop and shape their identities throughout their education, their learning journey and identity interact and shape each other (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Nguyen & Dao, 2019; Yazan, 2018). Therefore, student teachers' professional identity is constructed and reconstructed during their journey of learning to teach.

Professional identity itself is a crucial factor in how teachers view themselves and approach their pedagogical practices, influencing their commitment, beliefs, motivation, and

values (Pennington & Richards, 2016; Richards, 2021). In language teacher identity research, learning to teach has been highlighted as an essential stage in shaping language teachers' life experiences and professional identity (Aneja, 2016; Yazan, 2018). Thus, it is important for teacher educators to navigate and facilitate student teachers' professional identity development, particularly in the early phase of teacher education program.

Student teachers bring accumulated experiences, values, memories, and beliefs to their initial teacher education, which impact their learning journey during and after pre-service education (Olsen, 2016; Yazan, 2018). These components form their emerging identity and shape their interpretation and understanding of learning to teach experiences during pre-service education (Yazan, 2018). Their initial beliefs and portrayal of a good teacher influence their professional identity and further learning and development during pre-service education (Sutherland et al., 2010).

Funds of Identity

Funds of identity, introduced by Saubich and Esteban-Guitart (2011) and developed by Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a), is based on the funds of knowledge approach, which defines aspects of an individual's identity. This approach is important in culturally responsive education (Moll & González, 2004; Hogg & Volman, 2020). Funds of identity are semiotic resources that are historically accumulated, culturally developed, and socially distributed, essential for defining and expressing oneself (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). They are not confined to an individual's mind but are situated, distributed, and shared among people, objects, actions, and settings (Esteban-Guitart, 2021). In constructing identity, cultural resources such as language, artifacts, and ideologies play a role. This concept views identity as a culturally mediated social phenomenon, focusing on meaningful relationships, settings, experiences, cultural tools, and symbols (Hedges, 2020).

Each person's funds of identity are unique semiotic resources used to define them (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a). These include objects, people, or activities from lived experiences (Poole, 2020; Subero, 2020). Five categories of funds of identity are identified by Esteban-Guitart (2012): 1) institutional (e.g., school, sport club); 2) cultural artifacts (e.g., coursebook, computer); 3) geographical (e.g., places); 4) social (e.g., teachers, parents); and 5) practical (e.g., reading, studying). Banegas et al., (2021) expand the typology with valuative (God, responsibility), disciplinary (teaching experience, knowledge of ELT), and anticipatory funds (future students, future colleagues) based on their study on student teachers' professional identity. Funds of identity theory emphasizes the significance of life experiences in identity development (Hedges, 2020).

According to Esteban-Guitart & Moll (2014b), funds of identity serve not only as a means of defining and presenting oneself but also as portable resources utilized for teaching purposes that enable linkages between different learning settings and activities. The theory helps teachers to understand their students by recognizing their identity construction based on previous knowledge and skills developed through lived experiences (Banegas et al., 2021) including meaningful aspects of their social, cultural, and historical background. This understanding is crucial in shaping and developing students' identity in educational settings.

In this study, we operationalize the definition and classification of funds of identity (Esteban-Guitart, 2012, 2014; Banegas et al., 2021) to identify components employed by first-

year EFL teacher candidates to construct their initial professional identity. EFLTEPs are paramount for developing student teachers' professional identity. Funds of identity can reveal the components shaping their professional identity and how it evolves (Banegas et al., 2021).

Student Teachers' Professional Identity Studies in Indonesian Context

Over the last decades, the study of prospective English teachers' professional identity has sparked interest among researchers including Indonesia. Nevertheless, the number of such studies in Indonesian setting is still very limited. Some of the noteworthy studies include Afrianto (2015), Kuswandono (2013), and Riyanti (2017) who explored the significance of practicum experiences in shaping student teachers' professional identity and contributing to the growth of aspiring teachers' professional capabilities. More recent studies explored specific programs like in-service teachers' support (Usman et al., 2021) and teacher camp programs (Hidarto & Christine, 2021) in identity formation.

Kuswandono (2013) examined reflective practices among preservice teachers on Java Island, while Afrianto (2015) investigated motivations and influences on identity formation in Sumatra. Riyanti (2017) studied pre-service EFL teachers' identity construction during training, highlighting differences between university and school expectations. Hidarto & Christine (2021) found positive changes in perception after a teacher camp, and Usman et al. (2021) emphasized the need for school support in identity development. These studies, while valuable, mainly focus on identity development through teaching experiences and specific programs, leaving aspects like first-year student teachers' initial identity largely unexplored.

