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Lic. Juan Bardo Rodríguez de la Vega
Coordinador de Asuntos Escolares
Presente

El que suscribe, Dr. Miguel Ángel Hernández Fuentes, Director de la División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades del Campus Guanajuato, le informo que el egresado Rafael Cruz Reyna de la Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés, ha cumplido íntegramente con los requisitos académico-administrativos necesarios para que le sea autorizada la sustentación de su examen para la obtención del grado de Maestro en Lingüística Aplicada a 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:

- Nombre del aspirante
- NUA:
- Sexo

- Programa educativo
- Modalidad de titulación
- Título del trabajo

- Rafael Cruz Reyna
- 232375
- Hombre _X_ Mujer ___ Otro ___
- Prefiere no decir ___

- Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés
- Trabajo de tesis
- Becoming an EFL teacher and transitioning to a teacher educator: The professional lives of five teacher educators at Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes.

Gracias por la atención prestada y por la realización de los trámites correspondientes.

Atentamente
"La Verdad Os Hará Libres"

_____
Dr. Miguel Ángel Hernández Fuentes
Director de la División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades
Campus Guanajuato

Ccp. Coordinación del programa.
Nota: FT08C: Para su aplicación para estudiantes de posgrado y aquellos y aquellas estudiantes de licenciatura cuya trayectoria se rige por la normatividad del 2008 y los planes de estudios anteriores al Modelo Educativo del 2016.

Universidad de Guanajuato

División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades

Departamento de Lenguas

Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

Becoming an EFL teacher and transitioning to a teacher educator: The professional lives of five teacher educators at Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes

TESIS

Que Para Obtener el Grado de Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

PRESENTA

Rafael Cruz Reyna

Guanajuato, Gto.   Mayo, 2023

Thesis Director:

M. Martha Lengeling, PhD

Dedicatoria

To my mother,

to my brothers and sisters,

to my friends,

thank you.

Acknowledgements

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es explorar cuáles son las experiencias de un grupo de cinco educadores de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés en la Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes para entender sus procesos de convertirse en docentes de inglés y su transición a educadores de maestros del mismo programa. Simultáneamente, se pretende examinar cómo esas vivencias influyen sobre sus identidades profesionales como maestros. Este estudio cualitativo empleó un método fenomenológico que permitió recolectar datos mediante cuestionarios abiertos y entrevistas semiestructuradas. Aunado al análisis temático propuesto por Clarke y Braun (2006), se crearon biogramas (Abel, 1947) para ordenar cronológicamente los eventos reportados sobre sus experiencias. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que los participantes experimentan una serie de etapas similares entre ellos, aunque no necesariamente de forma secuencial. Estos incluyeron: haber estudiado una licenciatura en el área de enseñanza del inglés; haber sido invitados por colegas o maestros tanto para dar clases de inglés como clases de contenido en inglés; haber tenido puestos administrativos; y haber estudiado por lo menos una maestría en áreas afines. También, se reveló que la identidad de los participantes es fluida (Dinkelman, 2011) y un reflejo de sus prácticas presentes y pasadas. Se espera que los resultados sirvan como base para futuras modificaciones de planes de estudios de programas de formación docente con el fin de enfatizar el desarrollo profesional y los ciclos de vida docente. De igual manera, se recomienda que los formadores reflexionen sobre su vida profesional y transmitan experiencias profesionales formativas a sus futuros alumnos docentes de inglés.

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Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the purpose of the study and the research questions. I follow with my motivation, and a brief description of background literature connected with it. I also elaborate on the identification of the gap and the potential contributions yielded from this project.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The objective of this research is to understand how individuals, through their lived experiences, become English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Mexico, along with their later transition to become teacher educators in the BA in English Language Teaching (ELT) at *Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes* (UAA). Another objective is to explore how their teacher professional identity is influenced by their lived experiences as EFL teachers and teacher educators. Based on these objectives, the study was guided by two research questions:

> RQ1: What are the lived experiences that contributed to the participants to become EFL teachers and to transition to teacher educators?

> RQ2: How have these experiences influenced their professional identity formation?

The first research question served as the main point of interest while the second research question examined the participants' identity to see how their lived experiences affected their professional identity. These two questions were designed with the purpose to gather sufficient information from the participants' experiences to delineate their professional lives to understand their transitions from before EFL teacher, to EFL teachers, and later as teacher educators. These two questions also cement the significance of the study as it valuable to not only understand these transitions, but to also document them as accurately and as chronologically as possible.

1.3 Motivation

My motivation to explore this topic arose because I would like to become a teacher educator in the future and teach at a BA in ELT program to prepare potential EFL teachers. Conducting

this study and having studied the Master's in Applied Linguistics in ELT at the *Universidad de Guanajuato* have prepared me to be a better teacher by expanding my knowledge of the ELT field and exploring my professional development.

My interest in how individuals became EFL teachers when I was a student in the BA in ELT and during my professional years as an English teacher. My career entry to the ELT profession was somehow incidental as I did not think about looking for a job in this field; it was offered to me. As a student-teacher from the BA in ELT, I had struggled to find one aspect about the profession that would resonate with me. Fortunately, when I was in fifth semester, in a microteaching class at UAA, when I started teaching a real group of students, I realized that I enjoyed it because I saw how students reacted positively to my teaching. Eventually, I started to feel more comfortable with the idea of becoming an EFL teacher. At that time, I was also influenced by my teacher of that class. I admired her and set a goal to be like her.

Years later, in 2015, when I graduated, I was invited to teach in the *Programa Institucional de Lenguas Extranjeras* (PILE) at the UAA. This was my first professional job and it lasted seven years. There, I taught students from several of the 51 BA degrees and 16 engineering programs (Automotive Engineering, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, International Business, to name a few). Despite that, I never taught in the BA in ELT, so my dream is to one day do so. To accomplish that, I need to have at least a master's degree in applied linguistics. Upon receiving my MA degree, I may have the opportunity to work in the BA in ELT at UAA or in another university with a similar degree.

1.4 Background of the Study

The phenomenon of becoming an EFL teacher is an area that has been previously researched in different contexts. In Taiwan, Shih (2016) investigated the complexities that individuals experienced when becoming EFL teachers. In Japan, Wong (2020) explored the reasons why people became EFL teachers as well as their sources of motivations. In Mexico, Lengeling (2010) researched the phenomenon of becoming an EFL teacher and described a juxtaposition of the career between teachers that knew English but had little pedagogical knowledge and teachers that knew English and had formal language education. In her research, Lengeling was also concerned about the formation of teacher identities. The process

of becoming an EFL teacher has been explored in Australia (Wood & Borg, 2010), in Canada (Acker, 2006; Cole, 1999; Kosnik & Beck, 2000; Kosnik et al., 2015), in Sweden (Niklasson, 2019), in the UK (Boyd & Harris, 2010; Murray & Male, 2005), and in the US (Zeichner, 2005) to name a few. Furthermore, Kosnik and Beck (2009) conducted an international study encompassing Canada, the US, the UK, and Australia. These studies represent the relevance of investigating how individuals decide to enter the EFL teaching area.

A search of the literature revealed few studies in Mexico which were concerned with teacher educators as their prime subject of investigation. Cruz-Gómez (2021) studied teacher educators' beliefs regarding the BA in ELT program at the *Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas* (UNACH). Lemus-Hidalgo (2017) explored teacher educators' knowledge, beliefs, practices, and approaches regarding their professional lives. She conducted a comparative study that involved teacher educators from three universities: two from Mexico and one from Spain. While these studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of the phenomenon, much research still needs to be conducted.

In contrast to teacher education research, language teacher identity has been investigated to a greater extent. Barkhuizen (2016) edited a book on language teacher identity (LTI). Yazan and Lindahl (2020) published a book to define LTI, its complexities, dimensions, and merger between LTI with teachers' knowledge, beliefs, values, priorities, and aspirations. More recently, Richards (2021) described LTI as commitment, self-esteem, agency, and self-efficacy along with three sources of LTI: past experiences, teacher education, and language proficiency.

Also regarding LTI, Mugford et al. (2015) studied EFL teachers' identity and emotions in Mexico. They attempted to bridge the gap between what is known about LTI and what has occurred in two ELT programs at two Mexican universities: *Universidad de Guadalajara* and *Universidad Autónoma "Benito Juárez" de Oaxaca*. Similarly, Frausto Hernandez (2019) researched transnationals and their identity formation as to how they became EFL teachers.

1.5 Identification of the Research Gap

Teacher educators have been recognized as an under-researched population (Boyd & Harris, 2010; Dávila & Jarquín, 2015; Kosnik et al., 2015; Murray & Male, 2005; Niklasson, 2019). For that reason, further research considering this almost neglected population has been suggested. This claim is also supported by Barkhuizen (2021) who stated that "[a] number of researchers have commented that language teacher educators have been neglected in the research literature" (p. 73). Although some research has been carried out on teacher educators, there is still little understanding on the process of becoming a teacher educator in Mexico specially in the state of Aguascalientes.

1.6 Potential Contributions of the Study

The potential contributions of this research are to suggest insights on a relatively under-researched topic regarding teacher educators from ELT programs and their identity formation in Mexico, more specifically in Aguascalientes. The knowledge generated from this study can inform coordinators, program designers, evaluators and other teacher educators about the experiences teachers educators undergo to develop professionally. This information could also be of use to change current curricula for ELT programs to offer a better understanding of the intricacies of the process of becoming a teacher educator by incorporating subjects related to professional development.

1.7 Organization of the Thesis

The study consists of five chapters. In Chapter I, I started with a general overview of the project followed by the purpose, the motivation, and previous research background. I then detailed the identification of the gap and concluded it with the study's contributions.

Chapter II includes the main concepts of teacher education, teacher training and development, teacher cognition, teacher socialization, as well as identity as a language teacher and as a teacher educator.

Continuing with Chapter III, I describe the qualitative paradigm and the phenomenological approach. Then, the data collection techniques, the semi-structured interview and the semi-structured questionnaire are presented followed by the participants' profile and ethical consideration. I end this chapter by elaborating on how the data was analyzed using Braun

and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis and how the three data collection techniques allowed me to triangulate.

Chapter IV presents the most important themes obtained from the collected data. The findings/results are illustrated with data excerpts to allow a robust interpretation of the themes.

Lastly, in Chapter V, I provide an overview of the key findings along with the implications and applications of the project. The limitations faced during the data collection process and a few suggestions for future research on teacher education close this chapter.

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the concepts of teacher education, teacher training, and teacher development. I then explore teacher cognition, and teacher socialization. The distinction between an EFL teacher and a teacher educator are offered in this chapter. Lastly, I elaborate on what teacher educator identity is.

2.2. Teacher Education

Teacher education is a field of professional activity whose objective is to train individuals to become teachers and develop skills to teach (Freeman, 2001; Maggioli, 2017). Additionally, González (2009) refers to teacher education as "a more complex view of the job of teachers" (p. 155). Furthermore, Maggioli (2017) acknowledges that in teacher education, teachers assume role-model responsibilities where "those who [know] their subject areas best [are] put in charge of teaching future teachers" (p. 10). Teacher education is more than the field of training future teachers; it is the area where teachers are prepared to teach.

Teachers in teacher education are not only role models, but they are also retellers of their own experiences, mostly the ones they have lived in teacher training or teacher development courses (Freeman, 2001; 2002). This means that teacher educators are able to reflect upon their practice and tell anecdotes about their own professional development to future teachers which may influence their own formation as Johnson (2002) states that teachers learn to teach through experiences. Therefore, as Freeman (2002) concludes, teacher education is "the sum of experiences through which individuals learn to be language teachers" (p. 72).

