

Becoming a Teacher Educator of Foreign Languages: Through the Narrative of Two Teacher Educators

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Abstract

外国語教員養成において、教師がどのように成長し教師としてのアイデンティティをどのように構築していくかについての研究は多く行われてきている。その一方で、外国語教師を養成する立場にある教師教育者の成長とアイデンティティ構築に関する研究はまだ数が少ない。特に日本では教師教育者になるにあたっての養成教育や任用基準も存在しない。そこで本研究では、外国語教員養成の改革を進めていく中で見落とされがちな教師教育者の経験・信条・教育実践に焦点を当て、異なる言語を教授対象とする2人の教師教育者の語りをナラティブに記述し、彼らの専門的アイデンティティの構築と再構築の軌跡の理解を目的として質的研究を行った。2人それぞれの文脈によりその軌跡は異なったが、「リフレクティブな教師」と「経験や考えを共有できる安全な場」が共通する重要なキーワードとして示唆された。

Introduction

Many previous studies in the field of teacher education have examined the professional learning of teachers, particularly the formation and development of teacher identities. However, less attention has been paid to the trajectories of professional growth involving teacher educators who teach current and future teachers (Brody & Hadar, 2011; Korthagen et al., 2005). Teacher educators' role in educational research has been ignored and overlooked; however, according to Trent (2013), the transition from teacher to teacher educator could be problematic in many cases. The issues that teacher educators are likely to encounter include “tensions between the value of abstract knowledge and work-based practice, uncertainty about what a teacher educator should be, the difficulties of developing a new pedagogy, [and] feelings of personal and professional isolation” (Trent, 2013, p. 262), among many other issues.

Although self-study research has recently begun to contribute to the teacher educator literature (e.g., Williams & Ritter, 2010), it is still unclear how teacher educators learn within their professional contexts and how they construct their professional identities. This is also true especially regarding teacher educators of foreign languages in Japan, where the society has increasingly become more plurilingual recently. Moreover, there should be more opportunities to learn foreign languages other than English in order to become a global

citizen. Thus, utilizing a narrative research design, the current study explores the learning trajectories of two foreign language teacher educators in Japan. This research is based on the first-year data collection of a two-year project.

Discussion of the Literature

First of all, what makes a good teacher? Many scholars in the field of teacher education have long focused on this issue. What a good teacher should acquire is actually very complex. Shulman (1987), for example, argues that there are seven dimensions of teachers' knowledge:

1. Content knowledge
2. General pedagogical knowledge
3. Curriculum knowledge
4. Pedagogical content knowledge
5. Knowledge of learners and their characteristics
6. Knowledge of educational contexts
7. Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and value

Shulman explains that pedagogical content knowledge is particularly valuable in professional expertise, defining it as “the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interest and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (1987, p. 8). This notion implies that good teachers should acquire both content and pedagogical knowledge bases. By drawing upon these bases, they should be able to determine the best and most effective approach and make pedagogical choices, catering to particular groups of learners' needs and interests (Asaoka, 2019).

In addition to the theoretical and pedagogical knowledge that good teachers must accumulate, personal qualities are often considered essential for a good teacher, although the particular qualities that are prioritized depend on who defines good teaching. For instance, based on the results of an open-ended questionnaire, Bullock (2015) asserts that there exists a gap in terms of how students and teachers describe a good teacher. In her study, many students identified personality characteristics such as “helpful” and “kind” as qualities of a good teacher, while teachers tended to emphasize relational and ability qualities such as “flexible” and “caring”. Furthermore, as Moore (2004) argues, notions of what constitutes a good teacher change across time as well as across cultures and nations. Therefore, there is no one definite or universal definition of a good teacher, let alone a good language teacher. In fact, many previous studies have used narrative inquiry to determine multiple identities of a good language teacher (e.g., Asaoka et al., 2020). In these studies, teachers individually tell their stories in their own teaching contexts or work in collaborative communities to share their

narratives and reflect on their multiple, dynamic identities as a group. However, what about a good *teacher educator*?