Given the lack of professionalism among Indonesian teachers and the limited study on preservice teachers' professional identity, conducting research in this area is crucial. It will contribute to the growth of professionalism among Indonesian EFL prospective teachers, ultimately influencing the professionalism of EFL teachers in Indonesia. As teacher educators responsible for EFL teacher candidates' quality, we recognize the importance of facilitating their professional growth. Investigating student teachers' early professional identity will aid in expediting their development during their EFLTEP journey. Therefore, this study examines the initial professional identity of first-year student teachers in an EFLTEP in Indonesia. It is particularly intended to answer the following questions:
1)   What are the components forming first-year Indonesian EFL student teachers' initial funds of professional identity?
2)   How do first-year Indonesian EFL student teachers portray their initial professional identity as English teacher candidates?

Methods

This study presents findings describing the initial professional identity of a group of Indonesian EFL student teachers commencing their first year in an EFLTEP at a private university in East Java, Indonesia. Following the purpose of this study which investigates a particular group in a specific context, a case study approach (Cohen et al., 2018) is utilized for its appropriateness as a "phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, P.25). The bounded case represents in this study is the first-year student

teachers' narratives on their initial professional identity as the candidates of English teachers in Indonesia.

Data were collected at the beginning of 2022 academic year purposively from a cohort of 23 first-year Indonesian student teachers consisting of 16 female and 7 male students. All 23 participants are Indonesian natives from several different ethnicities and regions in Indonesia and were about to start the first week of their teacher education journey. The student teachers involved in this research were registered in an EFLTEP bachelor degree program for EFL teaching. The EFLTEP particularly provides a four-year initial teacher training program as a preparation before the teacher candidates are eligible to teach English in secondary schools in Indonesia.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data triangulation was done through the collection of data involving multiple approaches. Four research instruments were administered to collect the participants' narrative data included significant circle drawing, self-portrait drawing, focused group interview and individual interview. The significant circle and self-portrait (Bagnoli, 2009; Banegas et al., 2021; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014a; Leavy, 2019) drawings are forms of visual elicitation technique (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) which are also known as art-based techniques (Leavy, 2019). Their utilization is intended to collect multimodal narrative data and particularly suggested by Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014a) for investigating their funds of identity. To be specific, the significant circle drawings provide the main data concerning the components forming the participants' initial funds of professional identity. Meanwhile, the self-portrait drawings produce the main data depicting the participants' initial professional identity. In addition, the spoken narratives from the interviews generate richer data source allowing a greater depth of analysis and understanding of the information.

After obtaining informed consent, we conducted a focused group interview to gather participants' thoughts on the teaching profession and being English teachers in Indonesia. This was followed by significant circle drawing and self-portrait drawing. For the significant circle, participants drew a circle and listed their most significant resources as student teachers, placing the most important resource in the center. For the self-portrait, participants drew themselves as future English teachers, using any signs, symbols, or notes to represent their identity. Individual interviews were then scheduled to discuss their drawings. These semi-structured interviews, lasting 15-20 minutes, were conducted in both Indonesian and English. The group interview was video recorded, and the individual interviews were audio recorded. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English.

To analyze the data, content analysis (Cohen, et al., 2018) and thematic analysis (Barkhuizen, et al., 2014) were utilized. Content analysis was used to identify the participants' funds of professional identity while thematic analysis was employed to find the 'themes' which are based on commonalities, relationships, and differences gained from the participants' spoken narratives. Before engaging in the coding, all authors read and re-read the interview transcripts. The process of coding the spoken narrative data included open, axial, and selective coding stages respectively. In addition, concerning the identification of funds of identity components from the participants' drawings, the coding responded to Esteban-Guitart's (2012, 2014) funds of identity category and Banegas et al., (2021) expanded classification. After re-examining the transcripts for categorizing the emerging themes, we discussed and compared our analysis and identified the

connection between the themes and the categories emerged. Upon reaching an agreement of the emerging categories and themes, we finally made the interpretations of their interconnections.

Ethical Issues and Trustworthiness

Ethical considerations which include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were taken into account. Therefore, prior to data collection participants were informed about the study and provided with informed consent forms. We assured that their participation was voluntary and the data collected from them were treated confidentially. We informed the participants that their narratives would be returned by email to allow them to validate and make any necessary changes to their statements. Further, in presenting the data, pseudonyms were used to guarantee that there were no personal data exposed.

To ensure the trustworthiness, we took steps to eliminate any power imbalances in this study. The interaction between researchers and participants was characterized by equality rather than hierarchy. In addition, the participants were explicitly involved at several stages of the research to ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis and findings through participants' validation.

