



Reflective Autoethnography on the Transformation of Teacher Professional Identity within the Classroom Context

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-04-06 Revised: 2026-05-14 Accepted: 2026-09-25 Keywords: <i>autoethnography;</i> <i>reflective practice;</i> <i>teacher professional identity;</i> <i>classroom interaction;</i> <i>collaboration</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i1.10073 Corresponding Author: Shinta Shinta Shinta120786@gmail.com Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari	<i>This study examines the transformation of teacher professional identity through a reflective autoethnographic approach situated in classroom practice. Grounded in the view that identity is dynamic and socially constructed, the study investigates how lived teaching experiences, reflection, and professional interaction contribute to identity development. Data were generated from reflective journals, autobiographical narratives, classroom observations, and collegial discussions over an extended teaching period. The findings reveal that identity transformation occurs through three interconnected processes: reflective practice, collaboration, and classroom interaction. Reflective practice functions as the core mechanism enabling the reinterpretation of experiences and the reconstruction of professional beliefs. Collaboration provides a dialogic space for negotiating meaning and developing professional agency, while classroom interaction serves as the primary site where identity is enacted and reshaped. The study also highlights the role of tension, emotion, and vulnerability as productive elements in identity development. Overall, teacher professional identity emerges as a cyclical, context-dependent, and continuously evolving process. This study contributes to the literature by offering an in-depth, experience-based understanding of identity construction and emphasizing the importance of reflective and collaborative practices in supporting teacher professional growth.</i>

1. Introduction

I still remember the uneasy feeling that emerged the first time I realized that a well-prepared lesson plan could not fully prepare me for the realities of the classroom. Standing before my students, I held a lesson plan that, on paper, seemed organized and convincing. The objectives were measurable, the activities carefully arranged, and every stage appeared logically sequenced. Yet, as the lesson progressed, the classroom unfolded in ways I had not anticipated. Some students responded with silence, others appeared disengaged, and I found myself hesitating between continuing with the plan and responding to the situation in front of me. In that moment, teaching no longer felt like a demonstration of competence or professional certainty. Instead, it became a space filled with tension, uncertainty, and internal questioning. What unsettled me most was not merely the failure of the lesson to unfold as expected, but the realization that my understanding of myself as a teacher was also being challenged.

At that time, I had unconsciously embraced the common assumption that professional identity develops gradually through training, experience, and mastery of teaching techniques. I believed that becoming a “good teacher” meant being able to control the classroom, deliver the curriculum effectively, and meet institutional expectations. However, my everyday classroom experiences began to reveal how unstable and negotiated teacher identity actually was. The more I reflected on my teaching, the more I recognized that identity could not be understood as something fixed or fully achieved. Instead, it was continuously shaped through interaction, experience, and reflection, echoing perspectives that conceptualize teacher identity as dynamic and socially constructed (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004). I gradually came to understand that identity was not something I simply possessed as a teacher, but something I was constantly negotiating through practice and lived experience (Varghese et al., 2005).

These realizations became increasingly visible during my experience as a senior high school English teacher implementing Kurikulum Merdeka in Indonesia. Although the curriculum promotes flexibility, student-centered learning, and teacher autonomy, translating these ideals into classroom practice was far more complex than I initially imagined. I often found myself caught between what I believed teaching should look like and what actually occurred in the classroom. My intention to create student-centered learning frequently conflicted with students’ expectations of teacher-directed instruction.

At the same time, the desire to design meaningful and engaging activities was often constrained by limited time, assessment pressures, and the diverse readiness levels of students. Rather than providing clarity, these experiences exposed tensions that forced me to question many of my previous assumptions about teaching, learning, and professionalism. Over time, those tensions became important moments of reflection that gradually reshaped how I understood myself as a teacher.