In regard to a teacher educator, there seems to be an assumption that educating language teachers does not require any preparation or certificate if one is a good teacher of elementary or secondary education (Zeichner, 2005). Nevertheless, it needs to be stressed that one's expertise as a good teacher does not automatically carry over to novice teachers. This expertise must be explicated, analyzed, and reflected upon; thus, the transition from teacher to teacher educator may sometimes be problematic (Trent, 2013). For example, Zeichner (2005) explains that teacher educators must learn how to mentor and scaffold novice teachers' learning. This notion implies that such skills must be acquired and that they are not necessarily due to innate ability. Furthermore, in Williams and Ritter's (2010) self-study research, they identified two major challenges of beginning teacher educators: making professional connections with other teacher educators and negotiating new professional relationships with students. They further state that dealing with these challenges is essential for teacher educators' professional development as "an integral part of the journey toward 'becoming' teacher educators" (p. 83).

In the Japanese context, one can become a teacher educator without any criteria, and usually no training is provided (Takeda, 2012). Furthermore, little research has been conducted on the professional development of teacher educators and their journeys, particularly in the field of foreign language education. For this reason, the current article focuses on the following questions: 1. How do people become teacher educators? and 2. What are the essential qualities of a good teacher educator? However, the objective of the current study is not to present definitive answers to the questions, as I believe the answers may differ, depending on the context. Thus, a phenomenological perspective plays an important role in this study in terms of exploring the "journeys" of teacher educators and better understanding the various levels and contexts of teacher educators' professional development.

Context of the Study

The two teacher educators featured in the current study are Monsieur R and Ms. A (pseudonyms). They are both Japanese; Monsieur R taught French mainly in tertiary education in Japan for approximately 30 years, and Ms. A taught English for the same number of years. In addition, Monsieur R engaged in teacher education for about 25 years; as a result, he is quite experienced as a teacher educator. In contrast, Ms. A, engaged in teacher education for about five years, and she discussed her struggles as a beginning teacher educator during the semi-structured interview of the current study. Although the target languages that they taught, their teaching experiences, and their teaching contexts in which they taught initial teacher education are quite different, their narratives reveal similar themes in terms of how their beliefs in initial teacher education were influenced and reinforced by

their experience as a language learner, as well as a language teacher. The current paper provides further evidence on the importance of examining the experiences of teacher educators as they undergo the transition from learner to teacher and from teacher to teacher educator.

Methodology and Analytical Framework

In the current study, two foreign language teachers/teacher educators, Monsieur R and Ms. A, were highlighted to explore their lived experiences as learners/teachers/teacher educators of foreign languages. A narrative approach was used in this study, as it provides us with “the experiences as expressed in *lived* and *told stories* of individuals” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.67, italics by the author). As the quote above suggests, narratives enable us to understand the meanings and contextual issues that impact the transition in becoming a teacher and then a teacher educator.

The biographic-narrative-interview guiding framework was used to gather data in the current study (See the appendix for the schedule used during the interviews). The participants took part in one in-depth narrative interview in Japanese, which took place on Zoom for 110 minutes with Monsieur R and for 70 minutes with Ms. A, respectively. At the onset of each interview, the participants were asked to discuss three main topics freely: (a) their encounters with foreign languages, (b) how they became teachers of a foreign language, and (c) how they became teacher educators. After transcribing the interviews, the data were translated into English by the author and analyzed both holistically and thematically from a phenomenological perspective. I coded the meaning and essence of the participants’ learning and teaching experiences, identifying broad, salient themes.

Findings

The current study focuses on the narratives of two teacher educators, Monsieur R and Ms. A. I will begin with a brief biographical sketch of each participant’s language learning experiences. Their narratives show that their professional identities were shaped by components of their learning/teaching environments and experiences. However, only Ms. A shared her challenges in becoming a teacher educator due to the gap between her teaching experiences and actual teaching contexts, as each occurred at a different career stage as a teacher educator.