Findings

The Components Forming First-year Indonesian EFL Student Teachers' Initial Funds of Professional Identity

This section presents data from significant circle drawings and individual interviews to answer the first research question. The data, analyzed using Esteban-Guitart's (2012, 2014) and Banegas et al.'s (2021) typologies, revealed dominant funds of identity including: social (e.g., parents, family, friends), valuative (e.g., God, attitude, responsibilities), practical activities (e.g., listening to music, studying), anticipatory (e.g., future self, future students); and the less dominant funds: institutional (e.g., former school, college), cultural artifacts (e.g., books, smartphone), disciplinary (e.g., pedagogical knowledge, language skills), and geographical (e.g., hometown). The most dominant social funds were parents or family, and the most dominant valuative funds were attitude and God, highlighting their influence on the initial professional identity of first-year Indonesian EFL student teachers. Results also showed that family or parents and God were the most central for the majority of participants, reflecting their fundamental roles in shaping the identity.

Overall components of Funds of professional identity				Most central components			
Types of Funds	*Freq*	*Funds of Identity*	*Freq*	*Types of funds*	*Freq*	*Funds of identity*	*Freq*
Social funds	20	Parents/family	20	Social funds	13	Parents/family	13
		Friends/closed person/partner	9	Valuative funds	6	God	5
		Teacher	6			Attitude	1
Valuative funds	19	Attitude	14	Practical funds	2	Studying/ Learning	2
		God	10	Anticipatory funds	1	Future students	1
		Discipline	4	Institutional funds	1	College	1
Practical funds	13	Studying	9				
		Listening to music	5				
		Reading	3				
		Watching movies	3				
Anticipatory funds	9	Future students	6				
		Future self as a teacher	3				
		Study achievement	3				
Institutional funds	7	College	5				
		Former school	4				
Cultural funds	6	Books	6				
		Money	4				
		Technology/ technological devices	4				
Disciplinary	6	Knowledge	5				
		English skills	4				
Geographical	3	Hometown	2				
		Local coffeeshop	1				

Table 1: the components of student teachers' initial funds of professional identity

Our analysis of the initial professional identity of 23 first-year student teachers revealed two patterns: 1) the dominant role of significant others, religion, and positive values; and 2) the influence of past experiences. Parents and family were the most significant social funds, reflecting the first pattern. Valuative funds like God and positive attributes associated with teaching were also important. Considering the second pattern, during individual interviews, participants mostly cited past experiences to explain their identity formation. Exemplar student teachers Niko and Anita (pseudonyms) are presented to illustrate this finding. They were chosen for their detailed comments about their significant circle.
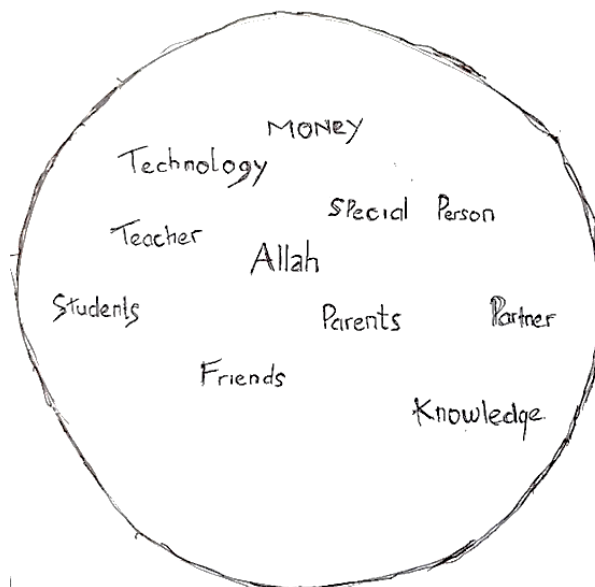
Niko's Significant Circle

Figure 1: Niko's significant circle

Niko placed 'Allah' (God) in the center of his significant circle. Besides, his significant circle also consisted of six social funds of identity (parents, teacher, friends, special person, partner), two cultural artifacts funds (money, technology), one disciplinary fund (knowledge), and one anticipatory fund (students). In relation to his identity as a student teacher of English, Niko kept emphasizing God's role in his educational journey. Before finally registered in the EFLTEP, he tried to apply for a bachelor degree in Primary School Teacher Education at a state university through SBMPTN (Joint Entrance Selection of State Universities) two years in a row and failed. When he became a student at the EFLTEP he realized that this was destined for him; to be an English teacher, not a primary school teacher:

> I was able to get to this university, I think it was thanks to God, my God,
> because I think I've been uh... I was not accepted at that state university twice, I
> was not accepted twice. Now, maybe Allah has another way, maybe it means
> that this is the path I have to take.

