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Lic. Juan Bardo Rodríguez de la Vega  
Coordinador de Asuntos Escolares del Campus Guanajuato  
Universidad de Guanajuato  
Presente

El que suscribe, Dr. Miguel Ángel Hernández Fuentes Director Sustituto de la División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades le informo que la egresada Kitzén Cuéllar León del programa educativo de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés ha cumplido íntegramente con los requisitos académico-administrativos (*INCLUYENDO LOS REQUERIMIENTOS DEL IDIOMA EXTRANJERO.*) necesarios para que le sea autorizada la sustentación de su examen para la obtención del grado de **Licenciada en la Enseñanza del Inglés.**

En virtud de lo anterior me permito solicitarle tenga a bien autorizar la realización de dicho examen. Los datos completos son los siguientes.

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**ATENTAMENTE**  
**"LA VERDAD OS HARÁ LIBRES"**

Dr. Miguel Ángel Hernández Fuentes  
Director Sustituto

División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades



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Lascuráin de Retana No. 5 4to Piso, Centro C.P 3600  
Tel. 473 73 2 00 06 ext. 8031



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de Guanajuato**

**División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades**

**Departamento de Lenguas**

**Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés**

**“What is a ‘Mexican’ English Teacher Identity?”**

**TESIS**

**Que Para Obtener el Grado de Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés**

**PRESENTA**

**Kitzén Cuéllar León**

**Guanajuato, Guanajuato.**

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**Thesis Director**  
**Dra. Martha M. Lengeling**

## **Abstract**

Al ingresar al programa de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del inglés en la Universidad de Guanajuato, pude rodearme de muchos maestros que aprendieron el idioma en México sin necesidad de haber vivido en otro país de habla inglesa. Este contacto y experiencia de estar con compañeros que han podido aprender el idioma y ahora enseñarlo motivó la inquietud de investigar sobre la identidad de los maestros mexicanos de inglés. Por lo tanto, la presente tesis explora los diferentes factores que influyen en la construcción de identidad de un grupo de maestros de inglés que cursaban el programa de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés. Siete profesores de inglés (todos hombres) fueron seleccionados con la única condición de haber nacido, crecido, haber aprendido inglés en México, y tener preparación como profesor de inglés en el mismo país. Para la investigación, se centró la atención en el enfoque cualitativo utilizando cuestionarios semiestructurados con el propósito de extraer la máxima información que se pudiese y el uso de entrevista semiestructurada para extender e interpretar la información obtenida en los cuestionarios. Se llegó a la conclusión que ciertamente, existen varios factores que influyen e intervienen de alguna manera en la construcción de identidad de este grupo de profesores. Tales factores son: las propias ideas y pensamientos hacia su labor como profesores, ser parte de un grupo de profesores con características similares, el proceso de aprender el idioma como sus propios alumnos lo hacen y adaptarse al lugar de trabajo al igual que a los alumnos. A pesar de los factores que influyen en la construcción de la identidad de cada persona, esta puede ser temporal, ya que es un proceso que puede ser cambiado con las experiencias e ideas que cada persona presenta junto con otros y el lugar en el que lo haga.

## **Dedication and Acknowledgments**

For my family: my parents Raúl and Rosa, my brother Raúl, my sister Judith and Salvador Enriquez, who always were there for me and believed in me and have given me their endless support. I want to thank to the following people for so many different reasons that helped me to get through this BA and finish my thesis. To begin with I want to thank my parents: Raul and Rosa Cuellar for always respecting my decisions and always told me to do everything well. To my brother Ruly for always being there with a smile for me. To Salvador Enriquez for always being there, good or bad times, and always supporting me in all that I did to finish the BA. I also want to thank other family members such as my aunts Tere and Ma. Luisa and their husbands for always giving me a word of support to continue studying. I specially want to thank to my cousins Judith and Daniel, because they inspired me to study a major.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The aim of this first chapter is to give background information regarding the research carried out for this project. I will explain the reason for this research and the motivation that led me to choose this topic. A general overview of my thesis will also be presented.

#### **1.2 My Motivation**

I was born in Mexico City and raised in Leon, Guanajuato. I was raised in a Jehovah's Witness family and my parents decided to move to an English congregation here in Mexico when I was young. I was able to learn English at an early age and have friends that only spoke English. English language has been part of my daily life since I was a kid, and I really enjoyed the language. Later, I was able to live in Canada for a while and interact with only English in my life. At the age of 19 I needed a job. A person that knew I spoke English asked me if I could work for him as an English teacher and I said yes. I taught for a couple of months and I decided that I needed to get formal preparation as a teacher, so I took the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) from the University of Cambridge and I continued teaching.

Through my teaching experience, I have worked with different language teachers. I was curious about knowing what similarities or specific qualities were present in my coworkers as English teachers had. This curiosity began in my teaching context and in Mexico. I wanted to know what it was meant to be a Mexican English teacher. I would like to mention what I mean by 'Mexican' English Teacher, which is a person who was born, raised and educated

in Mexico and has not traveled or studied abroad and has some type of English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher preparation in Mexico. Even though I am in the context of this research, I am not part of it, because I have lived in an English speaking country.

### **1.3 Purpose of This Study**

During my time working as an English teacher and as a student in the BA in English Language Teaching program, I have had the opportunity to interact with different type of English teachers; these teachers have been from different parts of the world including Mexico. I have had the opportunity to see how they work, and I have known some of their stories on how they became English teachers.

I then asked myself what characterizes a Mexican English teacher and if they have any similarities in their identity construction. The purpose of my study is to look at Mexican English teachers' identity and perceptions of who they are as Mexican EFL teachers. I decided to approach this topic as my thesis project because I am interested in knowing what a Mexican English teacher is, what they think a teacher is and how they see themselves as teachers different from those who are native speakers or have learned the language in English speaking countries, and have been trained abroad. A key aspect of choosing this topic is that I am Mexican, born, learned the language (English), educated, prepared as an English teacher in Mexico.

### **1.4 My Research Questions**

These are the questions which guided my research:

1. What are 'Mexican' English teacher perceptions and beliefs about themselves as teachers?
2. What are their qualities as English teachers?
3. How are they different from a native English speaker teacher or someone who developed professionally in an English speaking country?

I aim to explore their perceptions of who they are as Mexican ELT teachers and how their identity is constructed.

### **1.5 Description of Methodology**

This research is qualitative because I wanted to know about their experiences and teacher's characteristics. The methodology used in this research was phenomenology, to know about the participants' perceptions of who they are as Mexican EFL teachers and their emotions. The data was gathered through multiple techniques. First e-mail questionnaires were sent to the participants using open ended questions related to the topic that I choose to research. The aim of this questionnaire is to know about their beliefs and perceptions. Also I used focus group interviews in order to get more specific information after reading the data from the questionnaire. I decided to use questionnaires, because they are easy to read. They help to get a lot of information from the participant, and it is easier to analyze. Focus group interviews can gather more information in a short period of time from the participants. The research was carried out at the Universidad Tecnológica de León (UTL) where I am currently working at. I choose seven male teachers from this university and the participants are aged between 23 years old to 35 years old. These male participants were at my school and it was easier to contact them. This fits the profile that I was looking at (born in Mexico, learned English in Mexico, middle and high school education as teachers in Mexico).

