

# Stories of Kuwaiti English Language Teachers: A Multimodal Narrative Inquiry

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## **Abstract**

This study explored the lived stories of three Kuwaiti English language teachers in Kuwait. It investigated the identity construction and negotiations of these teachers through a thematic and membership categorization lens. The study employed a qualitative research approach with multimodal narratives: textual and digital stories.

The main findings of the study highlight how teachers through the act of storying developed both their personal and professional identities at the intersection of not belonging, ageism and relationships. The Kuwaiti language teachers constructed multiple identities through their multimodal narratives, for example, Unbelonging Teacher, Young Teacher, Local Teacher, Kuwaiti Teacher and Professional Teacher.

**Key words:** Second language teacher identity, storying, multimodal narratives, thematic analysis, membership categorization framework.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1 General Setting

The inspiration for this research came from an article entitled ““Working on a rocky shore”: Micro-moments of positive affect in academic work.” (Gannon, Taylor, Adams, Donaghue, Hannam-Swain, Harris-Evans, Healey, & Moore, 2019). The paper analyzes stories to shed light on glimpses of joy in everyday moments in academic life from connecting with others. During my read I sensed and felt joy. The paper combined nearly all my interests and gave me a clearer direction of my research focus, and the emphasis on personal experience pushed me towards narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Thus, I started to become interested in exploring more about English language teachers’ personal and professional sense of identity and belonging.

This study attempts to gain insight into the complex process of identity development of Kuwaiti female English language teachers. This is an area of research which is considerably lacking. The study also hopes to highlight the usefulness of bringing female English language teachers in Kuwait together through sharing their own textual and digital stories and promote it as a process that could be a meaningful way for them to develop. Many researchers suggest that for teachers, development occurs when there is an assessment of their values, beliefs and attitudes as well as teaching practice. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to also involve Kuwaiti teachers in identity work, an aspect of teachers and teaching which is crucial to their professional development (Clarke, 2009). The main research question is:

1. Which identities do Kuwaiti English language teachers construct through multimodal narratives?

## 1.2 Aims and Boundaries of the Study

The main reason for selecting this topic of research is to extend my knowledge in an area of interest and personal relevance to me, especially as an ELT teacher who is in the process of ‘becoming a teacher’. While reflecting on critical moments of my personal and professional life throughout the MA TESOL modules, I am also interested in lived experiences of others. I was drawn to the stories of the module leaders and fellow teachers in the course, specifically to the similarities and differences in our lived stories. This interest led to my research investigation: a project that aims to uncover in what ways second language teachers’ past

experiences shape their identities, in particular Kuwaiti English language teachers working in Kuwait.

Through narrative inquiry I feel this research may further my understanding of how identities are greatly influenced by experiences. As a teacher, the stories that teachers tell always fascinate me, especially my mothers' who was a teacher herself. I grew up listening to her stories from the classroom while I was in the back seat on the ride back home from school. I observed, without realizing at that time, as her identity as a female, mother and teacher constructed and shifted throughout the years. As Varghese et al. (2005, p.22) points out, identity is "multiple, shifting and in conflict". Similarly, Ellis (2016) and Song (2016) define identity as the way teachers position themselves as complex and multifaceted individuals and in the context of language teaching and learning Varghese, Morgan and Johnston (2005) argue that, "In order to understand language teaching and learning we need to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, we need to have a clearer sense of who they are: the professional, cultural, political and individual identities which they claim or which are assigned to them." (p. 22). Therefore, I believe that the topic of identity is crucial to explore in the context of Kuwait where the identities of experienced teachers are seldom researched. Although issues of identity have been regularly discussed in teacher development literature, most research in the fields of both TESOL and identity has been undertaken in the West, some in the East, but very little in the Middle East. In addition, most ELT teacher identity research has been undertaken with preservice teachers, ignoring in-service teachers who make up most of the profession (Donaghue, 2020).

The aim of the study is to also help increase awareness of the importance of professional development in ESL teaching in Kuwait where teachers from my experience, are often overloaded in teaching schedules and daily duties and isolated from colleagues. This process hopes to encourage Kuwaiti English Language teachers to be involved in identity work, which may in turn help them understand their professional needs in order to identify areas of development. Finally, as the profession of TESOL moves away from and continues to demolish the old NEST/NNEST matter, it is important to explore the identities of all TESOL instructors as multifaceted individuals with unique skills and backgrounds (Black, Park, Carpenter, & Willis, 2019). Many of these skills, such as the awareness of cultural differences, though ignored in earlier research, are now found as beneficial in the teaching practice (Ellis, 2016; Menard-Warwick, 2017).

## 1.3 English Language Teaching in Kuwait

### 1.3.1 Education in Kuwait

According to the Kuwaiti Constitution:

- Education is a right for Kuwaitis, guaranteed by the State in accordance with law and within the limits of public policy and morals. Education in its preliminary stages is compulsory and free in accordance with the law.
- The law lays down plans necessary to eliminate illiteracy.
- The State devotes particular care to the physical, moral and mental development of the youth.

(Kuwait Constitution, 1962, Article no. 40)

There are three compulsory stages in the educational system of the State of Kuwait: five years in the primary stage, four years in the intermediate stage, and three in secondary school (Educational Statistical Group, 2011-12; Ministry of Education, 2012-13).

### 2.2.1 Teacher Education in Kuwait

Teaching the English language is crucial in the context of Kuwait as the medium of teaching in most public and private colleges is the English language. There are two main education and training institutions in Kuwait which educate and train teachers to work in schools. Kuwait University and the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (Kuwait Cultural Office, 2013). There are also a number of private post-secondary colleges and universities but not all of them offer teacher education programmes. Because of the shortage in numbers of Kuwaiti teachers in comparison to the growing number of schools and pupils, the majority of English language teachers in Kuwait are non-nationals. The Educational Statistical Group 2015-2016 report from the Ministry of Education illustrates that in the field of ELT, only 37% of English language teachers employed in the public education system are Kuwaiti, whereas this figure drops dramatically to a mere 2% in private institutions (Ministry of Education, 2015). As Vaccino-Salvadore (2020) states, no official data is given for post-secondary institutions and her “experiential and anecdotal evidence seem to indicate that the number of Kuwaiti English language teaching professionals is very low overall” (p.7).

## 1.4 Scope and Limitations

The study was conducted with Kuwaiti female teachers who are currently working as English Language teachers in Kuwait. A prompt was sent via email to three Kuwaiti female English language teachers. Participants were asked to reply with their own textual and digital story in response to the following prompt:

***Write a story about belonging/not belonging to your department alongside a digital attachment of your own choice.***

In response to the prompt, they wrote their textual stories alongside their digital ones. The study employed two collection methods: textual and digital stories. Personal textual narratives written by three teachers as well as digital stories of their choice were collected. Then all stories were anonymized then shared with each participant. At the end of the data collection process, a number of 6 texts were collected alongside three digital images.

Although the findings cannot claim to represent more broadly the identity construction of Kuwaiti English Language teachers, it is hoped that the study can highlight the importance of identity work to a teacher's professional and personal development.

## 1.5 Structure of the Research Dissertation

This dissertation contains five chapters and 6 appendices. This introductory chapter is followed by Chapter 2 which includes a discussion of the relevant literature regarding the research topic. Chapter 3 starts with an introduction and then discusses research design instruments. It provides brief information on the study samples and then concludes with ethical considerations and limitations of research instruments. Chapter 4 presents an analysis and interpretation as well as discussion of the research findings. Chapter 5 is the conclusion chapter with an overview of the main findings as well as contributions of the study. Then, study implications and limitations of the study. Lastly, recommendations for future research.

## 1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

The following table contains definitions of key terms in alphabetical order.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Identity</b>	“ways of being in the world which are ongoing, individual and collective, socially and psychologically situated and socioculturally and sociohistorically constructed” (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015).
<b>Membership Categorization analysis</b>	An analysis which focuses on how people through talk make specific identities relevant by referring themselves and others to certain categorisations. (Gray, & Morton, 2018).
<b>Multimodal Discourse</b>	“A discourse which employs and integrates more than one mode of presentation” (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015).
<b>Narrative Inquiry</b>	“A qualitative research approach that employs a variety of data collection methods to elicit, document, and analyse life experiences as they are recounted by the individuals who live them” (Heigham & Croker, 2009).
<b>Thematic Analysis</b>	“An analysis which looks for themes that emerge entirely from the data” (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015).

*Table 1. Definitions of Key Terms*

## 1.7 Summary

- The aim of the study is to explore the identity construction and negotiation of Kuwaiti English language teachers.
- The contexts of the study are three female Kuwaiti English language teachers teaching in Kuwait.
- The rationale of the study is to give voice to a rarely heard population in an understudied part of the world.
- The study involved textual and digital narratives.
- Researchers in education highlighted the strength of narrative research to investigate teachers’ professional lives (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chick, 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Watson, 2006), and is one way of studying teacher identity

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Language Teacher Identities

Research on LTI has gained great attention in recent years and this is evidenced by recent publications such as special issues devoted to the topic of identity in TESOL Journal (2009), Modern Language Journal (2017) and TESOL Quarterly (2016), and many cited collections (for example, Barkhuizen, 2017; Cheung, Said, & Park, 2015; Clarke, 2008; Kamhi-Stein, 2013; Nagatomo, 2012; Park, 2017; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018). This expanding of research has theorized and examined language teachers' identities, the construction, negotiations and shifting during pre-service teacher-training and in-service professional setting focusing on the interchange of several social identity categories including, race, gender, socioeconomic status, nationality, and religion.

According to Varghere, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson (2005), "the teacher's whole identity... [is] at play in the classroom. This line of thinking, then, sees teacher identity as a crucial component in determining how language teaching is played out" (p.22). Hence, exploring and studying language teacher identities is also beneficial for classroom practice as several studies have shown, such as Morgan's (2004) study, that a teacher's own identity work through personal narrative can be a reference of teaching resources. Both practice and discourse are crucial and contribute to language teachers' identity construction.

It is therefore important to study language teacher identity and explore the ways that professional identities are shaped and reshaped, studying how teachers position themselves, and how others position them. This is essential to understanding how teachers teach, interact with students and their community and their outlook on professional development as an English language teacher.

### 2.2 English Language Teaching in Kuwait

As mentioned above, LTI research is continuously increasing. Yet studies on LTI in various contexts are limited, such as the Middle East and in particular the Arab Gulf countries. Although limited, there is a small pool of research in this area. The identity construction and negotiation of Kuwaiti English language teachers has been recently in a doctoral thesis by Vaccino-Salvadore (2020) who explored the lived experiences of three female Kuwaiti English language teachers working in English Foundation Programs in Kuwait. The study

adopted a social constructionist paradigm and positioning theory with the attempt to understand the ways the participants constructed and negotiated their language teacher identities within their own non-Western, sociocultural and educational contexts. Narratives of teachers were collected through timeline essays, interviews, reflection tasks, and research diaries. The data revealed how the teachers' language learning histories, their reasons behind becoming teachers, their teacher training stories, and their teaching experiences shaped and reshaped their language teacher identities with the focus of gender, native-speakerism and religious discourses. Another related research study in terms of geographical context and research topic is Clarke's (2008) study on pre-service Emirati teachers' identity construction in an undergraduate degree program in the U.A.E. In his study, he analyzes how Emirati female pre-service teachers learn how to teach by monitoring their identity development within their community of practice. Through socio-discursive and socio-cultural approaches to teacher learning in addition to an in-depth linguistic and rhetorical analysis of interviews, he exposes the complex interrelationships between factors that shape the language teacher identities. Factors include, the UAE educational system and nationalism, globalization, gender, language and culture, as all are shaped by issues of power.

Research on LTI is encouraging the necessity to view teachers as more than professionals who need to follow the right methodology to help learners acquire the target language. Rather, teachers are seen as complex individuals whose knowledge, values, beliefs, feelings and attitudes are essential parts of their personal, professional selves whose social, cultural and political contexts shape who and what they are. Yet, these contexts are also shaped by these teachers as well and because very little is known about the experiences of Kuwaiti teachers in Kuwait, the current study is exploratory in nature. Hayes (2009) recommends "mak[ing] a case for further research into the careers of NNS [Non-Native Speakers of] English teachers in order that the full richness and complexity of teaching and learning of English in the widest possible variety of socio-educational contexts can be revealed and compared'. (p. 83) With studies focusing on the Middle East and in particular the Arab Gulf countries being few, I believe it is a requirement to fill this gap and build upon previous research as Hayes (2010) recommends 'to contribute to an increased understanding of teachers' lives within their specific social contexts in order that the knowledge base of TESOL in its multiple professional realizations might be expanded'. (p.58) Simply put, LTI research helps shed the light on fundamental aspects of language teaching and learning as they relate to various contexts.



