Identity Construction of EFL Learners of Translated Short Stories

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Abstract

Despite some investigations highlighting the role of English literary texts in learner identity construction, few studies have explored how integrating translated short stories from learners' native culture impacts L2 learners' identity reconstruction in EFL contexts. This study addresses how learning English through Persian short stories translated into English can affect reader identity reconstruction of Iranian undergraduate students of English. The researchers selected three translated stories of loyalty, justice, and love themes. After collecting the data through five WhatsApp semi-structured interviews and five open-ended questionnaires, the researchers applied qualitative content analysis to the data related to readers' self-descriptions of the initial L2 learning experiences, the story-based instructional stage, and their aspirations. The findings revealed significant alterations in the emotional and attitudinal states of the learners throughout the stages. Despite prioritizing different cultural and linguistic resources, the three participants highlighted the contribution of resources in language learning in the story-based stage and in their aspirations. All participants focused on the scaffolding role of their native language and culture in enhancing classroom interactions. The results would enlighten materials developers to integrate translated literary texts from Persian literature into language teaching programs.

Introduction

Many second language scholars have investigated the role of target language literature in conveying cultural codes to second-language learners, (Fenner, 2001; Komorowska, 2006; Rezaie & Naghibian, 2018; Zunshine, 2015). In recent years, incorporating English literary texts into language teaching programs has led to vigorous studies of how exposure to the new culture can impact ESL/EFL learners' self-perceptions (Altun, 2018; Rezaie & Naghibian, 2018; Schrijvers et al., 2016). According to Altun (2018), implementing these texts can enhance readers' cultural awareness, personal growth, and identity development. The investigations have already included explorations on the impacts of teaching English stories on second language learner identity construction (Fenner and Newby, 2000; Schrijvers et al., 2016; Shin & Riazantseva, 2015).

However, little attempt has been made to explore how translated short stories from learners' native culture, integrated into language teaching materials, affect second language learners' identity construction and development in foreign language contexts. While the educational setting of Iran boasting the rich Persian literature and culture seems to be an appropriate context for the research exploring the impacts of teaching source stories on language learners' self-images, this aspect of reader identity reconstruction, nevertheless, has remained under-researched. A lack of research on learner identity reconstruction in the socio-cultural context of language teaching hinders due recognition of Persian English learners' self-perceptions as an essential step in understanding the foreign language learning process and systemizing language teaching materials.

This study investigates how the English short stories of readers' native culture can affect the identity reconstruction of undergraduate learners in the EFL context of Iran. Accordingly, it intends to identify the contextual elements contributing to reader identity reconstruction. The study addresses these questions to fulfill the aim:

1. How are the identities of undergraduate Iranian English Literature students represented in the initial stages of learning English?

2. How are the Iranian English Literature students' identities constructed in the while-experience stage of language learning through the translated source stories?

3. How are the identities of undergraduate Iranian English Literature students represented in their future aspirations?

Review of the Literature

Literary texts provide various options for the transmission of culture alongside the linguistic aspect of the second language (Birjandi & Khatib, 2018; Heggernes, 2021). Secondly, they provide golden opportunities to see the interaction between language and culture. Their next contribution is that literary texts are concerned with self-image and identity (Fenner, 2001). According to Schrijvers et al. (2016), they can enhance readers' self-modification and potential to imagine the situations and emotions of others.

In Kramsch's view (2002), cultural learning enables learners to construct an interpersonal relationship with people from other cultures with empathy, respect, and justice. This integration

raises learners' cultural knowledge, awareness, and competence of the target and source cultures (Fenner & Newby, 2000).

Selecting cultural content from the source language has been a significant challenge. Recently, cultural teaching programs have undermined cultural diversity to develop intercultural learners in ELT contexts. Accordingly, cultural content is not limited to the dominating target culture of English-speaking cultures (Chinh, 2013; Kim, 2022). As Cortazzi and Jin (1999) noted, cultural contents fall into the three categories of target, source, and international cultures. Over the past two decades, the growing trend has likely been expanding learners' cultural awareness of various cultures (Chinh, 2013; Hişmanoğlu, 2005; Yuen, 2011). Turning to the socio-cultural advantages of using short stories in EFL classrooms, Pathan (2013) argued that the stories from the native culture of EFL learners conveying their national heritage also attract their attention due to familiarity and national pride rejuvenation. The incorporation of native culture stories contributes to developing cultural and intercultural competence.

