

THE STATUS OF AGENCY IN TEACHER IDENTITY TOWARDS THE DELIVERANCE OF EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: A STUDY BASED ON ELT IN SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITIES

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Identity is a multifaceted, complicated notion involving dynamic linguistic, cultural and social negotiation. Many language practitioners perceive identity as a notion to differentiate one another, to position oneself among others and more importantly to identify oneself in a unique manner. However, the question lies on the necessity of the notion of identity in language teaching. Language practitioners try numerous methods to make their teaching effective. Yet, a handful of methods could result in achieving the aforementioned. If identity is linked to this discussion, it could be understood that a teacher's way of perceiving the language, curriculum, perspectives and attitudes, the learning environment he/she creates, and how the curriculum is delivered to the learners is shaped by the teacher's identity. A commonly evident fact in language classrooms, especially in the Sri Lankan universities is absenteeism and lack of interest. Thus, it could be noted that the teacher has a considerable responsibility towards mitigating the aforementioned issues. A language practitioner's adjustment made to suit the classroom is a process of identity. A majority of research findings depict that the lack of student interest is a result of ineffective teaching methods. Agency is significant in identity which refers to one's ability to do something at a given time. Agency is also the power that one could exert to position oneself in a certain way. Ten language practitioners from randomly selected state universities were interviewed to gather their views of their teaching practice. Additionally, a sample of twenty students were also interviewed in order to determine their learning experiences and their satisfaction of the classroom space. The findings reflected that a majority of teachers represented by the sample were restricted to the assigned identities and have not exercised their agency in positioning themselves in the classroom space as a result of the power exerted on them by senior and experienced individuals of the field. Thus teachers should exert agency in shaping his/her identity in order to create a more friendly atmosphere for learning.

Keywords: Agency, effective teaching, Identity, Interpersonal space, Learning experiences