Monsieur R

Monsieur R went to a public high school in western Japan, where he studied English and described having very negative language learning experiences. For each English class, he and

his classmates translated a 3-to-4-page-long text from English to Japanese as homework; in the classroom, they took turns reading the translated sentences out loud in Japanese. He literally did not have to say anything in English at all for three years. He did not find this method of learning English to be appropriate.

Monsieur R originally wanted to major in education in college, but for some reasons, he studied French, which he believed was a fateful encounter, or “*deai* (出会い)” in Japanese. He and his classmates were all beginners in French, but in the very first class, their textbooks and writing instruments were taken away. The class turned out to be a challenging yet eye-opening learning experience. Reflecting on how he learned, Monsieur R recalled that the teacher taught French using the so-called structure-global audiovisual methodology. This was a method developed in the 1950s, whose aim was to teach everyday communication in the spoken language through “audio” and “visual” elements.

Excerpt 1

The French classes in college were conducted totally differently from the English classes in high school, where I never had to say anything in English. It was a 180-degree change for me. Yes, it was exactly what I had been looking for in a foreign language class. It fit perfectly with my learning style. I fell in love with French language learning.

When Monsieur R was a senior student, he had the chance to study French for two months in France. It was his first-time trip abroad. Reflecting on his experiences, he confessed another challenge that he encountered.

Excerpt 2

I thought I had acquired French quite well by then, but of course I didn't understand much and couldn't say what I wanted to say. It is the *plateau* that any learners may hit when they go to an area for the first time where the target language is used...My classmates were Italian and Spanish, and they expressed their ideas rapidly even though their speaking proficiency level was not that high. We say “*tour de parole*” in French, which means a chance to have one's say in English. In my case, I kept missing my turn to speak.

This experience was somewhat of a culture shock to Monsieur R since he became aware of the classroom culture there in which learners try to express their thoughts even when they cannot do so very accurately, and it ignited his interest in further learning French more effectively. Coupled with his original interest in education, he decided to pursue an advanced degree in French teaching methods in graduate school.

His teaching career started shortly after he began his postgraduate study, where he encountered some challenges in making the transition from a language student to a language

teacher. Back in 1980s, there were few graduate students who could teach French, at least in western Japan. He was in his second year of the master's program when he was asked to teach one undergraduate-level class at his *alma mater*. He was then able to increase his practical teaching experiences.

Excerpt 3

It was such a great opportunity to practice teaching French while learning about how to teach French. I was able to try many different methods, and learning such and such a method of a certain era was effective for this skill and such...I probably spent the longest time preparing for class in my life. I did this for a whole year, and I learned so many things. You do not notice them until you actually teach, right?

This excerpt indicates how Monsieur R valued practical teaching experiences and tried to mitigate the gap between the theoretical concepts he learned in his graduate-level coursework and actual classroom practices. In the following year, Monsieur R also taught at an all-boys' high school. He had a class of 40 third-year students who took beginning French as an elective course. He recalled that they were not studious at all; many were playing Othello or listening to music on a Walkman in the back of the room. He wanted them to gain something out of taking his course. Thus, he decided to come up with a clear goal to achieve by the end of the year: to learn useful expressions for travelling in France. Back in those days, some parents took their children on a tour of Europe as a graduation trip, and he explained to his students that if they could use these expressions, it would help their parents, and as a result, they could enjoy the trip more. He also made it clear to his students that he was serious about his teaching, and he wanted them to take the course seriously as well. Eventually, they became serious about learning French. At the end of the year, they gave Monsieur R a handmade appreciation card, in which they described how they had learned a new culture of French, very different from that of English, thanks to his class. Reflecting on these very first few years of teaching as a novice language teacher, he stated the following:

Excerpt 4

How I taught then based on the theories and methods I learned ties in with how I teach my teaching methodology course now...When I used the same textbook at different universities, I realized there were different outcomes, and I tried to understand the reasons. What do I need to consider when I choose teaching materials? What kind of objectives are more reasonable? In this way, I noticed the importance of course design. When I learned theories of language teaching in graduate school, it didn't really click for me, but it did when I started to teach French, like "Ah, that's what it meant". It was sort of like I gained on-the-job training.