## **1.6 General Overview**

The focus of Chapter 1 establishes the foundation of my research. This investigation focuses on the factors that influence the identity construction and similarities of ‘Mexican’ English teachers. This chapter gives a brief introduction, followed by my motivation to do this research, the purpose of the research, the research questions, and concludes with the research site. Chapter 2 focuses on literature that relates to this study. Identity construction and identity are defined, as well as my own definition of a Mexican teacher is. Chapter 3 explains the methodology under which this study was approached, as well as the data gathering techniques. Chapter 4 provides examples of data, under themes that emerged from it and a given interpretation. Finally, in Chapter 5, a general conclusion will be presented, as well as implications of my findings and some ideas of possible future research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The main purpose of this chapter is to present literature and academic concepts related to this research. This study endeavors to examine the construction of identity and perceptions of Mexican English teachers. The following concepts are related to the development of this research:

- Identity and identity construction
- Teachers' perceptions and development
- Non-native and native speakers of English

#### **2.2 Identity and the Process of Identity Construction**

According to the Merriam-Webster (2016) dictionary, identity is constructed by ideas, talents, qualities, and beliefs that define a person's identity. This research aims to explore the identity of a group of Mexican English teachers and the characteristics they might share in common.

Identity helps a person know and understand who they are within a specific context. Erikson (1968) defines identity as a growing process located inside an individual's life. People construct their identity through time; identity construction is a continuous process and is shaped by experiences. A person might develop a sense of belonging or being part of a society (Mead, 1934).

Identity is not something static, but is developed, and can change over time. Smolicz and Secombe (2009) affirm that a person can have different identities. For example, a person who speaks different languages can act different either by speaking or in the interaction with people from other cultures. This means that the person's identity was built by learning or speaking different languages and being part of the culture. In other words, a person can have multiple identities that can have different factors affecting the building of the identity that changes over time. Identity that includes cultural heritage might be based by family, birthplace, language, and society (Cornell, 1998).

According to Pollard (2002), the identity of a teacher refers to being an individual either in the classroom or in a personal context. In this case, identity is how the person is in different context without having barriers or bringing personal life aspects to the classroom. Taking the context into account for this research is significant, since it is part of identity, which perceptions act as a central element of the study. Experiences and thoughts reshape teachers' self and others perceptions and teachers' identities may help them to become part of a group, as a desire of recognition (Norton, 2000).

Moreover, identity refers to "as how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5). An important part of identity are peoples' circumstances that "might change over time but people tend to maintain their identities in order to make their lives coherent and stable, in this case teachers' professional lives might develop but their identity keeps the same" (Norton, 2000, p. 5). This shows how identity shifts and adapts to circumstances. As mentioned before, the context and circumstances of the participants are similar. A vital type of identity that I considered to be important in this

research is described as national identity. Mandler (2006) describes national identity as “the social space that persons feel they belong and also to both political and cultural aspects that they are more familiar” (p. 276). In this case, the participants for this study belong to a specific nation, region, state, city and context, which is in Mexico.

Regarding identity, Burr (2003) argues that “a person’s identity is achieved by a subtle interweaving of many different threads. These threads are woven together to produce the fabric of a person’s identity” (p. 106). As Burr defines, a person’s identity is constructed over time with different elements. For example, identity can be affected through the individual’s world. Norton (2000) refers to social identity as the relationship between the individual and the social world. School, family and friends may have an important role in constructing a person’s beliefs, and values that influence the identity construction.

Having discussed identity, I now will look at professional identity: how people see themselves within a professional career as a teacher. This thesis explores teachers’ identity. Day (2004) mentions that “Professional identity is closely related, among other concepts, with sense of belonging, notions of commitment and the teacher interest and education, which is not only based on the past but into future perception” (p. 53). In this research we will see how different experiences of the past and future expectation relate to identity.

Regarding identity, Bucholtz (1999) points out that identities emerge in practice, through the combined effects of structure and agency. Individuals can engage in multiple identity practices simultaneously, and they are able to move from one identity to another. An individual’s identity construction is a continuous process and can be affected by different experiences. Being a Mexican English teacher can shape one’s identity. Experiences and

circumstances relate to the construction of one's identity either as an individual or as a professional. Having discussed these definitions, identity is an evolving construction of who a person is within a different context. Life experiences influence this construction. In the following section, teacher's perceptions of themselves as teachers will be discussed.

### **2.3 Teacher's Perceptions of Themselves and Professional Development**

In this study, the participants shared their perceptions of who they are as Mexican EFL teachers and how others see them as professionals. A person might be moved to change or to continue in the same pattern by the comments and ideas that he or she might either have or receive. The individuals in this study might have different teaching experiences that shape their perceptions about themselves as teachers, the successful aspects of their teaching and also in professional development. Regarding the individuals of this study, they are chiefly affected to change by students' comments and suggestions.

Professional development focuses on the self and students, rather than on the knowledge and theory (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001). Teachers that are interested in their professional development, concentrate on their attitude and skills to help students learn. Bailey, Curtis and Nunan (2001) mention that "professional development, happens if, and only, if is chosen to be taken" (p. 4). In this study the participants have enrolled in different courses, certifications, because they have decided to improve their teaching skills, based on both their personal and students' perceptions. Engaging in professional development as English teachers, does not only involve knowledge, techniques and skills. Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) comment that teachers have to understand what sort of person they are in their context. As seen above, teacher's education is also part of one's identity.



Teachers acquire experience throughout their classes, and they might become more confident in their teaching methods. Also as teachers, they become more aware of what their students' needs are. Brumfit (2001) says that "the ability to relate to learners, the role of enthusiasm for the subject and the interaction of these with a sense of purpose and organization are aspects to consider to be a good teacher" (p. 13). If teachers relate to their students with enthusiasm, this attitude helps students to see their teacher in a positive way and even consider him or her to be a good teacher.

Both teachers and students have their personal perceptions regarding the class, methodology and attitude. Brumfit (1982) comments that "successful teaching is more likely to emerge when students join a community in which they are provided with an example of the desired behavior" (p. 13). In other words, attitude is one of the most important things that a teacher should have. Success as a teacher would not only depend on the approach or method that the teacher follows but the integrity as a person and the relationships that the teacher is able to develop with students are part of effective teaching. Also, the way teachers build human relationships give students the opportunity to build their own perceptions and beliefs about their teacher. Holliday (1994) argues that in order to be effective, teachers must take into account all of the students and what influences them in their learning.

At the moment that a teacher is developing as a person and as a professional, he or she is creating his or her identity as both the person and the professional. A teacher's identity construction is also influenced by past and present experiences; these experiences provide with opportunities to teachers to achieve behaviors and professionalism of an effective teacher and to be perceived as an effective one. Reflecting on past and present teaching experiences can be good ways of reflection and can give pedagogical knowledge to create

effective teaching (Schön, 1983). A teacher should be aware of what experiences have been positive and what aspects need to be improved in teaching.