## 2.3 Defining Identity

Although there is no one stable definition of identity, there is a current agreement that identity has shifted from being fixed and a “stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change” (Hall, 2000, p.17) to an understanding of identity to being dynamic, multiple and complex (Varghese et al., 2005).

Vaccino-Salvadore presents Table 2 which includes definitions of identity referring to teacher professional identity as well as identity in general contexts that inform significant themes such as identity seen as individual, social and relational, dynamic and unstable, constructed and negotiated, performed and transformative (2020).

Identity is / Identities are:	Author/s(Year): Page #
...transformational and transformative...is not context-free...and [it is] constructed, maintained and negotiated through language and discourse.	Varghese et al. (2005): 23
...at once a complex matter of the social and the individual, of discourse and practice, of reification and participation, of similarity and difference, of agency and structure, of fixity and transgression, of the singular and the multiple, and of the synoptic and the dynamic	Clarke (2009): 189
...how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future.	Norton (2013): 45
...viewed as socially constituted, a reflexive and dynamic product of the social, historical and political contexts of an individual's lived experiences.	J. K. Hall (2013): 31
...in part socially constructed, the process involved in becoming and being a teacher are also deeply personal.	Trent (2015): 46

Table 2. Defining Identity

Simply put, language teacher identities are far from being fixed, but dynamic, complex and multiple. Different contexts such as encounters with students and parents, colleagues and department meetings all help shape a language teachers' identity and will continue to do so.

## 2.4 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a methodology often used by researchers interested in studying teacher identity. Defining narrative is known to be a difficult task as Riessman and Speedy (2007) note “We caution readers not to expect a simple, clear definition of narrative here that can cover all applications” (p. 428). They further explain, “the term has come to mean anything and everything” (p. 428). It is also believed that a fixed definition of the term ‘narrative’ might remain nearly impossible as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, “We wish to make clear that we are *not* setting out to define narrative” (p. 49), While Clandinin and Murphy

(2007) affirm “we cannot police the boundaries of narrative inquiry” (p. 636), despite narrative being an on-going diverse research approach, I believe it is important for this study to present key definitions in attempt to establish research boundaries.

One way to study how individuals experience the world around them is through the study of narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 2008). As a “subtype” of qualitative research (Chase, 2011, p. 421) narrative inquiry allows us to analyse the lived experiences storied by those who experience them in order to gain insight on how they make sense of the world. In general terms, narrative inquiry involves research that uses narratives as data to study, analyse and attempt to understand the participants’ stories (Benson, 2014). In this dissertation, narrative inquiry is used as through this methodological approach I am able to “shed light on the identities of individuals and how they see themselves” (Creswell, 2013, p. 71) and because narratives can be ‘temporal, emotive, reflective, strategic, and instructive’ (Barkhuizen et al., 2014p. 38). They are thus an appropriate data source to closely study the lived experiences of the female English language teachers in this study. Teachers lead storied lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), and it is through these stories that they realise the meaning of their experiences. Thus, by applying narrative research in the fields of applied linguistics and specifically second language acquisition, many researches have examined teachers’ personal stories, their past and present, their values and beliefs, their traditions and customs, their inner emotions and attitudes and viewpoints as they link to both their personal and professional lives.

## 2.5 Previous Research

### 2.5.1 Past Experiences which Shape Identity

Many researchers have looked at how past experiences shape teachers’ identities. As Martel & Wang (2015) note critical incidents are beneficial as they help reveal to what extent the influence of others can have on LTI construction. A number of researchers have analysed personal narratives and biographies to explore the identity construction and negotiation of pre-service or in-service teachers in various contexts. Arvaja (2016) explored teacher identity work in the context of a one-year programme, Pedagogical Studies for Adult Educators. She used personal narratives and biographies to investigate the identity construction of Anna, a university teacher, through the process of positioning. Data consisted of weekly learning diaries written by Anna during one academic year and by reflecting on her past self through her personal biography, she was able to distance her current self-positioning from her

“earlier, less genuine” one and develop a more genuine and relaxed personal identity in social interactions that suited her present professional identity (Arvaja, 2016, p. 397), as Nagatomo (2012) explains, the “process of identity formation involves constant movement between the personal and the professional”.

In her study, Kayi-Aydar (2018) focused on the lived stories of three pre-service Latina teachers in the United States. She investigated how they positioned themselves as learners of English and teachers of Spanish in their oral narratives, and how their past experience as minority students shaped their present professional identity negotiations as language teachers. Positioning analysis of their narrative accounts showed that these female teachers felt different or isolated during their education because of their ethnicity, language, and class. Participants negotiated memberships in different communities and Kayi-Aydar (2018) emphasized the importance of exploring and understanding the conflicts and shifts in identity construction that the teachers experience and their ways of overcoming such struggles might provide useful insights for several teachers and teacher educators in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts.

Another example of past experiences and their influence on shaping identities is via a critical incident analysis presented in Yi’s (2019) study. One participant described her professional identity as mainly shaped by three critical incidents from her past experiences. First, choosing English as a major despite disliking it. Second, going to Tibet as a translator post-graduation. Third, becoming a teacher in her 40s after quitting her job as a translator. In Yi’s (2009) study, it was revealed that prior experience was a determining factor in a language teacher’s identity.

### 2.5.2 Present Context which Shape Identity

Alongside past experiences, context also influences and shapes identities. The influence that place or location has on teacher identity construction has been explored in a number of studies (Duff & Uchida, 1997, Clarke, Ramanathan & Morgan, 2007, Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, Donaghue, 2020). Research has shown that a teacher’s work environment can directly influence teacher’s identity shift or construction. Both Tsui (2007) and Liu and Xu (2011) present teachers who needed to shift identities to adapt to forced changes on their teaching practice. Tsui (2007) explored the institutional and personal influences on a teacher’s identity in an English department in China. To become an active participant in his community and illustrate his competency, the teacher in Tsui’s study had to adapt the communicative

methodologies encouraged by his institution. Similarly, Liu and Xu (2011) examined how a Chinese EFL teacher had to shift her identity to orient herself with new liberal discourses. As the teacher negotiated her identity during events at the institution, she frequently faced and experienced the difference between what she was seen as and how she identified herself. While teachers in both studies by Tsui (2007) and Liu and Xu (2011) face change, those in Trent's (2014) aim to implement change themselves. The novice English language teachers' in Trent's (2014) study aimed to bring innovation to their schools in Hong Kong. While previous studies focused on early career teachers, Donaghue (2020) focused on experienced teachers and examined their identity in the context of work-based talk where one particular language teacher identity (that of an expert and enthusiastic technology user) was co-constructed, affirmed, and highlighted by those teachers and their supervisors during their post observation feedback. This identity reflected context as technology was being pushed at both an institutional and government level.

A contextual sense of belonging or not belonging can greatly influence teacher identity. For example, in Vaccino-Salvadore's (2020) study, she states that although the participants' professional title was English Instructor, they still had the sense of not belonging to their academic community, as they, "saw themselves being treated as second-class citizens by top administration (because they are not PhD holders, for instance). This negative feeling indubitably influenced their sense of professional identity" (p. 38).

While these studies present further insights on the relationship between identity and context, they also highlight two main gaps in the literature which this study aims to contribute to filling. Firstly, the exploration of English language teacher identity in the context of Kuwait where the identities of teachers are seldom researched. Secondly, the focus on the local non-native English Language teachers in their own local contexts. By examining Kuwaiti English language teachers teaching in Kuwait, this article aims to contribute to filling this gap.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to describe the methodological rationale of the study and its design. It briefly discusses the research question and aims of the study. Then it sheds light on the research participants and design, data analysis and collection stages. Lastly, Ethical considerations and limitations of the research instruments.

### 3.2 Research Approach

The present study was influenced by a social constructionist worldview which aligns with my view of identity as dynamic, fluid and socially constructed. The epistemological and ontological assumption underlying my research is that reality and knowledge are socially constructed:

Reality is not ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered in an unproblematic way but is socially constructed by the everyday practices of speaking, interacting and writing. (Roberts, 2006, p. 9)

This constructivist view suggests a qualitative approach: 'The basic aim of qualitative research is to get to the bottom of what is going on in all aspects of social behaviour' (Holliday, 2015, p. 50). Qualitative research does not try to prove something and does not focus on broad tendencies. Rather it tries to tell us more about something or help us understand something and focuses on instances of behaviour.

According to Burr (2003) knowledge in this paradigm is “historically and culturally specific; knowledge is socially constructed; knowledge goes hand-in-hand with social action; and finally, knowledge of the conventional kind, that is, the-taken-for-granted knowledge based on an unbiased understanding of the world, is best seen from a critical standpoint.” (Vaccino-Salvadore, 2020, p. 52) I also believe that knowledge is not created by observing the world around in an objective manner. Thus, knowledge or meaning is “not *discovered* but constructed. Meaning does not inhere in the object, merely waiting for someone to come upon it... Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, pp.42-43). Given this constructive stance, my research aligns more easily with a qualitative approach.

### 3.2.1 Qualitative Research

In accordance with a social constructionist paradigm, qualitative research is based on “the social construction of reality, where the focus is on the interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the social world” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 52). As the definition of qualitative research differs from a field to another it is not easy to find a specific definition for the term. Yet, books on qualitative research include a general definition, as Bloomberg and Volpe (2016, p. 41) explain:

Qualitative research is... concerned with how the complexities of the social and cultural world are experienced, interpreted and understood, in a particular context, and at a particular point in time. The intent of qualitative research is to examine a social situation or interaction by allowing the researcher to enter the world of others and attempt to achieve a *holistic* understanding.

Thus, a qualitative approach aligns with my aim of exploring how three Kuwaiti female English language teachers experience, interpret and understand themselves and their context at this particular time to gain more understanding of their identity and belonging in their social and cultural world.

### 3.2.2 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry as a trend of research in qualitative approach has been adapted by several disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and education. In education, narrative research has been much used to investigate teachers’ professional lives (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chick, 2014; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Watson, 2006), and is one way of studying teacher identity. Farrell (2011) proposed that “teachers can articulate their roles through their biographies, stories, and diaries and share with other teachers as they begin to construct and reconstruct their teaching worlds” (p. 60). Barkhuizen et al. (2014) classified previous narrative inquiry studies in the field of language pedagogy to five main categories, i.e. language memoirs, studies of language memoirs, autobiographical case studies, biographical case studies, and studies of multiple narratives. The role of the researcher is what differentiated these five categories from each other, also the size of the participant group, and both the data collection and data analysis instruments. In studies of multiple narratives, “the number of participants can vary from two to several hundred ...and the narratives are usually written and the researchers play no role in their construction, other than giving the writers instructions on what they should write about” (Barkhuizen et al., 2014, p. 9). Whereas the

number of participants in the current study was more than two (four participants) and digital as well as textual narratives of participants were used as data in order to understand the identity construction and negotiation of Kuwaiti English language teachers. Research on lived stories give access to the inner world of language teachers and their identity construction and negotiation through their personal experiences (Park, 2013). As a research methodology, narrative inquiry allows researchers to study “experience understood narratively” and “shapes new theoretical understandings of people’s experiences” (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 436). As a result, narrative inquiry is a fitting methodological approach to help me gain deeper insight of my participants’ lived stories with focus on the process of teacher identity construction.

### 3.3 Research Participants

Because the current research aimed to explore and gain insight into the complex process of identity development of Kuwaiti English language teachers, a purposeful sampling approach was followed (Merriam, 2009). I used the selection criteria below to choose my study participants. All study participants had to be:

-Known to me.

-Kuwaiti.

-English language teachers in Kuwait.

In order to share their personal information whether through their written narratives or digital stories it was of great importance that they feel themselves in a safe environment to do so. As Hayes (2013) states, asking teachers with whom he had previous contact with was “beneficial” due to the “mutual trust”. Yet, sharing a relationship with my participants might have drawbacks as well. One was the fact that I personally knew the participants and that may have pressured them to take part in my study. To make sure I avoided that, a short message was sent via WhatsApp to ask if they were interested in being part of the study, rather than asking face to face which would be harder to refuse. That helped put the participants at ease to refuse if they wanted to, which is exactly what happened as I messaged four participants and only three were able to participate.