In relation to his significant others featured in the circle, Niko emphasized that teachers are important for their students due to their role in sharing and transferring the knowledge that they have. Niko further explained how his former teacher at secondary school had given strong influence on his identity:

> There was a teacher that had influenced me a lot. He was not an English
> teacher, but the way he taught his students was so inspiring for me. The way he
> taught was like, uhm, it was so good, it was easy for the students to understand.
> His style in teaching was relaxing and also fun. So, the students were happy
> being taught by him. That's what inspired me to be a teacher.

Considering the significance of his parents, it is interesting to note that although Niko's father is an English teacher, it was not him who had particularly inspired Niko in how he wanted to be a teacher. For Niko, his parents' role was more in form of mental, motivational, and financial supports:

> *...for me, parents are important because they are the ones who pay everything for me. They also support me to be able to study, because, before, since I was not accepted at the state university, I actually wanted to work. However, they wanted me to have a higher education. So, in the end, it was because of them. It was because of their support.*

Niko's description of his significant circle also foregrounded his previous lived experiences. In his individual interview, Niko kept referring to his past experiences in describing his funds of identity. He emphasized God's role by referring to his failure in the state university selection, described his former teacher's influence on his motivation to be a teacher, and underlined how his parents had supported him throughout his previous struggles. The components forming his initial professional identity was built following not only the first but also the second pattern.

Anita's Significant Circle

Figure 2: Anita's significant circle

Anita's funds of identity illustrate how her past experiences have shaped her initial professional identity as an English student teacher. In her individual interview, Anita frequently referred to her past experiences. Waiting seven years to continue her studies in the EFLTEP was monumental for her, making her especially grateful for the opportunity. Her significant circle placed learning English at the center, surrounded by valuative funds (God, attitude, principle, character), social funds (parents, big family, two close friends), and a cultural artifact fund (money). Explaining her central fund, Anita emphasized her long-time interest in English, developed since childhood, and stated her goal was not only to become a teacher but also to learn more about the language.

Further, when explaining the valuative fund (God) included in her significant circle, Anita recalled her past experience of being unable to directly continue her study to university:

I wrote "God" here because in my life I have experienced a lot before. My graduation year was in 2015, that means it's been quite a while, sir. If you count from the current year to the last year, it's been 7 years, sir. Those 7 years, there must be question why I didn't go to college in those previous years, right? There were many reasons.

She explained further that besides some other obstacles, she had to delay her study for several years mainly because she had to give the chance to her younger sisters first. Being the older sister in the family, she believed that it was wiser for her to let her younger sisters get the chance to go to college before her. She had ten siblings and she realized that her parents could not afford to send their children to college every single year. Therefore, she had to wait and be patient. She believed that God would give her the best time for her to pursue her dream:

...why is it only now that I can go to college? Because of God, sir. For others, being able to go to college may be just a common thing. But for me, the college opportunity that I got this year is a miracle. Because this is something I have been waiting for, dreaming about, longing for, since I graduated (from senior high school) in 2015. After so many years, after waiting for this, I'm finally here. So, I think it's a gift, a blessing from God.

Anita's description about God's role in her journey to become a student teacher in the EFLTEP was strongly associated with her past experience. Further, describing the importance of her parents in relation to her journey as a student teacher that had just been started, Anita said:

...to me they are everything. In addition to the first one, God, who has given gifts, blessings, paths, there are also parents. It was because so far, up to this point, my happiness is also their happiness. When I was not able to go to college, I was sad, they were sad too. Now that I am in college, they must be proud. Even though everything is just starting from scratch. But surely, they will always support me and keep on giving their best.

Anita's constant reference to her previous lived-experiences continued further to her description about her parents being one of her funds of identity. She, again, mentioned the unfavorable situation in the past which affected not only her but also her parents. Anita's parents big influence in the past continued to the present time and became the fuel for her motivation in learning in the EFLTEP.

First-year Indonesian EFL Student teachers Portrayal of Their Professional Identity as Future English Teacher Candidates

The second research question analyzed the student teachers' self-portraits, revealing a common theme of motivated-self for those depicting themselves as students, and two themes for those depicting their future as English teachers. The motivated-self theme highlighted the importance of social and valuative funds in driving enthusiasm for their preservice teacher education. The two future-self themes were role-model teacher and aspiring teacher, reflecting anticipatory, valuative, and disciplinary funds. Exemplar student teachers Zifana, Shalfa, and Murni (pseudonyms) illustrate each theme.