Regarding the participants of this study, their identity was built through personal and professional experiences, new knowledge acquired and their professional development. In this aspect the teacher is continuously improving his or her teaching skills, strategies and methods by updating their knowledge and obtaining preparation which will help to develop as teachers. The teachers' perceptions of themselves show how they may develop as teachers.

#### **2.4 Native and Non-Native Speakers of English**

The topic of native and non-native speakerism to be very important for this study. This is to make it clear who the individuals are and the difference between a native and a non-native speaker.

According to Bloomfield (1933), "the first language that is learned by a person is their native language, so this person is called a native speaker of the language" (p. 43). In this definition, a person's first language is their native language and the person is considered to be a native speaker. However, this is not the only way of identifying a native speaker. For example, Davies (2003) identifies a native speaker as one that despite not having been born in a country where the language is spoken, for example been born in Mexico where Spanish is the native language a person might be able to learn English, the person adopts it or was adopted by the language. According to Árvá and Medgyes (2000), "teachers should be hired solely on the basis of their professional virtue, regardless of their language background" (p. 358). As stated here, teachers' academic preparation in teaching a language should be more important instead of what their native language is. In this study, attention is given to participants whose first

and native language is Spanish but they are professionally trained as English teachers. In other words, this study is carried on with non-native speakers. In recent years, there has been a growing number of English speaking people whose native language is different from English (Jasone Cenoz, 2000). As seen in this study, the teachers are trained in a Spanish speaking country to teach English.

There is a lot of literature researchers that describe what type of teacher is better, either a native or a non-native speaker, but this research does not focus on that. This study focuses on how non-native teachers see themselves as English teachers and how students see them. Braine (1999) mentions that there can be some type of prejudice by having a non-native teacher or being disappointed; a native teacher might better know the context of use of the language and its use.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The literature that has been provided in this chapter supports the main topics of this study. The topics that are considered are: 1) Identity and identity construction, 2) Teachers' perceptions and development, 3) Non-native and native speakers. Moreover, relevant literature was used to support the interpretation of the researcher through the development of this study. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the aim of this study is to find out what influences the construction of identity and perceptions of Mexican English teachers, and what their identity. I considered it important to mention that it is not the focus of this research to determine who is better at the teaching work native or non-native teachers but I considered pertinent to point out what does it mean to be a native or non-native speaker. Consequently, the concepts that have been presented in this chapter are all related to the identity construction of the participants and the process of being a professional English

teacher. In the following chapter, the methodology and data collection techniques and process will be discussed in detail.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology and Data Collection**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the research questions, the methodology, techniques used for the data collection process, and how the data was collected are discussed.

#### **3.2 Research Questions**

Through this research, I want to get to know what is the identity and perceptions of EFL teachers in Mexico. And I attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are 'Mexican' English teacher perceptions and beliefs about themselves as teachers?
2. What are their qualities as English teachers?
3. How are they different from a native English speaker teacher or someone who developed professionally in an English speaking country?

Through this research, I want to get to know what is the identity and perceptions of EFL teachers in Mexico.

#### **3.3 Qualitative Research**

The research was conducted through a qualitative perspective, because it was suitable to explore the identity of teachers in Mexico and their experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe qualitative research as: "a set of interpretative practices with no theory or paradigm" (p. 7). It is important to explore the participants' thoughts and experiences within the teaching context and a social setting as the Universidad Tecnológica de León in order to answer the

research questions. As Holliday (2002) suggests “qualitative research data is conceived as what happens in a particular social setting, or among a particular group of people” (p. 61). The reason I decided to approach this research with a qualitative paradigm is to examine participants’ ideas, words, and experiences as descriptive as possible. Maycut and Morehouse (1994) comment that “A qualitative research is designed to learn about some kind of phenomenon of interest in a social context” (p. 24). It was important for participants to express what they believe and experience as Mexican English teachers in order to understand their identity. In the following section, I will describe the site in which this research was carried out.

### **3.4 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology was the method that was used to carry this research. Phenomenology studies everyday experiences of people (Merriam, 2009). This may refer to how people see themselves as well as their emotions and experiences. The researcher tries to analyze participants shared experiences, beliefs and ideas with the purpose of determining the essence of phenomena (Merriam, 2009).

In this research, I focused on a particular group of people, in order to look at their identity building. I focus on what I defined as a Mexican person who teaches English: being born in Mexico, having lived in Mexico, having learned English in the same country, not having ever traveled to an English speaking country and having been trained as an EFL teacher in Mexico. The group of participants in this research had the same profile that fit my research goals.

### **3.5 Data Techniques**

In this section the two techniques of online questionnaires and a focus group interview are presented.

#### **3.5.1 Online Questionnaire**

In the process of data collection, an online open-ended questionnaire was created to obtain information from the participants. The participants were sent the questionnaire, and they had the option to answer in more than a week, in order for them to take enough time to answer each question. The seven participants all answered the questionnaire in English (Appendix A).

I chose to use the semi-structured questionnaire as a suitable technique to gather data regarding this research. First, I will define what an open-ended questionnaire is: an open-ended questionnaire is made of open format questions which give participants the opportunity to express their opinions in a free-flowing manner. These questions do not have a predetermined set of responses and the participant is free to answer whatever they feel right. My main reason to use an online questionnaire was to get as much information as I could from the participant in a relaxed way and compare the data with data from other participants. Before sending the online questionnaire, I talked to the participants in order to see if they had the profile to be part of the research. Afterwards, I explained the purpose of my research and asked them if they wanted to be part of it. Once the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and agreed to be part of the study, the questionnaire was sent to their email accounts or Facebook accounts.

Seven questions were used in each questionnaire:

- How did you learn English?
- How did you become a teacher? How long have you been teaching?
- What documents do you have to back you up as a teacher?
- How do you see yourself as a teacher/ why?
- How do you think others (students) perceive you as a teacher?
- Define an English teacher.
- How do you feel in comparison with a teacher who has learned English outside Mexico, studied, and travelled abroad? Are there any differences? Do you think you need to travel to other countries to be a better teacher?

With these open questions, the intention was to gather valuable data that would help to answer the research questions. In addition to these, I decided to implement a focus group interview which would allow me to get more information from participants.

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Interview**

The second technique that I used to gather data was a focus group interview and I will define it. Madriz (2000) refers to a focus group as a “collectivistic rather than an individualistic research method that focuses on participants’ attitudes, experiences and belief” (p. 836).

Lincoln and Guba (2000) make reference to humans as the primary data-gathering instruments for the human researcher. I considered that the use of a focus group interview was a helpful tool to obtain more data from participants. Lengeling (2010) mentions that focus group discussions create a positive atmosphere where participants can interact and listen to thoughts and opinions from other participants. I noticed it was important for all the participants to feel comfortable in participating in this research and with me (the researcher),



and as a result participants were able to share their thoughts and experiences with the group and researcher.