He allowed his practical teaching experiences to shape his professional and conceptual knowledge of French language teaching, and that is what he emphasizes in his teaching methodology course to pre-service teachers of French.

He gained further practical learning and teaching experience when he worked on a master's degree in French teaching methodology in France – learning French for academic purposes and teaching French during the practicum. These experiences, he believes, led to his current teaching style of French language classes: a group-work oriented approach. In fact, many of his current colleagues did not understand the importance of group work in teaching French, at least in the beginning. Senior colleagues once said to him that his students were saying his class was fun; thus, they believed that the students were just playing. They even said to him, “You are talented in letting them play and have fun.” They did not understand the meaning of group activities, Monsieur R recalled. He thought his senior colleagues taught based on how they learned, and they could not accept different approaches from their own learning.

Monsieur R believes he made a smoother transition from becoming a language teacher to a teacher educator when he started to teach full time at a private university in the Kanto area in 2000. The university offered an initial teacher education program at the secondary-education level, and he was asked to teach courses in the program. He had been working as a lecturer and organizer in a teacher training program called “Stage” even back in western Japan. This is a program aimed at novice French teachers with less than ten years of teaching experience, as well as graduate students who will be teaching French in the future. He believes that even if language teachers are at the novice level, they tend to stick to their own way of teaching, similar to his senior colleagues. On the other hand, student teachers at the undergraduate level are, according to Monsieur R, “more accepting” than the novice teachers. Thus, he enjoys teaching them. Many of his student teachers became French or English teachers at the secondary-education level.

Excerpt 5

Whether they teach English or French, it should be within the same framework of teaching a foreign language. Who are the learners? What are the teaching objectives? What do you want them to achieve? How much time, how many students in class, and what is the learning environment like? I think it's the same kind of thinking...Whether they become English or French teachers, they should understand where to begin and design a course. That's what I'm aiming for in my methodology course.

On a different note, he brought up two issues that French language education in Japan currently faces. One is that many French teachers do not seriously think about how to teach the language; rather, they are more interested in teaching French culture such as soccer, fashion, and French cuisine, as they believe their students are more interested in these

cultural topics. He of course understands the importance and meaning of teaching cultural aspects, but in his words, “We are just running away from our problems of teaching the language.” The other issue involves the route to become a secondary schoolteacher. Unlike secondary public school English teachers in Japan, there is no teacher recruitment exam at the prefectural level. French teachers are basically recruited through a personal contact because the French language is not an academic subject. Rather, it belongs to a category of associated subjects such as home economics and bookkeeping. Thus, if one has a teaching certificate in an academic subject such as math or English, they are allowed to teach subjects such as home economics or French. Therefore, if an individual has a teaching certificate in English and learned French as a second foreign language at college (meaning one or two courses per week for one or two years), that individual may teach French. In Monsieur R’s view, this is a problem; he believes his student teachers who undergo proper teacher training to become a French teacher may not become a teacher upon graduation. Instead, after a few years, with experience working at a company, they may decide to enter the teaching profession. However, currently French teachers are not openly recruited; as a result, those who are not properly trained to be a French teacher may still get a job as a teacher. Monsieur R believes these two issues need to be resolved immediately for both the improvement of French language education and teacher education.

On a final note, Monsieur R states that he hopes teachers do not stick to their own ways of teaching. Rather, he believes they should be open-minded and accepting. It is fine to stick to 60% to 70% of their own way, but 30 to 40 % should be left blank to accept new and different ways of teaching a foreign language.

Ms. A

Ms. A was born in Japan. She grew up in an environment that put her in frequent touch with English. Her mother ran an English cram school at home, while her father had worked at a US military base, and many American soldiers took great care of him. As a result, her father admired the US culture very much. He learned English while working at the base, and her parents whispered to each other in English when they did not want their children to understand what they were saying. Ms. A had a natural curiosity about English, as she wanted to understand what her parents were saying in English.