Although the area of teacher education seems to be of great interest, some researchers agree that there is still much to be explored (Borg, 2011; Boyd & Harris, 2010; Freeman, 2001; Kosnik et al., 2015; Richards & Nunan, 1990). Some studies have concluded that teacher education is sometimes perceived negatively, and it is associated with "themes of low status and lack of respect" (Dinkelman, 2011, p. 310) and not being taken seriously (Zeichner, 2005). Dinkelman (2011) relates the decline of government support for public higher education and the rise of private and "alternative pathways into teaching" (p. 311) as contributors to the negative labels of low status and lack of respect about teacher education.

More studies about the positive aspects of teacher education and the benefits yielded from them should be conducted in order to better represent the views drawn from teacher education and how teacher educators are thought to be educated.

Yuan and Lee's (2021) work attempts to close the above gap by compiling a collection of articles in a book considering teacher educators as their participants. They conclude that teacher education programs in universities allow teachers to "develop linguistically, socially, and culturally compatible pedagogical practice to prepare them with strong teaching competence" (Yuan & Lee, 2021, p. 3). These types of studies could potentially inform the population better about what the field of teacher education and its practices is like.

2.2.1 Teacher Training and Development

Although the concepts may be used with no variation amongst them, it is important to distinguish their differences and establish them as separate concepts that sometimes overlap. Thus, teacher education has been defined as an umbrella concept where teacher training and teacher development are seen as two broad objectives on how teachers are educated (Freeman, 1989; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

According to Richards and Farrell (2005), there are "two broad kinds of goals within the scope of teacher education" (p. 3), these being teacher training and teacher development. Additionally, Freeman (1989) establishes teacher education as an umbrella term from which teacher training and teacher development stem and are connected to how teachers are educated. The two concepts of teacher training and teacher development have been used interchangeably (Cho, 2014; Gonzalez, 2009; Hobbs, 2007; Korkmazgil, 2015; Mushaandja, 2006; Parsons et al., 2016; Phothongsunan, 2018); however, to avoid confusion, it is necessary to distinguish and conceptualize each term.

Teacher training is defined as the acquisition of knowledge or competences and skills which are obtained in an isolated manner, then practiced, and ultimately mastered (Freeman, 1989; Maggioli, 2017; Richards, 1990). Furthermore, Richards and Farrell (2005) indicate that teacher training is understanding basic concepts or principles as knowledge or competences and the ability to apply them to teaching in the classroom as skills and techniques. That is, trainees do not only learn about technical concepts such as methodologies or approaches to teaching, but they also learn about practical concepts as well such as classroom management,

monitoring or giving feedback, to name a few. These refer to the teaching practice within the classroom.

Teacher training is typically short-termed, goal oriented (Hobbs, 2007; Richard & Farrell, 2005), and focused on learning how to do things (Maggioli, 2017): use of strategies, adaptation of textbooks, use of group activities, use of effective questioning techniques, use of classroom resources, and acquisition of techniques to provide feedback, to name a few. These are obtainable objectives after completion (Richard & Farrell, 2005). Teacher training should then be understood as the acquisition of skills to know how to teach.

In addition, teacher development is a personal reflexive process focused on an individual basis of free-will shaped by who a teacher is, who a teacher wants to become, and what a teacher believes in (Freeman, 2001; Richards, 1998; Woodward et al., 2018). This means that teacher development is a voluntary process guided by personal reasons. Additionally, Richards and Farrell (2005) define teacher development as seeking "to facilitate [the] growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and of themselves as teachers" (p. 4). Teacher development seems to be related with making sense and constructing understandings of teachers' knowledge, skills, and techniques resulting in a more inward process.

Kosnik et al. (2015) refer to teacher development as the means to help and improve teachers' practice. Furthermore, Richards and Farrell (2005) identify the following five ideas as the main objectives for teacher development: 1) understanding the process of second language development, 2) knowing how our roles change, 3) making decision as well as reviewing theories and principles of language teaching, 4) developing an understanding of different styles of teaching, and 5) determining learners' perceptions of classroom activities. Although teacher training is focused on the acquisition of knowledge and skills based on preparation, teacher development is aimed at exploring the professional growth of the teacher in practice with what they already know and what they can do with it. Having explored the three concepts of teacher education, teacher training, and teacher development, I will now turn to teacher cognition as it is imperative to also focus on who teacher are based on their beliefs, practice, and context.

2.2.2 Teacher Cognition

Freeman and Richards (1996) argue that in order to know about language teaching, we need to first know about language teachers by understanding "what they know about language teaching, how they think about classroom practice, and how that knowledge and those thinking processes are learned" (p. 1). What Freeman and Richard commented on is related with teacher cognition which refers to a "personally held, practical system of mental constructs [beliefs] held by teachers, and which are dynamic and refined on the basis of educational and professional experiences throughout teachers' lives" (Borg, 2006, p. 35). Richards (2008) establishes that teacher cognition goes beyond knowledge and learned skills and Feryok (2010) notes that teacher cognition is complex, dynamic, and systematic. Teacher cognition may be defined as a complex process as it concerns mental processes, such as beliefs, which makes it difficult to analyze.

Additionally, teacher cognition is not only seen as a dynamic process, but a social activity where teachers engage in meaningful and collaborative experiences with others (Johnson, 2006; Johnson & Golombek, 2003), suggesting that teacher cognition is a social construct where interaction takes place. Golombek (2015) concludes that teacher cognition is not a teachers' only activity and that it should be considered as "the interaction of both teacher learner and teacher educator's emotion and cognition in their activity of teaching and learning" (p. 470). Teacher cognition is then a social construct amongst teachers within the teacher training and development processes present throughout teachers' professional lives at different stages in their development. Consequently, teacher cognition seems to be built up on interaction. In order to gain a better understanding of the relevance of interaction, the following section presents the notion of teacher socialization.

2.2.3. Teacher Socialization

Zeichner and Gore (1989) describe teacher socialization as a process of assimilation into the membership of a group, in this case, the teaching context. To better understand this notion, Richards (2008) states that learning through experiences takes place in teacher socialization and occurs "upon relationships with mentors, fellow novice teachers and interaction with experienced teachers in the school" (p. 165). Teacher socialization can be understood as building relationships through interactions with goals of belonging to a teacher community.

Zeichner and Gore (1989) also establish that teacher socialization is an ongoing process which involves teachers' development of their professional live. They indicate that teacher socialization happens during three stages namely: 1) prior to formal teacher education, 2) during preservice teacher education, and 3) during in-service years of teaching. This conceptualization of how socialization is not a static process and how it is influential during different stages of a teacher's life stages. This is important as teacher socialization seems to occur as early as teachers are language learners, then when they decide to study a BA in ELT, and when they are either EFL teacher or teacher educators.

Kosnik et al. (2015) conclude that during and after the process of socialization in the teacher community, considerable outcomes exist. For example, teachers use the teacher community as an outlet for discussion and reflection about taking risks in the classroom, as well as trying new pedagogical strategies, or modifying strategies for the future. Teacher socialization goes beyond a relationship-building process as it also considers the members of the group to establish the parameters of what teaching involves. I will now introduce the concepts of EFL teacher and teacher educator, active actors in the interactions in the process of teacher socialization.

2.3 Teacher Educator Identity

In this section, I differentiate the characteristics between being an EFL teacher or a teacher educator. I then move to explain the concepts of language teacher identity and teacher educator identity.

2.3.1 EFL Teacher vs. Teacher Educator

A distinction between the concepts of EFL teacher and teacher educator is essential to be explored because the differences will allow for readers an easier understanding of the two terms within the transition of becoming one and then the other. This distinction is vital to contextualize how they are used throughout this thesis.

Moradkhani et al. (2013) define an EFL teacher as an expert involved in the real act of teaching English as a foreign language to language learners. Recently, Dávila and Jarquín (2020), identify an EFL teacher as someone in charge of teaching listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English. An EFL teacher is then someone in charge of more than

transmitting what they know about the language, but the ones responsible for teaching formal English skills. According to Lengeling (2010), many paths to becoming an EFL teacher exists, for example, falling into the job where an individual with or without formal education is invited to teach; or having language command where a person, normally, native speakers or returnees with or without pedagogical background are also invited to teach; or being influenced by family members to study to a BA in education as in the case of family of teachers.

Additionally, people interested in becoming an EFL teacher can take training programs such as a BA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), or ELT; they can also study a certifications such as a Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA), or a Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (DELTA) in order to gain classroom skills and knowledge (Lee, 2022; Richards, 2008). Acquiring a certification like the ones referred above reflects the ideas previously presented about teacher training. This means acquiring skills and knowledge from short-term programs.

In contrast, the term 'teacher educator' is described as language teaching experts and role models, professionals in charge of teacher certification programs, and crucial instructors to prepare future language teachers (Dávila & Jarquín, 2020; Korthagen et al., 2005; Kosnik et al., 2015; Moradkhani et al. 2013; Yuan & Lee, 2021). Additionally, teacher educators are responsible for providing formal acquisition of pedagogy, content, support, and other types of knowledges to pre-service and in-service teachers in teacher development or teacher education programs for ELT (Barkhuizen, 2016; Dávila & Jarquín, 2020; González, 2009; Maggioli, 2017; Moradkhani et al., 2013). Teacher educators have then a more profound teaching profession where they oversee the training of EFL teachers.

EFL teachers become teacher educators for a variety of reasons. Yuan (2017) along with Dávila and Jarquín (2022) comment that a number of teacher educators start as EFL teachers which may be recognized as the most frequent transition to teacher educators. When EFL teachers transition to teacher educators, they have accumulated successful classroom teaching experience (Dávila & Jarquín, 2022; Yuan, 2017). Dávila and Jarquín (2022) also note that a definite characteristic for becoming a teacher educator is holding a master's or

PhD degree in the area as those qualifications are later requisites to enter the teacher education field.

Regarding more reasons for this transition, Maggioli (2017) listed eight causes why EFL teachers become teacher educators, namely: 1) having a vocation for being a teacher educator, 2) being promoted to the position of teacher educator, 3) desiring a career change from being an EFL teacher to a teacher educator, 4) having an institutional need where teachers are needed so EFL teachers are trained to become teacher educators, 5) changing their teaching situation from teaching in basic educational levels to higher ones, 6) changing their institutional role to become coordinators or head of departments, essential positions teacher educators take, 7) showing entrepreneurship where teacher educators act as consultants to educational institution, or 8) lacking personnel where for an array of reason personnel shortage exist. Yazan (2021) explains that "university-based TESOL teacher educators are often self-made through experimentation and practice" (p. 247) suggesting that they may not receive institutional preparation for their transition to becoming a teacher educator; instead, they often also fall into the job. Nonetheless, no prescriptive paths exist to become a teacher educator.

Zeichner (2005) affirms that "If teacher education is to be taken more seriously in colleges and universities, then the preparation of new school- and university-based teacher educators needs to be taken more seriously as well" (p. 123). Therefore, it is imperative to state that, although the EFL teacher to teacher educator transition is not seamless, a call for induction programs for teacher educators is needed (Kosnik et al., 2015). Teacher educators need a set of skills and knowledge including instructional ability and research-based skills, technological literacy, program evaluation knowledge, and teacher development orientation (Freeman, 1989). Thus, teachers, whether EFL teacher or teacher educators, are or should be in constant preparation and development.