Prior to conducting the focus group interview, I contacted the participants to gather them together so as to have the group discussion. This process was difficult due to the participants' schedules and activities. Indeed, it was impossible to gather all of the seven participants at once. I decided to create a WhatsApp group with the intention to have all of the participants together and able to send their answers to the questions through an audio and everybody would be able to listen to each other. After explaining the purpose of the WhatsApp group, and having the participants' agreement, I proceeded to ask them the questions. I was sure they listened to each other, because they would comment or agree on the other participants' answers.

Two main questions were asked in the interview besides having followed up questions. Such questions were:

- What does it mean for you to be called a Mexican English teacher or non-native teacher?
- Is there a specific quality or even advantage that you see as a Mexican teacher from a native speaker teacher?

With these open questions, the intent was to obtain more valuable data that would help in the attempt to answer the research questions. I decided to use this interview because I thought these questions would help me to get more authentic and spontaneous information from the participants, instead of just using a questionnaire in which they had time to plan their answers.

The manner of approaching this interview resulted in an effective gathering data and participants in an informal way, giving the participants the flexibility to express their ideas in an open way and in a personal means without having the stress to be in a specific time and place to be interviewed.

### **3.6 Context and the Participants**

The context is the Universidad Tecnológica de León, which is a public technical university in León Guanajuato, Mexico. The participants in this study are seven male English teachers who work at this university or were working there during the time I collected data. It is important to mention that I am part of the context of these participants, but I am not part of the research. I saw these seven participants daily while we were teaching together in the same university.

The main characteristics of these participants is that they are Mexican and have a BA major in EFL, either finished or still in process. The average age of the participants is from 24 to 30 years old. I decided to select these participants, because they fit the definition that I came up with as to who a Mexican EFL teacher is. This is someone who was born in Mexico and has learned English in Mexico. This teacher has also received training as an EFL teacher in Mexico. I arrived at this specific definition to understand this group of teachers. The purpose of having participants with a finished BA and in progress is because they can give different thoughts and experiences in teaching as a graduate or while still studying a BA. The total of participants was seven, and they accepted to be part of this research project. All the participants took part in answering an online questionnaire and a focused semi structured

interview, acknowledging the purpose of this investigation signing a letter of informed consent. Table 1 provides information regarding the participants.

Table 1. Information regarding the participants.

<b>PARTICIPANT PSEUDONYM</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>DEGREE</b>	<b>NATIONALITY</b>	<b>WORK PLACE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING</b>
Simon	27	Studying BA in ELT	Mexican	UTL	5
Gillian	23	Studying BA in ELT	Mexican	UTL	3
Andres	24	BA in ELT	Mexican	UTL	3
Fabian	27	Studying BA in ELT	Mexican	UTL	8
Manuel	35	BA in ELT	Mexican	UTL	10
Juan	28	BA in ELT	Mexican	UTL	6
Eduardo	27	Studying BA in ELT	Mexican	UTL	5

The following section will provide more details about the tools used in the data gathering process

### 3.7 Data Organization

After gathering the data from the questionnaires and the focus group, I read through the data various times to find similar categories. I compared the two data sources and assigned the data a category on paper, I went through it and divided it into themes that had relevance on identity and perceptions, then I assigned an order on the themes.

### 3.8 Coding

In this section I will explain how I codified the data for better analysis, first I will present a table that explains the information regarding the codes and for the techniques and participants.

Table 2. Information regarding the codes for techniques and participants

<b>TECHNIQUE</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Questionnaire	Q
Focus Group Interview	I
Question number	1 to 10
<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>CODE</b>
Andrés	A
Manuel	M
Eduardo	E
Simon	S
Juan	J
Fabian	F
Gillian	G

I will now explain the codes were used using data examples.

I think an English teacher is not anybody who is able to speak the language but a person that has studies about it, in both: language focused and pedagogy focused. (Q6S)

The code of this piece of information is (Q6S). The initial 'Q' is used to indicate the piece of information is obtained from the questionnaire. The number '6' is to indicate that this is the sixth question and the initial 'S' refers to the name or pseudonym of the participant (in this case, the 'S' refers to Simon).

### **3.9 Ethics**

Ethics plays an important part on my research, because ethics are norms that help society know what is acceptable or unacceptable in a specific context (Resnik, 2015). In order to obtain participants' permission to use their information in this research, first I asked them if they would like to be part of this research project individually. Then I gave each a letter of consent. My intent in the first part was to open the dialogue and to send the online questionnaire and establish a friendly environment. Then with the letter of consent, I wanted the participants to see the formality and my position in the research towards the information that each participant gave (see Appendix B).

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This section made reference to the research questions attempted to be answered in this research project. Later, the method and then the data collection techniques were described. As referee to before in this chapter, open-ended questionnaire was a useful technique to obtain relevant data from participants. Then the use of a focus group interview was also

helpful to gather more in-depth personal information from participants. The profile and context of the participants was mentioned in a general way to them. In addition to this, the process of data collection, and informing the participants about it and what the purpose of the research was, took an important aspect in gathering data. Moreover, each participant was protected under confidentiality. In the following chapter, the data and its findings will be analyzed and presented.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the method and techniques used were explained, along with the participants selected for this research, and the context in which it took place. This chapter will show the data analysis and the results from the analysis. At the same time, the findings regarding the information provided by the participants will be interpreted and discussed.

#### **4.2 The Findings**

I will begin by analyzing fragments of data that were obtained from the open-ended online questionnaires. The data was divided into different themes with the aim to have a more careful analysis. Through the analysis, it seems that some of the participants provided similar ideas related to similar experiences for more than one question. It might appear that different teachers have had common thoughts and experiences regarding a Mexican English teacher.

Now, based on the responses given by the participants, a personal interpretation will be made regarding the data based upon the following themes: 1) Teachers' professional preparation; 2) Teachers' identity construction; 3) Teachers' perceptions of themselves 4) Others' perceptions of them; 5) Native and non-native English teachers; and 5) Who is a Mexican English teacher? In the following section, I will discuss each theme with data and an interpretation.

### 4.2.1 Teachers' Professional Preparation

Some of the English teachers have just 'fall into' a teaching job without having any professional training (Duff, 1997; Freeman, 2000; Williams, 1995). In this research there were a few teachers who were considered this. In some cases speaking the language was the only preparation they were required in order to be hired.

When Juan was asked the question: What documents do you have to back you up as a teacher?

He responded with the following:

I studied a BA in TESOL [Teaching English as Foreign Language] at the University of Guanajuato. Also, I completed a Basic English Teacher's Course in Stratford Institute in October 2012. I got my "Diploma" by the Secretaría de Educación Pública. (Q3J)

In this case, Juan has had professional training as an English teacher, and he has a BA and other courses which backup his professional teaching preparation. Similar to Juan, Andrés answered:

I have a TOEFL [Test of English as a Foreign Language] score card, and I have my university certificate, where it officially state that I have finished the subjects of the English teacher career". (Andrés, Q3A)

Andrés has taken professional training such as a BA degree in ELT. In addition, he has the TOEFL, and this measures the level of English. It should be mentioned that this exam is not specifically for English teachers but it is required to have it where he teaches. Also it is a multiple choice exam which shows recognition of the language, and not the production of the language.