The Theoretical Framework of the Study

L2 Learner Identity, Imagined Community and Language Investment

To provide the operational concept of learner identity, Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009) presented the conceptual framework of language learner identity, exploring learners' identity through analyzing their past, present, and future self-images. They (2009) undermined L2 ideal future selves with their favorite aspirations and attributes. Coll and Falsafi (2010) introduced a comprehensive framework of identity development. Likewise, they focused not only on the stories of previous self-experiences but also on the role of future learning aspirations. They (2010) conceptualized learner identity through the socio-cultural approaches to identity construction. The scholars (2010) categorized learner identity into situated/short timescale construction and cross-situational/long-timescale reconstruction. This holistic approach can investigate learner identity reshaped by the informal and formal instructional contexts, events, and experiences. In their opinion, formal education functions as an arena for self-construction and reconstruction by engaging in some social and instructional activities in specific communities (2010). Richards (2021) also asserted that second language learners reshape their self-images, leading to different attitudes, motivations, and approaches to using and learning the language.

Beinhoff (2013) highlighted L2 learners' struggling to analyze, understand, and actively join the aspirational communities with different linguistic and cultural features, which leads to reframing their views and reconstructing their self-images. Similarly, Teng (2019) regarded the conflict between the current community of practice and the aspirational community that the learners are willing to join as the component affecting learner identity reconstruction. Underlining the multiplicity of identity, Kramsch (2013) confirmed that learners strive to liberate themselves from the identities imposed by the existing institutional structures and reclaim a new one among the multiple identities they are experiencing to correspond with the one they are willing to have.

Concerning the relationship between investment, language learning, and imagined communities, as Norton Peirce (1995) argued, investment is concerned with the identity construction of second language learners. The learners' investment in L2 learning is associated with the investment in dynamic social identities. While learning the language, they conceptualize their senses of themselves and their relations to social contexts. Kramsch (2013) also confirmed that investment concerns the learners' commitment to participate in social interactions and use language for some perspective benefits such as acquiring and enhancing cultural and material resources for cultural capital and social power. Kanno and Norton (2003) highlighted the significant impacts of imagined communities on L2 learners' investment. Exploring imagined communities' sheds light on the learners' willingness to reconstruct a range of identities reframing their investment in the present and prospective language practices and activities (2003).

The present study adopted the social constructionist approach highlighting the role of context-congruent resources and constraints in developing and reconstructing learner identity (Hedegaard, 2012; Wortham, 2006). The researchers employed the two theoretical frameworks of identity construction devised by Coll and Falsafi (2010) and Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009). Building on the frameworks, we explored learners' identity construction by focusing on their past, present, and future self-images. We deductively analyzed the data associated with their situated experiences of the story-based instructional stage. To explore the cross-situational/long-timescale aspects of identity reframing, the researchers analyzed their narrated past experiences and future aspirations. The justification behind implementing the frameworks can be the nature of learners' identity presentations through positioning themselves in former life experiences, expressing their views about themselves, their ideologies, and their ever-evolving expectations as members of multiple communities.

Short Stories and L2 Learner Identity Construction

Despite the interwoven relationship between learner identity and literature (Rezaei & Naghibian, 2018; Shin & Riazantseva, 2015), few studies have investigated how translated short stories originally from the native culture of L2 learners impact their identity reconstruction. Previous studies highly focused on the impacts of teaching English literary texts on second language learners' identity (Fenner and Newby, 2000; Schrijvers et al., 2016; Shin & Riazantseva, 2015).

Following contemporary learner identity theories, Shin and Riazantseva (2015) explored the identity construction of three Korean students reading an English novel named *The Catcher in the Rye*. They (2015) investigated how the research cases reframed their self-perceptions while reconstructing the novel concepts. The researchers collected the data through think-aloud protocols, participants' written responses, and semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data analysis revealed that L2 readers' engagement with the literary text led to multiple identities at social and personal levels. The findings also highlighted the role of contrasting conceptualizations related to different cultures and in different contexts in rebuilding readers' multiple identities reported. Unlike the present research, Shin and Riazantseva (2015) analyzed incorporating the literary text from the target literature.

Rezaei and Naghibian (2018) explored the role of literary texts in reconstructing Iranian English learners' cultural competence. They designed a syllabus for English Short Stories encompassing short stories of some eminent American fiction writers. 13 students of the intermediate to upper-intermediate level participated in the study. To collect data, the researchers used journal entries and semi-structured interviews. The results of the content analysis revealed some patterns of change. Even though the participants had some presuppositions about their source and target cultural values, the course discussions contributed to developing a more positive attitude towards both cultures. Their positive cultural stance led to a more international perspective.