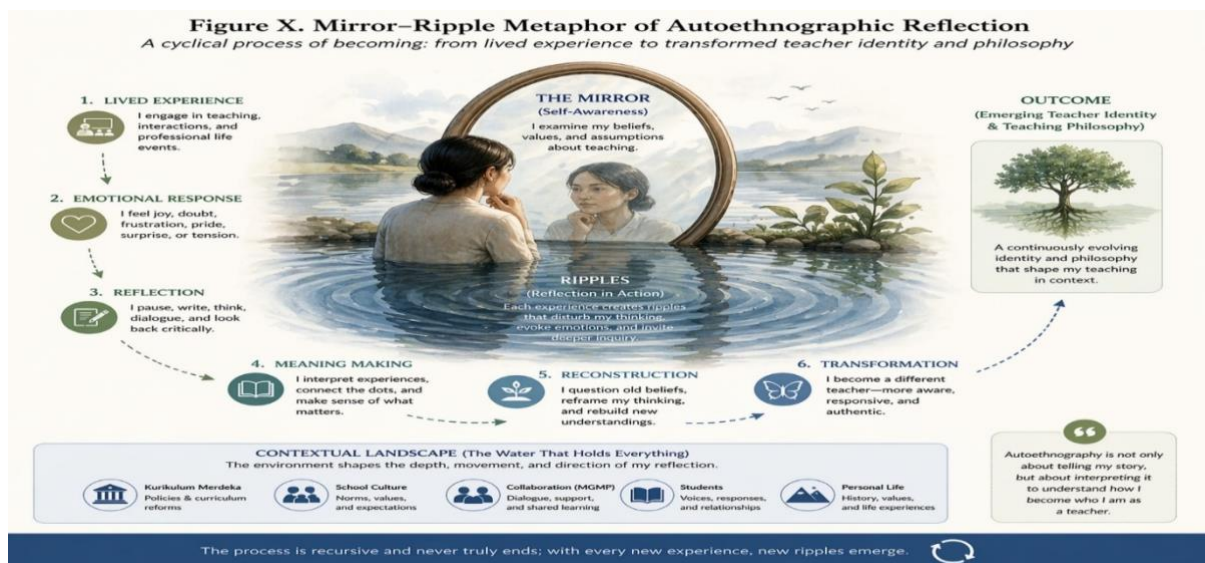
This study adopts a reflective autoethnographic approach to examine how such tensions contribute to the transformation of teacher professional identity. Autoethnography enables the systematic exploration of personal experience as a means of understanding broader professional and cultural phenomena (Ellis et al., 2011). In this study, my reflective journals, classroom documentation, and records of collegial interactions serve as primary data, capturing the lived realities of teaching as they unfold over time. These data reveal that

identity transformation does not occur as a linear progression but as a recursive and cyclical process shaped by continuous reflection.

A key finding emerging from this study is that moments of tension function as catalysts for identity reconstruction. Rather than being obstacles to effective teaching, experiences of doubt, failure, and uncertainty became productive sites of reflection. Through sustained reflective practice, I was able to reinterpret these moments not as indicators of inadequacy, but as opportunities to question, adapt, and reframe my professional beliefs. This aligns with Schön's (1983) notion of reflection as a process of meaning-making that occurs both during and after practice, enabling practitioners to navigate complex and uncertain situations.

Furthermore, identity transformation in this study is mediated not only by individual reflection but also by social interaction. Engagement in collegial discussions and professional learning communities (PLC) provided spaces for dialogue, validation, and negotiation of meaning. These interactions allowed me to situate my experiences within broader professional discourses, reinforcing the idea that identity is socially constructed and relational. At the same time, classroom interaction itself played a significant role, as students' responses continuously shaped and reshaped my pedagogical decisions and self-perception as a teacher.

To conceptualize this dynamic process, this study employs the metaphor of a mirror and rippling water. The mirror represents moments of critical reflection in which I confront my beliefs, assumptions, and practices. However, reflection is not static. Like ripples spreading across water, each experience generates new layers of interpretation that extend beyond the initial moment. This metaphor captures the recursive nature of identity construction, where each reflective cycle reshapes previous understandings and informs future practice. In this sense, identity is not a fixed image but a continuously evolving reflection shaped by experience, interaction, and context.



Despite the growing recognition of teacher identity as dynamic, there remains a need for more nuanced, experience-based accounts that illustrate how identity transformation occurs in practice, particularly within specific educational contexts such as Indonesia. Much of the existing literature tends to emphasize theoretical models or external observations, often overlooking the emotional, reflective, and lived dimensions of teaching. This study addresses this gap by providing an insider perspective grounded in sustained reflective practice.