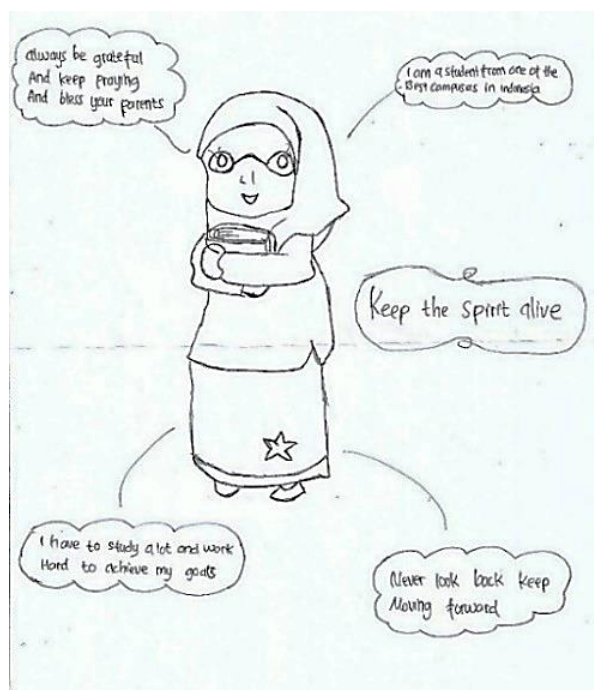***Zifana's Self-portrait***

Figure 3: Zifana's self-portrait

In her self-portrait, Zifana depicted herself as a student who was ready to start her journey in the EFLTEP to prepare herself as a future teacher candidate. She showed that she was enthusiastic for her study despite all the challenges she had and all that she had been through in the past. It was important to note that her motivation and enthusiasm were fueled by her significant others (parents):

> *So, for this one: 'keep the spirit alive', always excited and enthusiastic for what I'm doing right now as a student here, that's what I mean. Even though I am far away from my parents, they have always supported me, they have also paid for my study. Therefore, even if the study in this EFLTEP might seem difficult, I still have to be enthusiastic. Therefore, I won't give up, that's what I mean.*

Both Zifana's parents lived far away from her. Her mother was a migrant worker in Hongkong while her father worked in Jakarta. She was carried away when talking about her parents. However, she believed that they always supported her and whatever they did was to provide a better future for her. Hence, for Zifana, her study in the EFLTEP to become a future teacher was dedicated for her parents; to make them proud of her. All the hardships in her youth for being separated from both parents was not something she hoped for, yet she did not want to dwell herself on this unfortunate situation. Instead, she wanted to consider that as past chapter; a learning experience for the betterment of her future:

> *…I mean, I will never look back and I will keep moving forward. So, it's like let the past be the past. What I have experienced is a chapter of my life journey.*
> *…Then, it is related to 'I have to keep learning to achieve my goals', I mean, without learning, we don't... I mean, our insight will not develop, in my opinion, sir, so we have to keep learning.*

She also showed her optimism for her recently started learning journey as a student teacher in the EFLTEP. She was enthusiastic to learn and to achieve her goal which is to be an English teacher emphasizing that she had made the right decision by studying in the EFLTEP. Further, Zifana also underlined that besides her parents, God also played critical role in her initial professional identity:

> *I always try to be grateful and always remember to pray to God. For this one, it is according to our own religion. I do believe that whatever happens in this world, including my journey in this EFLTEP, it is destiny from God. But people are different, right? Some of us want to worship, some don't. So, it depends on ourself, but I try to always pray to God. Even though there are times when I don't do the prayers, but for me the important thing is the intention.*

Zifana's zestful spirit and highly motivated mindset in her premier stage of learning to become a future teacher featured the pivotal of God and her significant others. Her enthusiasm and excitement to commence the learning journey as a student teacher in the EFLTEP were particularly fueled by her social and valuative funds of identity.
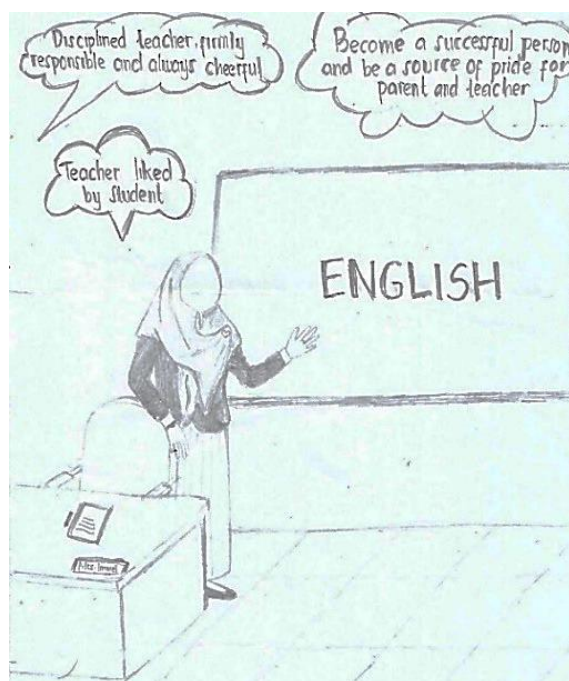
Shalfa's Self-portrait