In the case of Fabian, he mentioned the following to the same question:

The documents I have are: a certificate stating that I took the eight levels of English in the UG, the training course in English teaching, several letters from the talks...that I have attended, and more recently the TOEFL and am actually studying a BA in Guanajuato (Q3F).

Fabian has some preparation in learning the language, but he is also taking professional training in order to become a professional English teacher. It can be inferred that he takes



professional training as something important and as something that needs to be improved. One can see that Fabian is active in his profession and perhaps this is how he validates himself in the profession.

#### **4.2.2 Teachers' Identity Construction**

Identifying what makes a person a good teacher in general might seem easy. But the way each teacher develops his or her own thought about identity as a language teacher might be difficult to generalize. One of the questions in this questionnaire asked participants to define an English teacher. Simon explained the following:

An English teacher is the one who has qualifications to teach the English language. The main qualifications are the knowledge of the language, as well as pedagogy. (Simon, Q6S)

Simon, in this case, mentions that an English teacher should actually know the language and have some kind of preparation in order to know how to teach the language. It is necessary for Simon to have a professional training as a teacher and not only be able to speak the language. Gillian shares this viewpoint to the same question:

I think an English teacher is not anybody who is able to speak the language but a person that has studies about it, and both: language focused and pedagogy focused. (Gillian, Q6G)

An important aspect that Gillian mentions is that an English teacher should be someone who is prepared to teach the language and has a methodology to teach it. Speaking a language does not mean the person is able or skilled enough to teach it to others.

When asked to define an English teacher, Andrés claims:

I think an English teacher must have the knowledge to transmit the L2 to the students, and must have the control of the classroom. (Andrés, Q6A)

Andrés is more concerned with the teacher's preparation, language knowledge and the way the class is controlled. In comparison, Fabian mentions the following:

It is a person who is in charge of giving or orienting a student or a group of them about their second language learning using strategies or methods fulfilling the students' needs. (Fabian, Q6F)

According to Fabian, an English teacher guides students to learn a language. The teacher helps students to learn the language by knowing what the students' needs are. In this case the teacher's role is to apply the correct methods, so as to aid the students to learn the target language.

Similar to Fabian, Juan replied the following when answering what an English teacher is:

An English teacher is one who is committed with their improvement and professional development as well as with the students' English language learning, who tries to give a better class every day and who is passionate with what he/she is doing. An English teacher is one who masters the language in the four skills, who promotes the learning focusing on communication rather than on grammar, who tries to fix the weakness which might appear during the course and who designs his or her own materials. An English teacher is one who is open to new challenges and tendencies in the learning process, and who is constantly looking for the perfection of his/her classes as well as the students' interests, needs, emotions and performance in class. An English teacher is one who works under any teaching situation though the circumstances may be awful, uncomfortable and unacceptable. (Q6J)

Interpreting Juan's words, an English teacher should not only master the language, but also should have commitment to improve as a professional teacher, and to teach with interest regarding the students and the material. It is important for an English teacher to be open minded to either favorable or difficult circumstances. Juan also seems to be open to learning in order to help students.

Eduardo expressed the following by answering what an English teacher is:

I believe that an English teacher should have three important elements: knowledge, skills, and attitude. The knowledge is the command of the language. The skills are the ways to share that knowledge (methods, strategies), and last but not least, the attitude to go for the extra mile. I believe that a teacher is the one who is devoted to his/her job expecting nothing in return. (Q6E)

Eduardo coincides with some of the other participants' ideas and adds the importance of having knowledge about the language, and to have enough professional preparation, such as

knowing the teaching methods and pedagogy. It seems that a positive attitude is an important aspect of being a teacher. It can be concluded that it is not only essential to speak the language but to have professional training, in order to facilitate the methods and teach the language, as well a positive attitude is needed while teaching.

#### **4.2.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Themselves**

Bucholtz (1999) views identities as emerging in practice, and are involved in multiple identity practices simultaneously. He mentions that "Constructing one's identity is a process that external factors can affect in the building of it" (Bucholtz, 1999 p.210). In this research, EFL teachers' identity construction is built through personal circumstances, and the community itself are part of this construction process.

When being questioned about how they considered themselves as teachers. Manuel gave the following answer:

I consider myself as a patient teacher and I know that every classroom is different, so I do not consider myself an expert English teacher. I try to promote confidence among my students, because I think that confidence plays an important role when learning a foreign language, so I always try to make them feel safe in a friendly environment and also to give them some strategies and let them know about the different tools they have to learn the target language.  
(Q5M)

He considers himself not to be an expert teacher; however, he promotes a friendly classroom environment by being patient. This normally gives confidence to students and provides for better learning and participation. He also adapts his methods in the class according to students' needs and, and he seems to be confident of who he is as an English teacher and promotes a safe environment for students to learn. Similarly to this case, Juan mentions how he adapts his own methods by providing the following answer:

I consider myself as a teacher who is professionally well-prepared. I am also flexible because I consider myself humanistic. When my students present difficulties to learn something in my class or they have an issue that interferes with their studies. I really like to help them and look for choices that they can offer in order to recover the course. However, when the students present a bad attitude, I apply the institution rules; also as a teacher I design my material. I look for authentic material and communicative activities which help the students to learn the language. (Q5J)

In Juan's case, he also adapts to his students' needs and enjoys helping them in order for them to have a better performance. He considers himself humanistic, so he is interested in his students. He does not only have professional preparation to teach but he shows flexibility to act according to the circumstances in both reasonable and professional ways. It is also important that he looks for material and activities to encourage his students to learn and speak. Identity can help a person to become part of a specific community, an effect or even social position (Skeggs, 2008). In this case, Juan's identity is related to how he sees himself as a teacher in a specific context.

Simon commented the following when answering about how his self-perception as a teacher:

I consider myself as a good teacher. I think I have good communication skills. I also think I have some charisma as a teacher. I have had good experiences in my teaching. Of course, as anybody, I have messed up some times, but I get to build very good relationships with my students, regardless of their age and their gender. This is not only because I am a knowledgeable teacher from the university, but also because I am flexible and eclectic. My goal is to be as objective as possible all the time and to be aware of the different realities of the different places that I am and that I teach at. (Q5S)

Simon mentioned the importance of having charisma in order to have a good relationship with students, but he mentions flexibility as an important part of teaching. He also takes into consideration the schools' needs where he is teaching. Even though he considers he is a good teacher he has messed up sometimes and it can be inferred that he is able to change the way he teaches according to the context. In contrast, Fabian thinks the following:

I believe I need more training; due to my little experience I have noticed I need to polish to develop the strategies and abilities that I have learned through my education. (Q5F)

Fabian is interested in his teaching development and in gaining more experience in the field.

Also he is interested in developing more strategies to teach his classes and skills as a teacher.