As I reflected on my experiences throughout this journey, I gradually came to see my professional identity not as something fixed or fully achieved, but as a process that was constantly evolving. Each classroom encounter, moment of tension, and reflective realization reshaped how I understood myself as a teacher. Through this process, I began to recognize that identity transformation does not occur suddenly or linearly; rather, it develops through continuous cycles of reflection, interaction, and reinterpretation of experience. Tension, uncertainty, and dialogue with students and colleagues became interconnected mechanisms that pushed me to reconsider my assumptions and reconstruct my professional beliefs. These experiences challenged the traditional view of teacher identity as stable and predictable, leading me instead to understand identity as something continuously negotiated through practice and lived experience. In this sense, reflective practice became more than a professional activity; it became a way of understanding and reconstructing myself within the complexities of teaching.

My experiences also made me realize that professional identity cannot be separated from ongoing professional learning and the contexts in which teaching occurs. I found that I learned far more from navigating everyday classroom realities than from simply following formal procedures or training routines. This resonates with Avalos (2011), who argues that teacher learning is continuous, contextual, and shaped through experience and reflection rather than isolated professional development events. Over time, I became increasingly aware that my identity was influenced not only by personal beliefs, but also by institutional expectations, curriculum demands, and sociocultural realities surrounding my teaching practice.

At various moments, I struggled to balance my own pedagogical ideals with the expectations imposed by the curriculum and classroom environment. These tensions revealed to me that teacher identity is socially situated and relational, emerging through the interaction between personal experience and broader educational contexts (Pennington & Richards, 2016). As a language teacher in particular, I came to understand that my professional identity was deeply connected to the stories I lived, reflected upon, and continuously reconstructed. My experiences, reflections, and narratives gradually became meaningful sources of knowledge that helped me make sense of who I was becoming as a teacher, reflecting Barkhuizen's (2017) view that teachers' lived stories are central to understanding identity construction.

2. Method

This study employs a reflective autoethnographic approach to examine the transformation of teacher professional identity within the classroom context. Autoethnography positions the researcher as both participant and analyst, enabling a systematic exploration of lived experience as a source of professional knowledge. Drawing on the work of Ellis (2004) and Bochner (2016), this approach connects personal narratives with

broader sociocultural and institutional contexts. It is particularly suitable for this study because teacher identity is understood as dynamic and continuously constructed through reflection, interaction, and experience. By critically documenting and interpreting my own teaching practices, emotions, and classroom encounters, this study captures the nuanced processes through which professional identity evolves over time.

The study is situated in a private Islamic senior high school in Indonesia implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes student-centred learning and reflective teaching practices. This context provides a meaningful setting for examining how institutional expectations, classroom realities, and pedagogical decisions intersect in shaping teacher identity. The sole participant in this study is the researcher herself, an English teacher with several years of professional experience. This dual role as teacher and researcher allows for an insider perspective, making it possible to access the emotional, relational, and reflective dimensions of teaching that are often difficult to capture through external observation.

The stories and reflections presented in this study emerged from my everyday experiences as a teacher navigating classroom realities over an extended period of time. Throughout the teaching process, I regularly documented moments that felt emotionally significant, professionally challenging, or personally transformative. My reflective journals became the primary space where I recorded classroom interactions, instructional decisions, emotional reactions, and moments of uncertainty that shaped my understanding of teaching.

Alongside these journals, I also revisited autobiographical memories, classroom observation notes, informal conversations with colleagues, and institutional documents such as lesson plans and curriculum guidelines. Rather than functioning merely as research materials, these sources became part of a larger process of self-examination through which I attempted to understand how my professional identity was being constructed and reconstructed across different experiences and contexts. Bringing together these multiple forms of reflection allowed me to see connections between personal experience, professional practice, and the broader institutional environment in which I taught.

The process of data collection was closely intertwined with my daily teaching practice and ongoing reflective engagement. I wrote reflective journal entries two to three times each week, usually after classroom instruction or significant professional experiences that stayed with me emotionally or intellectually. Some entries captured frustration when lessons did not unfold as expected, while others documented moments of connection, adaptation, or professional growth. Over time, these reflections shifted from simple descriptions of classroom events to deeper questioning about my beliefs, assumptions, and identity as a teacher.