Regarding the shortcoming of the relevant studies, there is a need to address the identity construction of foreign language learners where short stories from their native culture are incorporated into language teaching programs, especially in the Iranian EFL context.

Method

Participants

In the initial session of the course, the first researcher arranged an online meeting with all undergraduate students of English literature at Yazd University attending Oral Reproduction of Short Stories in the fall semester of 2021. The researcher presented the requirements and objectives of the project. To identify the proficiency level of the fifteen students who filled the consent form to participate in the investigation voluntarily, the researcher conducted The Oxford Placement Test. According to the test results, eight were at upper-intermediate or advanced levels. Through purposeful sampling, the researchers selected three, including two females and one male representing initial maximum diversities of characteristics. The justification for choosing the participants with varied ways of initiating L2 learning and the length of language learning would lie in identifying with-in-case diversities in addition to common cross-case themes in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, selecting adequately proficient participants would allow them to articulate their views about social issues affecting their self-images and the story content more fluently.

Regarding how different they commenced learning English, Mary attended language institutes for family benefits. While Sargol listened to English music, watched films, and played games to initiate learning English, Sepehr's condition was quite different from others (Table 1). Concerning the length of learning English, Sargol and Sepehr's figures were approximately similar (14 & 15), but Mary reported five years of learning the foreign language. Mary was of upper-intermediate, but others were of advanced.

Table 1 presents the participants' gender, age, proficiency level, and the length and way of learning English.

Table 1. *Participants' Demographic Data*

Pseudonym	Age	Years	Gender	Linguistic level	Way of learning English
Mary	40	5	F	Upper intermediate	Attending L2 institute classes to help her son in English
Sargol	20	14	F	Advanced	Listening to music, playing games, and watching films
Sepehr	20	15	M	Advanced	Living abroad and attending bilingual schools and private classes

Materials

Considering the potential of these cultural themes for provoking classroom interactions and discussions, we selected the short stories of loyalty, justice, and love themes. The texts included three translated Persian short stories entitled *The Story of Shahrayar and Shahrazad, Justice, and The Broken Cup,* representing the cultural conceptualizations of these themes (Sharifian, 2017) within the Persian literature. Each fiction of a different length was taught and discussed in two or more sessions (See Online Resources). The longest one incorporated approximately 3500 and the shortest less than 1000 words. The professor, the research supervisor, asked a student to read paragraphs aloud when other learners were to participate in the discussions about the themes, similar and different cultural concepts, and the story content.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

To attain a rich profile of their self-perceptions and avoid the errors of single-source data collection (Ortaçtepe, 2015), the researchers administered the following data collection methods:

Five Open-ended Questionnaires

The researchers devised questionnaires by reviewing the relevant literature (Norton, 2003; Ushioda and Dörnyei, 2009). Two specialized experts checked them and applied some alterations to ensure their appropriacy for the intended objectives. A pilot study was conducted on two of the same population to reassure their validity.

The questionnaires provided space to record the learners' context-congruent language learning experiences in different stages. They recorded their initial attitudes, emotions, and cultural views in the first questionnaire, the translated Persian story-based instructional experiences in the second, third, and fourth ones after learning each story in the online classes, and their perspective aspirations related to L2 learning in the last questionnaire (Table 2). The research team developed questionnaires by reviewing the relevant literature. The researchers revised the questionnaires after being checked by three specialized experts to ensure the appropriateness of items for the intended objectives.

Five WhatsApp Semi-Structured Interviews

To construct the interviews, we studied the relevant literature (Norton, 2013; Sacklin, 2015), collected a range of statements, altered them into question items checked and reworded by two professors of applied linguistics. Two researchers interviewed the participants Via Whatsapp, asking them to voice their situation-based self-perceptions, world understandings, and social roles (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2019). Noteworthy is that the team reused some of Sacklin's

items (2015) to compare the participants' current self-image to their self-description of the initial stages of English learning in the second, third, and fourth sessions after reading each story in class (Appendix 1). Moreover, we asked them to vocalize their relevant plans and aspirations in the last interview. We also asked them for clarifications in the related interview session based on the questionnaires previously emailed. Their narrations were recorded and manually transcribed.