This set of criteria does not specify the gender of the teachers but all of the potential participants who met the above criteria were women due to the fact that there is a high percentage of women in the teaching profession in Kuwait. Throughout my teaching career, I

have personally met a limited number of Kuwaiti male English language teachers but worked with none. Thus, the three female participants were a convenient sample to my study as the participants and I are in regular contact both professionally and personally. Participants were not selected on the basis of similarity; the teachers are from different educational backgrounds, various qualifications and are practicing teaching in different contexts. I have personally known all the participants during my teaching career in Kuwait and was able to easily reach them and ask if they were interested in taking part in my research project via WhatsApp. All three participants were former colleagues of mine and it was easy to contact them as I had their personal number and email. They all felt comfortable asking me questions regarding the study and their participation and that is why it was important for the participants and I to have known each other. The three Kuwaiti English language teachers were available, easy to contact and most importantly willing to share and include their personal stories in this study.

The small sample size can be justified by the qualitative nature of the data collection methods needed to answer the research question. Yet the reason behind limiting the number of participants to three is because I believe a small group allowed me to gain a deeper insight of my participants' experiences. The intent of the study was to find out about the identity construction of these teachers; thus, the smaller sample allowed a richer, in depth study.

Table 3 presents a brief overview of the research participants.

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years Teaching</b>
<b>A</b>	30	Eight
<b>B</b>	28	Six
<b>C</b>	33	Four

*Table 3. Research Participant Overview*

### 3.4 Research Design

#### 3.4.1 Data Sources and Collection Methods

To explore the identity construction of the three Kuwaiti English language teachers, a research question was suggested using two main data collection methods to gain the information needed for the analysis. Table 4 below illustrates the research question and data collection methods followed.



Research Question	Data Collection Methods
1. Which identities do Kuwaiti English language teachers construct through multimodal narratives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two textual narratives.</li> <li>- One digital narrative.</li> </ul>

Table 4. Research Question and Data Collection Methods

Both data sources provided the participants with a safe setting, unlike a face to face context where they might be uncomfortable. In other words, participants may not have wanted to share such stories and details in a different setting, for example, a face-to-face interview. Also, all three participants were anonymized, they knew that the other participants were also Kuwaiti English language teachers in Kuwait, yet no further details or descriptions were given to others. Therefore, the anonymized data and participants created a safe and trusting atmosphere for each participant and allowed for more confidentiality.

*Data source 1: First Textual Narrative with Digital Attachment.*

I decided to start my data collection process via email by requesting my participants to provide me with their first textual and digital narrative in reply to the prompt: *Write a story about belonging/not belonging to your department alongside a digital attachment of your own choice.*

I believe that the influence of the working place on teacher identity construction is important (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Clarke, Ramanathan, & Morgan, 2007; Duff & Uchida, 1997). Contexts such as a teacher’s environment can directly influence teacher identity development (Tsui, 2007; Liu & Xu, 2011; Trent, 2014; Donaghue, 2020). For example, teachers being valued or not in their department has a great effect on teacher identity (Van Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, & Beishuizen. 2017). Participants replied to the prompt with their own textual and digital narratives. At the end of this stage, a number of three texts and three digital attachments were collected. Each participant’s narrative was anonymized then shared with the other participants. To clarify, participant A received the textual and digital narratives of B and C, likewise B, received the narratives of both A and C, and C received the narratives of A and B.

*Data source 2: Second Textual Narrative.*

Participants had the option to reply to any textual and digital narrative of their choice. The process can be seen as an ongoing virtual conversation between participants A, B and C, through the act of storying. Table 5 below presents the participants’ second textual narratives in response to the first textual and digital stories.

Participant	Responded to
A	B
B	C
C	B

*Table 5. Participant’s Response*

After this stage, each participant submitted two textual narratives (their initial narrative and a response to another participant’s narrative) as well as a digital one. At the end of the data collection process, six textual narratives were collected with three digital stories.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis is a detailed process of how the collected data is stored, managed, transcribed, coded and interpreted based on the researcher’s approach to the study. As my study explored the identity construction of three Kuwaiti English language teachers, my interpretations included making sense of the participants’ textual and digital narratives by using two methods of analysis: A thematic analysis and a membership categorization analysis.

#### 3.5.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is seen as a “foundational method for qualitative analysis” because of its adaptability, flexibility and practicality as a research tool (Braun & Clarke,2006, p. 78). As Braun & Clarke (2006) state, a thematic analysis “can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within a society” (p. 81).

I started the analyzing process by attaching the first and second narrative of each participant chronologically together alongside their digital stories and highlighting who each participant

chose to reply to in order to look for links between the participants and themes amongst the narratives. I read all textual narratives and looked closely at their digital ones too. Simultaneously, I added my thoughts and comments to each to keep track of my own insight. Once I finished noting all my thoughts, I read and reread them all before proceeding to code the narratives. As Saldaña (2014) argues “by reading and rereading the corpus, you gain intimate familiarity with its contents and begin to notice significant details as well as make new insights about their meanings” (p. 584) and that is why it was very important for me to read each narrative multiple times as well as to record my insights. Next, I chose the lengthiest narrative from the participants’ first textual story because it presented the most codes which I could then adapt for the other participants’ first narratives. While studying the narratives I started noticing patterns appearing from the data. I then started to digitally code the data as presented in the image below.



Figure 1. Digitally Coded Data

After identifying the initial codes, I applied the same codes to the other narratives. I then read all the first textual narratives once again to make sure I had exhausted all codes. After that I grouped similar codes together and created categories (for example, not belonging, relationships, age) in alignment with my research focus. A similar process was applied to the digital narratives. My aim was “to observe and discern patterns within data and to construct meanings” (Saldaña, 2014, p. 584). Then the coding approach was checked for inter-coder reliability by my project supervisor coding the anonymized textual and digital narratives (see Appendix 6). Out of all 9 codes derived by my supervisor, only two were either coded differently or not included in my coding attempt. My coding attempt was then re-evaluated for possible changes. Eventually, my coding approach was considered suitable and kept the same. (Appendix 5 shows my coded transcript and Appendix 6 shows my supervisors’ coding attempt of the same transcript, which is Participant A First Textual Narrative.)

Table 6 below presents resulted codes of both textual and digital narrative analysis and their explanations.

Code	Meaning
1. Interpersonal Relations	Relationships with: students or colleagues.
2. Not belonging	The sense of not belonging.
3. Belonging	The sense of belonging.
4. Age	The issue of ageism.
5. Seen by others	Participants' belief of how others view them.
6. Support	The support received by others.
7. Teaching practice and beliefs	The participants teaching practice and beliefs.
8. Professionalism	Participants' perception of professionalism.
9. Nationality	Nationalism highlighted.
10. Voice	Developing a voice.

Table 6. Textual and Digital Data Codes

To clarify, the highlighted excerpt from Participant C refers to her interpersonal relations.

It's my second year in this school and I feel comfortable to be in a department that is led by a professional HOD; Ms. [redacted]. Even though I've been through unpleasant situations with my colleagues; which I'm sure is a normal thing; I can still wrap up the misunderstandings peacefully and maintain a good relationship with all of the staff. I've always wanted to be a teacher, and I have always tried my best since day one, luckily all my efforts were highly appreciated by my boss and I started to have a significant reputation among all other departments not to mention the administration.

Figure 2. Participant C-First textual Narrative

### 3.5.2 Membership Categorization Analysis

The next stage followed the framework of Membership Categorization Analysis, which originates in the work of Saks (1974) and is closely discussed by Hester and Eglin (1997) and by Stokoe (2012). MCA typically involves the use of media and textual data (Benwell & Stokoe 2006) which were the main sources of data in this study. MCA focuses on how people through talk, in the case of this study text and media, make specific identities relevant by referring themselves and/or others to certain categorisations (Gray, & Morton, 2018). A benefit of MCA as Stokoe (2009) points out is that it is a 'topic-based' research that can be done without directly asking participants anything about or related to the term 'identity'. This approach was adapted to help analyse how Kuwaiti female English language teachers constructed their identities by looking closely at which as well as how categories were made relevant by the teachers following the main three dimensions of the MCA framework:

membership categories, membership categorization devices and category predicates (Hester & Eglin 1997).

As MCA is “concerned with the organization of common-sense knowledge in terms of the categories members employ in accomplishing their activities in and through talk” (Hester, and Francis, 1997) and in the case of this study through textual and digital narratives. For this study’s MCA, I focused on participants’ explicit uses of categories across their narratives following the five guiding principles offered by Stokoe (2012).

1. The collection of data, both textual and digital narratives.
2. Build collections of explicit mentions of categories (e.g. teacher, Kuwaiti); membership categorization devices (e.g. ‘professionalism’, ‘age’, etc.); and category-resonant descriptions (e.g. the descriptions ‘I work to be a professional image’ and ‘I’m also the only Kuwaiti teacher’).
3. Locate the position of each category within the textual narratives.
4. Analyse the text in which the category appears.
5. Look for evidence that, and of how, participants orient to the category, device or resonant description.

The analysis of the textual narratives resulted in how participants claimed membership of different categories through their narratives in their own context. Participants occupied categories that can be collected together under the device “professional teacher” as in their sense of being a professional. Within the narratives, membership categorization devices were activated, made relevant by the participants, and thereby its category and the knowledge that can come with them. To clarify, Participant A in the excerpt below claimed her membership of being a “professional teacher” through the category of “Teacher Commitment to Students”:

*I focused diligently on the relationship between the students and myself. Teaching is what mattered the most to me. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

She occupied this category by presenting what mattered to her as a professional teacher and how she prioritized a teacher-student relationship. MCA expanded and enriched thematic analysis by exploring the categories the teachers used when sharing their stories. Together, both analysis stages enabled a clear systematic interpretation and analysis of the data in order to answer the proposed research question.

### 3.6 Digital Stories

With the advances in technology, images and multimodality have become significant in social sciences in recent years. Digital attachments helped tell the stories that are important to this study because they showed personal emotions, relationships with others and a sense of sarcasm which is interestingly a component of daily social interaction and conversation. Such images can be labelled as digital stories according to Rossiter and Garcia (2010) whose definition of digital stories include the use of digital images, audio, or even animation. Giving teachers the option to choose their digital story was employed in the analysis of the teachers' lived experiences and in the construction of their identity. All three participants were encouraged to freely choose their own digital story type and attach whatever they wish alongside their textual one. However, I would like to stress that the focus of this study was not on the technical aspects, it was rather on how they could be employed in the analysis of the teachers' lived stories and in the construction of their identities. Table 7 below presents each participants' choice of digital attachment.


Participant	Digital Story	Content
A	Picture	
B	Meme	
C	Song	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwU3vugtWYE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwU3vugtWYE</a>

Table 7. Participant Digital Attachment

As previously described in this section, the thematic analysis process was applied to both textual and digital narratives. For example, below is the coding approach attempted on Participant's C digital narrative.

### 3.2 Participant C's Digital Narrative



Figure 3. Participant C-Digital Narrative

## 3.7 Data Collection Stages

As previously mentioned, I have known and worked with all participants, thus I chose to contact four participants asking if they were willing to participate in my study and explain the purpose of the research and what it would involve. Eventually only three out of four teachers were able to participate. After receiving my Ethical Approval Letter (Appendix A) on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, I sent all three participants an invitation email including the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) and the Participant Consent Form (Appendix C) and they all responded positively with their signed consent forms. Next, via WhatsApp messenger, I sent the participants the request to start writing their first textual narratives. Within 1-2 weeks all three participants replied with their textual and digital narratives. Next, all the data was anonymized and shared with the other participants. After 1-2 weeks, I received the participants' second textual narrative and by early July, all participant narratives were collected for the starting of the data analysis process.

## 3.8 Ethical Considerations

As a clear understanding of ethical conduct must underpin all research, the following list of measurements were taken to ensure the protection and rights of the participants in this study.

### 1. The Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Participants were sent The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) and Consent Form (Appendix C) and given the time to read them carefully. During that time, I was available to

answer all questions and address any concerns. I also stressed that their participation was voluntary and what their agreement to participate would entail in order to give their consent willingly and that they may withdraw from the study at any time. The Participant Information Sheet also states that the findings will be made available upon their request.

## 2. Participant Anonymity

It is crucial to highlight anonymity to the participants as it allows and assures them the freedom of expressing themselves. Anonymity also protects the researcher from any later questioning (Bell 2014; Dornyei 2007). The participant information sheet and consent form described the arrangements for ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality. All participants were given pseudonyms (A, B, C). The institutions where participants worked at were not named. No details about the participants were given apart from the fact that they are all Kuwaiti English language teachers. During the study, some textual and digital narratives submitted by the participants were not anonymised, including a personal image and names of colleagues. Therefore, I needed to anonymise names and crop digital images to ensure anonymity. The Participant Information Sheet also made the participants aware of how their narrative accounts were shared with the other participants. All data was stored in my password protected personal computer.