To maintain focus throughout the reflective process, I guided my writing using prompts connected to the central concerns of the study, particularly issues related to identity development, collaboration, and classroom interaction. At important moments during the research journey, I also wrote autobiographical narratives that allowed me to step back from individual experiences and trace broader shifts in how I understood myself professionally. Writing these narratives helped me recognize patterns of change that were not immediately visible within isolated classroom events.

Analyzing the data became a deeply reflective and recursive process rather than a strictly technical procedure. I repeatedly returned to my journals, narratives, and notes, reading and rereading them while paying attention to recurring emotions, tensions, interactions, and moments of transformation. Guided by Adams et al. (2015), I began identifying recurring ideas related to reflection, vulnerability, collaboration, emotion, and identity negotiation. Gradually, these recurring experiences formed broader themes that revealed patterns in my professional identity transformation. The process was not linear because each rereading often generated new interpretations and insights about experiences I had previously understood differently.

In many ways, writing itself became an analytical act. As I revisited my experiences through narrative and reflection, I was not only analyzing the data but also reconstructing my understanding of myself as a teacher. Through this cyclical movement between experience, reflection, interpretation, and theory, I came to see identity not as something fixed within me, but as something continuously shaped through lived experience and reflective meaning-making.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study follows qualitative criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including credibility, authenticity, and reflexivity. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement with the data, triangulation of multiple sources, and iterative reflection. Reflexivity was maintained by continuously acknowledging the researcher's positionality, assumptions, and emotional involvement in the research process. Ethical considerations were addressed through the use of pseudonyms, the omission of identifiable details, and careful representation of students and colleagues to ensure respect and confidentiality.

While autoethnography provides deep and contextually rich insights, it is inherently subjective and context-specific. As noted by Anderson (2006), the close involvement of the researcher may introduce bias; however, this is addressed through transparency, systematic analysis, and reflexive practice. Therefore, the findings of this study are not intended for generalization but for offering meaningful, experience-based insights into the complex and evolving nature of teacher professional identity.

3. Results and Discussion

This study reveals that teacher professional identity is not a fixed attribute but a dynamic, evolving process shaped through continuous reflection, collaborative engagement, and classroom interaction. Drawing on reflective journals, autobiographical narratives, and classroom notes, the findings are organized into three interconnected dimensions corresponding to the research focus: (1) reflective practice as the internal mechanism of identity transformation, (2) collaboration as a relational catalyst for belief reconstruction, and (3) classroom interaction as the primary site of identity negotiation. These dimensions are discussed in relation to relevant theoretical perspectives to deepen interpretation.

As I revisited my reflective journals and classroom experiences, I began to realize that reflection had become the central mechanism through which my professional identity was gradually transformed. At the beginning of my teaching journey, I understood professionalism primarily through compliance with curriculum expectations, successful lesson delivery, and maintaining classroom control. I believed that being a competent teacher meant ensuring that lessons followed the plan accurately and that students responded according to instructional expectations.

However, continuous reflective writing slowly revealed tensions between these assumptions and the realities I encountered in the classroom. Many lessons did not unfold as I had anticipated, and moments of student disengagement, confusion, or silence often left me questioning my teaching decisions and my sense of competence.

Through ongoing cycles of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, as conceptualized by Schön (1983), I gradually began to reinterpret these classroom challenges differently. Situations that I once viewed as signs of failure became opportunities to reconsider my beliefs, teaching approaches, and professional assumptions. My reflections shifted from focusing solely on whether a lesson was successful toward deeper questions about what these experiences revealed about my role and identity as a teacher. Instead of asking myself, "Did the lesson work?" I increasingly found myself wondering, "What does this experience teach me about teaching and about myself?"

This process of critical self-inquiry allowed me to move beyond technical evaluation toward a more reflective and context-sensitive understanding of professionalism. Over time, I no longer saw myself merely as a curriculum implementer responsible for delivering content, but as a reflective practitioner who continuously negotiates pedagogical decisions in response to classroom realities. This transformation reflects the view of Beijaard et al. (2004) that teacher identity is not fixed, but continuously reconstructed through experience, reflection, and practice.