Figure 4: Shalfa's self-portrait

In her self-portrait, Shalfa depicted her imagined future-self as a teacher who can become a role model for her students. She emphasized on the importance of setting good examples for students by showing good attitudes and positive values:

> *I want to be a teacher who is disciplined, firm, responsible, and always cheerful. What would it be if the teacher is not disciplined, right? There's a saying: a teacher is a role model for his/her students. ...a teacher must be firm so she will be appreciated. So, the students will be respectful toward the teacher. ...and*

then, be responsible. Make sure that if we are given the mandate to become a teacher, we must be responsible. …always be happy and cheerful. It's like, for example, as a teacher I must be cheerful. Then, be a successful person who can make my parents and teachers proud. That's for sure. It is a must for me.

Shalfa's imagined future as a teacher centered on becoming an ideal role model, respected by students. Her vision was rooted in valuative funds of identity, emphasizing good character over excellent teaching skills. In Indonesian society, a "role model" teacher is seen as someone with positive attitudes and behavior, who is easily likable. Shalfa highlighted the influence of her parents and teachers on her initial professional identity. Like most participants, social funds of identity were crucial for Shalfa, with parents and teachers as key sources of motivation. Making them proud was her main reason for wanting to be a successful teacher.

In addition, she made a statement in relation to her motive of becoming a role model teacher. Shalfa wanted her future students to like her:

I want to be a teacher that students like and admire. So, I don't want that, for example, when I am teaching, the students be like: 'why does it have to be that teacher again?' I want them to be excited every time they see me.

It is obvious that for Shalfa being personally likeable as a teacher was of great importance. Similar to the majority of the participants, valuative funds had been the crucial components invoking her imagined professional identity. As a future teacher, Shalfa focused more on having friendly personality and good attitudes. It seemed that she tended to neglect the need to have sufficient English language proficiency (ELP).

Murni's Self-portrait

Figure 5: Murni's self-portrait

In her self-portrait, Murni illustrated her imagined future-self as an aspiring English teacher focusing on how to teach her students well. In addition to having a good character, Murni highlighted more on how she would make the teaching and learning process become an empowering enterprise for her students. Her self-portrait developed around anticipatory funds which were incorporated with valuative and disciplinary funds:

> *For this one, become a 'good and humble' teacher, it is very common that teachers invite their students to ask questions, but, when the students ask questions (which are not in accord with the teacher's favor), they are sometimes getting criticized for asking such questions. It's a learning process, right? So, I want to be a teacher who makes sure that: 'it's always okay to ask question, we learn together'. I believe that being a teacher is also learning, just like being a student is learning.*

Based on her past learning experiences, not all teachers could appreciate students' questions during the teaching-learning process. For Murni, this condition was bad because it demotivated the students to learn more and hindered them from developing their curiosities. Murni's explanation illustrates how her past experiences were linked with her anticipatory funds and evoke her imagined professional identity which highlight disciplinary and valuative funds. Further, Murni showed her intention of creating a learning environment where her students would feel encouraged and have no pressure:

> *… 'to be a fun teacher and keep students active'. It's like this, it's because sometimes, when I was in secondary school, I was afraid I would give a wrong answer if I raise my hand when I actually could answer the question. That's why, I want all of my students to be happier when I teach them. And that becomes my future goal.*

Including the use of technology in teaching inside her portrait, Murni showed that besides her strong emphasis on how she would teach her students, she also put her attention on what she would use for her teaching:

> *So, you know, especially nowadays, the use of technology is ubiquitous. Therefore, I wrote technology here because I think it will be more fun if we teach using technology.*

Murni's self-portrait showed her imagined future-self as rooted in her past experiences as a student. Dissatisfied with her former study environment and some teachers' treatment, she was motivated to ensure her future students feel encouraged and appreciated. She also envisioned herself as a techno-savvy teacher using technology in her teaching. Thus, her initial professional identity was shaped by past experiences and manifested in her future aspirations. Murni's identity focused on acquiring good pedagogical knowledge and skills to best support her future students' learning.