## 3.9 Limitations of Research Instruments

Although participants were interested in the study, writing and attaching their digital narratives was challenging to some. Once participants started to write their narrative, I was immediately contacted with concerns. Some believed that the prompt was too general, they wanted more specification, for instance, whether they should mention a story about a colleague or a student. Others preferred additional guidelines of how to write their narratives, yet the reason behind not giving them a more specific brief was simply not to restrict them. Even though the prompt is considered a clear guide or setting of what to tell a story about, '*belonging/not belonging to your department*', I believe the participants were unclear of how to write their textual narratives because it was their first time attempting to write a story for others to read, knowing that the ones reading theirs are teachers too. Storying is an activity that nearly everyone experiences, whether with a family member, friend or colleague, but sharing textual and digital stories is a different and an unfamiliar experience to the participants.



### 3.10 Summary

This study followed a qualitative research approach using textual and digital narratives in order to analyze and interpret data aiming to answer the research question. The results as well as the discussion of the analysis will be presented in the following chapter, in an attempt to discuss the construction and negotiation of the Kuwaiti English language teachers' identities through both their textual and digital narratives.

## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings as well as the discussion derived from the qualitative content analysis of the participants' textual and digital narratives. The findings are presented and discussed in order to address and interpret the research question motivating this study.

1. Which identities do Kuwaiti English language teachers construct through multimodal narratives?

The aim of combining the findings and discussion in this chapter is to answer the RQ through my interpretations of the findings of this study as well as compare some of these findings to the literature discussed in Chapter 2, discussing how the current study may support, refute or add to previous research.

### 4.1 Introduction

This section presents an overview of the themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of the three participants' narratives through the lens of thematic and membership categorization analysis with a detailed discussion.

Themes allow me to explore the idea of not belonging as personal and social factors like age and relationships were interwoven in the formation of the participants' personal and professional identity. Additionally, membership categorizations present a glimpse of how participants align or distance themselves from different categories as English language teachers under the device "professional teacher".

### 4.2 Thematic Analysis and Discussion

The analysis in this section is organised thematically. From all emerging themes, the dominant ones addressed by the participants will be discussed, in order to address what was highlighted by the participants themselves. I chose narrative excerpts and digital examples which I found to provide a varied and interesting look into each theme, summarizing what the majority of participants had addressed. Table 8 below illustrates the dominant themes in the participants' narratives.

Participant	Themes	
	<i>First Textual &amp; Digital Narrative</i>	<i>Second Textual Narrative</i>
<b>A</b>	Not belonging Ageism Relationships	Ageism Seen by others
<b>B</b>	Not belonging Ageism Nationalism	Relationships Professional Image
<b>C</b>	Relationships	Not belonging Ageism Nationalism

Table 8. Themes in Participant Narratives

### Theme 1: Language Teacher Identities shaped by Belonging/Not belonging

All three participants shared their stories regarding the prompt presented to them:

*Write a story about belonging/not belonging to your department alongside a digital attachment of your own choice.*

When answering the prompt, the narratives mostly described a sense of not belonging rather than belonging. Interestingly, Participant C was the only one whose first textual narrative somehow signals a sense of belonging:

*It's my second year in this school and I feel comfortable to be in a department that is led by a professional HOD (Participant C, Narrative 1)*

At first, she mentions that it is her second year and that it has taken her a year to feel a sense of belonging as in her response to B's story further explains and makes clear. Her sense of belonging comes from having a professional head of department, highlighting the influence that others have on the sense of belonging and in shaping her identity and claiming her space and being "comfortable" as an English language teacher in the department. Yet in her second narrative, in response to Participant B's story, the theme of not belonging emerges through sharing certain identity categories with Participant B: they are both Kuwaiti and the youngest local teachers in a department with mostly foreign colleagues:

*Oh I can totally feel you. Besides, we're in the same boat here, I'm also the only Kuwaiti teacher in my department, not to mention a decade younger than the youngest one of them. (Participant C, Narrative 2)*

At the beginning of her textual narrative, Participant B attributes her sense of not belonging to the same factors of being young and Kuwaiti:

*In the English department I work for (at an American system institution), I am the youngest person among my peers and the newest hire although I've been working in this position for two years now, and had previously been a TA for the department for longer. A lot of my colleagues are not from Kuwait and are a generation older than I am, and, although they treat me as an equal, I don't feel a sense of belonging all the time. I think I still feel like the "inferior" TA at times. (Participant B, Narrative 1)*

However, although her colleagues treat her as an "equal" she sees herself as an "inferior". She ascribes the TA identity to herself despite the respect of her colleagues. Participant B positioned herself by distancing herself from other teachers based on her sense of not belonging. Unlike the teachers in Sosa and Gomez study (2012) who positioned themselves as efficient by distancing themselves from other colleagues, participant's B position of inferiority stems from how she viewed herself as lower in status. As a result, the feeling of not belonging increases as well as the need to distance herself from her colleagues. This act of distancing is also clear in her reply to C.

*From then on, I made a conscious decision to not become friends with anyone at work and keep all my relationships at the workplace professional. I don't chat with anyone in my free time—I get work done and leave. (Participant B, narrative 2)*

Her reactions and how she positions herself is closely discussed in Theme 3: Language Teacher Identities influenced by Relationships. Alongside her textual narrative, her digital one was a meme that illustrated her struggle in a humorous nature.

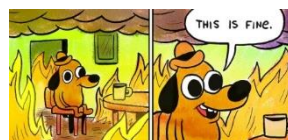


Figure 4. Participant B Digital Narrative

The image presents a character surrounded with a big fire and at the same time having a cup of coffee/tea with the quote “this is fine”. Usually, a cup of coffee/tea connotes a good time or a break but here it is in an unusual setting, in the middle of a fire. That scene/meme might present B’s act of surviving in her department. Through her digital story she seems to portray herself as a risktaker and someone who is not afraid of obstacles or confrontations when the need arises. Referring to a time she believed it was important to interject during a department meeting when a colleague suggested that Kuwaiti students were not “worldly”, B writes:

*I interjected, which, as I said, I don’t often do, and said, “Kuwaitis are not that ignorant. They do have a sense of how people live in this world.” She immediately realized that I was a Kuwaiti (perhaps just realizing that I was there at all!) just like the students, and it seemed like it was a slip of the tongue, and she had forgotten who her colleagues were. I felt like I got to see how some (of course, not all) viewed me, being a young Kuwaiti woman. It felt right to impose/assert who I was in that moment and put someone’s prejudices in check. (Participant B, Narrative 1)*

Participant B not only developed a voice but also prioritizes her identity as a young Kuwaiti teacher. In that incident where she places herself as the Kuwaiti teacher, she seems to distance herself from her colleagues again but this time as the only Kuwaiti and not the “inferior TA”. In her Kuwaiti teacher identity, she also challenged a general perception about Kuwaiti teachers too. Unfortunately, as there is a general perception in Kuwait that teachers do not enjoy a dignified position in the society and according to Alobaid (2006), who surveyed over 1000 participants of in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, high school students and the general public in Kuwait “Kuwaitis nowadays have two main images of teachers: a Kuwaiti teacher with poor ability to teach but well paid, and a knowledgeable non-national who does not earn enough, and has no power, no authority and no appreciation from the government, the parents, and thus the students.” (p. 243). In other words, the overall perception of Kuwaiti teachers is that although they are offered high salaries, have long holidays, and have a sense of job security, they are viewed as unqualified to teach. Because the Kuwaiti government ensures all Kuwaiti citizens employment, one way to encourage graduating students into the teaching profession is to lower entry level requirements of the teacher training institutions in the country. Consequently, the qualification Kuwaiti teachers earn is seen as achieved without great or any effort, thus making others view them as unqualified “to a point where teachers feel themselves as devalued as professionals” (Alobaid, 2006, p. 237). Therefore, in her defense of the students and her image, her identity as the competent Kuwaiti teacher

emerged and resisted the common ideologies of unworldly Kuwaiti students and unqualified Kuwaiti teachers in what is seen as an intrusive move unlike her previous sense of “inferior”.

In reply, participant C relates to her and seems to attribute her own sense of not belonging to similar reasons (youth, Kuwaiti) yet C adds that others view her as a “threat”:

*Oh I can totally feel you. Besides, we're in the same boat here, I'm also the only Kuwaiti teacher in my department, not to mention a decade younger than the youngest one of them. And sometime I feel that they see me as a kind of threat to them, because usually the local teachers get to have the priority in everything. I don't think it will surprise you to say that some of them pay great efforts in making me seem unreliable, unprofessional and unjust to the students. (Participant C, Narrative 2)*

Both Participants B and C distance themselves from other teachers identifying themselves as local teachers that do not feel the sense of belonging to their departments, as the majority of teachers in their departments are foreign teachers and again referring to themselves as being othered and different. In Kuwait, the majority of English language teachers are non-nationals as the country's supply of teachers at all levels of education comes from abroad. The Educational Statistical Group 2015-2016 report from the Ministry of Education in Kuwait presents that in the field of ELT, that 37% of English language teachers employed in the K-12 state education system as well as only 2% in the private K-12 institutions are Kuwaiti (Ministry of Education, 2015). Together Participants B and C, claim their identity as the Kuwaiti English language teachers in their department. However, Participant C views herself differently, “prioritized” and a “threat” to other non-local teachers. Firstly, to highlight why Participant B feels “prioritized” it is important to mention Kuwait's policy, *Kuwaitization*. It is the act of nationalizing the local workforce in both private and public sectors, as in prioritizing Kuwaiti nationals. Thus, as the only local teacher in her department, she feels prioritized. Secondly, the March 2018 news article from the Arab Times Online illustrates the Kuwaiti government plan of increasing the number of Kuwaiti nationals in the workforce. For instance, the Ministry of Education in Kuwait revealed that 1,500 foreigner teachers' contracts would be terminated, and that Kuwaiti nationals would then replace the vacant positions (AlSeyassah, 2018). Consequently, as a Kuwaiti teacher, Participant C might be seen as a threat by her foreign colleagues. Yet, experiential evidence supported by The Educational Statistical Group (Ministry of Education, 2015), as a Kuwaiti national myself who studied in both public and private schools, worked as an English language TA in a

private university and as an English language teacher in a public school, the majority of the English language teachers/instructors if not all, were not Kuwaiti but foreigners.

While Participant's A first narrative begins with her sense of not belonging, in the shift of events in her story she eventually marks her place in the department. As her first week at her new department was not easy that she "was immediately taken back" and believed that the reason behind that reaction was her students' and colleagues' different background/culture that she was not previously exposed to. She admits her struggle and even though some colleagues were "thoughtful" she still "second doubt[ed] their intentions" as she saw the majority unwelcoming and the more, she tried to be part of the department, the more it "backfired". Near the end of her first year, Participant A finds herself surrounded by complaints but surprisingly some colleagues were supporting her by being on her side as they believed that those complaints were being filled against her for no "valid" reason. Fortunately, that unexpected turn in events changed her relationship with colleagues, students and even her head of department as she saw that it "flourished".

She found empowerment in her emerging identity as an English language teacher and earned her place in the department through overcoming the negative experiences in the department that lead to her sense of not belonging at first. She might have eventually discovered that such obstacles were what gave her a better understanding of the different reasons for others to dislike her, but what matters to her is how she was able to find her space. She concludes her textual narrative, by realizing that all the negative experiences might have taught her to develop the most important qualities for her identity teacher: determination.

*The support I received started to outweigh the negative comments until they started to gradually dissipate. While I was not welcomed at the beginning of my new job, I felt like I earned both the respect of my students and colleagues the more I weathered through the problems that I faced. Slowly, with time, I realized that I may be disliked for reasons I may not know or fathom, but I definitely felt like I belonged and proved to be indispensable to the department. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

She also seems to settle with the fact that she is disliked as long as she is now "indispensable" prioritizing her teacher identity over her relationships with others as a colleague. In addition, her digital narrative displays how she proudly presents her identity as the English language teacher at her workplace.



Figure 5. Participant A Digital Narrative

In her image, she is surrounded by her smiling students behind an ‘I ‘heart’ English’ sign. She seems to highlight two main things, her profession and position. Firstly, her digital story clearly presents her valued profession as an English language teacher, it again reassures her teacher identity being valued over forming relationships with colleagues. Secondly, she claimed her place as the English language teacher in both her department through her textual narrative, and in her classroom through her digital one. Similarly, to the teachers in Kayi-Aydar's (2015) study, wherein they distanced “themselves from certain kinds of behavior, ideas, values, and activities their mentor teachers valued”, and thus “were able to position themselves in ways that empower them” (Kayi-Aydar, 2019, p. 135). Participant A might have experienced the sense of not belonging earlier at her workplace, but she seems to claim her language teacher identity as a student-centred teacher in her digital narrative in opposition to those colleagues who form relationships/friendships with each other. She also realized that she could be positioned/viewed as different by others and still earn and value her professional identity as an English language teacher in the institute and amongst her students.