At the same time, the findings highlight that identity transformation is often accompanied by tension, vulnerability, and self-negotiation. Reflective entries revealed recurring contradictions between my ideal and enacted identities, for example, valuing student-centred learning while occasionally reverting to teacher-centred practices. These tensions initially produced discomfort but later became productive sites of reflection. This supports Kelchtermans (2009), who emphasizes that professional identity is closely tied to teachers' self-understanding, including vulnerability, self-esteem, and moral commitment. Rather than indicating weakness, such tensions played a crucial role in deepening my reflective capacity and fostering a more integrated professional self. Identity development, therefore, emerged not through stability but through ongoing negotiation and reinterpretation of experience.

The second major finding demonstrates that collaborative experiences act as a catalyst for reshaping teaching beliefs and professional identity. Prior to engaging in professional dialogue, I viewed curriculum fidelity and classroom control as indicators of professionalism. However, participation in collegial discussions, mentoring interactions, and informal conversations exposed me to alternative perspectives that challenged these assumptions. Observing how colleagues adapted instructional strategies to meet student needs prompted me to reconsider my rigid adherence to curriculum structures. This shift reflects the notion of professional agency proposed by Sachs (2001), where teachers actively interpret and negotiate policy rather than passively implement it.

As I became more engaged in conversations with colleagues, I gradually realized that my professional identity was not formed solely through individual reflection or classroom experience, but also through dialogue and shared interaction with others. Informal discussions in the teachers' room, exchanges about classroom challenges, and moments of collaborative problem-solving became spaces where I questioned, defended, and

reconsidered many of my assumptions about teaching. At times, hearing how colleagues approached similar classroom situations challenged my belief that professionalism meant strict curriculum compliance and classroom control. These interactions encouraged me to see teaching less as an individual responsibility and more as a socially situated practice shaped through shared experiences and collective meaning-making.

Through collaboration, I began to understand that professional identity develops through participation in a broader professional community rather than in isolation. Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice strongly resonated with my experience, as my interactions with colleagues gradually influenced how I saw myself within the teaching profession. I no longer positioned myself only as someone responsible for delivering lessons, but also as a learner who continuously gained insight from others, a contributor who shared experiences, and a reflective peer who participated in professional dialogue.

These collaborative experiences expanded my understanding of teaching and helped me become more open to adapting my practices according to classroom realities and students' needs. Over time, I noticed a significant shift in how I approached my work. I became less dependent on rigid instructional routines and more confident in exercising pedagogical judgment within specific contexts. In this way, collaboration transformed me from an isolated practitioner into a more dialogic and agentic professional who viewed identity as something continuously negotiated through interaction and participation.

The third key finding identifies classroom interaction as the central arena of professional identity negotiation and reconstruction. Daily encounters with students ranging from engagement and enthusiasm to silence and resistance significantly influenced how I perceived myself as a teacher. Positive student responses reinforced my sense of competence and efficacy, while moments of disengagement or failure triggered self-doubt and critical reflection. These emotionally charged experiences highlight the role of affect in identity formation, supporting the argument of Hargreaves (1998) that teaching is an emotional practice shaped by relational dynamics.

Importantly, classroom interactions prompted real-time pedagogical adjustments, illustrating the process of reflection-in-action. When lessons did not proceed as expected, I adapted strategies, simplified explanations, or shifted to more dialogic approaches. These moments required identity flexibility, as I moved between roles such as authority figure, facilitator, and co-learner. This reinforces the view that professional identity is not stable but performed and negotiated through interaction, as suggested by Gee (2001). Over time, repeated cycles of interaction and reflection led to a redefinition of competence from maintaining control to fostering meaningful engagement and responsiveness.

This study focuses on three primary dimensions of teacher professional identity transformation: reflective practice, collaboration, and classroom interaction. However, during the thematic analysis process, these broader dimensions generated several more specific and interconnected subthemes. Therefore, Sections 3.1 to 3.8 should not be understood as separate dimensions, but as analytical elaborations that explain how each dimension operates in practice. In qualitative research, one dimension often contains multiple subthemes because lived experiences are complex and multidimensional.