Discussion

The present study investigated first-year Indonesian EFL student teachers' embryonic professional identity at the premier stage of their teacher education program including the components forming their early identity and the portrayals of their identity. The empirical data were collected from the first-year student teachers' multimodal and spoken narratives. The findings indicate that, although multiple funds of identity were identified, the participants' initial

professional identity is mainly built from their social and valuative funds of identity and particularly rooted in their past experiences. The findings also demonstrate that they portray themselves either through their present representation as enthusiastic student teacher or their imagined future-self as a good teacher. In this section, we discuss the participants' narratives in relation to Esteban-Guitart's (2012, 2014) funds of identity theory and the extended categorization by Banegas et al., (2021).

Among the five types of funds of identity (Esteban-Guitart, 2012, 2014) and the three extended classifications (Banegas et al., 2021), the main semiotic resources shaping student teachers' professional identity highlight that their early teacher identity development was linked to their motives for enrolling in EFLTEP, their values and beliefs about teaching, and their past experiences. Despite mixed motivations for entering the teaching profession (Yuan & Zhang, 2017), social actors were the main impetus for these student teachers. Parents and family, as dominant social funds of identity, were the primary motives for studying in the teacher education program. Due to their pivotal roles, making family and parents proud was a significant driving force for Indonesian student teachers. Family is considered the most meaningful component due to its role as the main support agency (Banegas et al., 2021). The influence of family was crucial in shaping their identity, with parents playing a critical part in guiding and preparing them for the future. Some participants' decisions to study in EFLTEP were highly influenced by their parents' suggestions. Influenced by local culture, most Indonesian student teachers included their parents in major decisions, including their choice of EFLTEP as their major. In Indonesian culture, parents are believed to know what is best for their children, who are expected to obey their advice for success and fortune. Making parents proud is seen as a way to return the favor for their support. Some participants chose the teacher education program primarily due to their parents' preference, believing it would bring goodness and blessing. Even those whose parents did not interfere sought their suggestions and directions.

Certain funds revealed the student teachers' motivations shaping their identity as EFL teacher candidates. Contrary to Holliday (2015) and Nunan (2017), this study shows that most participants, being non-native English speakers, did not prioritize ELP in their imagined future selves. Instead, they envisioned themselves as role models with good character and attitudes, adored by students. The valuative funds influencing their initial professional identity related to both their current status and future self-images as EFL teachers. Their present mannerisms and their visionary identity were interconnected in their initial professional identity. Unlike Banegas et al. (2021) and Aneja (2016) studies, the belief in native speakerism affecting future identity and self-efficacy was absent among these participants. Their anticipatory funds of identity included their imagined future self-image and past learning experiences, shaping their awareness of how they wanted to be perceived by their future students. The learning experience was a form of educational trace left by their former EFL teachers (Hahl & Mikulec, 2018). These experiences created an anticipation of their future becoming, reflecting what they desired to be and feared becoming (Banegas et al., 2021).

The participants' portrayals of their initial professional identity, whether as enthusiastic student teachers or future good teachers, aligned with the components comprising their significant circles. Social and valuative funds highlighted their initial professional identity, while anticipatory and disciplinary funds also played pivotal roles. Anticipatory funds included people and experiences imagined by the student teachers in their future (Banegas et al., 2021). Their imagined professional identity as EFL teachers was shaped by these funds (Banegas et al., 2021; Barkhuizen, 2017). The student teachers envisioned themselves as EFL teachers and imagined

their future students. Similar to their significant circles, student teachers' self-portraits shed light on the facts that native-speakerism (Holliday, 2015; Nunan, 2017) did not have significant influence on their imagined future selves. Disciplinary funds in their imagined professional identity included general pedagogical knowledge, not specifically pedagogical content knowledge or ELP. Their imagined professional identity also emphasized valuative funds related to good character and attitudes, showing that authoritative beliefs did not harm their initial professional identity.