Eduardo shares a similar thought, in the following:

I consider myself as a teacher in progress, or as a newborn teacher. I believe that I have not gotten enough experience yet even though I have been teaching for five years. This is because when I was teaching in kindergarden and primary schools I did not really teach. It was more like a fun game. Then, when I started to teach in high school and university, this is when I first started to “teach”. It has been a good experience but I still consider myself a newborn because I still need to work on developing my knowledge and pedagogical skills; therefore, I think I only have the attitude. So, I would say that I consider myself as an unexperienced teacher with attitude to develop and grow. (Q5E)

Both Fabian and Simon seem to care about their students and perhaps they want to become better teachers. Wanting to have more knowledge and pedagogical skills are central aspects to develop as a teacher. Eduardo considers that at the primary school level he was “not really teaching”. He also has a good attitude to learn, teach and grow as an English teacher. As discussed in this section, flexibility from the teacher, context knowledge and pedagogical skills are important factors when teaching a language from teachers’ perceptions.

#### **4.2.4 Others’ Perceptions of Them**

As mentioned before, identity can make a person be categorized or be part of some kind of community. Participants mentioned important aspects and ideas that other students and teachers have mentioned about them as teachers. These ideas built their identities and are what makes these teachers feel part of a certain community, and know how others perceive them. Andrés mentioned the following:

So far, I think I have been considered as a real teacher among other people. A reason to mention this aspect is that other people have seen that I have knowledge of the language, and I have awareness to work with people who want to learn. (Q5A)

Andrés, is being perceived as a real teacher who has enough knowledge, in both how to teach the language and the language itself. Simon contributed the following when answering the same question:

They see me as a good teacher. It is easy to know because as soon as I finish a period with a group, they go to the coordination and ask for me to be their teacher again. Also, in the teacher evaluations they always make very good comments about me. (Q5S)

In Simon's case he is considered to be a good teacher by others. Students want him to continue being their teacher. He also gets good comments from students. Similarly, Manuel mentions the next:

I think that most of my students have perceived me as a friendly teacher who likes to learn and to promote learning in a relaxed way. Sometimes, some students misunderstand the way I work and they lose themselves and have difficulties with the different assigned homework, but when they are learning the language, I respond in a flexible manner, so they do not feel demotivated and pay more attention to their assignments. (Q5M)

In Manuel's case, students see his positive disposition to learn and to teach. When faced with difficulties, he seems to have a very positive attitude to help students by being flexible and friendly, and as a result students pay more attention. For this participant, attitude is vital for others, especially students.

Gillian said the following about attitude:

I am not certain about how my students perceive me, but what I do know and this is because students have told me that they know I care for them and that I try to do my best as a teacher. (Q5G)

While Gillian is not sure as to how his students see him, he has been told he is a caring teacher. He also mentions the willingness he has to teach because he tries his best as a teacher, even though he does not really know students' perceptions.

Juan provides the following reply to the same question:

Students see me as a teacher who knows the American culture and as a teacher who behaves as a young person. I think my students see me as a teacher who is not like other English teachers that they have had in the past. I say this because all my students know what and where I studied to become an English teacher and they have seen my work in the English lessons. Most of them have told me that they had high grades with me and they enjoy the class. In other words, my students see me as a well-prepared English teacher. Also, they see me as a friendly person because they have told me that I have been very nice with them and they often joke with me and they work very well in my class. (Q6J)

Juan is considered to be a good teacher by his students, because he knows not only about the language but culture of the target language. He also sees himself as flexible and friendly.

Similarly, Eduardo commented the following about perceptions:

I believe that others perceive me as a fun teacher, and sometimes with a good command of the language; however, I also believe that they can perceive my lack of knowledge in some areas such as grammar. I think that they perceive me as a very patient as well as a flexible teacher, one who encourages them to speak, and one that makes them feel less anxious. (Q6E)

Eduardo seems to be concerned about both positive aspects as a teacher and also areas to improve. He describes himself as being a knowledgeable teacher and fun in his classes; also his attitude towards students and the class are important aspects as how others perceive him. As seen in his answer, he is flexible with students and helps them to be comfortable when learning English. He is also a patient teacher and encourages students to use the language. In addition, Fabian shared the following answer:

So far none of my students have complained about my classes. I constantly question the learners in my classes, about how they feel about the class and me and they will reply that it is ok for them. (Fabian, Q6F)

Fabian mentions that he constantly asks his students how they feel in the class, this shows he is interested in knowing his students' opinions and feelings. Students respond in a positive way to the teacher, Fabian looks concerned about what students think about him as a teacher.

For these participants, not only knowledge and preparation are important aspects in the class, but a positive perception from the students of their classes is important. Teacher's attitude,

interests, willingness and patience are relevant features for students. Some of the participants want to know what their students think about them in order to gain feedback for classes.

#### **4.2.5 Native and Non-Native English Teachers**

In the participants' answers, they showed that their identities and perceptions have been constructed by experiences in teaching and the comments or feedback that they have received from students. An important aspect of their identity construction as English teachers is how they perceive themselves as non-native English teachers.

When being asked about how Simon feels in comparison with a teacher who has learned English outside Mexico, he answered the following:

I do not usually think about it honestly. People tell me that my English sounds pretty good and they normally think I learnt abroad or sound like a native speaker. It tells me that I have a good level. Travelling does not teach pedagogy, I think. Probably those who learned abroad have some specific knowledge that can be shared with students and they might consider more valuable. However, the programs in which the teaching is based, dictate what is necessary to teach and to know. (Q7S)

Simon is comfortable as an English teacher, because he is perceived as someone who learned the language abroad. But his opinion shows that for him is more significant pedagogy, which is not learned by traveling to an English speaking country. In his opinion the teacher who has been in an English speaking country knows about the language, but does not know what or how to teach in the language program.

Andrés gave a similar answer:

I don't feel any kind of bad feeling because even though I learned English, and studied here in Mexico, I have been developing my professional life so I think I do not see any differences in not being a native speaker. Also, I think you don't need to travel abroad to be the best or a better language teacher. (Andrés, Q7A)



Andrés does not feel different in comparison to a teacher who has received professional education in an English speaking country. He mentions that it is not necessary to be a native speaker to be a better teacher, and he mentions professional training as more important.

Fabian gave the following reply to the same question:

I feel good because I think there is a big difference between people who learned the language outside of Mexico or studied there or even as native speakers. They had to learn the language because they needed it and I think that I learned it just because I liked it. I think I need to travel to improve my English level. (Fabian, Q7F)

In the case of Fabian, he mentions a specific difference between a teacher who is a native or has learned the language in an English speaking country and a non-native speaker who has only lived in Mexico. Fabian learned the language because he likes it, and had fun and then decided to be a teacher. He seems to be interested in traveling to an English speaking country to improve his language skills and practice the language, but he does not see it as relevant being native to be a teacher.