## Theme 2: Language Teacher Identities and Ageism

In this study, the definition of ageism is taken from Greenberg et al. (2002) as the “negative attitudes or behaviors toward an individual solely based on that person’s age” (p. 27). As previously mentioned, age was a dominant theme in the participants’ stories. All three participants mentioned how they believe age was a factor of how others treated or viewed them which also contributed in increasing the sense of not belonging. Participant A was seen by others as the new younger teacher:

*A similar encounter happened to me in regards to being the youngest teacher in the department. When I first started working in my department, I could sense that I was not liked. A large factor of that was because of my age, which I cannot fathom.*  
(Participant A, Narrative 2)

Participant B was the younger former TA:



*In the English department I work for (at an American system institution), I am the youngest person among my peers and the newest hire although I've been working in this position for two years now, and had previously been a TA for the department for longer. A lot of my colleagues are not from Kuwait and are a generation older than I am, and, although they treat me as an equal, I don't feel a sense of belonging all the time. I think I still feel like the "inferior" TA at times. (Participant B, Narrative 1)*

Participant C was seen as the youngest teacher:

*I'm also the only Kuwaiti teacher in my department, not to mention a decade younger than the youngest one of them. (Participant C, Narrative 2)*

All being the youngest in their department was a common factor in their stories and struggles. According to Andrew (2012) age is under researched in Language Teacher Identity when compared to gender, class, race or ethnicity. Like gender and race, age is one of the first things we notice about another person. In many cultures around the world, age might guide interactions with others, determining how we address others, how loudly and openly we speak, and the kind of speech we articulate. At times, age can also determine the level of respect we show to others, also whether we are engaged in a conversation or trying to avoid it (McCann et al., 2005).

In her first textual narrative, Participant A begins her story with how she wanted a shift from teaching in a private university to a public institute and that she worried about cultural differences at first but she then realized there were other issues to unravel.:

*I was the youngest and newest instructor in the department, which was not a problem at all, or so I had thought. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

In her second textual narrative, participant A emphasizes age by giving it the status of being in the title to her narrative, "The Obstacles of being Young". She also starts her story by recalling a negative incident that occurred because of her young age:

*A similar encounter happened to me in regards to being the youngest teacher in the department. (Participant A, Narrative 2)*

However, through her identity as the youngest English language teacher in the department, she saw the age difference as an opportunity to gain knowledge from those older and experienced teachers:

*I did not understand why my young age would be an issue as I was eager to learn from the more experienced teachers. (Participant A, Narrative 2)*

She tells her story of when she was at an important meeting with visitors from outside the institute. During the break, when the only people present were Participant A, a colleague that already seemed to dislike Participant A, and the visitors. The colleague started talking to the visitors about her experience working in the institute and how she was recently unhappy. While talking to them, the colleague made sure Participant A was listening as she further explained the reasons for not wanting to work at the institute anymore:

*she then very loudly said “I do not plan on staying here, now they just hire pretty looking young girls to do the work without knowing anything about the system here.” (Participant A, Narrative 2)*

The colleague believes that appearance, age and gender is what earned Participant A her position and it is clearly why she dislikes her. In contrast, Participant A was acknowledged for her work earlier in her first narrative by her head of department:

*The support that followed was overwhelming, especially when my department head called me in for a meeting and recognized the effort that I had put into my teaching and into the department. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

A contrast emphasized in Participants’ A narrative is how she portrays herself as a helpful, ‘good’, generous teacher:

*The same person who kept on complaining about me, was the same person whose proctoring I volunteered to offer with wanting nothing in return. (Participant A, Narrative 2)*

While the colleague is the ungrateful, ‘bad’, rude teacher:

*She never thanked me for it, but it did not matter to me as we work as a department, and not individually. (Participant A, Narrative 2)*

In this contrast, it is interesting how Participant A positioned her colleague and how she positioned herself, and vice versa. Participant A positioned herself as a better teacher with morals that cares more about the work flow. As a colleague, she seems to also develop a competitive identity, where she is the one who proposes and initiates, she is the better

teacher. This influence on her teacher identity is similar to the one in Tsui's study (2007) where the teacher was institutionally and personally influenced to become an active participant in his community. Participant A and the teacher in Tsui's study (2007) seem to have negotiated their identities to prove their competence.

In her narrative, Participant B also presents her struggles to establish herself as the 'young' English instructor in her English department. Interestingly, she starts her first textual narrative highlighting age:

*In the English department I work for (at an American system institution), I am the youngest person among my peers and the newest hire although I've been working in this position for two years now, and had previously been a TA for the department for longer. A lot of my colleagues are not from Kuwait and are a generation older than I am. (Participant B, Narrative 1)*

Participant B seems to highlight age paving the way to her story where many other themes were salient, the sense of not belonging and her relationships with others. She highlights the reason for not belonging to her department and her troubled relationships with colleagues which was age. Ageism was also present in the second textual narrative of participant C in her response to Participant B, in both their stories, age corresponds to their troubled relationships with others:

*Oh I can totally feel you. Besides, we're in the same boat here, I'm also the only Kuwaiti teacher in my department, not to mention a decade younger than the youngest one of them. (Participant C, Narrative 2)*

Participant C also believes that because of her young age she relates to Participant B through a shared identity as the youngest English language teacher in the department while introducing her second textual narrative where age and other factors were a source of tension. In their textual responses, both Participants A and C highlighted age which was interestingly what Participant B first wrote in her first textual narrative as mentioned earlier. Age being the factor of how older colleagues viewed the participants as "others" is similar to how the teachers in Kayi-Aydar's (2018) study were positioned as outsiders because of their race and ethnicity. Although ageism was not featured in her study, but the participants in this study as well as Kayi-Aydar's (2018) were treated differently because of social factors and the teachers negotiated their different identities in trying to fit in.

### Theme 3: Language Teacher Identities influenced by Relationships

All three participants attributed not belonging to their departments to their struggle in forming/maintaining relationships with others in their workplace. As seen in Participants' A first textual narrative, her transition to a new job was not smooth:

*At that point, I did not know what to do, I was getting negativity even though I always kept to my own. Even though I was extremely uncomfortable, I decided to remain unruffled and not react to any hatred or gossip around me. I focused diligently on the relationship between the students and myself. Teaching is what mattered the most to me. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

Although forming relationships with colleagues was not successful, in her English language teacher identity she made the decision to concentrate on the relationships that mattered the most, her teacher-student relationship. Again, Participant A highlights the value of her teacher identity and profession over her relationships with colleagues. Later on, in her story she uncovers more unpleasant events that surprisingly lead to unexpected relationships:

*Nearing the end of the year, problems elevated to the extent that some colleagues who I never spoke to, came to support me once they saw that complaints were being filed against me without any valid reasoning. The support that followed was overwhelming, especially when my department head called me in for a meeting and recognized the effort that I had put into my teaching and into the department. My relationship with the head department flourished in a way that I did not think was possible, I started to be in charge of big events and my help was sought after from various teachers, some of which hated me at the beginning. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

Shifts in events made her realize that her relationship with the head of department had positive effects on her as teacher. That influential relationship is also what led her to opportunities at her workplace and also changed the attitudes of other teachers towards her. According to VielRuma, Houchins, Jolivette, and Benson (2010), interpersonal relations with colleagues could positively affect teachers' perceptions about themselves and the departments' ability in achieving the planned institutional objectives. Through this relationship, Participant A also found support, recognition and authority. In her teacher identity, relationships seemed to empower her:

*The support I received started to outweigh the negative comments until they started to gradually dissipate. While I was not welcomed at the beginning of my new job, I felt like I earned both the respect of my students and colleagues the more I weathered through the problems that I faced. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

That support positively affected her relationship with her students too. As it is important to build a positive atmosphere of collaboration and mutual trust amongst teachers because it leads to the improvement of teachers' relationship with students (Lee, Zhang & Yin, 2011) As she writes:

*My students, who I struggled to understand at the beginning, wanted me to continue teaching them in their following courses.*

Similarly, Participant C constructs an identity as a recognized teacher in her workplace by highlighting the importance of maintaining good relationships with others:

*Even though I've been through unpleasant situations with my colleagues; which I'm sure is a normal thing; I can still wrap up the misunderstandings peacefully and maintain a good relationship with all of the staff. (Participant C, Narrative 1)*

Interestingly, she presumes it is a "normal thing" to have negative experiences with colleagues and seems to attribute it to her professional identity in that context. A reason to her view of such negative situations being usual in a workplace might be aligned with her sense of belonging to an efficient department with a "professional" HOD. For example, according to the English teachers and instructors in a study that explored elements of collective teacher efficacy beliefs, the participants believe that an efficient educational institute has members that can manage problems successfully and can develop as a competent cooperative team that is able to overcome obstacles. (Abedini, Bagheri, Sadighi, & Yarmohammadi, 2018). In a similar vein, C's relationships seem to be a source of pride as they lead her to being noticed and appreciated:

*Luckily all my efforts were highly appreciated by my boss and I started to have a significant reputation among all other departments not to mention the administration. (Participant C, Narrative 1)*

Similar to Participants' A influential relationship with the HOD, here C is also recognized by someone in power. Participant C positions herself as appreciated by a powerful individual

that might have had impact on how others positively perceive Participant C. However, her digital narrative views one of her relationships very differently. The digital attachment she selected was a song, titled “The Knife in my back”. The song represents a relationship again, and also her developing professional identity in the department. The title as an idiom represents the act of betrayal caused by a colleague. Her digital narrative illustrates how she was disappointed by a colleague and the struggle she faced in their relationship, as a verse of the song says, “I thought we were friends” and develops an opposite relationship towards her colleague “now we're enemies”. In her digital narrative, she illustrates the links interwoven in her identity as a friend and her identity as a teacher. Her song captures her failed attempt of maintaining a good relationship specifically with that one colleague but also the evolving of a new identity. Her digital narrative also reveals a reflective, critical awareness of the social factors that might help shape both her personal and professional identity: relationships.

Participant’s B second textual narrative also viewed relationships negatively. Relationships in her story were not a priority as she struggles through some:

*but this does remind me of an incident where a colleague was spreading false rumors about me that could have hurt real friendships I had in my department. (Participant B, Narrative 2)*

She then comes to a decision that relieves her from the stress and anxiety that comes with forming relationships with others at her workplace.

*From then on, I made a conscious decision to not become friends with anyone at work and keep all my relationships at the workplace professional. I don’t chat with anyone in my free time—I get work done and leave. (Participant B, Narrative 2)*

She presumes it is the best solution to have no friendships with colleagues and seems to attribute it to her professional identity in that context, emphasizing only work “I get work done and leave” in what might be seen as an extreme reaction, a choice of distancing herself from others. In their study, Sosa and Gomez (2012) illustrate how in-service teachers described and positioned themselves as more efficient teachers by distancing themselves from their colleagues. As Participant C willfully isolates herself from other teachers based on her belief that the decision of distancing herself would protect her professionally and personally in the department.

*As a result, I am less anxious about gossip that goes around in my workplace as I am oblivious to it now. Ignorance is bliss! (Participant B, Narrative 2)*

Similarly, to how Bukor's (2013) three participants' relationship with their significant influencers shaped their language teacher identity, the relationships of the participants in this study whether negative or positive influenced their teacher identity.

### 4.3 Language Teacher Identities and Membership

According to Bamberg (2012), a prime dimension along which identity is navigated is sameness versus difference. Specifically,

Category ascriptions or attributions to characters that imply identity categories, or even choices of event descriptions as candidates for category-bound activities, mark affiliations with these categories in terms of proximity or distance. Aligning with these categories, speakers draw boundaries around themselves—and others—so that individual identities and group belongings become visible. (Bamberg, 2012, pp. 104–105)

Through the framework of membership categorization, I now focus on how the participants as English language teachers claim membership of different categories through their narratives in their own context. Participants occupied categories that can be collected together under the device “professional teacher” as in their sense of being a professional. In this analysis, the definition of “professionalism” is taken from Evans (2008) as the

Practice that is consistent with commonly held consensual delineations of a specific profession and that both contributes to and reflects perceptions of the profession's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice. (p. 29)

Below are different categories where participants claimed and at times distanced others from memberships of being a professional teacher.

#### 4.3.1 Teacher Commitment to Students

Teachers occupied this category by presenting what mattered to them as teachers. In the following section, excerpts from participants showed their commitment to their students.

