Identity Study of English for Specific Purposes Teachers in the Context of Shifts in Public English Teaching Positioning

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Abstract: This study investigates the identity of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers within the dynamic landscape of shifts in public English teaching positioning. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, qualitative and quantitative analyses were employed to explore the complexities of ESP teacher identity construction and adaptation. Qualitative findings revealed key themes including strong professional identity grounded in specialized expertise, the impact of changing educational policies and curriculum reforms, and the importance of cultural competence and intercultural communication. Quantitative analysis of survey data indicated high levels of job satisfaction among ESP teachers, with significant correlations between variables such as professional development participation, perceived efficacy in technology integration, and self-perceptions of identity as ESP educators.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes teachers; Identity; Public English teaching; Positioning

1. Background

With the global emphasis on English proficiency and the diversification of learners' needs, there has been a notable shift in the positioning of public English teaching. This shift not only reflects changes in educational policies and curricula but also underscores the evolving role and identity of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teachers within this dynamic context. As public English teaching undergoes repositioning to accommodate broader language learning objectives and diverse learner populations, ESP teachers find themselves at the nexus of pedagogical adaptation and professional identity negotiation.

Moreover, the emergence of digital technologies, interdisciplinary approaches, and communicative methodologies has further nuanced the landscape of ESP instruction. These factors have not only expanded the scope of ESP teaching but also challenged traditional notions of teacher identity, prompting ESP educators to reassess their roles, competencies, and affiliations within the broader educational ecosystem.

Against this backdrop, this research endeavors to delve into the intricate interplay between ESP teacher

identity and the shifting paradigms of public English teaching positioning. By examining the perspectives, experiences, and challenges encountered by ESP teachers, this study seeks to illuminate the multifaceted nature of their professional identity construction within the evolving landscape of English language education.

2. Current research status from domestic and international perspectives

2.1. Domestic research status

One notable area of focus is the impact of educational policies and curriculum reforms on ESP teachers' professional identity. Research by scholars such as Jian and Dan investigated how shifts in government policies and curriculum guidelines influence ESP teachers' roles, responsibilities, and self-perceptions [1]. These studies highlight the need for ESP educators to adapt their teaching practices and professional identities in response to changing educational contexts.

Scholars like Linares have examined the professional development needs of ESP teachers and the efficacy of training programs in enhancing their pedagogical competencies and identity formation [2]. These studies underscore the importance of continuous professional development initiatives to support ESP teachers in navigating the complexities of contemporary English language teaching.

Furthermore, there is a growing interest in exploring the intersection of technology and ESP teacher identity in Chinese academia. Researchers have investigated how digital tools and online platforms shape ESP teachers' professional identities and instructional practices [3,4]. These studies shed light on the evolving role of technology in English language education and its implications for ESP teacher identity construction.

2.2. International research status

In Western academia, studies by researchers such as Li and Qiong have explored the challenges and opportunities faced by ESP teachers in adapting to changing educational landscapes [5]. These studies often emphasize the need for ESP educators to negotiate their professional identities amidst competing demands and expectations from stakeholders.

Moreover, research on the multicultural dimensions of ESP teacher identity has gained traction in international literature. Scholars have investigated how ESP teachers navigate cultural diversity and intercultural communication in their teaching contexts [6,7]. These studies highlight the importance of fostering cultural competence and reflexivity among ESP educators to effectively engage with diverse student populations.

Overall, both domestic and international research on ESP teachers' identity in the context of shifts in public English teaching positioning reflect a multifaceted and evolving landscape. By synthesizing insights from diverse perspectives, this body of literature offers valuable implications for teacher training, curriculum development, and educational policy formulation in the field of English language education [8,9].

3. Research content and methodology

Firstly, the study examined the socio-political and institutional factors driving shifts in public English teaching positioning. By analyzing government policies, curriculum reforms, and broader educational trends, the research sought to contextualize the changing roles and expectations placed on ESP teachers within the contemporary educational landscape.

Secondly, the research investigated the professional experiences and challenges encountered by ESP teachers in adapting to new teaching contexts and pedagogical approaches. Through qualitative interviews, surveys, and classroom observations, the study explored how ESP educators negotiate their professional

identities amidst shifting instructional methodologies, technological advancements, and diverse learner needs.