Table 2 shows data collection procedures through interviews and questionnaires as follows:

Table 2. *Data Collection through Interviews and Questionnaires*

Data collection period		Data collected Fall semester of 2021
Five open-ended questionnaires		
The 1st	The 1st session	Demographic data and initial learning experiences
The 2nd	A half hour during the semester	Self-perceptions of *The Story of Shahrayar and Shahrazad*
The 3rd	A half hour during the semester	Self-perceptions after Justice
The 4th	A half hour during the semester	Self-perceptions after The Broken Cup
The last	A half hour during the last session	Future aspirations of L2 learning
Five WhatsApp interviews		
The 1st	45 minutes after the 2nd session	Audio-taped initial L2 learning experiences
The 2nd, 3rd, and the 4th	A half hour after each story	Audio-taped story-based self-images
The last	45 minutes after the final session	Audio-taped expectations related to L2

Exploring language learners' identity reframing required the researchers to work convivially with them for four months. Roughly twenty-four pages of data were accumulated to be analyzed. We had WhatsApp contacts with the participants throughout the period to conduct Member checks asking them to assess the data verification concerning collection and analysis. To ascertain dependability, a professor in applied linguistics, as an external auditor, scrutinized the data during the data collection and analysis to understand whether the data analysis and the related findings were valid. The second team member coded the data of interviews and questionnaires independently to ensure reliability. It indicated a high degree of agreement, 80%. Finally, we discussed the subtle differences and modified the codes. Performing these processes can establish research trustworthiness (Creswell, 2014).

Following Norton (2013), the researchers devised three individual composite files indicating the data of the questionnaires and the transcribed interviews. Comparing and contrasting the data, we identified some codes. Administering the relevant thematic analysis of qualitative research data (Saladana, 2016), the researchers extracted recurrent categories from the identical codes. Based on the common categories, we formed three major themes. The themes were the attitudinal, affective, and social dimensions of the learners' experiences. This framework helped us enrich the three-stage analysis through the cross-case themes and within-case diversities.

Concerning the ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality, the researchers asked them to choose a favorite pseudonym to be referred to throughout the process of data collecting and disseminating findings. During different phases, the researcher gave assurance of confidentiality to encourage them to express their experiences conveniently.

Findings

This section presents the data of the participants' self-images in the three stages of language learning, namely the initial, the translated Persian story-based, and the prospective ones. The researchers highlighted within-case analysis to present critical elements related to the individual dimensions of identity reconstruction. Understanding the effects of context-based factors on self-image and investment (Hedegaard, 2012; Wortham, 2006), the researchers investigated the contributive and debilitative elements of the context.

Initial Attitudes and Emotions of L2 Learning Experiences

Table 3. illustrates how the participants described themselves in the initial stages of second language learning. Analyzing the data, the researchers derived the themes of attitude towards English native speakers and culture and the participants' emotional state. They all reported that centering on or ignoring the cultural diversities leads to different views and positions towards English native speakers, their language, and culture (Excerpt 2, September 2021; Excerpt 13, September 2021; Excerpt 28, September 2021).

Table 3. *Participants' Self-images of the Initial Stages of L2 Learning*

Name	Emotional state	Attitudes towards English speakers and culture
Mary	Anxious and unconfident due to stepping into a challenging world	Considering them as strangers and spacemen with presuppositions like being unfriendly
		Highlighting cultural differences
Sargol	Displeased with unfamiliarity with their culture, especially the masterpieces	Considering them as good language and culture teachers
		Appreciating their different culture
Sepehr	Feeling pleased with learning L2 among English peers	Considering them as great models and superior speakers to be mimicked
		Understanding the superiority and internationality of L2 but not worried about cltural differences as a lingo

Self-descriptions in the Source Story-based Stage

The researchers derived three common cross-case themes and within-case diversities associated with the translated source story-based instructional stage. The themes show how the participants' affective, attitudinal, and social aspects are related to engaging with the stories. The common themes are as follows (Table 4):

Table 4. *Common Cross-case Themes of the Story-based Stage*

Common themes of the story-based instructional stage

Positive emotions related to
feeling confident discussing stories from Persia in the classes
experiencing a sense of familiarity with the story concepts
appreciating the opportunities to discuss current social issues
Consistent self-improvement perspective
Understanding the importance of Persian literature and culture
Enhancing willingness to participate for intellectual growth
Consolidating Persian cultural knowledge for preserving and sharing
Strengthening linguistic resources of vocabulary and structure
Self-narrated social interactions in different contexts
Passionate readers with a large amount of ambiguity tolerance
Social analyzer sharing views and values from the culturally rich background