2.3.2 Language Teacher Identity

Identity is linked with teacher development and teacher transition as teachers experience change and reflection about who they were, who they are, and who they want to be. Thus, by its own nature, identity is a widely used concept within the education area (Barkhuizen, 2016, 2021; Richards, 2016; Varghese, 2016; Watkins-Goffman, 2001). A quick search on Google

Scholar with the terms 'identity' and 'education' generated over 4,300,000 results. From those findings and altering the search by adding the term 'EFL', almost 94,000 results are related with English learning and English teaching. It is then quite clear that the term identity is an omnipresent concept in both education and the EFL field.

Watkins-Goffman (2001) defines identity as a "complex ongoing mental process influenced by one's experiences and ones' history" (p. 1). Consequently, identity should be regarded as a concept that is influenced by diverse factors primarily inner variables and social constructs. These experiences are what constitute the sense of self. The idea of someone's identity being influenced by one's history resonates with He's (1995) where she denotes identity as a dynamic process situated in the past, present, and future experiences within the person's development. Identity should then be understood as a constantly changing concept influenced by a personal basis.

Weigert et al. (1986) recognize that identity consists of two levels: micro and macro. Table 1 shows the most relevant characteristics of each of the levels.

Table 1.

Levels of identity

Micro level	Macro level
• It is described as 'interactional', meaning identity is based on how individuals see themselves and are seen by others, how it varies depending on the situation, and how it is influenced by behavior.	• It is also referred to as 'systemic,' meaning identity belongs to a social order.

Note. Original text appears in-text, but it was adapted to a table for this study. From Society and identity: Toward a sociological psychology by A. J. Weigert, J. S. Teitge, & D. W. Teitge (Eds.) (1986). Cambridge University Press.

Similar to Weigert et al.'s (1986) micro level of identity, Barkhuizen (2021) establishes that identity does not only refer to how we perceive ourselves, but also about how other people perceive us. Furthermore, Gee (2000) mentions that identity is "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person' in a given context" (p. 99). These perceptions of us and how others influence our sense of identity are just one of the main of characteristics identify where context also

plays an important factor. Richards (2008) lists other aspects that influence identity: personal life, gender, culture, working conditions, age, gender, and the school and classroom culture to name a few. Thus, identity reflects its flexibility by being affected by different variables. Lastly, Richards (2016) comments that identity seems to play a special role in teaching as compared with other professions.

Varghese et al. (2005) define language teacher identity as the perceptions of who one is and how others see us. Additionally, Barkhuizen (2016) describes language teacher identity as a self and social process of being cognitive, emotional, ideological, and historical where interactions with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community occur. Thus, language teacher identity is a complex concept attributed to teachers who experience professional development.

2.3.3 Teacher Educator Identity

Dinkelman (2011) emphasizes that "much of a teacher educator identity is formed in the actual work of teacher education" (p. 138). As any other field, teacher education is constantly changing, improving, and adapting to new times; these exact same issues happen to teacher educators which consequently affect their identity. Dinkelman (2011) furthers this idea by stating that "The practice arena is the space in which we most hone our senses of what it means to be a teacher educator, and this arena never stays the same" (p. 318). It is quite important to remember that in this *arena*, teacher educators are assigned different tasks and positions such as being coordinators or heads of department.

In addition, Dinkelman (2011) maintains that teacher educator identity is "multiple, fluid, always developing, shaped by a broad range of sociocultural power relationships, strongly influenced by any number of relevant contexts and relational" (p. 309). Similarly, Barkhuizen (2021) states that teacher education identity should be referred as consisting of multiple identities as the concept centers around "their history, their beliefs, experiences, roles and practices, emotions and desires, as well as their moral stance" (p. 3). This means that, as with identity, teacher educator identity is not one-dimensional and its greatly influenced by several other inner and outer aspects surrounding the teacher educator. This multifaceted vision of teacher educator identity is strongly linked with the environment or context where it is developed.

Considering the proposition about teacher educator identity being multiple, Barkhuizen (2021) declares that an identity dilemma exists which reflects a mix of roles, duties, and loyalties, which would consequently create a stressful identity. This overlap of teaching tasks may affect the way in which teacher educators see themselves and, retaking their identity and how they want to be seen by others. This duality of performance maybe then detrimental for those teacher educators who have to balance their teaching in language teaching and in teacher education.

2.4 Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the research conducted in relation to the most relevant concepts in this study: teacher education, teacher training, and teacher development which were followed by the definitions for teacher cognition and teacher socialization. I offered a distinction between the notions of EFL teacher and teacher educator, which allow us to see how the concepts are intertwined but, at the same time, distinct. Lastly, I presented some of the main considerations that have been made regarding teacher educator identity. The information provided sets a strong foundation to identity is and how it relates to the becoming and the transition of being a teacher.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used to design and conduct the study. It first presents the research questions followed by an overview of the qualitative paradigm and the phenomenological method. I then define and justify the techniques used to collect data: the semi-structured questionnaire and the semi-structure interview, as well as the tool of analysis, biograms, and the use of the thematic analysis used to process the data. In addition, I describe the context where the study took place and the participants' background. This chapter is concluded with the ethical considerations concerning the study's context, participants, and confidentiality.

3.2 Research Questions

This research was guided by the two following questions:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences that contributed to the participants to become EFL teachers and to transition to teacher educators?

RQ2: How have these experiences influenced their professional identity formation?

3.3 Qualitative Paradigm

For this research, a qualitative paradigm was chosen given that the study focuses on understanding what the lived experiences of the participants on becoming an EFL teacher and transitioning to teacher educator were and how these influenced their professional identities. According to Dörnyei (2007) this type of research, qualitative, is "concerned with subjective opinions, experiences, and feelings of individuals" (p. 38). Additionally, qualitative research explores how participants interact with a social or human phenomenon and the meanings they attribute to it with an emphasis on the context of the participants' everyday lives (Barbour, 2013; Creswell, 2007; Heigham & Croker, 2009).

3.4 Phenomenology Method

In this study, the phenomenology method was employed as it explored the participants' lived experiences during their transition to EFL teachers and later teacher educator selves. A phenomenology method is described as the examination of life-world subjective experiences

as lived by humans (Eberle, 2014; Pacherie, 2017; Roulston, 2014). Lived experiences are often referred to and emphasized in phenomenology (Køster, 2021). Furthermore, this method describes the meaning of the experiences regarding the phenomenon lived by several participants (Heigham & Croker, 2009). In this study, the phenomenon of becoming an EFL teacher and transitioning to a teacher educator was investigated from the perspective of five teacher educators from the BA in ELT at UAA. I also used this method to understand how the participants make reason of their lived experiences and how these lived experiences contributed to their identity formation.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

In the following section, I define the two techniques and the tool of analysis I used to collect and examine data. I also provide an explanation of how I designed and applied.

3.5.1 Semi-structured Questionnaires

Questionnaires are an appropriate data collection technique in qualitative research because researchers can collect data from abstract ideas, or concepts, such as opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or experiences and they function by establishing an order of questions without assuming the participants' responses" (Artino et al., 2014; Cohen et al., 2000). As I intended to know the experiences of the participants, I used questionnaires, but more specifically, I used semi-structured questionnaires (SSQ) which are defined as a series of predetermined but open-ended questions (Ayres, 2008). Open-ended questions gather data from the participants' providing them with the liberty to express their ideas, feelings, and perspectives freely about the phenomenon studied (Heigham & Croker, 2009; Phothongsunan, 2018). I used this type of questions to ask about the participants' academic and professional experiences. Contrary to open-ended questions, closed questions are used to gather the participants' biographical information (Brown, 2001) such as age, gender, and email. I used other closed questions to know about to the participants' years of teaching EFL experience, and current EFL teaching status (see Appendix A).

The SSQ that I designed consisted of 19 questions: 14 were open-ended and five were closed questions. None of the open-ended questions presuppose any answers; therefore, I was able to collect broader and more natural responses from the participant. Although the SSQ was created with a base-structure of questions, answers varied from participant to participant

especially in those questions that asked them to recall the reasons why they became EFL teachers and their transition to teacher educators. I also avoided overcomplicating the SSQ by not including leading, complex, or irritating questions, and by paying attention to the questionnaire's phrasing, length, and layout to prevent participants to lose interest resulting in unconclusive questionnaires (Cohen et al., 2000; Rugg & Petre, 2007).

Furthermore, to guarantee appropriateness of the questionnaire, I piloted it with a participant, a fellow teacher of the participants. He was asked to answer the questionnaire and to provide feedback about the content and phrasing of the questions in order to improve the SSQ. This piloting allowed me to correct or change some of the questions as well as to manage vagueness within the questions. Most of the questions were open-ended allowing the participants to elaborate extensively on their answers; thus, the questionnaire is considered to be semi-structured. The SSQ. were created in a Google Forms and a link to the form was sent via email to the participants. Transcribing the SSQ allowed me to create interview guides.

3.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews have been notably used by qualitative researchers, especially for those who try to unravel on participants' lived experiences, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs (Roulston, 2014). Additionally, they work as an exceptional tool as they are an interactive process where a person asks questions to seek information (Adhabi & Anozie 2017). Concerning these definitions, I decided that interviews are another technique to collect data from the participants. More specifically, I decided to use semi-structured interviews (SSI) as they are a set of pre-prepared and open-ended questions that provide a possible structure for the interview with the benefit to add prompted questions from the interviewees' open responses (Dörnyei, 2007; Lou & Wildemuth, 2016).

Although face-to-face interviews were desired given their advantages on social cues (voice, intonation, body language) as well as on synchronous communication allowing for more spontaneous responses (Opdenakker, 2006), three of participants opted for an online interview while the other two favored a face-to-face interview.

Semi-structure interview guides (SSIG) help the researcher to know what to ask, in what sequence, how to present the questions, and how to ask follow-up questions for clarification

or elaboration with the goal of improving the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Kallio et al., 2016; Kennedy, 2006). For those reasons, I created personalized SSIG (see Appendix B) containing specific questions, based on the information collected from the SSQ, to each of the participants which allowed me to conduct interviews with a structure and a sequence while also granting me space to add prompted questions. These included five sets of questions: 1) questions before studying a BA; 2) questions as EFL teachers; 3) questions as teacher educators; 4) questions about the future; and 5) extra questions. I personalized the SSIG by selecting the most appropriate questions from a bank of questions (see Appendix C) I had developed beforehand. As with the SSQ, I piloted the SSIG with the same participants to ensure its validity and alter it if needed.

Once I had created the SSQI, the participants were contacted via email to schedule an interview. Considering that the data collection process occurred whilst the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants were offered the possibilities of an online or face-to-face interview. Online interviews were conducted using the video-chat platform Zoom while the face-to-face interviews took place in the participants' offices in the Language Department at UAA.

When I conducted the interviews, I wanted to establish rapport with the interviewees to obtain more authentic information and to facilitate cooperation and disclosure (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; Gabbert et al., 2020). Therefore, I engaged in small talk for the participants to feel comfortable to disclose as much information as they could. Most of the interview time was allocated for the participants to talk and I only intervened with either backchanneling responses such as *mmm, uhuh, yeah, sure, right* (McCarthy et al., 2013, my italics) or probing questions (Dörnyei, 2007) to indicate the interviewee that I was still following them and wished them to continue. SSI were recorded and transcribed for their later analysis.