At school, Ms. A was never very studious. Her grades were not bad in the beginning, but eventually, she fell behind in her schoolwork. One of the reasons for her falling behind was that she disliked her teachers. Recalling her student days, she described her teachers as being authoritative, distrustful, and intent on molding students into certain categories. She even coined the word, *soshi-sozo* (相思相憎) in Japanese, meaning that she hated them, and they hated her as well. She never thought she was going to enter the teaching profession back then.

Due to her learning environment at home, she never considered English as a school subject to study. Her father wanted his children to study abroad, so Ms. A learned English for a year in the US when she was in high school. It was only after she came back to Japan that she studied English seriously as a subject. To get good grades on her tests, Ms. A basically memorized everything in the textbook.

Ms. A went to an American university to study psychology. Although she wanted to pursue an advanced degree in psychology in the US, due to financial constraints, she decided to return to Japan upon graduation. With her mother's encouragement, however, Ms. A decided to enter a master's program offered in Tokyo by an American university in the late 1980s. The program focused on English language teaching, different from her original intention to study psychology. However, she believed she could at least continue to study in English for an advanced degree. She soon realized that psychology studies were highly relevant to language teaching theories.

Excerpt 6

I began to notice that what I learned in the coursework, such as learning theories, was based on theories of psychology. For example, student-centered learning was closely related to client-centeredness developed by Carl Rogers, which I already knew very well. Or the audiolingual method was based on such and such a theory. I also enjoyed Prof. Fanselow's unconventional and out-of-the-box way of thinking.

Greatly influenced by her mentor there, Ms. A found English language teaching interesting, and she decided to become a language teacher. She taught English to a wide age range of students at language schools, vocational colleges, and universities, where she tried to deal with various issues she encountered in class. At one time, Ms. A taught a group of first graders, but she did not know any language activities to keep their attention. They started walking around, and she thought it was a disaster. The problems she had experienced in her earlier career as a language teacher led her to become more reflective and interested in how she could improve her teaching.

Excerpt 7

I thought the best thing about teaching was, which I still think it is, that it is different every time. For instance, what I said last week, or what I taught in a previous lesson, when I try to teach the same content in another class, it does not always go as smoothly. When I was a novice at teaching, I liked reflecting on why it did not go well, and I found it very interesting, as it is always different.

As a language teacher, Ms. A likes the idea of inquiry-based learning. Thus, she tries to facilitate student self-discovery and maximize educational benefits. She does not provide

answers explicitly, as she believes her students need to obtain experience and find solutions inductively. She prefers the approach that she likes for herself as a learner. One time she joined a workshop on the Silent Way as part of a conference on reflective practice, and Professor Carol Rogers gave a demonstration of the Swahili language. She uttered some words in Swahili but did not explain what they meant, while the participants had to figure out the meaning. Ms. A found it fascinating and realized that she liked this sort of learning herself.

After teaching as a full-time lecturer in an English-for-academic-purposes program at a prestigious university for more than two decades, Ms. A moved to another university offering an initial teacher education (ITE) program, where she started her career as a teacher educator about five years ago. Because Ms. A did not go to a Japanese university, she does not have a teaching certificate at a secondary-education level. As a result, she disclosed her ambivalent feelings about teaching in the ITE program.

Excerpt 8

I didn't go to a Japanese university and did not study for a teaching certificate. Also, the educational context in which I taught English previously is quite different from contexts in middle schools and high schools. I don't know much about the school contexts, which is probably a main cause of my ambivalent feelings...I should learn more about the school contexts, while I notice many strange things about current classroom situations. I wonder if I find it strange because I'm not familiar enough with the current situations... So, I have this feeling of ambivalence, or I should say, the attitude of reserve (*enryo* 遠慮 in Japanese)...I came to think my belief in education may be far from how my student teachers have framed their thoughts on education. Of course, I do not want to press my thoughts on them, but at the same time, there are certain ways I believe they should learn to teach English more effectively.