Specifically, the first dimension, reflective practice, includes subthemes related to reflection, tension, and vulnerability. The second dimension, collaboration, includes subthemes concerning belief reconstruction and participation in communities of practice. The

third dimension, classroom interaction, includes subthemes related to interactional negotiation and emotional experiences in teaching.

Meanwhile, the final subthemes synthesize the relationship among all three dimensions and therefore function as integrative themes rather than independent categories. The three dimensions are the main analytical categories, while the eight subthemes are more detailed findings emerging from those categories. The subthemes help explain the complexity of identity transformation within each dimension.

Across these findings, a clear pattern emerges: professional identity is constructed through the interplay of reflection, collaboration, and interaction. Reflection provides the internal space for sense-making, collaboration offers external perspectives that challenge and expand beliefs, and classroom interaction serves as the lived context where identity is enacted and tested. These processes are interconnected and cyclical rather than linear. Identity transformation occurs through ongoing movement between experience and interpretation, shaped by both personal meaning-making and social participation.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that teacher professional identity develops as a relational, reflective, and context-dependent process. The findings contribute to existing literature by illustrating how identity transformation is grounded in everyday classroom practice and shaped by emotional, social, and pedagogical experiences. Rather than viewing identity as a stable professional attribute, this study positions it as an evolving narrative continuously reconstructed through reflective engagement with teaching practice.

3.1. Reflective Practice as the Engine of Identity Transformation

The findings indicate that reflective practice serves as the primary mechanism through which professional identity is reconstructed. Initially, teaching was understood as the accurate delivery of curriculum content, reflecting a compliance-oriented identity. However, sustained reflective journaling revealed tensions between planned instruction and classroom realities. Through cycles of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, as proposed by Donald Schön, classroom challenges were reinterpreted as opportunities for professional learning rather than failure (Schön, 1983). This shift enabled a movement from technical evaluation toward critical self-inquiry, aligning with the view that identity is continuously reconstructed through experience (Beijaard et al., 2004). Recent studies further support this transformation, emphasizing that reflective practice is central to professional growth and identity development in contemporary teaching contexts (Yazan, 2024; Patahuddin, 2026). Reflection, therefore, functions not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a critical process of identity construction and transformation.

3.2. Identity Negotiation Through Tension and Vulnerability

The data reveal that identity transformation is closely linked to experiences of tension between ideal and enacted professional selves. Reflective entries frequently highlighted contradictions, such as valuing student-centred learning while reverting to teacher-centred practices. These tensions initially generated discomfort but gradually became productive sites of reflection. This finding supports Geert Kelchtermans, who emphasizes vulnerability as central to teachers' self-understanding (Kelchtermans, 2009). Recent research also highlights that emotional tension and identity conflict are integral to teacher development, as they prompt deeper reflexivity and adaptive professional responses (Janes & Chen, 2024;

Ferreira, 2024). Rather than indicating deficiency, vulnerability enabled critical awareness and contributed to the reconstruction of a more coherent professional identity.

3.3. Collaboration as a Catalyst for Belief Reconstruction

Collaborative experiences played a significant role in reshaping teaching beliefs and professional identity. Prior to engaging in professional dialogue, curriculum fidelity and classroom control were perceived as indicators of professionalism. However, participation in collegial discussions exposed alternative pedagogical perspectives that challenged these assumptions. This aligns with Sachs, who argues that professional identity involves active agency rather than passive compliance (Sachs, 2001). Through collaboration, curriculum was reinterpreted as a flexible framework rather than a fixed script. Consequently, belief transformation occurred not in isolation but through interaction, highlighting the social nature of professional learning. Contemporary studies further confirm that collaboration fosters professional learning and identity transformation by enabling teachers to negotiate meanings and adapt practices (Herrera-Espinoza et al., 2024). Through collaboration, curriculum was reinterpreted as a flexible framework, reinforcing the socially constructed nature of professional identity.