Within-case analyses are presented in this section to determine emergent individual elements impacting their self-identification. Mary narrated a blending of excitement, admiration, and sadness while interacting with translated Persian texts (Excerpts 4 & 9, October 2021). Sargol highlighted her consistent eagerness to participate and analyze the story content in most discussions and enhance his proficiency simultaneously (Excerpts 17 & 23, October 2021). Sargol noted, "As an enthusiastic language learner full of energy all the time, I take part in classroom interactions no matter how competent I am" (Excerpt 18, October 2021). Sepehr was pleased with the golden opportunities offered to analyze the characters' rights and express his voice (Excerpts 30, 32 & 34, October 2021). As he mentioned: "I feel confident to express my voice ignoring social considerations. I put myself in the characters' shoes easily and form views because of feeling connected with them" (Excerpt 31, October 2021).

Concerning their attitudes towards social interactions, Mary preferred to observe social constraints, discuss the stories corresponding with her Iranian and Islamic values, and avoid talking about controversial issues (Excerpts 5 & 8, October 2021). It might represent the relationship between her non-participation and unwillingness to invest in specific contexts due to respecting socio-cultural considerations. Highlighting her enthusiastic perspective, Sargol reported that taking part in the story-based practices would raise her social awareness (Excerpts 19 & 20, October 2021). To identify the facilitative factor fostering her desire for language investment, her enthusiasm for participation in classroom activities to acquire and enhance her social resources seems remarkable. Sepehr **appreciated the role of** reconstructing his personal views while taking part in challenging classroom practices. Accordingly, challenging class discussions would be the facilitative elements enhancing his language investment into the story-based activities (Excerpts 31 & 35, October 2021).

Future Aspirations Associated with Learning English

Regarding the potential self-image of the participant, the researchers extracted a range of commonalities and individual preferences self-reported in the last stage.

Table 5 shows common cross-case expectations and aspirations that emerged from the data of the post-story-based stage. They were related to their imagined communities and cultural resources.

Table 5. *Emerging Themes of the Participants' Future Self-images*

Common themes of prospective self-identifications
Participants' relations with imagined communities
Desire to be an interactive member in national communities
Desire to interact with international communities
Participants' desire for cultural competence
Enhancing Persian cultural knowledge
Enhancing intercultural knowledge

Describing their expectations and aspirations, Mary documented different aspirations, namely transmitting her native cultural knowledge to other communities. She recorded,

> *As a perpetual language and culture learner, I would like to study my Persian literature to afford to convey my rich literature and culture to foreigners more efficiently, not only through direct conversations but also via social media. This interaction can raise my cultural understanding* (Excerpt 10, December 2021).

Sargol highlighted job opportunities abroad as "a creative and fluent multilingual professor teaching language and literature at a foreign university" (Excerpt 25, December 2021), while Sepehr undermined making rapport with the target community members as a successful tour guide. In sum, these participants desire to enhance their career-related competence for their domestic or foreign prospective jobs (Excerpts 38 & 39, December 2021).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study intended to explore how incorporating the translated short stories of readers' native culture into language teaching courses can affect the identity construction of Iranian undergraduate students of English Literature in different stages of story-based instructional and the aspiration stages. It also investigated how their identities represented themselves in the beginning stages of learning L2. Findings indicated that some facilitative and debilitative components of the classroom community could affect learner investment in L2 learning. Although each participant prioritized raising diverse resources, namely social, cultural, and material (Table 4 & Table 5), all deemed enhancing the resources an influential element in language investment and learning via short stories. They associated their self-images with their propensity to various resources and capitals in the story-based stage, namely the lexical and grammatical ones (Table 4), and in their aspirations (Table 5). This finding might provide evidence to confirm the relationship between learner identity, language investment, and language learning reported by Norton (2013) and Sung (2020).

Concerning the participants' self-images and attitudes towards English native speakers in the initial stages of learning English, the first research question, two participants (Sargol and Sepehr) showed orientation toward the English language and culture. They also reported

longings for learning the language and culture of native speakers as their role models. They all expressed their desire to reconstruct their identity and move to a language and culture learner. This attraction might inspire them to invest in learning the English language and culture. These findings are in line with the results found by Rezaie and Naghibian (2018).