Ms. A feels that many of her students tend to stick to the "traditional" way of teaching English, the same way they themselves learned English in secondary education. For example, they attach importance to a deductive approach, the so-called PPP (presentation, practice, production), in which a teacher usually begins by presenting a target language structure and then gives students an opportunity to practice it through very controlled activities. Following this teaching method, her student teachers typically create a 50-minute lesson plan of a warm-up, introduction of a target language structure, practice of the structure, and a wrap-up. They feel satisfied when they can teach this sequence smoothly in 50 minutes, which seems strange to Ms. A. She likens this way of teaching to the "traditional performance" (*den sho-geino* 伝承芸能 in Japanese) transmitted from generation to generation.

Excerpt 9

I call it "traditional" because students learn English with this approach, and those who

like the approach become teachers, and then they teach English in a way similar to their teachers. What is important for them is whether they can teach the PPP lessons smoothly, and what their students say does not matter much. This is based on my observation of my student teachers in methodology courses, so I don't know whether this is how teachers teach in actual classrooms, ...but it seems they want to teach a subject called English, and not the language itself. And, in Japan, there is a unique way of teaching English as a subject, and it seems they want to pass it down to future teachers.

Ms. A has a desire to change all of this, but then again, the traditional way of teaching that many of her student teachers prefer is quite different from how she has learned and taught English. Thus, it is challenging for Ms. A to figure out how they could be on the same page with respect to English language teaching. She feels that her student teachers do not usually draw on her perspective or advice, but rather welcome their own senior student teachers' experiences during the teaching practicum.

This gap leads to another concern for Ms. A: giving feedback for student teachers' microteaching in methodology courses. She often does not have enough time to give feedback to her student teachers after their microteaching. Thus, she instead depends on after-class written feedback that they share on an online drive. She now believes that she might be unconsciously avoiding oral feedback, as she does not feel very comfortable about giving it. In one of Ms. A's courses during her master's degree program, she learned that she needs to be non-judgmental and avoid using adjectives such as "good" when she observes somebody else's teaching. This experience may have influenced her thinking as a teacher educator.

Excerpt 10

Through this interview, I actually noticed two things. One is that by sharing stories and experiences with somebody else, you notice things you are not good at and have been avoiding, which is, in my case, giving oral feedback to student teachers. When you give written feedback, you could be more prepared and pre-emptive, but to give oral feedback immediately after microteaching, you cannot be, so this is probably why I have a feeling of being not good at it. The other thing is my ambivalent feelings about teaching student teachers because of a lack of experience in actual classroom contexts. My own experiences as a learner and as a teacher are far from the actual classroom contexts in which my student teachers will be teaching in the future.

At the end of the interview, Ms. A expressed her gratitude for having a space to pour out her feelings about initial teacher education in Japan. Actually, she was surprised to find out that there was no culture of sharing common goals or ideas in the initial teacher education program among her current colleagues. She does not usually have many chances to discuss this matter with her current colleagues. Somehow, she believes that teachers cannot say that

they do not know something. Hence, she felt comfortable and safe about sharing her feelings and concerns in a confidential setting.

Discussion

For Monsieur R, the transition from becoming a learner to a teacher was challenging, but for him, his reflections indicate that he did not find it that challenging to become a teacher educator. For Ms. A, on the other hand, the transition from becoming a teacher to a teacher educator was a challenge. As a relatively novice teacher educator, her major concern was that she did not share similar learning or teaching backgrounds with her student teachers. As Zeichner (2005) mentions, it is easy for us to assume that educating language teachers does not require any preparation or certificate, but rather teaching experiences as an elementary or secondary teacher. In Ms. A's case, without teaching experiences as a secondary schoolteacher, she has adopted a reserved attitude, *enryo* in Japanese, toward her student teachers. *Enryo-suru* as a verb in Japanese means to hold back and refrain from doing something. In Ms. A's case, she believes that her student teachers do not find her advice practical or meaningful because she did not have teaching experience as a secondary schoolteacher. As a result, Ms. A refrains from giving oral feedback after the student teachers' microteaching; she does not wish to change their teaching approach drastically. Ms. A has also found it difficult to develop professional relationships with the more experienced teacher educators around whom she worked. Thus, it is likely that she probably feels that she is still a *peripheral* participant in her professional network (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This is in line with what Williams and Ritter (2010) conclude as one of the major challenges of beginning teacher educators: making professional connections with other teacher educators. As Wenger (1998) claims, an essential part of one's practice is to negotiate professional meaning by participating in learning communities that allow for an exploration of ideas within dynamic social relations.

Both teacher educators in the current study discussed how they were influenced by their own learning and teaching experiences in their professional development. What is noteworthy is that they were both reflective teachers themselves, even before they became teacher educators. In the case of Monsieur R, he noticed that teaching the same materials to different groups of learners led to different learning outcomes. Going back and forth between theory and practice, he learned to make appropriate adjustments and find better ways to teach. In other words, practical teaching experiences enabled him to reshape his professional expertise, the process of which he emphasizes to his student teachers in initial teacher education courses. In the case of Ms. A, she also noted as a teacher that every lesson was different, depending on the students. Thus, she learned the importance of reflecting on her own teaching and believes that improvement in teaching requires a continuous effort to meet her students' various levels, needs, and interests. It is not clear whether both of these teachers had an innate quality of being a reflective teacher or not, but it is certainly true that

they struggled to resolve the problems they encountered, and being reflective is one of the essential qualities that teacher educators should have.

Their challenges could have resulted from their negative experiences of learning English at the secondary school level, without meeting teachers that they could look up to. In both cases, their own teachers persisted in using the traditional grammar-translation method to help their students study for entrance exams. Both were not satisfied with their ways of teaching, and they continued to look for better ways to learn another language. Interestingly, this is in fact quite different from the “apprenticeship of observation”, a term coined by Lortie (1975). According to Lortie, student teachers spent thousands of hours as schoolchildren observing and evaluating their own teachers. Thus, this apprenticeship is responsible for many of the preconceptions that student teachers hold about teaching. In the cases of both teachers, on the other hand, their professional development was in fact triggered by negative examples as learners. They wanted to teach differently from their former teachers, and therefore, had to become reflective and find solutions to improve their teaching. What Monsieur R said at the end of the interview offers valuable insight: “Teachers should not stick to their own ways of teaching but should be more accepting of new and different ways of teaching a foreign language.”

How then did Monsieur R and Ms. A become teacher educators? Their narratives show that there is no one universal trajectory that teachers take to become teacher educators, although it is clear that they utilize their identity as a learner and as a teacher in ways that help them “deconstruct” and “reconstruct” who they are as teacher educators. Furthermore, what they shared in common was that these teacher educators have been on a lonely “journey” without a space to share their experiences and feelings, and without a space to negotiate their identities as teacher educators to become full participants in their social and professional networks.

Conclusion

Narratives about becoming a teacher educator reveal that the participants in the current study confronted multiple challenges, regardless of the target languages they taught. In particular, finding a safe space to share their experiences and feelings and becoming a full participant in a professional community were found to be the major challenges, particularly for novice teacher educators. As William and Ritter (2010) aptly state, dealing with these challenges is an essential part of the journey toward becoming more successful teacher educators. Additional studies are needed to further explore and better understand the experiences of teacher educators as they engage in the transition from becoming a learner to a teacher and from becoming a teacher to a teacher educator.

The current study also suggests that an open and safe space should be created and provided within and across the initial teacher education curricula, regardless of the languages

they teach. In such a space, teacher educators of foreign languages could negotiate their identities and share issues and problems related to nurturing student teachers with colleagues and peers. I strongly believe that collegiality, conversation, and collaboration among teacher educators themselves are essential for the professional development of teacher educators, both novice and experienced.

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Becoming a Teacher Educator of Foreign Languages

Appendix Schedule for the semi-structured interviews

1. Their encounters with foreign languages
 - How did you learn English/French?
2. How they became teachers of a foreign language
 - How did you become a foreign language teacher?
 - What is your teaching approach as a foreign language teacher?
 - What belief do you have about foreign language teaching?
3. How they became a teacher educator
 - How did you become a teacher educator?
 - What is your teaching approach as a teacher educator?
 - What belief do you have about initial teacher education?