Participant A prioritized the teacher-student relationship:

*I focused diligently on the relationship between the students and myself. Teaching is what mattered the most to me. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

Participant B gave students a voice and was also able to represent them as a Kuwaiti herself:

*She immediately realized that I was a Kuwaiti (perhaps just realizing that I was there at all!) just like the students, and it seemed like it was a slip of the tongue, and she had forgotten who her colleagues were. (Participant B, Narrative 1)*

Participant C acknowledges and highlights her student needs:

*When I reached the latter, I discovered that they weren't pleased with the grades of three low achievers in my class, whom I struggled throughout the year to reach their parents and push them to score more in their tasks, but all my trials came to failure as they were irresponsibly passive. (Participant C, Narrative 2)*

According to Butler (2014), the teachers who emphasize their positive relationships with students at the beginning of the year are those who find their students, to report that the teacher did indeed care and was committed to them as learners. Although participants do not directly mention their teacher-student relationship, they still highlight its importance. Through claiming their membership of a 'professional teacher', participants cared about their relationships with their students in different situations.

#### 4.3.3 Teacher Self Value

Value refers to the teachers' sense of self-worth as practitioners, the consciousness that their work and role is meaningful and appreciated in their contexts. Participants are seen to experience self-value through their relationship with people of authority such as a head of department, which is a person with power and influence. The following excerpt show how Participant A was acknowledged and appreciated as a teacher in the department because of her relationship with the HOD:

*My relationship with the head department flourished in a way that I did not think was possible, I started to be in charge of big events and my help was sought after from various teachers, some of which hated me at the beginning. (Participant A, Narrative 1)*

Participants feel "lucky" to have an HOD that supports them personally and professionally as a teacher:



*I was very lucky because my HOD immediately replied “I would love to give you more work! But she works until 9pm, would you be comfortable staying at work that long?” (Participant A, Narrative 2)*

*Luckily, I have a fair boss, and I made sure that she has a clear idea about what happened which in terms answered a lot of questions that she had on her assistant. (Participant C, Narrative 2)*

According to Martel and Wang (2015) significant influencers can be seen as instrumental factors that influence a language teacher’s identity construction and similarly participants A and C present the extent to which they feel their professionalism and value as teachers to be enhanced through their HOD, a relationship that allows them to claim their membership as professional teachers in their department.

#### 4.3.4 Teacher as a Learner

A teacher who is a learner too stands for the teachers who not only wanted to teach their students but also learn themselves. As shown in the excerpts below, both Participants A and C expressed their desire to develop whether through those experienced teachers or professional development opportunities:

*I did not understand why my young age would be an issue as I was eager to learn from the more experienced teachers. (Participant A, Narrative 2)*

Participant A here seems to be looking for peer coaching arrangements. For instance, as Richards and Farrell (2005) call it a “technical coach” where a teacher seeks the assistance of another who is more experienced and knowledgeable in order to learn, whether new teaching methods or techniques and many more aspects related to the profession.

In a similar vein, Participant C mentions professional courses as means for her own development as a teacher:

*I always had this passion and need to learn more, being a mother of four makes it difficult for me to enroll in professional courses specially outside my working hours. (Participant C, Narrative 1)*

While she is aware of her need of professional development as an English language teacher, she seems to also highlight her willingness and commitment to her learner teacher identity:

*I've always wanted to be a teacher, and I have always tried by best since day one.  
(Participant C, Narrative 1)*

Which then led her to professional development opportunities:

*Every teacher wanted to join, but not all could. I didn't fight for it as I was fortunately nominated by my HOD and was officially registered in it. (Participant C, Narrative 1)*

In her teacher as a learner category, she seems to encourage herself as a teacher to take an active role in different professional contexts. As it has been proven that teacher involvement and awareness of their own professional development needs boosts their sense of professionalism (Walsh & Mann, 2019). Participant C subscribes to the teacher as a learner category aiming to achieve her “professional teacher” identity. In their textual narratives, both participants A and C portray how they believe it is important for teachers to broaden their knowledge and seek achievement as a teacher learner in alignment with being a ‘professional teacher’.

In this study, the nature of the multimodal narratives, with the combination of text, image and sound, could benefit not only the study of identity in the Kuwaiti context but also other teachers and educators because “the stories would not only help the teachers themselves, who can use them as resources to improve their teaching, but also other teachers who share similar experiences to use as an additional resource for their own further developments as teachers” (Oda, 2017, p. 226). This process was a powerful tool for connecting the participants with their reflective practice of storying with their own professional transformation. I was able to catch a glimpse into their worlds and their professional and personal lives. The process of virtual interaction, as participants exchanged narratives, related and then replied to each other, I found myself engaging and reflecting too.

#### 4.4 Summary

In brief, all previous excerpts present how participants did not belong to their departments and therefore negotiate and switch categories in order to become “professional teachers”. Their commitment to their practice, attitude as teacher learners and their relationships with powerful managers were all means to achieve their professional identity as English language teachers. As their textual and digital narratives unfold, constructing and shifting their identities and categories are seen to continually flow through their interactions.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the study, the aim was to explore the lived experiences of the three Kuwaiti English language teachers with focus on their identity constructions and negotiations in their language teacher journey within a specific social context. My research question along with a thematic analysis and a membership categorization framework allowed me to investigate the constructions and negotiations of participants' identities through their multimodal narratives. In this final chapter, I present an overview of the main findings, contributions of the study and further implications. Then I discuss limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

### 6.2 Summary of Findings

In summarizing the analysis of the findings, it is important to review the original research question this study attempts to resolve. Table 9 below illustrates the research question in relation to teacher identities.

Research Question	
1. Which identities do Kuwaiti English language teachers construct through multimodal narratives?	Teachers constructed both personal and professional identities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Unbelonging Teacher</li><li>- Young Teacher</li><li>- Local Teacher</li><li>- Kuwaiti Teacher</li><li>- Professional Teacher</li></ul>

Table 9. Teacher Identities in Relation to the Research Question

The analysis revealed both the process of the teachers' identity work, that is, which identities were made relevant, how were they accomplished or challenged and by focusing on their experiences in belonging/not belonging to their departments and producing multimodal narratives, the three Kuwaiti English language teachers constructed and negotiated their personal and professional identities. These identities were complex and multifaceted as they were underlined by participants not belonging to departments, their image as professionals

and relationships with others, nationalism and ageism. The participants' stories also illustrated that it was difficult to overlook the different social factors in their experiences. For example, age and relationships and how they were intimately interwoven. The multimodal narratives not only reported what happened in the lives of the participants but also became a powerful tool in their identity transformation.

### 6.3 Contributions of the Study

As stated in chapter one, this research attempted to explore teachers' lived stories and how they constructed and negotiated their different identities through their multimodal narratives. I believe that this research project has contributed some interesting and meaningful results regarding LTI.

- Research in the fields of TESOL and LTI has been undertaken in the West and East but very little in the Middle East. In this study, the focus is on the Kuwaiti context where research is scarce.
- ELT teacher identity research has been undertaken with preservice teachers, neglecting in-service teachers who make up most of the profession. This study focused on Kuwaiti in-service teachers and documented their voices.
- Thematic analysis offered understandings of how different factors, like ageism influences language teacher identity. The issue of Ageism and the "young teacher" identity, also the issue of local and local teachers in Kuwait and the tense relationships between them are issues that can contribute to LTI as they were not discussed in previous research.
- Textual and digital narratives were significantly symbolic as participants expressed their personal emotions and unique experiences. Such emerging data sources can act as a source of inspiration for other teachers, educators and researchers. In this study, the digital stories also suggest the need to creativity in data sources.
- In response to each other's narratives, participants engaged in a virtual conversation to what they found relevant to their own experiences. Such textual communication between participants present how their identities did not develop in isolation but in participation and is an activity that highlights the importance of dialogue. In this study, the participants were separate yet together through stories.

### 6.4 Study Implications

Some of the results from this study address important aspects regarding to LTI, which are relevant to different bodies within ELT and TESOL.

#### 6.4.1 Implications for Teachers

An important implication that can be derived from this study is the utmost need for professional development opportunities for Kuwaiti English language teachers in Kuwait. Such opportunities would increase awareness and understanding of the local context and emphasize language teacher identity work within it.

Many researchers in the field of TESOL have emphasized the significant “role of identity in educating future language teachers and in preparing applied linguists for the field” (Donato, 2017, p. 25). One way to approach identity work in Kuwait is through workshops/courses that explicitly discuss English language teacher identity in terms of self-reflection activities that enable language teachers to critically examine their past experiences and inform their future ones, both personally and professionally. The goal is to help encourage language teachers to participate in such activities. That will also help them understand as well as accept their own journeys, reflect and take a critical look at how their personal lives can also influence their professional practice as this type of professional development focused on identity work “is indispensable for [language] teachers if they wish to exercise professional agency, and thereby maximize their potential for development and growth” (Clarke, 2009, pp. 186–187).

#### 6.4.2 Implications for Managers

As age emerged as a critical and negative theme which contributed towards participants sense of not belonging, a highly recommended suggestion for institutes, supervisor and directors in the Kuwaiti context is to consider professional development activities targeting “youth” and “newness” by bringing together early/new teachers with those experienced ones through peer mentoring. This model works when a newer/younger teacher gets help and support from an experienced one. For the participants of this study, being young or new made it harder for teachers to join an established group of teachers within a community. Other young or newly employed teachers may also feel this way. They may need help and support to find their places in a department. In addition, peer-mentoring also helps create a safe, open and supportive environment amongst all teachers. The peer-mentoring model not only creates opportunities for teachers to evaluate their own practice, but also enhances their overall professional knowledge and it would serve as a tool for reflection for the teachers on their experiences and helps develop their relationships with others. This collaboration could possibly be a form of support which early, younger teachers are in need of. This suggestion also highlights the value of peers and collaboration as a way of learning and reflection in the context of Kuwait and perhaps other similar contexts, the Gulf and the Middle East.

Ultimately, the goal is not to only help the local teachers but all English language teachers in the Kuwaiti context to grow and develop personally and professionally by providing professional development opportunities that not only focus on theoretical or practical levels.

#### 6.4.3. Implications for Publishers

Considering the scarcity of studies and literature about language teacher identity in the context of Kuwait, there seems to be a necessity for published material targeting this topic. As reading such published materials benefit the teachers in an under-researched context and help them to explore and understand themselves as well as others. Published material will also highlight the importance of identity work and emphasize the opportunities teachers have to engage in local and international LTI professional development opportunities. Ultimately, the goal is to help language teachers in Kuwait to grow and develop professionally.

#### 6.5 Limitations of Study

There are two main limitations for this study. The first is concerned with the data collection process. The second textual narratives can be seen as feedback which could have been invaluable for the participants to see as this might have helped them to develop a sense of not being alone, an issue which they struggled with or might still be facing. Giving the participants a chance to look at the responses to their narratives would greatly facilitate their identity construction as English language teachers, as well as their professional development.

The second limitation was due to the study's qualitative nature and small sample size. The number of participants in the study within their contexts was a limited sample. Future studies could be conducted with a larger population and by employing different research approaches and instruments. For instance, a digital diary. A digital diary as a source of data is when participants digitally keep a daily/weekly/monthly record of events and experiences, whether through photography, video, audio or animation as with advances in technology, the options are unlimited.

#### 6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

The current study explored the lives of three Kuwaiti English language teachers working in Kuwait. Another research direction would be to explore gendered identities. For example, the present study focused unintentionally on Kuwaiti female teachers, therefore exploring the lived stories of both male and female teachers would be worth investigating. Although in this study, a constructionist stance alongside a thematic and membership categorization analysis

was employed, other theoretical frameworks could be used when exploring/comparing gendered identities, such as a feminist approach as the profession of teaching in Kuwait consists of mostly females due to the fact that the postsecondary programs being open to female high school graduates only (Al-Rubaie, 2010; Boyle, 2004). Thus, creating the feminization of the teaching profession in the Kuwaiti context of English language teaching.

In summary, it is also hoped that this study will stimulate a productive and collaborative dialogue among teachers, educators and researchers in Kuwait, the Gulf and the Middle East who may be interested in examining teacher identity in their own context.

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## Appendix 1: Ethics application

### Part 2 - application for research ethics approval (approximately 600-800 words)

Are you aware of the four principles for ethical research? **YES**

beneficence (do positive good)

non-maleficence (do no harm)

informed consent

confidentiality/ anonymity

When answering these questions, cross reference, as appropriate, to information letters and consent forms which should be included with this form as numbered appendices.