The second research question concerned their identity construction in the translated Persian story-based stage. While tolerating some ambiguities, all participants engaged in the story-based class discussions to discuss the current social issues, raise their knowledge of Persian literature and culture for sharing, and facilitate their intellectual self-development (Table 4). The translated stories from Persian literature would likely offer a common ground to all participants for self-expression due to their familiarity with the Iranian cultural concepts. However, as the participant caring about conformity with religious and cultural patterns, Mary highlighted the importance of social considerations of the teacher-dominated systems and religious beliefs regulating her participation. As she reported, she remained silent and avoided participating in particular classroom activities to represent the alignment and attachment to her local communities (Excerpt 8, October. 2021). The findings indicate that the same participant, Mary, implemented different investment strategies and portrayed multiple identities in varied contexts. Despite being highly motivated, she avoided participating in some classroom practices. As proposed by several scholars (Block, 2007; Norton, 2013; Norton and Toohey, 2011), L2 learners in different identity positions can partly reframe their access to resources and their relations with the social contexts leading to alternative states of investment and identity reconstruction. Accordingly, being in a particular position confines her rights to analyze and discuss the short stories related to her culture. This finding might represent the relationship between non-participation and unwillingness to invest (sung, 2020) in originally Persian-story-based instructional contexts.
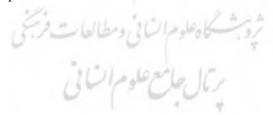
Regarding the last research question, which explored how their identities are represented in future expectations and aspirations, analyzing the data of their potential identities and comparing them with those of the initial stages of learning English indicate that individual learners documented particular inconsistencies throughout the investigation. Corroborating what Leary and Tangney recognized (2011), the findings showed the context sensitivity of self-descriptions fluctuating from context to context. While Mary commenced L2 learning with embarrassment, she recorded enthusiasm to communicate with foreigners by different means in her potential role. For Sepehr and Sargol, the dynamicity of their self-image presented two varied profiles. Sepehr's narrations confirmed initiating from highlighting foreigners' superiority and approaching making rapport with them as a successful tour guide of adequate proficiency. Sargol represented herself as the language learner displeased with unfamiliarity with the target culture and considering foreigners as role models in the initial stages but a competent bilingual professor in her future role. Corresponding with Teng's findings (2009), both perceived themselves as communicative members of national and international English-speaking communities with adequate job-related skills willing to invest in learning English. In sum, the findings indicate incremental reframing moving from anxiety and inferiority towards cultural diversity appreciation, positive self-identification, and desire for intercultural development. Despite the varying degrees of alteration during the timespan, a growing trend

of self-reconstruction confirming Rezaie and Naghibian's findings (2018) covers the identity pattern throughout the investigation.

Investigating imagined communities and identities can help language teachers design and implement activities worthwhile for language learners to invest in. This material development project seemingly encourages the incorporation of literary texts from source culture into educational practices. Although such studies cannot generally represent different learners' identities, they might clarify some individual features of identity reconstruction that are not easy to grasp in quantitative research. The results might enlighten Iranian material developers and curriculum designers to develop context-congruent materials improving cultural competence.

As Larsen-Freeman (2019) acknowledged, the methodologies implemented to investigate identity reconstruction in language learners are not clear-cut due to the complex nature of identity. Some more limitations seem plausible due to the nature of data collected through different self-reporting instruments. The researcher encountered various limitations in administration, namely the growing difficulty of access to the participants over four months and cooperation with the professor teaching the course. The current findings are not generalizable to other contexts due to the context-based nature of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014).

In addition, identity construction involves more longitudinal approaches to represent some effective identities leading to more productive learning outcomes in the language communities. Possible new areas for further investigations can be identity reconstruction in the second language learning communities through multiple literary texts of source and target cultures. Further investigations can also highlight the relatively under-researched second language classroom identity (Norton, 2013). Another avenue for further research might be investigating gender-related aspects of Persian learners' identity while partaking in social interactions in different communities of practice.

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Appendix 1: A WhatsApp Semi-Structured Interview

1. How were you feeling while reading this story?
2. How does this short story impact your attitudes and views?
3. How does the short story impact your interactions?
4. What motivates you to take part in classroom discussions?
5. How do the class interactions affect your self-perception?
6. How can you compare your *present self-perception* to your self-image of the initial stages of learning L2*?*
7. How can reading these stories impact your *future* interactions?
8. How can reading these stories affect your expectations and aspirations?