A similar thought was provided by Gillian by saying:

To be honest I do sometimes feel a bit down in comparison with other teachers who have traveled abroad. Because, I do not have the experience of being in another country where the language is spoken. (Gillian, Q7G)

In Gillian's case, he expresses that traveling abroad it is a relevant aspect of being an English teacher. Some reasons that he gives are to have the daily real life experience and use of the language in a native speaking country.

The following participant provided this answer to the same question:

To be honest I think this is the specific characteristic that I consider I have. I remember that this was my belief, that English teachers are "personas de mundo." In other words, people who have travelled to other countries, who read books, newspapers, articles about any information from other disciplines, related to teaching English or Education, and are not necessarily native of the language. My students think that I have been to other countries

especially those countries where English is spoken or even ask me if I am a native. (Juan, Q7J)

Juan argues that English teachers are considered to be people who have traveled around the world, and are open to other cultures. Even though he has not traveled or received professional preparation in an English speaking country, his students think he has done that or that his native language is English. Juan seems not to have any difference with those teachers who have traveled abroad and those who are native speakers.

#### **4.2.6 Who is a Mexican English teacher?**

In the following data, the participants commented on what it means for them to be called a non-native teacher in this case a Mexican teacher. For some participants they mentioned they have never been formally called a non-native teacher but how they identify themselves as Mexican English teachers.

When asked what a Mexican English teacher is, Manuel said the following:

I guess that being called a Mexican English teacher is not a problem because language teaching is not exclusive for those who speak a certain language. (Manuel, I1M)

For Manuel, teaching a language is not only for native speakers but for all speakers of the language. Similarly, Andrés contributes with this:

To me a Mexican teacher is a person who was born in this country and has been part of the culture and who has the ability of speaking the English language. That's what a Mexican English teacher is to me. (Andrés, I1A)

In the above Andrés defines what a Mexican teacher is and what the Mexican teacher brings to teaching, which is sharing the Mexican culture and going through the process of learning English.

It is common for English teachers to be asked where they are from and this is what Simon thinks about being a Mexican English teacher:

I do not remember of a moment in which I was identified as a Mexican teacher. However, students have asked me where I come from. It usually happens at the beginning of the course, but not only students, also some coworkers when we first meet. I guess it is pretty obvious that I am Mexican. That is why the most of people do not ask. Still, to me being called a Mexican teacher means I am a teacher of English whose nationality is Mexican, to be called non-native teacher means that I am not from an English speaking country. (Simon, I1S)

As noted by Simon, the difference between a non-native speaker and being ‘Mexican’ is that he does not come from an English speaking country and he was born in Mexico. He was born in Mexico and teaches English in a non-native speaking country. Being Mexican provides him with advantages, for example students can relate to him in the process of learning a language. An example is mentioned by Gillian in the following:

Well as I see things teaching here in Mexico and being a Mexican teacher gives me certain advantages. Such as, the fact that students can relate more with you and you can relate with them too. I can know more or less what their skills are as well as their weaknesses. Also you have the language so you can help them with the target language using structures or similar structures that you know will help them in Spanish. I am of the idea of using grammar translation if is good when it's possible. So I think this can help. (Gillian, I2G)

Gillian mentions some of the positive things that he is able to see in his teaching context which can help students better learn English. For example, students might feel connected or comfortable with a teacher of the same country. Also the teacher might understand the students better when learning the language or the struggles of learning it. An important thing is that he can use the students’ language to explain grammar points of English. Students and the teacher have similar backgrounds, which can help the teacher to relate to the students’ context. This provides a connection with the students and show us insight as to who the Mexican English teacher is.

A similar thought was given by Fabian:

Advantages are that I am in the context and I know the process of learning. I can use Spanish to explain some features of the language. Some students see the teacher as a model in this case non-native teacher. This factor can motivate students. The student sees the teacher as a model. They don't need to be a “gringo” to learn the language. (Fabian, I2F)

Fabian mentions that being part of the same context gives students motivation, because they can see the teacher as an example of a person who has learned other language. The teacher is not a native teacher. He is also able to use Spanish to explain similar points in the English language.

When being asked the same question Eduardo shared the following:

I believe that the preparation I have received during the BA has helped me not to feel bad about it (non-native). I can help students by giving more examples in the Mexican context and even in Spanish. (Eduardo, I2E)

To conclude Eduardo feels his preparation has been valuable for him as a teacher and a non-native speaker. This preparation is a BA in ELT and it validates who he is.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

Through the analysis of the data, a number of results were found. The building of an identity can have different factors that influence the construction of a Mexican English teacher. Some of these factors are: the professional preparation that a teacher has, teachers constructing their individual identity, the way other people perceives the individual teacher and how they see themselves in comparison to a native teacher. For some participants, being aware of what a teacher is has helped them to put it into practice in their actual teaching. Being aware of how each individual is when teaching and their qualities helps them want to improve their teaching or methods in order to help their students. An important part that shapes these teachers identity is being part of the BA program, helping them to develop their teaching skills and improve as teachers, focusing on students' needs and methods to best teach. This chapter presented the data analysis and its interpretation. Finally, a conclusion of the obtained results was given in order to answer three of the main research questions. The following chapter will present the conclusion of this research.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusions**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the conclusions of my research project will be presented. I will first mention what my research questions were along with the findings. The implications of my research in the research site, as well as my proposal for possible future research, will be mentioned. Then, the limitations of the research will be also mentioned. The chapter will then present the final conclusions.

#### **5.2 Answering the Research Questions**

In order to become a teacher, a person should have the proper education in order to teach. For English teachers the case is similar, although in some circumstances just speaking the language is the only preparation they are required in order to be hired. In this research, the focus was on Mexican English teachers that have or are studying a BA in ELT. These teachers have constructed their professional identity through a combination of time and different factors. Multiple factors and ideas may have affected their identity and beliefs. In this thesis, some aspects were seen as influential in the process of identity construction of the participant and what their beliefs are. Some of the possible factors are: what other people say about them, their working experience as teachers, how they feel in comparison with native English teachers.

At the beginning of my research, I had the objective of answering the following questions:

1. What are 'Mexican' English teacher perceptions and beliefs about themselves as teachers?
2. What are their qualities as English teachers?
3. How are they different from a native English speaker teacher or someone who developed professionally in an English speaking country?

The way each teacher develops his or her own identity as a language teacher might be difficult and different. Being aware of the commitment to their profession and being prepared to be a teacher are initial factors that influence the process of identity construction. Some participants mentioned their professional preparation as teachers; some mentioned that an English teacher should actually know the language and know how to teach the language. Some other participants mentioned that speaking a language does not give the person enough knowledge and skills to teach it to others. Maintaining a full interest in students' needs is an important factor for teachers' identity construction.

The majority of the participants mentioned the importance of having a positive attitude and a commitment to improve as professionals. They stated it is important to have interest in both the students and the material. Attitude was also an important factor; some participants mentioned that an English teacher should be open-minded to either favorable or difficult circumstances to help students learn. It is essential to be friendly and patient when teaching and learning about the language and as a result students might have a comfortable environment to both learn and use the language.