1. Describe arrangements for selecting/sampling potential participants.

***Sampling:***

- The arrangements for selecting/sampling potential participants is convenience sampling.
- Participants and I have previously met and worked together at different times.
- Participants will be contacted to determine if they are willing to share and include their personal stories in this study.

2. Describe the arrangements for briefing potential participants and obtaining institutional and participants' consent. If participants are under 18 years old, explain how parental/guardian consent will be obtained.

***Briefing:***

- Email participants to ask if they are interested in being part of the study. The reason for emailing is to make it easier for them to refuse if they want to.
- Contact the participants and arrange a virtual 1 : 1 meeting to explain the process of the research and what would it involve. Explanation of benefits: please see next section.
- Send Participant Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form to the participants who have agreed.
- Through the Participant Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form, the participants understand what their agreement to participate would entail in

order to give their consent willingly and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

3. What are the potential benefits of this research project for participants, your organisation or school, and/or the TESOL profession as a whole?

- Engaging in identity work would lead to the professional and personal development of the **participants**.
- It is my belief that there is an urgent need for greater investigation into the complex process of identity development especially regarding unexplored groups like Kuwaiti female English language teachers. In addition, in-service teachers are a neglected group in teacher identity research (Donaghue, 2020), despite making up most of the profession. This study will contribute towards filling this gap as the participants are all experienced in-service teachers.
- The research project is an opportunity to add to the **TESOL** body of research into teacher identity.

4. Describe any possible negative consequences of participation in the research along with the ways in which these consequences will be limited. *This should include details where appropriate of any withholding of information or misleading of participants along with a justification of why this is necessary. For most TESOL projects, the withholding of information is not necessary. Also consider the time that you are asking your participants to give to the project and how this will be explained to them.*

One negative consequence is the time needed for participants to write their stories. I will make it clear in the initial meeting how much time the project will take. It is hoped that the benefits will outweigh the time needed.

5. Describe the arrangements for ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality and how participants will be informed of this. This should include details of how data will be stored and how results will be presented.

- The participant information sheet and consent form will describe the arrangements for ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality.
- All participants will individually be informed in a briefing session about the research project to explain what is involved and allow them to ask questions.
- Participants will not be named – they will be given pseudonyms. The institutions where participants work will not be named. No details about participants will be given apart from the fact that they are English language teachers, their nationality and gender.
- All data will be stored in a password protected personal computer.
- Explanation of arrangements for sharing data: please see next section.

6. Describe how participants will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the research. This should also include information about participants' right to withhold information.

The participant information sheet will clearly include the participant's right to withdraw from the study up until 7 days after sending their story and response.

7. Describe the arrangements for sharing findings with the participants and/or explain how you will offer to share your findings.

- The Participant Information Sheet states that the findings will be made available upon request.
- The Participant Information Sheet will make the participants aware of how their narrative accounts will be shared with the other participants.

8. Are there any conflicts of interest in you undertaking this research? (E.g. Are you undertaking research on work colleagues?) How will you deal with these? Please supply details.

A possible conflict will be the fact that I personally know the participants and that may pressure them to take part in the study. To avoid that, I will send an e-mail to ask if they are interested in being part of the study (rather than ask face to face

which is harder to refuse), and that will put the participants at ease to refuse if they want to.

**Health and Safety Risk assessment for the researcher (Please highlight your responses in bold or a colour)**

9. Will the proposed data collection take place on campus? **No**

10. Where will the data collection take place?

The data will be collected via e-mail by the participants sending their narrative accounts.

11. How will you travel to and from the data collection venue? **NA**

12. How will you ensure your own personal safety whilst at the research venue? **NA**

13. If you are carrying out research off-campus, you must ensure that each time you go out to collect data you ensure that someone you trust knows where you are going (without breaching the confidentiality of your participants), how you are getting there (preferably including your travel route), when you expect to get back, and what to do should you not return at the specified time. Please outline here the procedure you propose using to do this. **NA**

14. Are there any potential risks to your health and wellbeing associated with either (a) the venue where the research will take place and/or (b) the research topic itself? **None.**

15. Does this research project require a health and safety risk analysis for the procedures to be used?    Yes                          **No**

(If YES the completed Health and Safety Project Safety Plan for Procedures should be attached)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Final draft of proposal and ethics application only.**

Please reflect on and summarise ways in which this document has changed and evolved since your first draft.

This document has evolved in various ways:

1. The title has been amended by removing the word 'female' which pre-supposes a gender focus, it is now a focus on Kuwaiti English language teachers.
2. The word 'second' in the research questions has been replaced with the word 'English' in order to allow a focused investigation.
3. Amendments were made to the background and rationale in order to include more up-to-date references.
4. The description of the methodological approach has been expanded to justify my choice of a qualitative method with reference to scholarly sources.
5. The ethics section has been expanded to include arrangements for briefing potential participants and obtaining their consent, as well as the benefits of taking part.
6. Further information of how participants will be informed of this and their guarantee of anonymity has been added.
7. A conflict of interest in undertaking this research has been added, as well as details of how I will deal with it.
8. As plans for data collection were altered, corresponding changes were made to all the consent forms.

\*\*\*\*\*

I confirm that this research will conform to the principles outlined in the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics policy.

I confirm that this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Student's signature (or typed name)	<b>Shahd Al Mnaies</b>
Date	Sunday, 19 April 2020

## Appendix 2: Ethical approval Letter



Sheffield Hallam University  
City Campus  
Arundel Building  
Sheffield, S1 1WB

+44(0)114 225 5515

tesol@shu.ac.uk

1 June 2020

To whom it may concern

Shahd Almnaies is a full time MA TESOL student at Sheffield Hallam University. The MA TESOL Research Committee has granted ethical approval for her research project: **Exploring Kuwaiti English Language Teacher's Identities: A Multimodal Narrative Approach**. This approval was granted on the 1 June 2020.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Ridley".

Dr Diana Ridley (MA TESOL DL Course leader and Research project module leader, on behalf of the MA TESOL Research Committee)

+44(0)114 225 5513

d.m.ridley@shu.ac.uk

## Appendix 3: Participant Information Sheet



### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

#### **Title of Project: Exploring Kuwaiti English Language Teacher's Identities: A Multimodal Narrative Approach**

**Researcher:** Shahad Al Mnaies

#### **Invitation to participate**

I am conducting research to investigate teacher identity with English language teachers in Kuwait. The research will explore a group of four Kuwaiti female English language teachers; including you.

#### **What will participation involve?**

If you agree to participate in the research, I will request your consent for the following:

- You will answer the following prompt:  
*Write a story about belonging/not belonging to your department alongside a digital attachment of your own choice.*
- All written stories and digital attachments will be anonymised and shared with the other participants to read.
- You will then choose one story to respond to.

You may withdraw from the project up until 7 days after sending your story and response without giving a reason. For those who remain in the study, all data will be anonymised.

#### **Are there any possible risks or disadvantages in taking part?**

There are no possible risks or disadvantages in taking part in this research, but have in mind the time you will put into the whole process; writing your story, reading the stories of others and responding.

#### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Participation in the research and engaging in identity work may lead to your professional and personal development.

#### **What happens following my participation?**

You will have the option of receiving results from the project by email by adding your email address on the consent sheet

#### **Research ethics and data security**

Anything you submit during the course of the research will be confidential. Data will be anonymised and will remain confidential to the researcher. However, your anonymised written story and digital attachment will be shared with the other three research participants. Extracts from your stories will be used in the dissertation and in academic journals and conference presentations after sharing



them with you first and getting your approval. The photograph you contribute will be seen by the other participants and will be published after your approval in the dissertation and possible academic journals and conferences. No aspect of your story or photograph which could identify you will be published. All participants will be asked to respect confidentiality.

Anonymised data from the project will be kept for ten years in the SHU electronic data archive. For more information please refer to: <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/quality/ethics-and-integrity/data-management-policy>

I may want to present or publish from this research. All quotations from you will be anonymised and you will not be identifiable in the reporting.

If you want any more information or have any concerns about your participation during or after the project please get in touch with Shahad Al Mnaies [b9027563@my.shu.ac.uk](mailto:b9027563@my.shu.ac.uk)

The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest**. A full statement of your rights can be found at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notice-for-research>. However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Converis number ER13899857. Further information at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>

**You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:**

- you have a query about how your data is used by the University
- you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
- you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data

[DPO@shu.ac.uk](mailto:DPO@shu.ac.uk)

**You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if:**

- you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated

[a.macaskill@shu.ac.uk](mailto:a.macaskill@shu.ac.uk)

Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555

## Appendix 4: Participant Consent Form



### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:**

#### **Exploring Kuwaiti English Language Teacher's Identities: A Multimodal Narrative Approach**

*Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies*

- |   | <b>YES</b>               | <b>NO</b>                |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the Participant Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that I am free to withdraw and withdraw my data from the study within the time limits outlined in the Participant Information Sheet, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree to provide information to the researcher under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Participant Information Sheet.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I consent to my written story and digital attachment being shared with the other three participants. I consent to anonymised extracts from my story and my digital attachment appearing in the dissertation and in academic journal articles or conferences with no aspects that could identify me.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Participant Information Sheet.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide an email address if you would like a summary of the research findings: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name (Printed): Shahad Al Mnaies

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's contact details: b9027563@my.shu.ac.uk

## Appendix 5: Participants' Textual and Digital Narratives

### 1. Participant A's First Textual Narrative

#### *My Teaching Experience*

After working as an English teaching assistant at a private university for a few years, I decided to shift my career towards teaching in a public sector. The shift I had made from teaching in a private institute to a public institute was a change that I had wanted, but also feared because I was unfamiliar to the cultural difference that I might encounter. After my first week of teaching in a new environment, I was immediately taken back. I felt completely alienated as my department and the students I taught were from a background that I was not exposed to before in my teaching career. I was the youngest and newest instructor in the department, which was not a problem at all, or so I had thought. A lot of my colleagues felt like I did not belong, my eagerness to teach and help others was perceived as trying to make my colleagues look bad or that I had some mischievous intent to outperform them. During the first year of my teaching, I felt like I did not belong in the department. While there were some colleagues who were very helpful and thoughtful, I could not help but constantly second doubt their intentions as the majority were not welcoming. I was struggling to understand not only my colleagues' mentality, but also my students who did not take a liking to me easily. The more I tried to be a part of my department, the more it backfired. At that point, I did not know what to do, I was getting negativity even though I always kept to my own. Even though I was extremely uncomfortable, I decided to remain unruffled and not react to any hatred or gossip around me. I focused diligently on the relationship between the students and myself. Teaching is what mattered the most to me.

Nearing the end of the year, problems elevated to the extent that some colleagues who I never spoke to, came to support me once they saw that complaints were being filed against me without any valid reasoning. The support that followed was overwhelming, especially when my department head called me in for a meeting and recognized the effort that I had put into my teaching and into the department. My relationship with the head department flourished in a way that I did not think was possible, I started to be in charge of big events and my help was sought after from various teachers, some of which hated me at the beginning. My students, who I struggled to understand at the beginning, wanted me to continue teaching them in their following courses. The support I received started to outweigh the negative comments until they started to gradually dissipate. While I was not welcomed at the beginning of my new job, I felt like I earned both the respect of my students and colleagues the more I weathered through the problems that I faced. Slowly, with time, I realized that I may be disliked for reasons I may not know or fathom, but I definitely felt like I belonged and proved to be indispensable to the department.

### 1.2 Participant A's Second Textual Narrative-In Response to B

#### *The Obstacles of Being Young*

A similar encounter happened to me in regards to being the youngest teacher in the department. When I first started working in my department, I could sense that I was not liked. A large factor of that was because of my age, which I cannot fathom. I did not understand why my young age would be an issue as I was eager to learn from the more experienced teachers. At first, I could hear gossip about me near the corridor, which I immediately discarded because I thought that there was no way that seasoned teachers would have the time to nitpick the behaviors of the new teacher. I kept giving them the benefit of the doubt. Because of my eagerness to work, I was given more tasks to do, which I did not mind. In many department meetings, some colleagues would blatantly, and repeatedly ask "why are you giving all the work to her? We are seasoned teachers and deserve recognition." I was so shocked that I had nothing to do or say except laugh that a teacher almost twice my age, would be so aggravated over me doing my job. Was she actually serious? I was very lucky because my HOD immediately replied "I would love to give you more work! But she works until 9pm, would you be comfortable staying at work that long?" to which she immediately rejected. The same person who kept on complaining about me, was the same person whose proctoring I volunteered to offer with wanting nothing in return. She never thanked me for it, but it did not matter to me as we work as a department, and not individually.