3.4. Identity Formation Through Participation in Communities of Practice

The findings further demonstrate that professional identity is shaped through participation in collaborative communities. Engagement in professional discussions, mentoring, and peer interaction enabled the negotiation of meanings and roles beyond the classroom. This supports Etienne Wenger, who conceptualizes identity as emerging through participation in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Through these interactions, teacher identity expanded from an isolated practitioner to a member of a dialogic professional community. Roles became more fluid, encompassing learner, collaborator, and reflective practitioner. Identity, therefore, was not individually constructed but socially co-constructed through shared experience and dialogue. Recent literature reinforces this perspective, showing that identity development is influenced by participation in professional networks and institutional contexts (Andrews & Wright, 2024; Zhai et al., 2024). Through these interactions, teacher identity expanded from an isolated practitioner to a member of a dialogic professional community.

3.5. Classroom Interaction as a Site of Identity Negotiation

Classroom interaction emerged as the primary arena where professional identity is enacted and negotiated. Student responses ranging from engagement to silence significantly influenced self-perception as a teacher. Moments of success reinforced professional confidence, while instances of disengagement triggered critical reflection. These findings align with James Paul Gee, who argues that identity is performed and recognized through interaction (Gee, 2001). Classroom experiences required continuous adaptation, prompting shifts in roles from authority figure to facilitator and co-learner. Identity, therefore, was not stable but dynamically shaped through interactional processes. Recent studies also highlight that classroom dynamics and student engagement play a crucial role in shaping teacher identity, particularly in relation to adaptability and responsiveness (Dar, 2024). Identity, therefore, is continuously shaped through interactional and contextual experiences.

3.6. Emotional Dimensions of Teaching and Identity Construction

Emotions played a central role in shaping professional identity. Feelings of pride, frustration, doubt, and motivation were closely tied to classroom experiences and student responses. These emotional dynamics influenced how competence and professional worth were interpreted. This finding is consistent with Hargreaves, who conceptualizes teaching as emotional labor (Hargreaves, 1998), and Zembylas, who views emotions as socially constructed within institutional contexts (Zembylas, 2003). Emotional experiences functioned as signals that revealed tensions between beliefs and practices, thereby prompting reflection and identity reconstruction. Recent research further emphasizes that emotions are closely linked to teacher agency and identity negotiation, particularly in challenging teaching contexts (Janes & Chen, 2024). Emotional experiences thus function as catalysts for reflection and identity reconstruction.

3.7. Reconstructing Pedagogical Identity: From Authority to Relational Practice

Across the data, a clear shift emerged from authority-centred teaching toward a more relational and dialogic pedagogy. Initially, control and structured delivery were prioritized; however, classroom interaction and reflection led to the recognition that meaningful learning occurs through engagement and dialogue. This transformation reflects the dynamic nature of identity described by Beijaard et al. (2004), where multiple sub-identities are negotiated and integrated. The teacher identity evolved into a more flexible and context-responsive form, emphasizing facilitation, responsiveness, and student engagement. Recent studies support this shift, indicating that modern teacher identity increasingly emphasizes flexibility, responsiveness, and student-centered approaches (Yan, 2024). The teacher identity thus evolved into a more adaptive and context-sensitive form.

3.8. Identity as a Cyclical and Context-Responsive Process

Overall, the findings suggest that professional identity development is cyclical rather than linear. Reflection, collaboration, and classroom interaction operate as interconnected processes that continuously shape identity. Each teaching experience becomes a site of interpretation and reconstruction, reinforcing the view that identity is context-dependent and evolving. This perspective aligns with sociocultural understandings of identity as relational and situated within practice (Wenger, 1998; Beijaard et al., 2004). The study thus highlights that teacher identity is not a fixed outcome but an ongoing narrative shaped by experience, reflection, and participation. Recent literature further confirms that teacher identity is multifactorial, dynamic, and influenced by personal, institutional, and social dimensions (Herrera-Espinoza et al., 2024; Yan, 2024). The study thus highlights that teacher identity is not a fixed outcome but an ongoing process of becoming.



Timeline of Teacher Professional Identity Transformation

The timeline illustrates the developmental trajectory of teacher professional identity as a dynamic and evolving process over the period 2023 to 2025. In early 2023, the timeline begins with the compliance-oriented phase, where identity is primarily shaped by institutional expectations and characterized by a focus on curriculum delivery and classroom control. At this stage, professional identity is relatively stable but externally driven.