Factors that also seem to influence identity construction were how Mexican teachers see themselves and what special characteristics they have with their students. Some of the

participants mentioned that they are flexible and have a good relationship with their students. Being friendly towards students helps them to have a better teaching environment. Some characteristics that the participants mentioned are that students might feel empathy or more comfortable with a teacher of the same country or context, and also the teacher might understand better students' circumstances and culture. For some participants, being part of the same culture and being a Spanish speaker is important to help students in struggling times in learning the language.

Nevertheless, for some participants their identity construction has been influenced by experiences in teaching and the comments or feedback that others give to them. The majority of participants do not seem to feel any difference from a teacher who has received professional education in an English speaking country. For others, the necessity to travel to an English speaking country is important specially to share with students' culture and experiences. The process of constructing ones' identity may change from person to person depending on their experiences as they continue to develop as English teachers in Mexico. This process might take a long period of time for some people, while for others it might be a short period of time in which they construct a particular identity as professional English teachers.

### **5.3 Possible Contributions**

Research on teachers' identity is an interesting field to expand in Mexico and in different contexts. It can be discussed through culture and experiences. Identity can be viewed as a changing process (Norton, 2010), and can be transformed on an ongoing basis through life (Duff, 1997). Several factors may affect a person's identity, especially while developing as

an English teacher. The results of this thesis show how a group of Mexican English teachers teaching in a public university in Mexico constructed their identity based on factors that seem to affect the majority of them in developing themselves as teachers. This thesis can show a little part of how these factors help or influence the process of their identity construction. Some of the factors were: teaching context, personal perceptions, training and students' perceptions.

#### **5.4 Implications**

As I attempted to answer the research questions with the analyzed data in this research, I realized that this research is important to have an idea of the identity of EFL teachers who are non-native speakers and they are Mexican. To know who the teacher is, and represent teachers in Mexico. This is valuable information for administrators, coordinators, and teacher educators. Understanding who these teachers are will help us to understand and identify what is needed for the teaching context.

#### **5.5 Limitations**

There were several limitations while developing this thesis. At the beginning, finding the right participants that fit in the definition of 'Mexican' was difficult but after asking different teachers, I decided to choose seven participants. Another limitation was the number of data gathering techniques used. I relied a lot on the questionnaires but then I chose the use of focus group interviews. Another limitation was the time that I had to make the focus interviews. Regarding to getting the seven participants together to participate in the focus group interview, I had to look for different ways to make sure all of them were together in the same place; that is way I came with the use of a social media (WhatsApp) to get their participation



and answers in the interview. It might have being better to do it in person and twice rather than just having one interview with the participants.-I would have this before implications

## **5.6 Future Research**

After analyzing the information obtained from the data, several topics arose. From them, I was able to determine possible factors of influence in the identity construction of these teachers. I was able to discover what I believe to be beneficial to perform further research on a similar project, and it can be carried out with another group of teachers in other institutions and even in other countries. Also, a future research can be carried out with the same participants but in a couple of years to see how has their identity and perceptions of themselves have varied. This research focused on my definition of Mexican English teachers. A different approach can be taken by considering teachers that are Mexicans, but have lived or learned English in other parts of the world with regards to how they engage with other teachers and how they share cultural ideas and costumes.

## **5.7 Final Conclusion**

Because I am an English teacher in Mexico, I am able to relate to some of the participants comments and experiences through their identity construction. Even though I am not completely part of the definition of a ‘Mexican’ English teacher, this research helped me relate and understand my colleagues that work in the same context as me. The results come not only with answers but also with experiences that teachers has and share similar feelings and thoughts regarding the same context and how they view themselves as teachers.

A particular group of English teachers with the main characteristic of being ‘Mexican’ was focused on for this research project. The use of semi-structured questionnaires helped obtain

information from the participants from their experiences and beliefs. Some participants have been teaching for many years, other participants have already finished a BA, and others are still studying it.

The use of this group in this research was with the purpose of identifying and understanding factors that influenced their identity construction process as English teachers. Some factors which seem to be influential are: the way they perceive themselves as teachers in the classroom, their learning experience and preparation as professional English teachers, what other people think about them as teachers and their contact with both the language and culture. I believe these factors helped the participants to relate to both other teachers and students, as well to identify themselves as English teachers. Although some of the participants are not so sure of their identity, they are in the process of constructing one regarding what they do, the place where they are, their interaction with others and the environment in which they relate to a particular culture.

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## Appendix A Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find similarities in Mexican English teachers

Open ended questionnaire:

Dear participant, please try to answer in paragraph format for each question or write a short letter with all the answers

1. How did you learn English?
2. How did you become a teacher? How long have you been teaching? Explain.
3. What documents do you have as a teacher?
4. How do you consider yourself as a teacher/ why?
5. How do you think others (students) perceive you as a teacher?
6. Define an English teacher.
7. How do you feel in comparison with a teacher who has learned English outside Mexico, studied, and travelled abroad? Are there any differences? Do you think you need to travel to other countries to be a better teacher?

## Appendix B Letter of Consent

Consentimiento informado

Profesor:

Por medio de la presente se te invita a formar parte de un Proyecto de investigación que se llevará a cabo en el Departamento de Lenguas como parte de una indagación sobre los profesores de inglés mexicanos. El objetivo principal de tal investigación es explorar las experiencias y percepciones del profesor que posiblemente influyan en la construcción de identidad. El propósito de la investigación es con la finalidad de realizar un proyecto para titulación de un programa de licenciatura.

El estudio abarca:

Cuestionarios y una entrevista. El cuestionario será mandado vía internet y será con preguntas semiestructuradas en cuanto a experiencias e información como profesor de inglés. La entrevista se podrá hacer en un horario y lugar conveniente para ti.

Se planea grabar el audio de la entrevista. Dicha grabación será escuchada solo por el investigador. La información obtenida de dicha entrevista será utilizada solamente para cumplir con los objetivos del proyecto, y serán resguardados por el investigador.

Si decides participar, la privacidad será de suma importancia. Se proporcionará un seudónimo para evitar reconocimiento personal. Además de posibles publicaciones, el investigador podrá presentar los resultados en congresos y foros académicos, manteniendo bajo estricta confidencialidad los nombres de los participantes. Cualquier información proporcionada será confidencial.

Tienes derecho de decidir si participar o no en este proyecto. En caso de tener alguna duda, o bien para saber tus derechos como participante, puedes comunicarte al correo electrónico: [kitzo89gmail.com](mailto:kitzo89gmail.com)

Si deseas formar parte del proyecto, deberás llenar la forma incluida. Se te agradece de antemano tu apoyo.

Atentamente:

---

Alumna de LEI: Kitzén Cuéllar León  
Departamento de Lenguas  
Universidad de Guanajuato

Consentimiento para participar en el estudio

SI

He leído y entendido esta forma de consentimiento. Se ha respondido a todas mis preguntas y dudas. Deseo participar.

Doy mi permiso para la entrevista y el uso de los datos que proporciono.

NO

No doy permiso y prefiero no participar en el estudio.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre y firma del participante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Correo electrónico  
Fecha \_\_\_\_\_