I had not the time or the patience to deal with such frivolous accusations. One of the most recent meetings that we had involved two very prestigious people from [REDACTED]. During our break, they were talking to my colleague about her experience in our department. The only people present other than her at that time were the guests and myself. After talking about her experience, she then very loudly said "I do not plan on staying here, now they just hire pretty looking young girls to do the work without knowing anything about the system here." I was initially shocked, she was actually making a fool of herself in front of the guests. I just smiled while she glared at me. I continued to smile, after all, she did call me pretty! I never changed how I treated them. I did not like them, but I had to be professional. With time, ironically enough, they were trying to start conversations with me...and as always, I continued to smile.

### 1.3 Participant A's Digital Narrative



## 2. Participant B's First Textual Narrative

In the English department I work for (at an American system institution), I am the youngest person among my peers and the newest hire although I've been working in this position for two years now, and had previously been a TA for the department for longer. A lot of my colleagues are not from Kuwait and are a generation older than I am, and, although they treat me as an equal, I don't feel a sense of belonging all the time. I think I still feel like the "inferior" TA at times. I feel this more strongly when my opinion is overlooked during team meetings. I tend to shy away from voicing it, and I keep to myself most of the time during office hours, etc.

Here's a story that stands out to me when I think of my sense of belonging in the department I work at. A colleague of mine—an older Western woman—was partnered with me to double-grade essays. The gap between the grades we gave the essays in a couple of instances was greater than was permitted, and, instead of coming to me to discuss the discrepancy, she chose to speak directly with the department director, not only dismissing my judgement, but not seeing the need to speak with me about it first. I confronted her about it, but she was defensive. The same week, during a meeting while deciding on essay topics for our predominantly Kuwaiti students, someone suggested "The similarities/differences between living in a poor country and a rich country." She said she doesn't like the topic because she didn't think Kuwaiti students would relate and suggested that they were not worldly enough. I interjected, which, as I said, I don't often do, and said, "Kuwaitis are not that ignorant. They do have a sense of how people live in this world." She immediately realized that I was a Kuwaiti (perhaps just realizing that I was there at all!) just like the students, and it seemed like it was a slip of the tongue, and she had forgotten who her colleagues were. I felt like I got to see how some (of course, not all) viewed me, being a young Kuwaiti woman. It felt right to impose/assert who I was in that moment and put someone's prejudices in check.

### 2.1 Participant B's Second Textual Narrative-In Response to C

Oh, wow. Thankfully, I haven't had to experience a colleague sabotaging my reputation as a professional, but this does remind me of an incident where a colleague was spreading false rumors about me that could have hurt real friendships I had in my department. I decided not to confront the person, but, instead, just avoided them completely—I wouldn't even acknowledge them with a 'good morning.' From then on, I made a conscious decision to not become friends with anyone at work and keep all my relationships at the workplace professional. I don't chat with anyone in my free time—I get work done and leave. I have even kept to myself around the middleman who let me know what was being said behind my back even though she was a good friend, and, instead, I kept our conversations to small talk only from that point forward. Although I trusted her, anyone who gossiped and any he-said-she-said type conversations were avoided from then on. This was around 5 years ago now. I want the only image I project of myself where I work to be a professional image—I keep my personal life to myself. As a result, I am less anxious about gossip that goes around in my workplace as I am oblivious to it now. Ignorance is bliss!

### 2.2 Participant B's Digital Narrative



## 3. Participant C's First Textual Narrative

### THERE'S ONE IN EVERY DEPARTMENT

It's my second year in this school and I feel comfortable to be in a department that is led by a professional HOD; Ms. [REDACTED]. Even though I've been through unpleasant situations with my colleagues; which I'm sure is a normal thing; I can still wrap up the misunderstandings peacefully and maintain a good relationship with all of the staff. I've always wanted to be a teacher, and I have always tried by best since day one, luckily all my efforts were highly appreciated by my boss and I started to have a significant reputation among all other departments not to mention the administration.

I always had this passion and need to learn more, being a mother of four makes it difficult for me to enroll in professional courses specially outside my working hours. Then that day came, we received a bulletin from the head of supervision requesting names for a special IELTS training course presented by an American IELTS instructor, a course which was in association with the [REDACTED]. Every teacher wanted to join, but not all could. I didn't fight for it as I was fortunately nominated by my HOD and was officially registered in it.

Since the course was held at our school in a separated building (other than the one we worked in), [the HOD] was responsible for arranging everything and she was enrolled in it too. We were divided into two groups, she was in the first, I was in the second. The course started, [the HOD] had to distribute some of her administrative work to the staff. The assistant head teacher; [REDACTED]; who was in a constant struggle to keep her position and who always ensured that she is the closest one to the administration in any way that is possible; was responsible for making sure that all our work was in a perfect flow, and I had to attend the administration's meeting instead of the HOD at the fifth period of that bad hair day.

"[the HOD] called, she needs you right away." [the assistant head teacher] addressed me.

"Where? Down at the training centre?" I replied.

"Yes." Said [the assistant head teacher] with a yellow smile.

I left my toasted sandwich on the table, wiped my hands and mouth, put some lipstick on and flew to the training centre. It took me some time to find [the HOD] since her mobile was on the silent mode, then there she was...

"Yes [the HOD]."

"Yes dear what's wrong?"

"[the assistant head teacher] said that you want me here"

"NO I DO NOT. I TOLD HER TO TELL YOU THAT THE ADMINISTRATION MEETING IS GOING TO BE HELD AT THE FOURTH PERIOD INSTEAD OF THE FIFTH!!" replied [the HOD] angrily. "WHY CAN'T I RELY ON YOU GUYS!!"

Well, the fourth period was almost finished. I ran to the meeting room, and there I found the members of the administration enjoying their coffee and snacks, which pretty much indicates that the meeting was over long before I have arrived.

"Oh it's the English department, you missed a lot of important points to discuss [The participant]." Said the principal.

"Sorry about that, I was informed late about the new timing."

A cold smile was all I got as a reply. It turned out that [the HOD] had told [the assistant head teacher] to inform me about the updated time a period before the meeting, which means I should've had enough time to get ready for it. What happened with [the assistant head teacher]? Why didn't she tell me then? And why did she confirm that I was needed in the training centre instead of the meeting room? There was only one answer to all of those questions. Yes, the same one that popped into your mind.

### **3.1 Participant C's Second Textual Narrative-In Response to B**

Oh I can totally feel you. Besides, we're in the same boat here, I'm also the only Kuwaiti teacher in my department, not to mention a decade younger than the youngest one of them. And sometime I feel that they see me as a kind of threat to them, because usually the local teachers get to have the priority in everything. I don't think it will surprise you to say that some of them pay great efforts in making me seem unreliable, unprofessional and unjust to the students.

It was that day when we had to submit our final grades to the administration before the finals. Our grading was supervised by the HOD and was double checked by the assistant head-teacher. I really took grading seriously at that time, believing that the grades should tell the actual level of the student. Unfortunately, the society's ideology doesn't accept that, so; I was asked by the HOD to increase the grades, and so I did but not generously.

All the teachers' grades were collected by the assistant head to have a second look, give her comments in case some changes needed, and to submit them to the administration. On the same day, she came to inform me that I was needed urgently by the head of the grading committee. When I reached the latter, I discovered that they weren't pleased with the grades of three low achievers in my class, whom I struggled throughout the year to reach their parents and push them to score more in their tasks, but all my trials came to failure as they were irresponsibly passive. She requests an immediate visit to the principal's office who started blaming me for their low grades and accusing me of not doing my job sufficiently. After defending my situation, she gave the order to make a curve to increase the grades of the whole class and stated that I needed special supervision on my work in the coming courses! I was disgusted by the idea of giving fake shining grades to students who rarely attended my class, and I was also upset and embarrassed as the situation occurred in front of a large and attentive audience.

I'm sure that the head assistant's job was to make sure that none of the teachers in department gets such a comment from the administration, and It wasn't shocking to know that she had given some suggestions for the nonlocal teachers to change their grades even after the HOD's revision, I was the only one who didn't get that. Luckily, I have a fair boss, and I made sure that she has a clear idea about what happened which in terms answered a lot of questions that she had on her assistant.

### 3.2 Participant C's Digital Narrative



#### **"The Knife In My Back"**

##### **Alec Benjamin Lyrics**

I am slowly learning that the things you  
promised me  
Are burning like the embers of a thousand willow trees  
And every single secret has been broadcast like TV  
Now all the threads are severed that were tying you to  
me

I thought we were friends, but now we're enemies  
I thought we were friends, but now we're enemies

Pull your knife out of my back, your blood runs black  
I was just surprised at how you turned on me so fast  
I let you in, I held you close  
My blood flows like a river cause I trusted you the most  
And now I know it's over (woo-oooh oooh)  
And now I know it's over (woo-oooh oooh)  
And now I know it's over (woo-oooh oooh)  
And now I know it's over (woo-oooh oooh)

I was so naive, I even let you in my home  
Took you out for dinner and let you wear my clothes  
I can't even breathe, I have your scent still in my nose  
It's like I almost miss you, I should have known

I thought we were friends, but now we're enemies  
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## Appendix 5: Sample of Data Analysis

### Textual and Digital Data Codes

Code	Meaning
1. Interpersonal Relations	Relationships with: students or colleagues.
2. Not belonging	The sense of not belonging.
3. Belonging	The sense of belonging.
4. Age	The issue of ageism.
5. Seen by others	Participants' belief of how others view them.
6. Support	The support received by others.
7. Teaching practice and beliefs	The participants teaching practice and beliefs.
8. Professionalism	Participants' perception of professionalism.
9. Nationality	Nationalism highlighted.
10. Voice	Developing a voice.

### Example of Textual Data Analysis

#### 1. Participant A's First Textual Narrative

##### *My Teaching Experience*

After working as an English teaching assistant at a private university for a few years, I decided to shift my career towards teaching in a public sector. The shift I had made from teaching in a private institute to a public institute was a change that I had wanted, but also feared because I was unfamiliar to the cultural difference that I might encounter. After my first week of teaching in a new environment, I was immediately taken back. I felt completely alienated as my department and the students I taught were from a background that I was not exposed to before in my teaching career. I was the youngest and newest instructor in the department, which was not a problem at all, or so I had thought. A lot of my colleagues felt like I did not belong, my eagerness to teach and help others was perceived as trying to make my colleagues look bad or that I had some mischievous intent to outperform them. During the first year of my teaching, I felt like I did not belong in the department. While there were some colleagues who were very helpful and thoughtful, I could not help but constantly second doubt their intentions as the majority were not welcoming. I was struggling to understand not only my colleagues' mentality, but also my students who did not take a liking to me easily. The more I tried to be a part of my department, the more it backfired. At that point, I did not know what to do, I was getting negativity even though I always kept to my own. Even though I was extremely uncomfortable, I decided to remain unruffled and not react to any hatred or gossip around me. I focused diligently on the relationship between the students and myself. Teaching is what mattered the most to me.

Nearing the end of the year, problems elevated to the extent that some colleagues who I never spoke to, came to support me once they saw that complaints were being filed against me without any valid reasoning. The support that followed was overwhelming, especially when my department head called me in for a meeting and recognized the effort that I had put into my teaching and into the department. My relationship with the head department flourished in a way that I did not think was possible. I started to be in charge of big events and my help was sought after from various teachers, some of which hated me at the beginning. My students, who I struggled to understand at the beginning, wanted me to continue teaching them in their following courses. The support I received started to outweigh the negative comments until they started to gradually dissipate. While I was not welcomed at the beginning of my new job, I felt like I earned both the respect of my students and colleagues the more I weathered through the problems that I faced. Slowly, with time, I realized that I may be disliked for reasons I may not know or fathom, but I definitely felt like I belonged and proved to be indispensable to the department.

## Example of Digital Data Analysis

### 3.2 Participant C's Digital Narrative



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# Appendix 6: Coded transcript of my project supervisor for inter-coder reliability comparison

Helen’s suggested codes:

1. age/youth
2. differences to colleagues
3. mistrust of colleagues
4. being undermined or damaged by colleagues
5. comparison with/to others
6. how others view me / the perceptions of others
7. confrontation
8. being heard / not being heard
9. nationality

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- helen donaghue** Agency - she made the decision
- helen donaghue** Fear of the unfamiliar
- helen donaghue** Feeling of alienation
- helen donaghue** Different to colleagues / youth
- helen donaghue** Perceptions of others / not
- helen donaghue** Comparison with others /
- helen donaghue** Not belonging
- helen donaghue** Mistrust of colleagues
- helen donaghue** Not understanding others
- helen donaghue** Not being liked
- helen donaghue** Not belonging
- helen donaghue** Support of colleagues / forming
  
- helen donaghue** Not welcomed
  
- helen donaghue** value