This phenomenon may result from common English language teaching practices in Indonesian schools, where EFL teachers often lack proficiency and do not use English for instruction (Rahman et al., 2015; Wulyani et al., 2019). The facts that the participants did not put considerable emphasis on ELP might be related to the typical pedagogical practice of EFL teachers in Indonesia, in which, due to their lack of mastery of the language, the teachers do not usually use English for teaching the language. Despite English's importance in Indonesian education system (Sukyadi, 2015), its status as a foreign language (Kachru & Nelson, 2006) limits its daily use, affecting proficiency among teachers and learners (Renandya et al., 2018). The perception is that many Indonesian EFL teachers lack sufficient proficiency (Hadi, 2019). Studies confirm that Indonesian EFL in-service teachers often have inadequate English proficiency (Rahman et al., 2015; Wulyani et al., 2019). In this context, teachers may emphasize ethical conduct, such as kindness and patience, to compensate for their lack of English mastery. Consequently, student teachers envision their future selves as kind-hearted and likable rather than highly proficient English users. They prioritize good character and setting positive examples for their students. However, despite debates around native speakerism (Holliday, 2015; Nunan, 2017), Renandya et al. (2018) note that EFL teachers need sufficient English proficiency to teach effectively.

How the first-year Indonesian EFL student teachers in this study view teaching profession and being English teacher in Indonesia might indicate their fear and anticipation of not having acceptable ELP as a teacher. Linking the anticipation with their past experiences has manifested the imagined professional identity. Hence, even at their first-year of studying at the EFLTEP they already projected their anticipation of being future EFL teachers in Indonesia. What they believed about teaching profession and being English teacher in Indonesia connect their past experiences with their imagined future experiences. As noted by Banegas et al., (2021), anticipatory funds could create proleptic anxiety and expectation happening in the present time. Such feelings at certain stage, however, are considered to be quite beneficial in preparing student teachers to reach their future objective as teacher candidates. Thus, it is the teacher educators' responsibility to channel the student teachers' anticipatory anxiety through the facilitation of the most appropriate and effective professional learning which will better prepare them in becoming qualified and effective EFL teachers.

Conclusion

The study examined the initial professional identity of first-year Indonesian EFL student teachers using Esteban-Guitart's funds of identity theory. The results show two resource patterns and three forms of depiction used by the student teachers to describe their identity. Social and valuative funds were crucial in shaping their initial professional identity, linking past experiences with their imagined professional identity through present projections and anticipatory anxiety.

Contrary to the predominant belief in native speakerism (Nunan, 2017), the participants emphasized positive character traits and attitudes as role model teachers over becoming highly competent English users.

This study has operational and methodological implications. EFLTEPs, particularly in Indonesia, should pay more attention to student teachers' early professional identity to provide suitable assistance and facilitate professional growth during pre-service teacher education. Being cognizant of student teachers' initial professional identity will enable teacher educators to design the curriculum and learning approach better. This study used multimodal narratives and spoken narratives as sources of data to explore student teachers' initial professional identity construction, presenting a methodological strength in the study of identity. The organization of different narrative types may help teacher educators and student teachers better understand professional identity construction and development in teacher education programs.

The study's findings suggest several avenues for future research. First, investigate the long-term impact of former English teachers on student teachers' professional identity in pre-service education programs. Second, study Indonesian EFL in-service teachers' professional identity and its effect on EFL learners' identity to explore the issue of native speakerism. Third, examine the professional identity development of EFL student teachers at every stage of their education program.

Despite its strengths and significant insights, this study has limitations. It includes only a small sample of first-year Indonesian EFL student teachers. More comprehensive studies could yield different findings and enhance understanding of preservice teachers' early professional identity, given the scarcity of research in this area. Nonetheless, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on identity, particularly regarding the values, beliefs, and understandings that language teacher candidates bring to their teacher education journey.

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Appendices

Significant Circle Drawing Task:

Instruction:
1. Draw a big circle in this paper.
2. Inside the circle that you have drawn, write down the people, places, activities, institutions, objects, or anything that are most significant or meaningful to you as a student teacher/future teacher of English. The closer the items to the center of the circle means that the more significant or meaningful they are to you as a student teacher/future teacher of English.

Self-Portrait Drawing Task:

Instruction:
In this piece of paper, please show who you are as a student teacher/future teacher of English by drawing your self-portrait. If you wish, you can also add objects, people or things which are most important to you as a student teacher/future teacher of English. You may also add notes on your drawing. (Good skill of drawing is NOT needed, the meaning that you want to unveil from your drawing is more important).

Focused Group Interview Questions:

1. *What do you think about teaching profession?*
2. *How do you see yourself as the future teacher of English? What kind of English teacher are you?*
3. *What factors influencing your view?*
4. *What do you think about being an English teacher in Indonesia context?*
5. *What do you need to develop as a student teacher/future teacher of English?*

Individual Interview Procedure:

1. *Show the significant circle and the self-portrait drawings to each participant*
2. *Ask the participant to describe, clarify and elaborate his/her drawings.*
3. *Follow-up questions will be made whenever necessary*