Transcribing "allow[s] us to get to know our data thoroughly" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 246) and are "material for analysis" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 274). I used a software called Otter to transcribe the interviews. I found Otter to be user-friendly and with a high level of accuracy for transcribing in English. Although this program accelerated the process, it was not completely accurate, especially when the participants and I talked over each other, or when the participants switched to speaking in Spanish. Therefore, I had to listen through the

generated transcripts and correct any mistakes. I also identified myself as the "interviewer" and identified each of the participants with their assigned pseudonym when I revised the transcripts (see Appendix D). Once I transcribed the data collection form the two data collection techniques, I was tasked with analyzing data. To do this, I began using biograms.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this section, I explain the function of biograms as a preliminary tool of analysis and how I implemented Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to process the participants' data.

3.6.1 Biograms

Biograms (Bgs) are graphical and chronological representations composed with the participants' experiences which are representative of their personal and professional development and are used especially when the participants have experienced change or development. (Abel, 1947; Chavarría et al., 2018; Cruz González et al., 2021; Domingo & Fernández, 1999; Robinson-Seisdedos et al., 2021). Additionally, Ávila (2020) recognizes that biograms aid to organize large volumes of data produced by the in-depth semi-structured interviews.

In addition, Ávila (2020) suggests structuring biograms using columns where the first column sets the time when the event occurred and the second column describes the event or as Bálan et al. (1968) called it, the critical incident. Cruz González et al. (2021) included a column in their biograms labeled personal/professional impact which offers an explanation on how the event impacted and on what aspects. An example of the use of biograms is that of Villegas Torres. Villegas Torres (2009) researched EFL teachers that were returnees from the United States (US) and who were raising bilingual children in central Mexico. She used biograms to explore the participants' trajectories and included a section for emotions that she could relate to each of the experiences of her participants.

Given that I was exploring the experiences throughout the participants' professional lives, biograms (see Appendix E) were created after applying the SSQ and conducting the SSI. I based my biograms on those of Cruz Gonzalez et al. (2021). These consisted of four columns: 1) the year of the experience, 2) the description of the experience, 3) an associated theme to the experience, and 4) a personal or professional impact to the experience.

When I created the biograms, in many cases, the year of the experiences was missing as some of the participants could not remember the exact time an event had happened. To resolve this, I used member checking (Padgett, 2016) which was twofold. I emailed the drafted biograms to the participants for them to complete the missing information and asked them to verify that their data was correct. The use of biograms proved to be a useful tool for data analysis as they allowed me to organize the large volume of data as well as getting familiarized with the data. Biograms also permitted me to start associating a theme to a piece of data. This worked for me when I began coding data while using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis (TA).

3.6.2 Thematic Analysis

The SSI transcripts were examined using Braun and Clarke's (2006) TA to "identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes)" (p. 79) within the participants' experiences specially to find similar themes amongst all the participants' data. To conduct such analysis, I followed Braun and Clarke's six steps to TA. First, I familiarized with the data and then I started to generate initial codes which are labels attached to data to make manageable characterized by being easy to identify, retrieve or group (Dörnyei, 2007). These two steps were followed by searching for themes and reviewing them. The last two steps consisted of defining themes and producing the report. I familiarized with my data since I applied the SSQ and continued to do so while conducting the interviews and the transcriptions. I created initial codes and themes when I constructed the biograms and continued to define and review the themes within the data to consequently start writing the findings generated from the commonality within the participants' experiences.

To organize the data, I created labels (Dörnyei, 2007) to identify the data and techniques to each participant. Table 2 shows this coding.

Table 2

Labeling system

Technique	Label
Semi-structured questionnaire	SSQ-Didion
Semi-structured interview guides	SSIG-Didion

Table 2. (continued).

Semi-structured interview	SSI-Didion
Biograms	Bgs-Didion

In this research, I used four different labels SSQ, SSIG, SSI, and Bgs along with the pseudonym assigned to each of the participant as suggested by Richards and Morse (2012) to deal with anonymity. The following section centers on describing the context where the study took place and the participants that were part of the investigation.

3.7 Context and Participants

The research project was conducted in the BA in ELT at UAA in Aguascalientes. This program was first offered in 1993 to satisfy an increasing social need for EFL teachers in the center of Mexico. The program is composed of eight semesters with two initial semesters offered only to students that need to be regularized before entering the first semester. The main objective of the program is to prepare professionals that have the knowledge and master the linguistic, methodological, technological, and cultural skills to teach English classes in any scholar level (Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, n.d.).

The participants of the research were five teacher educators described in Table 3.

Table 3

Participants' profile

Pseudonym	Didion	Sabato	Capote	Cohen	Dunne
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male
Native (N) or Non-native (NN)	NN	NN	NN	NN	NN
Years of teaching experience	40	24	13	22	28
Years of EFL teaching experience	20	20	13	18	10

Table 3. (continued).

Working at the BA in ELT at UAA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working status	Retired	Tenured	Part time	Tenured	Tenured
BA degree (all from UAA)	ELT	ELT	ELT	ELT	ELT
Educational level and area	PhD Applied Linguistics	MA GDEIE[1]	MA Education	MA ELT	PhD Applied Linguistics

Two of the participants were female and three were men; all are Mexican self-identified as non-native English-speaking teachers. They had background experience teaching EFL classes ranging from ten to 20 years. Each of their total experience teaching EFL classes and content classes ranged from 13 to 40 years. Lastly, according to their academic profile, all the participants studied in an ELT program. Four of them are UAA graduates and one of them is a graduate from *Universidad de Guadalajara* (UG). In addition, continuing with their academic background, three participants have an MA degree, and three participants have a PhD. The areas of the MA degrees are one in Education and the other one in ELT. In the case of the PhD degrees, there is only one area, Applied Linguistics.

3.8 Ethics

In order to carry out this research, I followed ethical considerations, for example, gaining access to the site and the participants. Richards (2003) suggests that when making contact with the participants to be in person, rather than an email or a letter. Thus, I presented myself at the Head of the Language Department's office to request permission to access and contact the participants. I also presented a research information letter (see Appendix F) which included a brief profile of me as a student-researcher, the purpose of the investigation, and the participants' expected activities.

Then, I was referred to the coordinator who would provide me the contact information of some of the teacher educators. After communicating with some teacher educators and

[1]Gestión Directiva y Evaluación de Instituciones Educativas

confirming their participation, I emailed them a consent form (see Appendix G) which consisted of research purpose, a description of the research, information regarding their participation or withdrawal, and my contact information. This consent form also contained a confidentiality clause where I ensured the participants that their information would not be shared, and its only purpose would be to be used in this investigation. Anonymity was also established by stating that pseudonyms would be used and any information that could be linked to them would be changed in the transcription process. Lastly, for each of the participants a biogram, a SSIG, and a transcript were created and saved in different Word documents. These documents were saved in a single folder on a Cloud. I was the only person with access to it.

3.9 Summary

This chapter offered a description of the qualitative paradigm and the phenomenology method as well as the three data collection techniques used in this study. I also provided an overview of the context and the participants. In addition, I presented the thematic analysis framework to analyze and interpret the data. Lastly, I included a section where ethical considerations were taken, such as accessing the context and the participant agreement.

Chapter IV: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis. The data corpus was comprised by narratives in which the participants shared their lived experiences and how these have shaped their identities as EFL teachers and as teacher educators. The analysis of the data showed that the professional lives of participants is constructed in different stages. Based on the most relevant themes found, I decided to divide the analysis into five sections: 1) beginning to learn English; 2) entering the BA in ELT; 3) working as an EFL teacher; 4) transitioning to a teacher educator; and 5) going beyond teaching. Even though the participants' experiences are grouped in themes, it is essential to point out that these experiences were lived at different periods of the participants' lives.

4.2 Beginning to Learn English

In this section, I discuss the participants' first contact with the language as English learners. The participants learned English at different stages of their lives; for example, some were children, some more teenagers, and a few young adults.

4.2.1 Participants as English Learners

The professional lives of the participants seemed to begin when they first learnt English. This exposure to the language had a personal impact, which explains how they developed an interest in English. The following excerpt shows how Didion began learning English:

> *It all started when I was a child. I think I was 10 years old. I started studying English with a private teacher. (Didion-SSI)*

As it is observed, Didion was first exposed to English when she was young as it might be the case for many language learners. Throughout the interview, she mentioned that this activity was imposed by her parents, but she later commented that she "loved English" and considered it as being a "powerful language" when she learned it. For two other participants, their journey started not as children, but as teenagers. In the following excerpt, Capote mentioned learning English while being in high school.

I had the interest of learning the language since I was in high school, but I think that this particular interest for learning English started when I was in high school because I was the one in charge of helping a classmate [a native English speaker] with her homework and assignments [...] And in order to communicate with her, I knew that I had to use English and I didn't know any English. (Capote-SSI)

Capote become interested in English classes during high school, but it was not until he was in a public high school in the US that he felt he had to learn English because he had been assigned by his teachers to work with a native English speaker. For Capote, this task was motivation for him to improve his English. Moving to the US, Dunne learned English. For a number of EFL teachers, this experience is often relatable as they have the opportunity to travel abroad to study and consequently learn or perhaps perfect their English.

Two participants experienced learning and perfecting their English later in life while also studying the BA in ELT. The following excerpt is an example of this process of learning English:

I always had the feeling for studying English, but in my house, we didn't have enough money to pay for a private school. So, I studied in the Seguro Social[2], but I didn't learn [English] very well. I just learned, not even the basics. But I learned it when I was in the [ELT] major. (Cohen-SSI)

Cohen begins with the phrase "I always had the feeling for studying English" which means his desire of learning the language, but as opposed to other learners, he did not have access to private English lessons. Instead, he attended free courses provided by governmental institutions; however, he did not learn it very well. He entered the BA in ELT at UAA with a low proficiency of English and later perfected English throughout the major.

Alike Cohen, Sabato shared learning English while also studying the major stating "We didn't have a requirement for language" meaning his English level was not high either. He became more proficient as he "would go to evening English classes" from the university and by "dedicating time practicing it at the Self-Access Center" (*Centro de Auto-Aprendizaje de*

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[2]The Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social, (IMSS) provides social security and medical assistance to large number of the Mexican people. It also offers a number of skill-related courses and workshops.

Idiomas, CAADI in Spanish) at UAA. This shows determination by taking traditional classes and self-directed learning.

The participants started to form an identity related to how they saw themselves as English learners. They mentioned having an interest to learn the language as it was the case of Cohen or being motivated as it was the cases of Capote and Sabato. Didion stated how useful English has been for her and what it represents to her as "power" which reflects her identity and agency towards the language. Sabato showed agency by deciding to take extracurricular English classes besides the ones he coursed in the ELT major. This means that, in the route to become English teachers, the participants decide to further their language knowledge and professional development by taking English classes and by taking training courses which is driven by interest or motivation.

4.3 Entering the BA in ELT

Having explored initial experiences of learning English, I now turn to explore the experiences of the participants before entering the BA in ELT to understand how these led them to become EFL teachers. I start this section by discussing the participants' motivation to study the major and their reasons to enroll in the BA in ELT.

4.3.1 My EFL Teachers as Motivation to Study a BA in ELT

After being English learners, two participants expressed their motives that led them to study a BA in ELT and consequently to become EFL teachers. Capote and Dunne, for example, mentioned previous teachers they had as a positive or negative influence to become English teachers. In the following, Capote recounts his experience:

> *[My EFL] teachers in high school were not really interested in teaching the language. I think they were there because they earned a good salary. They didn't promote the use of challenging and attractive activities. And when they were teaching the language, they were not really teaching language. I didn't like the class at all. I didn't learn anything. So that was when I decided I wanted to study to be [an EFL] teacher. (Capote-SSI)*

Capote was affected negatively by his EFL teachers stating that he wanted to become an English teacher but to be the opposite of them. This may be an example of anti-apprenticeship of observation (Moodie, 2016). Regarding identity formation, it is clear how Capote had an idea of the type of teacher he did not like and wanted to be a different teacher. In contrast to Capote, Dunne was influenced positively by a teacher he considered as an "excellent EFL teacher."

> *The way he explained grammar was not so difficult. I started liking grammar at that point in my life [while he was in high school]. That's why I've been teaching grammar for so many years now. (Dunne-SSI)*

This teacher impacted Dunne in two ways; firstly, he wanted to become an EFL teacher, and secondly, he wanted to specialize in grammar teaching later on in his professional development as a teacher educator in the BA in ELT at UAA. Thus, teachers influence individuals in two ways; the first one is whether the person has become interested in becoming a teacher or not, and the second one is whether the individual has set to become like their teachers or to project an opposite view of who their teachers were.

4.3.2 Becoming an EFL Teacher

For some of the participants, becoming an EFL teacher meant studying a BA in ELT or diploma courses. For others, especially teachers with experience, it meant formalizing their professional status by means of obtaining a degree in the area. Interestingly, four participants obtained a BA degree in ELT at UAA and now are teachers in the same BA program. The next excerpt shows the reasons why they decided to become an EFL teacher.

> *The fact that I like to share what I know with other people. The fact that I was going to be supporting other people. The fact that I was going to be in front of people preparing them, applying different meaningful activities. The fact that I was going to be surrounded by people who were really interested in learning the language. I think these were the most important things that I took into account in order to become a teacher. (Capote-SSI)*

Capote desired to study a BA in ELT seems to be expressing a connection with people. He expressed that being in front of students, willing to learn the language, being able to share knowledge, and apply meaningful activities as reasons to apply for the BA in ELT. This could also be translated as having a vocation (Maggioli, 2017).

On the contrary, Cohen and Sabato were unsure about studying the BA in ELT. Cohen experienced indecisiveness, a back-and-forth of liking and disliking of the major; however, he ultimately finished the BA.

> *I wanted to study mass media communication, but I couldn't get in, so this [ELT major] was my third option, and I said, "Well, I can study this for a year. I can learn the language." I finished the first year and then I liked it. Then, I continued, and I didn't like it. Then I continued and I liked it again. And it was a struggle. But then I finished it. (Cohen-SSI)*

It seems teaching was not Cohen's first option and he thought he would pass the time until he would be accepted to study his first option. After a series of back-and-forth, he realized he enjoyed the BA in ELT. Sabato experienced a similar indecisiveness doubting his first choice.

> *When I was in line [to ask for an admission number to apply for a major at UAA], I realized that the major that I was going to apply for wasn't what I wanted and when I faced the booth as one of the first ones being asked [which career he was applying for] the first thing that came into my mind was English language teaching. And that's how I got into the career. (Sabato-SSI)*

Sabato experienced a last-moment decision in which he was forced to decide and so he might have experienced unsureness about his decision. Nonetheless, he stated "liking the major within the first month of studying it." This experience is similar to Cohen's. In both cases, one can notice how their identities shifted as they did not seem to like the BA in ELT, but ultimately liking it at the end almost like a click. They may have not seen themselves as English teachers before the BA, but they finished it.

Capote, Cohen and Sabato entered the BA without any experience in teaching and a seemingly disinterest to become EFL teachers at first. This was not Dunne's case as he already had teaching experience as a computer science teacher and an EFL teacher. For him, the reasons to study a BA in ETL were different.

> *And so I started teaching these kids in this secondary and I realized that that's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, but I also realized that I needed to formalize it. I was having a lot of problems with teaching techniques because I didn't have teaching techniques. I didn't know the literature, relevant for some areas for some topics. And that's why later on in my life. I did that training course and then the BA. (Dunne-SSI)*

In the long run, Dunne liked what he was meant to do, yet he realized he needed to obtain a degree to know the techniques and theory to strengthen his teaching. This is pragmatic thinking of what he wanted to do for his future. He recognized that he enjoyed the profession and said, "that's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life". Yet, he also mentioned "I needed to formalize it". These were the reasons why Dunne decided to study a BA in ELT and receive an education in the field.

Didion had accumulated over ten years of experience of EFL teaching before receiving a BA degree. She had already studied two diploma courses and later a third certificate in *Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras* from London University. Yet, Didion started a validation process to study a BA degree as she describes in the following:

> *[…] logramos sacar ese certificado, un certificado avanzado en Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad de Londres, pero luego yo quiero que me lo reconozcan en profesiones, en Ciudad de México, y lo traté de hacer con eso y no me lo aceptaron. Entonces, tenía yo que a fuerzas sacar una licenciatura y donde encontré que me revalidaban la mayor parte de los estudios, ese certificado de Inglaterra y lo de Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) y eso [her third diploma course], fue en la Universidad de Guadalajara. En la UdeG ya me revalidan prácticamente todo, nada más hago la tesis. (Didion-SSI)*

Didion wanted to have her three certificates revalidated in a university to obtain a BA degree in ELT. She was declined this process by one university but was successful to accomplish this at *Universidad de Guadalajara*. The only requisite she had pending was writing a thesis. Similar to Dunne's last excerpt, Didion expressed a feeling of validation as she stated that she wanted to be recognized as having a BA degree in ELT.

Based upon the experiences discussed above, three different paths to become an EFL teacher can be listed. The first and most common was to study a BA in ELT after studying high school and having no EFL teaching experience as was the case of Cohen, Capote, and Sabato. The second is for the teachers who started without a degree and later felt the need to become educated in the profession with a BA. The third was to study different certificates from diploma courses that would authenticate a degree in the profession with also presenting a thesis. This was the case of for Didion.

4.4 Working as an EFL Teacher

In this section, I explain how two of the participants gained teaching-experience before entering the BA as well as the other three who gained experienced as pre-service teachers. This is provided to see how regardless of the difference between how participants accumulated professional experience they all became professional EFL teachers. This section also examines how, regardless of whether they had preparation as a teacher or not, the participants started to teach English classes.

4.4.1 Gaining Experience as an EFL Teacher

Dunne and Didion had accumulated an average of 15 years of experience before getting their BA degrees in ELT. In the case of Dunne, the following extract exemplifies this experience:

> *I was teaching my friends for fun, and I went there [to a school in his hometown], and I got hired. I started teaching two or three courses there. I enjoyed that very much and I realized that that's what I wanted to do more of. (Dunne-SSI)*

Dunne began to teach friends and later started more formally in a school although he did not hold a BA degree yet. For Dunne acquiring EFL teaching experience happened before he had

even decided to study a BA in ELT. It was then when he discovered he liked the profession and wanted to teach EFL classes.

Didion is another participant who study a degree after 20 years of EFL teaching experience. She had worked at private institutions, *Vasco de Quiroga* school, for example, for five years after she moved to Aguascalientes and received her BA degree. The following excerpt illustrates Didion's early teaching experience.

> *I hadn't finished my teaching training, but she, a classmate, said that it was okay [that she had not finished her Diploma Course in Enseñanza del Inglés], that they really needed an English teacher. So, I went there, and the head of the high school said that it was okay. I really loved working there. (Didion-SSI)*

When Didion was asked to take the job as an EFL teacher, she was still completing a teacher training program suggesting that she already had knowledge of teaching skills, yet only limited, suggesting that is the reason why the director hired her. This practice is somehow similar to two other participants that acquired teaching experience as student-teachers. There was a need for an EFL teacher.

While studying the BA in ELT, Cohen and Sabato gained teaching experience by working at private institutions knowing experience was important. This type of experience-gaining relates more to Didion than Dunne. The following excerpt is an example of how Cohen started to accumulate teaching experience while being a BA student.

> *I wanted to work because I wanted to get experience. I wanted to be prepared with experience. I began working so that when I finished the major. I would have the experience, not only with the practicum subjects, but in real life. (Cohen-SSI)*

Cohen started to show agency by deciding to acquire real-life teaching experience which would later translate as effectiveness for his future bosses. This is a representation of how Cohen saw himself and how he wanted to be seen. One can see how Cohen started to shape his professional identity and the ways he wanted to be perceived as a teacher. This may also

be the case for other student-teachers who do not want to appear unexperienced after graduating from the BA in ELT.

Sabato also began to gain experience during the BA; however, he "was not looking for a job." Instead, he was approached by one of his teachers and was asked if he wanted to substitute for an EFL teacher. This process of obtaining a job as a pre-service teacher is common and it happens in ELT and Mexico. Student-teachers may be hired for their English teaching skills to cover for an available position or because there is a need for EFL teachers. EFL teachers gaining experience or furthering their skills through teacher training and development reflects what Freeman (1989) mentioned about the skills and knowledges teachers should have.

Lastly, although he did not gain any experience outside the BA in ELT, Capote mentioned acquiring experience within the major as a student-teacher in the practicum classes of the BA. The following excerpt describes the type of experience Capote acquired.

> *It [how he gained experience as an EFL teacher] was with a group from Fomento, as part of the practicum class, and I think the experience was really good, because students had the willingness of learning the language. I was able to show how I am as a teacher. (Capote-SSI)*

Capote acquired teaching experience as part of one of his subjects in the BA. These experiences are fundamental for ELT students as they encounter real-life events, practice with real students, and start to identify as teachers. It is debatable whether this teaching experience counts as valid working experience for some professional jobs. For most student teachers, this may be the easiest and most common way to acquire experience. At the end of the day, that is the purpose of the practicum class to acquire real-life teaching experience.

4.4.2 An Invitation to Teach English Classes

Four of the five participants had teaching jobs before receiving their BA degree in ELT. Dunne started working as an EFL teacher without having a formal educational background.

Didion, Cohen and Sabato worked as pre-service teachers. An invitation was the start for three of the five participants to teach. The following excerpt exemplifies that.

I was invited by a classmate to start teaching in a high school. (Didion-SSI)

Didion, Sabato, and Dunne were invited to begin teaching by someone they know. The participants were told of the existence of a position that needed to be covered and how they were asked to cover it. Didion was invited by a peer, word of mouth, while Dunne was informed by a student who happened to be a teacher at the school that offered the job. Sabato commented that it was a teacher who recommended him for the position.

Similarly, Cohen and Capote were invited and phrased their experience as "being given the opportunity." This excerpt is an example of that:

> *I was given the opportunity as soon as I finished the major [in ELT] to begin working here at the university and it was the coordinator at that time who gave me the chance (Capote-SSI).*

Even though their career entry is different, it is not far from the experiences of career entry from the other three participants. Cohen and Capote were granted this "opportunity" to teach by the Head of the Language Department or the Coordinator of the BA in ELT respectively. This process of entering the EFL profession may not be at all strange to ELT teachers as "word-to-mouth" is how people find out about job. This suggests that most career entries for EFL teachers may be informal and based on a right-place-right-time sort of situation.

4.4.3 Reflecting about Being an EFL Teacher

When the participants were asked about their experiences as an EFL teacher, four of the five participants reflected about their profession and who they were, a reflection of their identity as English teachers. The excerpt below presents how one participant developed his identity and started to know who he was as an EFL teacher:

When I was teaching kids in primary school, especially fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, I told myself that that's not what I wanted to do because you really need to know how to teach those kids. (Dunne-SSI)

Dunne expressed a sense of reflection and self-awareness about who he was as an EFL teacher. He makes a realization that teaching kids is not what he enjoys. Similarly, Cohen also expressed "not [being] good at teaching children or teens." Knowing their abilities and limitations can be indicatives of their teacher cognition as reported by Freeman and Richards (1996). This early teacher cognition may be reflected not only by them as EFL teachers but also as future teacher educators. Dunne mentioned to "have special skills to know how to teach" kids or teenagers.

4.5 Transitioning to a Teacher Educator

I examine how the participants see themselves as professional teachers. I also offer a differentiation of the two types of teachers from the participants' perspective.

4.5.1 From EFL Teachers to Teacher Educators

As part of their professional lives, the participants experienced transitioning to teacher education. This meant not teaching EFL classes, but to teach content classes in ELT programs. Dunne, while in the BA, was invited to teach in the BA which represents becoming a teacher educator. This transition was unusual as he was still a student in the BA. The following excerpts exemplify this transition.

I was in fourth semester doing the BA in ELT, and the head of department asked me if I wanted to teach in the BA, but I had to decline that offer. She asked me if I was interested to teach the next semester, so I said "yeah, of course." I started teaching in propedéutico [two semesters offered to the applicants of the BA in ELT before entering the first semester] when I was in the fifth semester. (Dunne-SSI)

Sabato also stated being invited to teach in the BA in ELT when he was still a student of the same program. Dunne mentioned in the interview that this happened because "they were lacking teachers" at that time. He also commented that this practice is no longer in place

because "you need a master's now." Lack of academic norms in the past may be another reason why Sabato and Dunne were able to teach in the same program they were still in.

For Cohen and Capote, the process of transitioning to teacher educators was different than Dunne and Sabato because they had graduated from the BA when they were invited to be teachers in the same program. However, Cohen and Capote shared a similarity with Dunne and Sabato; they were invited by the Head of the Language Department or the Coordinator. Capote described this invitation.

> *The coordinator was the one in charge of giving me this opportunity. He needed a teacher in the BA. He was like, "Are you interested in being part of the BA?" and I was like, "Sure, why not." (Capote-SSI)*

The above represents how even though both Capote and Cohen only had a BA degree in ELT at that time, they were asked to teach classes starting in *Propedeútico*, also called *"Semestre cero."* This can be interpreted as a need for teachers (Maggioli, 2017). They started teaching at this semester as a way to feel comfortable which in both cases turned fruitful as they were later given classes in other semesters. This practice of offering lower classes or levels may be a common practice for novice teachers to ensure that they can teach and later receive other classes. Capote and Cohen may have been in the right place and at the right time when they were offered these opportunities, and this may be the case for others.

The process of transitioning from an EFL teacher to a teacher educator for Didion was completely different than the other four participants. She mentions the following:

> *I became a teacher educator immediately with the first generation [of the BA in ELT]. I was in charge of different subjects. (Didion-SSI)*

Didion worked developing the curriculum for the BA in ELT program in the 1990s and she became a teacher educator when it was implemented. Didion was part of a group of teachers who created the program and were later hired to teach as there may not be enough qualified teacher educators to hire.

4.5.2 The Differences between EFL Teachers and Teacher Educators

To understand part of the participants' identity, they were asked to identify the differences between an EFL teacher and a teacher educator. The differences they mentioned may reflect how they see themselves as either one or the other. The following extract provides Capote's point of view.

> *When you are an EFL teacher, you are going to be teaching the language in a general way focusing to develop the four skills of the language. And when you become an educator, you are more aware of the different principles that are behind the application of all of these techniques. (Capote-SSI)*

For Capote, being an EFL teacher encompasses teaching learners how to write, speak, listen, and read English; whereas as a teacher educator's focus is more on the skills of how to apply methodologies when teaching language skills, which is a more complex area. The distinction made by Capote may be profoundly based on his practice as an EFL teacher and a teacher educator.

Another participant, Didion, did not made a distinction between the two types of teachers. Rather, this is what she had to say about it.

> *Teaching is teaching. As I used to say, we are not teachers of English we are teachers of students. (Didion-SSI)*

What Didion might have meant by that is that teaching is centered around the students and their language or pedagogical needs do not matter for her if it is EFL teaching or teacher education.

4.5.3 Teacher Educator or EFL Teacher

The following excerpt entails how the participants see themselves professionally. I linked the last question by asking them to tell me which of the two types of teachers they identified themselves. The five participants agreed on identifying more as teacher educators than as EFL teachers. The following excerpt is an example of their reasoning.

Teacher educator. For me, it requires more knowledge, more responsibility, and it gives me a lot more, it is a lot more challenging and that is why. Being an English teacher was not a challenge anymore. (Didion-SSI)

Didion shares that being a teacher educator is more challenging than being an EFL teacher as it requires more knowledge and responsibility from her. Didion's decision to transition from and EFL teacher to a teacher educator can be observed when she commented that "being an English teacher was not a challenge anymore." By this transition moment, Didion had accumulated 20 years of experience as an EFL teacher and that may be the reason why she felt teaching English for her was not exciting anymore and she wanted more.

Capote, Cohen, and Sabato agreed that being a teacher educator was more challenging. Capote included "gaining more knowledge" as one of the reasons he chose to be a teacher educator while Sabato based his decision on aiding students to "develop personally" at a different level in the field. It should also be stated that all the reasons the participants mentioned are valid. It should be recognized as well that those reasons may reflect the type of teachers, persons they are, and who they want to be as professionals. This recognitions of who they are as teachers mirrors what Richards (2016) established as identity playing a significant role in teaching as compared with other professions.

4.5.4 Studying a Master's Degree

Continuing with the professional lives of the participants, they mentioned studying a master's program in either applied linguistics, education, or ELT. This academic accomplishment happened differently amongst the participants. For some, it was part of their agenda, while for others the opportunity presented itself. For Dunne this decision was planned.

I told you before, I had these short-, mid-, and long-term projects. What was next was to do a master's and I wanted to do a master's abroad. (Dunne-SSI)

Dunne mentioned having an agenda of objectives at different parts of his professional life which shows a dedicated teacher who thinks ahead. For him, studying an MA was imperative. This decision of furthering his academic preparation may be tied with his reasoning to

validate himself in the profession as it was the reason why he studied a BA in ELT before. MA programs in foreign countries may offer a wider range of MA options in different areas as well as being seemingly more prestigious. This may be the reasons why Dunne opted for studying a master's program in the US.

Opposite to Dunne, Cohen did not plan to study an MA; however, the opportunity was offered to him by his boss.

> *The opportunity just presented. It wasn't in my head. I didn't have that idea of starting a master's program. I remember my boss telling me: "We have this opportunity, a scholarship. Do you want it?" And I was like, "Yes." (Cohen-SSI)*

Cohen shared that studying an MA was not part of his plans. He was already a teacher educator in the BA in ELT, so maybe he did not think it was necessary for him. Nonetheless, Cohen was given the opportunity to obtain a scholarship to study a master's abroad, and he did not let that opportunity go; he accepted it and studied an MA in the United Kingdom.

Capote's reasoning to study an MA in Mexico was neither pre-planned nor a sudden opportunity. For him, studying a master's program depended on his willingness to develop academically.

> *It all started in 2016, when I was like "I think it's now like the perfect time in order for me to continue preparing myself." So I was like, okay, so why not just study a master's degree. I felt the need of growing even more in a professional way that's why I thought of having a master's degree. (Capote-SSI)*

As he felt comfortable and was looking forward to, Capote expressed himself that he decided to study an MA as part of his preparation. This decision was not planned as he had already accumulated years of experience; yet he yearned to receive more education to be more professional. Capote studied the MA when he felt it was the right moment for him.

4.6 Going Beyond Teaching

This section is about how the participants did not only have teaching-related jobs on their professional lives, but they also had to work administrative-related jobs. I include the participants' thoughts about how these positions are part of their professional lives.

4.6.1 Working as a Coordinator or the Head of the Language Department

When I conducted the interviews, I noticed that some participants commented on having other roles along with teaching. I started to see that having an academic coordination was part of the professional lives of the participants. The following excerpt shows this experience:

> *I was given the opportunity to be the coordinator of the extension courses because the coordinator took a year of absence and the Head of the Language Department at that time asked me if I was interested in being the coordinator. (Capote-SSI)*

Capote was offered the chance to be the Coordinator of the extension courses at UAA, a job he was not looking for. Sabato and Cohen mentioned also being given the possibility to substitute for the Coordinator of CAADI and the Coordinator of the BA in ELT respectively, but later took on the role of the position. Similar to their career entry, the participants were invited to take on a role that they were not seeking but ultimately dictated part of their professional growth. This experience may be of common occurrence and other EFL teachers or teacher educators may relate with it.

Two other participants mentioned having a higher position as Head of the Language Department. As with many of their experiences, becoming the head of department happened differently for Dunne and Cohen. This is what one of them had to say about it:

> *When I became the head of the department, it was really shocking because I wasn't expecting it. It was just like, "Okay, he quit. Now you're the boss." (Cohen-SSI)*

For Cohen, becoming the Head of the Language Department was a surprise. He held this position for one year until a new one was elected. As opposed to Cohen, Dunne was elected

even after he shared that he "never thought that [he] would be the Head of the Department" even though these positions are part of our field.

4.6.2 Coordination Jobs for Teacher Educators

During the interviews, I asked the participants if they felt EFL teachers or teacher educators should take coordination jobs or related administrative jobs in our field. Most of the participants responded positively.

> *Yes. Because that gives you a different perspective on the job. (Cohen-SSI)*

Cohen replied that he felt that teacher educators should be given opportunities to work as coordinators or heads of departments as they offer other points of view about the teaching profession. Capote, Didion, and Dunne agreed on this. Furthermore, Dunne stated that "anybody could do it as long as they had the proper education" because these positions include areas of our profession and administrative duties. Didion shared that "not everybody could do it" and based her opinion on the person "having or not human skills" meaning being able to work and talk with other people. Capote said that "we could work one of those jobs simply because we have the knowledge" of the profession stating that the BA in ELT has prepared its graduates to take on such roles.

Nonetheless, Sabato, the participant with an MA in Management in Education, had a different opinion about the topic.

> *No, no, not if they don't have the formation. You need to have a lot of skills, a lot of abilities. Mainly, the first one, is having administrative knowledge in combination with academic grounding. (Sabato-SSI)*

Sabato did not immediately respond positively to my interview question. Nonetheless, he commented that to do so, the teacher should acquire the right knowledge and skills which is similar to what Dunne and Didion shared. There is debate whether EFL teachers or teacher educators should take on roles of coordination or alike if they do not have a background on management in education.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, I interpreted the participants' data and discovered similar experiences in the development of their professional lives. I presented the information divided in five sections which roughly described how the participants started their journey as English learners in which this experience they were influenced positively or negatively by their English teachers to pursue a career in the area. In order to do this, the participants all decided to study a BA in ELT at different points of their lives; three participants it was right after graduating high school and two others after years of teaching as means of professionalize their jobs. It was through an invitation that the five participants began teaching both as EFL teachers and as teacher educators. Lastly, it was noted that as part of their teacher educator position, the participants were ascribed with administrative-related tasks. These results were vital to answer the research questions leading to the final part of the investigation, the conclusions.

Chapter V: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research questions along with the conclusive findings are presented. These are followed by the contributions, and then the implications and applications of the study. Lastly, I present the limitations and future research suggestions.

5.2 Research Questions

The primary objective of this study was to understand the phenomenon of how EFL teachers transition to become teacher educators in the BA in ELT at the UAA. In addition, the study included the objective of knowing how the participants' professional identities evolved within the processes. The study sought to answer two research questions:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences that contributed to the participants to become EFL teachers and to transition to teacher educators?

RQ2: How have these experiences influenced their professional identity formation?

The study was carried out in a large public university in the State of Aguascalientes. The participants were five teacher educators from a BA in ELT. Data were collected through semi-structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Using the data from the two techniques, biograms were used as a tool to begin analyzing the participants' experiences in a chronological order. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was used to identify themes across all the data. The following are the findings for this study.

5.3 Summary of the Findings

Regarding the first research question, even though the participants underwent distinct professional lives, all participants shared various experiences in common. To begin, the participants reported to have experienced English for the first time while at school. They learnt English at different stages of their lives before becoming EFL teachers. For example, one of them learnt English when she was a in a private primary school, and two when they were in public high schools. The last two learnt some English before entering the university but became more proficient in English in the BA in ELT. This interaction with the language

seemed to have inspired the participants to become EFL teachers, as it often happens in other cases. I suggest that English is a part of their professional lives and development.

Irrespective of the time in their lives that the participants learnt English, another commonality is how learning English influenced their decision to become EFL teachers. Their EFL teachers inspired them either positively or negatively. Dunne, for example, mentioned having an excellent English grammar teacher as a positive reason of why he decided to become an EFL teacher. On the contrary, Capote wanted to be the opposite of the EFL teachers he had while in high school. It is clear then that the participants, as students, were not only introduced to the English language, but their teachers also had an impact on their decision to become EFL teachers.

Four of the five participants mentioned studying a BA in ELT. The remaining one, Didion, although not studying a formal BA, shared information about completing different diploma courses in teaching English which were later validated for a BA degree in ELT. Because of this, it was evident that she wanted to be recognized as an EFL teacher. Additionally, the five participants commented on having acquired experience as EFL teachers at different stages in their lives: for example, working in schools with no educational background in ELT, or during and after concluding the BA in ELT.

Three of the participants started teaching English classes when they were either studying the BA, or had just graduated from it. Others had little or no formal studies in English teaching when they began teaching the language. No matter if they had an educational background in teaching, all five participants experienced the similar situation that they were all invited by peers or teachers to teach an English class.

The participants taught English in a range of different institutions and educational levels, from primary to university. The participants' experience as EFL teachers ranged from one to 20 years. After those years of experience as EFL teachers, the participants were invited or given an opportunity to work as teacher educators in the BA in ELT. These shared events show that the participants were former EFL teachers before becoming teacher educators. This transition, EFL teachers to teacher educators, is not all uncommon and has been documented in other studies (Dávila & Jarquín, 2022; Yuan, 2017).

Two of the participants stated that they were offered an opportunity to teach EFL classes because of their working experience at CAADI and their microteaching experience in the BA in ELT at UAA. This suggests that an informal invitation to teach English includes knowing someone within the program that recognizes their academic background and professional performance. These incidental career entries should stress that becoming an EFL or a teacher educator as not a universally linear process. Career entry should then be seen as unconventional in most cases. Thus, in and of itself, becoming an EFL teacher in unordinary paths is an occurring phenomenon for EFL teachers and teacher educators.

However, there are a few reasons why the participants decided to become teacher educators. The five participants had an incidental transition to become teacher educators. This means that their career entry happened with an invitation by coordinators, or the head of the department. These invitations opened the door for them to become teacher educators. For example, Dunne and Sabato were invited to teach in the BA in ELT at UAA because there was a need to find teacher educators. Capote mentioned a desired to become a teacher educator and even though he was invited to teach, he had a sense of vocation to accept it.

Regarding the second research question, a vital finding was how the participants viewed themselves after their lived experiences as EFL teachers and teacher educators. Identity is influenced by the person's experiences and history (Watkins-Goffman, 2001). The participants commented that being an EFL teacher, or a teacher educator is a different experience. When asked if they preferred being one over the other, they all agreed that they preferred to be a teacher educator as it was more challenging than teaching EFL classes. Nonetheless, one of them mentioned that "teaching was teaching" to what she possibly meant was that there is no distinction between teaching EFL or ELT students.

Making a distinction between how a teacher interacts with EFL or BA in ELT students may relate to this idea of having multiple identities (Barkhuizen, 2021). A number of teacher educators have a set of identities easily interchangeable with one another depending on the situation they are in. In other words, this refers to the context in which they teach. It is essential to remember that identity is an ongoing process which always develops and evolves (He, 1995). This means that identity is comprised of not only the present, but also the past

and future experiences. Researching identity of EFL teachers and teacher educators should be carried out more to understand the complexities.

In addition to identity formation, some teacher educators took on other roles or functions in the teacher education area such as a coordinator, or head of department due to their experience as teacher educators. All five participants held coordination positions at least once in their professional careers. Three of the five participants were the Head of the Language Department at UAA. This means that the teacher educators had to develop additional identities to their already set of identities as well as skills and competences, yet this is quite normal.

5.4 Contributions and Implications

To date, research on teacher educators has received scant attention in the literature as mentioned by Barkhuizen (2016), Boyd and Harris (2010), Kosnik et al. (2015), Wood and Borg (2010), and Zeichner (2005). Additionally, there are some misconceptions about teacher educators mainly regarding their educational preparation (Wilson, 1990, Zeichner, 2005). This study demonstrated that this was not the case as it was shown that the five participants had study a BA and an MA, and even three of them had study a PhD. Thus, the most significant contribution that this study provides is evidence that teacher educators undergo certain academic and professional experiences to increase their development.

An additional contribution is that the study broadens the understanding of teachers' professional career development by knowing what happens to English teachers in their transition to become teacher educators. This was specially achieved by using biograms as a preliminary data analysis tool. Biograms allowed for a structural and chronological view of their professional lives; thus, providing a more visual understanding of their lived experiences. This contribution should shed light on the intricacies of becoming and EFL teacher and the becoming a teacher educator. Within the broadening of the career development, the participants as English learners and the influences they receive as learners should also be considered when describing their professional lives. These early on experiences are the results for some of the participants to become EFL teachers.

Regarding implications, this research is of interest to teacher educators in degree programs and training courses, EFL/ESL teachers, program designers, administrators, and coordinators of ELT programs. One of the implications that stands out the most is broadening the understanding of how EFL teachers become teacher educators. This entails teacher educators narrating their experiences to know what their journeys were like and how it impacted their practice. Furthermore, program designers could implement subjects of professional development in ELT degrees to create awareness on students about the intricacies of their plausible future professional lives.

5.5 Limitations

Data was collected from May to July in 2021 during the COVID-19. The pandemic brought limitations such as contacting individuals who would become participants and conducting face-to-face interviews. It was difficult to reach people via email and even in person. This process was time consuming. As the data were collected in the span of three months, meeting the gatekeepers to receive access, contacting participants, sending questionnaires, creating interview guides, and conducting interviews online was performed under a tight schedule. Nonetheless, being organized and maximizing the limited time I had to collect the data were keys for success.

Additionally, due to COVID-19 and a teacher shortage at that time, it was difficult to contact more participants than the five that accepted to participate in this study. Although an extensive number of participants is not required in qualitative research, I find that the inclusion of more participants could have yielded a greater number of experiences and a better understanding of the process of becoming an EFL teacher and the transition to a teacher educator.

One last limitation deals with technological issues during COVID-19. I gathered the data using a video call platform: Zoom. While using Zoom, I encountered some difficulties with the internet during the interviews. This setback was solved by anticipating problems and solutions. Before the interview, both the interviewer and interviewee agreed to stay on hold in case any of the two parties disconnected and wait for the other to connect again. Nonetheless, these situations with technology were solved eventually.

5.6 Future Research

This study offers some recommendations for future research regarding furthering the knowledge of teacher educators, their journey, and their identities. It would be interesting to compare native and non-native teacher educators to know how similar or different their journeys were. This recommendation unveils the possibility for comparative studies. Teacher educators from two universities could be compared or teacher educators from a public university and a private university. On a larger scale, there could be an option to compare teacher educators and their development from universities of different countries.

5.7 Final Thoughts

This study had the objective to understand the experiences that the participants lived when becoming English teachers and their later transition to teacher educators. Within this transition, it was also researched how their professional identities were constructed. In this chapter I offered a review of the research questions, findings, contributions, implications and applications, limitations, and finally possible future research. To conclude, it is important to highlight that there is a considerable need to carry out more research regarding teacher educators, their practices, and their identities in order to record their experiences and generate more valuable information about their journeys and transitions which will hopefully be of much help in the future for those interested in exploring more about the topic. This research begins to bridge the gap between how individuals started as EFL teachers and later move on to positions of teacher educators. Although much of the information that answered the two research questions may already been known, I find it vital to state that the results presented in this study are of outmost importance as they show that it is necessary to record the lived experiences from the teacher educators for present and future study.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Semi-structured Questionnaire

BECOMING EFL TEACHERS AND TRANSITIONING TO TEACHER EDUCATORS

Dear participant,

As part of a research study from a Master's in Applied Linguistics in ELT program at Universidad de Guanajuato, I am currently applying a questionnaire to collect factual information about your professional and academic lives. Your answers are essential for the development of a semi-structured interview guide. The information you give cannot be completely anonymous as it is necessary for me to identify your answers in order to create a personalized interview guide. However, the information you provide will remain confidential as the use of the information will be only for educational and personal purposes.

In case of any doubts, please, contact me at: rafaelcruzreyna@outlook.com.

Your participation is highly appreciated.

ACADEMIC LIFE

INSTRUCTION: Please, answer the next three questions. Follow the example provided.
BA. in English Language Teaching. UAA, 2015.

1. Please, mention the name of your BA degree. Add the name of the institution that granted it and the year you received it.

_____

2. Please, mention the name of your MA degree. Add the name of the institution that granted it and the year you received it.

_____

3. If you have a PhD, please, mention the name of the degree. Add the name of the institution that granted it and the year you received it.

_____

EFL BACKGROUND

INSTRUCTION: Please, answer the next four questions. Be careful, some questions may not apply to you.

4. Do you have experience teaching EFL classes? Mark one of the two answers.

Yes. ☐ (continue with the next question).   No. ☐ (continue with question number 8).

5. Do you still teach EFL classes? Mark one of the two answers.

Yes. ☐   No. ☐

6. Years of experience teaching only EFL classes: _____

7. At which schools have you taught EFL classes? Please, list them from earliest to latest.
_____
_____
_____

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

INSTRUCTION: Please, answer the next four questions. Be careful, some questions may not apply to you.

8. What was your first professional job as an EFL teacher? Tell me about it.
_____
_____
_____

9. Do you work as an EFL or teacher educator at another school besides UAA?

_____
_____
_____

10. Please, list all the schools you are currently working at.
_____
_____
_____

11. What classes do you regularly teach at the BA program? Please, list them.
_____
_____
_____

12. From the classes that you teach at the BA, which one is your favorite? You can list as many as you would like.
_____
_____
_____

13. Have you had another job at UAA that is not as an EFL teacher or a teacher educator? If so, please, describe it.
_____
_____
_____

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

INSTRUCTION: Please, answer the next two questions. Be as thorough as you can.

14. What are some of the reasons that led you to become an EFL teacher? Please, indicate the year this happened.

_____
_____
_____

15. What are some of the reasons that led you to become a teacher educator? Please, indicate the year this happened.

_____
_____
_____

BIODATA

INSTRUCTION: Finally, please, answer the following three questions.

16. Age range.

☐ 30-39
☐ 40-49
☐ 50-59
☐ 60+
☐ I prefer not to answer.

17. Gender.

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ I prefer not to say
☐ Other: _____

18. Total years of professional experience as an EFL teacher and teacher educator: _____

Thank you!

You have reached the end of the questionnaire.
Your answers will be analyzed, and a semi-structured interview guide will be developed. All the answers you have provided are confidential and will not be shared.

You will be contacted in a matter of days, once your interview guide is finished, in order to conduct a brief interview.

Thank you so much for your participation!

Appendix B – Semi-structured Interview Guide

B.A. = ELT, UAA, 2000	M.A.= ELT, Southampton University, 2010		PhD. = not yet	
EFL experience = yes	Years of experience as an EFL teacher = 18 years of experience		Total years of experience = 22 years of experience	
Gender = male	Age range = 40-49	Acronym ID = JATG	[Native] or [Non-native]	
Pseudonym = Cohen	Interview (date & format) = July 8th, online			

QUESTIONS BEFORE STUDYING THE B.A.	QUESTIONS AS A TEACHER EDUCATOR	NOTES:

- How did you learn English?
- How did you see English?
    - How do you see it now?
 	
You mentioned the BA in ELT was not your first option, can you tell me more about that experience?
    - What were your motivators to ultimately enter the BA?
 	
QUESTIONS AS AN EFL TEACHER.
 	
- You mentioned that you had a job as a pre-service teacher, can you tell me more about this experience?
    - What semester where you in?
    - Was it assigned?
 	
You mentioned a sense of reflection or awareness as an important factor in teacher development, can you tell me more about it, please?
 	
- Did you face any problems as an EFL teacher?
    - How did you overcome these problems?
 	
- What are the pros and cons of being an EFL teacher?
 	
- What are the characteristics of an EFL teacher?
 	
- You mentioned you studied an MA at Southampton University; can you tell me more about that experience?
	- What led you to become a teacher educator?
	
	- Have you faced any problems as a teacher educator?
	
	- Are there any challenges as a teacher educator?
	
	- What are the pros and cons of being a teacher educator?
	
	What are the differences between an EFL teacher and a teacher educator?
	    - Which one do you choose?
	
	EXTRA QUESTIONS
	
	- You mentioned that you worked in other positions in the BA, can you tell me about those experiences?
	    - Do you think teachers, if given the chance, should work those positions as well?
	
	- You mentioned research as a personal favorite, how important should research be for all EFL and teacher educators?
	
	QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE
	
	- What is next professionally in your journey?	

Appendix C – Bank of Questions

Biodata Questions:

Age
Gender
Years of experience
What is your degree? Where? When?
    BA
    MA
    PhD
What classes do you teach?
What levels of English… EFL or ESP
What was your first job?

How did you become a teacher educator?
How did you become an EFL teacher?
(how old were you?)
Which classes do you prefer to teach?
    Classes
How many jobs do you have?
Do you work somewhere else? As an EFL
teacher / as a teacher educator
    Other jobs

Before the BA	How did you learn English? How did you see English? What were your motivations to study the BA in ELT? How did you become an EFL teacher?
As EFL teachers	How old were you when you became an EFL teacher? How long were you an EFL teacher? How did you feel as an EFL teacher? Where did you teach? What levels did you teach? What problems did you face as an EFL teacher? What are the challenges as an EFL teacher? What are the pros and cons of an EFL teacher? What are the characteristics of a good EFL teacher? What did you do to meet those characteristics?
As teacher educators	Do you teach EFL classes now? How long did you teach EFL classes? What led you to become a teacher educator? How old were you when you became a teacher educator? How do you feel now? What problems have you faced as a teacher educator? What are the challenges as a teacher educator? What are the differences? What are the pros and cons of a teacher educator? How do you feel having a 10+ years of experience? How do you feel by having a Master's degree?
Future plans/self	What is next professionally?

Appendix D – Seample Transcription of a Semi-structured Interview (Cohen)

Interviewer   Thank you very much for your participation. This interview is going to be divided in five sets of questions. I will be telling you when each of the five sets of questions is going to start. So, this first set of questions is questions before studying a BA. First question, how did you learn English?

Cohen   I learned English when I was at the university. I didn't learn it very well when I was in high school or junior high. I just learned, not even the basics, but I learned it when I was in the major.

Interviewer   Okay. How did you see English before the major?

Cohen   I always had the feeling for studying English, but in my house, we didn't have like enough money to pay for a private school. So I never had the chance. But then I studied in Seguro Social when they offered English courses. I don't know if they still give those courses, but they were really cheap. But the classes were not really good. It wasn't like very good, it was very traditional methods like just grammar, grammar, grammar, and fill-in the blanks and that was it. But I always felt like learning it because I really liked it. And I wanted to speak in English with my cousins and any other person who spoke the language. So that was like something that I wanted to learn.

Interviewer   Okay, and how did you see English when you were in the major?

Cohen   It was a very useful tool. It is still a very useful tool. In some cases, it was kind of complicated in terms of some grammar structures or pronunciation, some words, but you get to you get used to it and you develop it.

Interviewer   Okay, yes. I know that the BA in ELT wasn't your first option. Can you tell me more about this situation?

Cohen   Yes. I wanted to study Mass Media Communication (MMC). But I couldn't get in there. So this was my third option. Or, yeah, it was my third option. And I said, "Well, I can study this for a year, I can learn the language, and then I can go back to try and study MMC". But then, I finished the first year and then I liked it. And then, I continued, but I didn't like it. And then, I continued and then I liked it again. And it was like that struggle. Like, one year I liked it, the next year I didn't like it, and so on. But then I finished it.

Interviewer   During these "I liked it. I didn't like that" process, did you find any motivators to continue?

Appendix E – Sample Biogram (Cohen)

Year	Description of experience	Theme(s)	Personal/Professional impact (Context)
1989	Cohen started studying English in the *Seguro Social* programs.	Early studies/ Education	He had always wanted to learn English, and this was the only option he got to start with the language.
1995	Cohen started studying the B.A. in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes (UAA).	Education	For him, ELT was not a first option. He experienced a lot of "liking-not liking" for most of the major.
1998	Cohen started working in a private school.	Work/ Experience/ EFL teaching	He wanted to get real-life working experience before graduating.
1998	Cohen finished working in a private school.	Work/ Experience/ EFL teaching	He had to leave the school because the payment was really low, and he had gotten some experience, and this was his opportunity to work in a different place.
1998	Cohen started working as an assessor at Centro de Auto Aprendizaje Dirigido a Idiomas (CAADI).	Work/ Profession/ Experience/ EFL teaching	The coordinator of CAADI offered him the opportunity to work in this place and he automatically said yes as this was an opportunity to work in the area and in the university.
1999	Cohen was offered to teach a class by the head of department at that time.	Work/ Profession/ EFL teaching	He started teaching ESP and EFL classes in the *Turismo* major and in some other majors as well.
2000	Cohen stopped teaching ESP and EFL classes in other majors.	Work/ Profession/ EFL teaching	The head of the Department at that moment talked to him and offered him to teach within the B.A. in ELT. He said yes as this was a major opportunity for him to develop professionally and to grow personally.
2000	Cohen was offered to teach the subject of Communicative Skills in the ELT major.	Work/ Profession/ EFL teaching TE	He considered this subject as still teaching EFL classes. Although the preparation of the subject was more exhaustive than a regular EFL class aimed for students who wanted to be English teachers.
2006	Cohen was offered to study an MA.	Education/	He was offered to study in a Master's program abroad.

Appendix F – Research Information Letter

A QUIEN CORRESPONDA
PRESENTE.

Por la presente me permito presentar a usted a RAFAEL CRUZ REYNA, estudiante de la Maestría en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés, programa impartido en el Departamento de Lenguas, de la División de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, del Campus Guanajuato de la Universidad de Guanajuato; quien actualmente cursa la materia "Estancia Profesional I". Como parte de las actividades del curso, los estudiantes deben realizar un proyecto de investigación profesional. Rafael desea realizar la recolección de datos correspondientes a su trabajo de investigación profesional en torno a las experiencias vividas que llevaron a los docentes de inglés a convertirse en maestros formadores.

Por lo tanto, solicitamos a usted de la manera más atenta, darle las facilidades para realizar algunas de las siguientes actividades:

- Contactar a algunos de sus maestros y pedirles ser participantes.
- Aplicar un cuestionario a los maestros participantes.
- Entrevistar a los maestros participantes.

Cabe señalar que estas actividades tienen como único fin que los estudiantes realicen un proyecto de investigación en el cual apliquen los conocimientos adquiridos en las diferentes materias que se imparten en el programa de la maestría. Los datos recabados serán tratados con suma discreción y respetando los principios de ética que exige cualquier investigación de carácter cualitativo, y en ningún momento serán utilizados con fines ajenos a los del proyecto mismo.

Agradeciendo de antemano su apoyo a nuestros estudiantes, aprovecho la ocasión para saludarle cordialmente.

ATENTAMENTE
"LA VERDAD OS HARÁ LIBRES"
Guanajuato, Gto., 31 de mayo de 2021.

_____
Dr. Martha Lengeling
Directora de tesis

_____
Vo.Bo. Dra. Irasema Mora Pablo
Coordinadora de la Maestría en Lingüística
Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Inglés

Appendix G – Consent Form

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM
From ELT teachers to teacher educators: A phenomenological study of non-native teacher
educators in the BA in ELT from UAA on teacher development
May, 2021

Researcher:
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lengeling@hotmail.com

Teacher educator:

You are invited to participate in a research study from a Master's in Applied Linguistics in
ELT program at Universidad de Guanajuato. This form outlines the purposes of the study
and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant. Please, take time
to read it carefully. If there is anything you need further clarification about, please do not
hesitate to contact me.

PURPOSE

As an MA student and an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher, I am intrigued
about the process some English teachers undergo to evolve from being an EFL teacher to a
teacher educator. Thus, the purposes of the research are to know what the lived experiences
are that fostered EFL teachers from UAA to transition to teacher educators as well as to
know how those experiences have influenced their professional development.

DESCRIPTION

I would greatly appreciate it if you accepted to be a participant. If you accept, you will be
asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding biodata information, and academic and
professional information. Later, you will also be asked to be part of a semi-structured
interview regarding your academic and professional lived experiences. Finally, once the
data collection is finished, and the information had been analyzed, you will be asked to
review this information.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In order to achieve confidentiality, your real name will not be included in any of the
transcripts or data presentation. Instead, pseudonyms will be used to maximize anonymity.
The information you disclose, both in the questionnaire and the interview, will remain

private and it will only be used for educational and personal purposes as well as any possible publication or presentation.

<div align="center">PARTICIPATION</div>

Your participation to this research project is voluntary. You also have the right to refuse to take part, or to withdraw at any point of the research without consequences. In which case, all the information you had provided will be discarded.

Hereby, I, _____, sign this consent form: a) understanding the
<div align="center">write your name here</div>
purpose of the research; b) accepting being a participant of this research; c) knowing that I

will complete a questionnaire as well as an interview; and e) agreeing to the use of the

information I provide to the researcher.

<div align="center">
_____
signature
</div>

<div align="center">
_____
date
</div>

Thank you for your kind participation!

Rafael Cruz Reyna, ELT

_____
signature

_____
date

This consent form has been approved by Dr. M. Martha Lengeling.

<div align="center">
_____
signature
</div>