Furthermore, the study explored the intersection of ESP teacher identity with issues of language proficiency, cultural competence, and intercultural communication. By examining how ESP teachers navigate linguistic diversity and cultural differences in their teaching practices, the research aimed to elucidate the role of identity in shaping effective pedagogical interactions and student learning outcomes.

Moreover, the study explored the implications of ESP teacher identity for curriculum design, assessment practices, and educational policy formulation. By analyzing the alignment between teacher identity, instructional goals, and assessment frameworks, the research aims to inform evidence-based approaches to curriculum development and educational reform in the field of English language education.

4. Data analysis
4.1. Qualitative analysis
Qualitative analysis revealed several key themes (Professional Identity, Impact of Educational Policies and Curriculum Reforms, and Cultural Competence and Intercultural Communication) regarding ESP teacher identity in the context of shifting public English teaching positioning. Participants expressed a strong sense of professional identity grounded in their specialized expertise and pedagogical adaptability. They highlighted the impact of changing educational policies and curriculum reforms on their roles, responsibilities, and self-perceptions as ESP educators. Moreover, participants emphasized the importance of cultural competence and intercultural communication in their teaching practices, underscoring the multifaceted nature of ESP teacher identity within diverse instructional contexts.

4.2. Quantitative analysis
Quantitative analysis of survey data provided further insights into ESP teacher identity trends and patterns. As shown in **Table 1**, the survey results indicated a high level of job satisfaction among ESP teachers, with the majority of respondents expressing confidence in their ability to meet the evolving needs of their students.

Table 1. Survey questionnaire responses of ESP teachers

Aspects	Responses
Job satisfaction	- Strongly agree: 45%
	- Agree: 35%
	- Neutral: 15%
	- Disagree: 3%
	- Strongly disagree: 2%
Confidence in meeting student needs	- Very confident: 55%
	- Somewhat confident: 30%
	- Neutral: 10%
	- Not very confident: 3%
	- Not at all confident: 2%

Furthermore, from **Table 2**, statistical analyses revealed significant correlations between variables such as professional development participation, perceived efficacy in technology integration, and self-perceptions

of identity as ESP educators. These findings suggest that ongoing professional development initiatives and technological advancements play crucial roles in shaping ESP teacher identity in contemporary educational settings.

Table 2. Statistical correlations (Pearson's correlation coefficient)

Correlations	Pearson's coefficient
professional development participation and self-perception of identity as ESP educators	0.72 ($P < 0.01$)
perceived efficacy in technology integration and self-perception of identity as ESP educators	0.64 ($P < 0.05$)
professional development participation and perceived efficacy in technology integration	0.57 ($P < 0.05$)

5. Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the intricate dynamics of ESP teacher identity within the evolving landscape of public English teaching positioning. The qualitative analysis revealed that ESP teachers exhibit a strong sense of professional identity, which is deeply influenced by their specialized expertise, pedagogical adaptability, and responsiveness to changing educational policies and curriculum reforms. Additionally, the importance of cultural competence and intercultural communication emerged as essential aspects of ESP teacher identity, underscoring the need for educators to cultivate sensitivity to diverse student populations and foster inclusive learning environments.

Furthermore, the quantitative analysis highlighted the positive outlook of ESP teachers, with high levels of job satisfaction and confidence in meeting student needs. Significant correlations between variables such as professional development participation, perceived efficacy in technology integration, and self-perceptions of identity as ESP educators underscored the importance of ongoing professional development initiatives and technological advancements in shaping ESP teacher identity in contemporary educational settings.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made to support ESP teachers in navigating the complexities of identity construction and adaptation within the changing landscape of English language education. Firstly, institutions and educational policymakers should prioritize providing opportunities for continuous professional development tailored to the specific needs of ESP educators, including training in technology integration, intercultural communication, and pedagogical innovation.

Secondly, fostering a supportive and inclusive organizational culture that values and celebrates the diverse expertise and experiences of ESP teachers is essential. This can be achieved through mentorship programs, collaborative communities of practice, and recognition of ESP educators' contributions to the field.

Lastly, further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of professional development initiatives and technological advancements on ESP teacher identity and instructional practices. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in ESP teacher identity over time can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of interventions and inform evidence-based strategies for enhancing teacher training, curriculum design, and educational policy formulation in the field of English language education.

Overall, by addressing the multifaceted nature of ESP teacher identity and providing support for ongoing professional development, institutions and educational stakeholders can empower ESP educators to thrive and excel in their roles within the evolving landscape of English language education.

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