My journey of becoming a teacher between 2023 and 2025 reflects a gradual yet deeply personal transformation of my professional identity. In early 2023, I saw myself as a compliant teacher, committed to delivering the curriculum accurately and maintaining classroom control. At that time, I equated effectiveness with structure and discipline. As I noted in one of my early reflections:

"I feel successful when the lesson goes exactly as planned. If students follow instructions and remain quiet, I believe I have done my job well." (Reflective Journal, March 2023)

Looking back, this sense of stability was rooted more in external expectations than in my own critical understanding of teaching. However, by mid to late 2023, this sense of certainty began to unravel. Classroom realities disrupted my assumptions. Students did not always respond as expected, and their diverse needs challenged my structured approach. These moments created discomfort and uncertainty:

"Today's lesson did not go as planned. Some students seemed disengaged, and I felt frustrated. I started to question whether my way of teaching truly supports their learning." (Reflective Journal, August 2023)

These experiences marked a turning point. I began to see teaching not as the execution of a plan, but as a space of inquiry, aligning with the reflective practice described by Schön (1983). By early 2024, I intentionally engaged in deeper reflection through consistent journaling. Writing became a way to make sense of my experiences, emotions, and decisions. Over time, my reflections shifted from simply describing events to critically examining my beliefs:

"I realize now that my frustration is not just about students' behavior, but about my expectation that everything should go according to plan. Maybe I need to rethink what 'successful teaching' means." (Reflective Journal, February 2024)

Through this process, I began to reinterpret moments of failure as opportunities for growth, gradually reconstructing my professional identity. During mid-2024, collaboration became an important influence on my development. Conversations with colleagues exposed me to alternative perspectives and teaching approaches. These interactions challenged my previous assumptions and expanded my understanding:

"After discussing with my colleague, I realized that flexibility is not a weakness but a strength. She adapts her teaching based on students' responses, something I rarely considered before." (Reflective Journal, June 2024)

Through these shared experiences, I recognized that my identity was shaped not only internally but also socially, consistent with Wenger (1998).

By late 2024, a noticeable shift had occurred in my teaching practice. I became more responsive to students and less focused on rigid control. My role in the classroom began to change:

"I tried a different approach today—more discussion, less instruction. The class felt more alive. I realized that learning happens when students are involved, not just when I explain." (Reflective Journal, October 2024)

This marked a reconstruction of my identity from an authority-centered teacher to a more relational and student-centered practitioner.

Entering early 2025, I experienced a growing sense of integration. I no longer saw myself as confined to a single role, but as someone who navigates multiple identities:

"I don't feel like I have to control everything anymore. Sometimes I learn from my students, and that feels okay. I am becoming more comfortable with uncertainty." (Reflective Journal, January 2025)

This integration allowed me to respond more flexibly and thoughtfully to classroom dynamics. By mid to late 2025, I came to understand that this transformation was not a final destination but an ongoing process. Each teaching experience continued to reshape my identity:

"Every class teaches me something new not just about my students, but about myself as a teacher. I realize now that becoming a teacher is a continuous journey." (Reflective Journal, July 2025)

This realization reinforces the idea that teacher identity is never fixed but continuously reconstructed through reflection, interaction, and experience (Beijaard et al., 2004; Kelchtermans, 2009).

4. Conclusion

This autoethnographic study explored how reflective practice, collaboration, and classroom interaction shaped the transformation of my professional identity as a senior high school English teacher implementing Kurikulum Merdeka. The findings reveal that teacher identity is not fixed or stable, but continuously negotiated through lived experience, reflection, and social interaction. Moments of tension, uncertainty, and vulnerability became important sites for questioning assumptions and reconstructing professional beliefs. Reflective practice functioned as the primary mechanism for identity transformation, enabling deeper self-inquiry and pedagogical awareness.

Collaboration with colleagues provided dialogic spaces for shared learning and belief reconstruction, while classroom interaction continuously influenced how I understood competence, authority, and responsiveness in teaching. Together, these dimensions demonstrate that professional identity develops through dynamic and context-responsive processes rather than through formal preparation alone.

This study contributes to discussions on teacher identity by highlighting the value of autoethnography in understanding the emotional and relational dimensions of teaching. It also emphasizes the importance of reflective and collaborative practices in supporting teachers as they navigate the complexities of contemporary educational contexts.

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