

BARKHUIZEN, G. (2021). LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATOR IDENTITY. Cambridge University Press.

Review by Celine Kearney

Waikato Institute of Technology

As a teacher of English as an Additional Language and academic literacies, the reader may well ask why I am reviewing a book about language teacher educator identity: because this insightful text brings together two areas of my academic interest, exploring identity and secondly the methodological uses of narrative and narrative analysis. I have had a decades-long interest in applications of identity theory and the use of narrative methods in research, informed through Master's and PhD research.

A reader might also question the value of a book exploring language teacher educator identity at this uncertain time for the profession, when COVID-19 has closed borders, causing loss of language teacher positions, and consequently less need for language teacher educators. However, I believe that exploring our identity/ies as a language teacher and/or a language teacher educator could enable us to revisit our understanding of the skills, knowledges and circumstances that led us into these professional roles. Reflective analysis on these might then offer opportunity to rethink and repackage our skills, and to explore where else in the workplace we might apply them, if we face the challenge of needing to find another job.

The text offers a rich theoretical grounding, clear definitions of and systematic analysis of the varied roles of language teacher educators and of Language Teacher Education (LTE) pedagogy. Three central domains inform research questions and contribute to the knowledge base of LTE, each systematically underpinned in the text by recent published research. The first domain relates to language teachers, who they are, whether they are learning to teach or continuing their professional development; the second domain relates to the content and pedagogy of teacher education; and the third to teacher educators.

Drawing on Johnson and Golombek's (2020) work on LTE pedagogy, which is informed by a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective, the author highlights that situated educational processes differ from context to context, influenced by sociocultural, historical and geopolitical influences, but that it is language teacher educators who are central to this, with their identity embodied, negotiated, enacted, constructed and reshaped (Barkhuizen 2021, p.39).

The study explores construction of the teacher-identities of seven Columbian doctoral students at a public university, within the doctoral programme and broader professional experiences in the Colombian education system. Analysis of interview-narratives reveal shifting identities of these experienced language teacher educators from their own perspectives. I found it refreshing to read personal narratives of the author's professional life, as well as the seven participants, and through narrative analysis to see the link between identity and emotion played out in professional life experience.

As a late-career teacher who has mentored teaching colleagues, both formally and informally, I support the premise that to understand language teachers or language teacher educators, we need to ask them about their history, their beliefs, experiences, roles and practices, emotions and desires, and ambitions, to gain insight into their identity and possibly multiple identities. (p.3). I resonate with Kramp's belief (2004, p.107, cited in Barkhuizen 2021, p.19) that 'stories assist humans to make life experiences meaningful. Stories preserve our memories, prompt our reflections, connect us to our past and present, and assist us to envision our future.'

An active advocate of using reflective practice to balance the multiple demands of professional life, I support the proposal that LTE pedagogy must have a self-inquiry dimension, and that "teacher-educator-mediated narrative inquiry" allows the teachers to make meaning of their experiences through the stories they tell, assisted in this through the temporal dimension in stories which enables them to trace their development over time – from the past and into their imagined and actual future teaching lives (p.45).

Concepts of identity (Norton 2013) have influenced my professional practice and research, therefore I find rich potential for understanding in the proposed four inter-related areas of language teacher educators' work: pedagogy, institutional service and leadership, community service and leadership, and LTE research and scholarship (p.49). I acknowledge, as the author does, that with these multiple roles and identities, the potential exists for tensions to arise when teacher educators and teachers try to balance their preferences, allegiances, and skills.

For readers interested in this professional area the author offers forty questions to encourage further research into the identities of language teacher educators. I would also recommend Professor Gary Barkhuizen's earlier book, *Reflections on language teacher identity research* (2017), which offers rich autobiographical narratives from scholars around the world, including Aotearoa New Zealand.

References

- Barkhuizen, G. (Ed.) (2017). *Reflections on language teacher identity research*. Routledge.
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and language learning: Extending the conversation* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters.