Online Teacher Identity Formation of English Instructors in State Universities of Sri Lanka

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Abstract - Teacher identity is a new focus of Applied Linguistics which explores the professional development of teachers by reflecting the sense of teacher self which is a result of the productive combination of key personal and professional subjectivities or beliefs. It investigates who the teachers are and how they execute what they practice in a certain context, explicitly in online context in this research. Many empirical studies have been done on the development of teacher identity in the university arena, yet little research to date has looked at how English Instructors in the university level develop their online teacher identity. This qualitative study aims to understand the new online teaching experience of English Instructors in State Universities of Sri Lanka. The study examines how they develop their online teacher identity and encounter the difficulties in developing their online teacher identity. The data were collected from ten English Instructors in different State Universities of Sri Lanka by using an online questionnaire and data were analysed qualitatively. The framework established by Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) was utilized as the lens for the analysis. Based on the results generated through the analysis, challenges of the online English Instructors were identified and recommendations were made for developing the online teacher identity of English Instructors at university level. Findings of the study are paramount, because the understanding of the online teacher identity along with the factors contributing to the online teacher identity formation and development is important as online teaching continues to grow exponentially in higher education.

Keywords: Online teacher identity, Professional development, English Instructors in State Universities

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