

Original Paper

How school Memories Inform Possible Selves of an English Pre-Service Teacher

Qianqian Pan^{1*} & Jianhong Huang¹

¹ School of English Education, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China

* Qianqian Pan, E-mail: pqqextraordinary@163.com

Received: April 10, 2023

Accepted: April 27, 2023

Online Published: May 9, 2023

doi:10.22158/elsr.v4n2p70

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/elsr.v4n2p70>

Abstract

Employing narrative prompting and interviewing, this qualitative study asked an English pre-service teacher to recall his memories of secondary schools and consider the significance of those memories. The participant recounted various memories related to the characteristics and behavior of his secondary school teachers, which fell into three main categories: “why did they ignore me”, “then they saw me” and “finally, he came and save me”. These memories revealed the barriers and supports the interviewee encountered in different educational environments, which greatly influenced the formation of his desired and feared possible selves. Moreover, the pre-service teacher recognized a conflict between the possible selves and teaching practices, and attempted to negotiate the past memories with future career, which was referred to as “no more acting against my beliefs”. The implications of pre-service teacher’s school memories and possible selves were discussed in the context of teacher development program.

Keywords

school memories, possible selves, teacher reflection, teacher development

1. Introduction

Many earlier studies have indicated that the process of becoming a teacher involved retrospective activities that look back on past experiences and future-oriented activities that prepare for the future (Avraamidou, 2019; Balli, 2011; Wall, 2016; Carrier et al., 2017; Hamman et al., 2010; Lutovac & Kaasila, 2014; Pellikka, Lutovac, & Kaasila, 2018). It has been suggested that pre-service teachers (PSTs) often hold pre-constructed ideas about teaching, as shaped and sculpted by their individual schooling experiences, when they commence their studies. Furthermore, these experiences, perceptions or memories had a prevailing influence on their views of their role as prospective educators, including their understanding of the responsibilities of a teacher, their behavior in a classroom (Bächeer & Salas, 2021;

Lutovac, 2020; McGarr & Gavalton, 2019; Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Furlong, 2013; Hudson et al., 2010; Trotman & Kerr, 2001) and the kind of future-oriented identities, that is, possible selves (Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Possible selves address “how individuals think about their potential and their future” (Markus & Nurius, 1986), and describe the importance and dynamics of self-relevant, future-oriented self-concepts, and how these self-concepts relate to motivation for present and future action (Hamman et al., 2013a). However, only a few studies have examined the possible selves in an educational context, while many studies have investigated possible selves in the field of psychology (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Cross & Markus, 1991).

The present study explored how recollections of school shaped the future development of pre-service English teachers. The concept of possible selves, described as both stable traits and changeable in response to time and context (Oyserman & Markus, 1990), as well as in narrative terms (e.g., Lutovac, 2020), was applied to investigate how the pre-service teacher’s narrated past school memories might influence his future career aspirations in the classroom and inform his approach to navigating the relationship between those memories and his future career. The pre-service teachers were thus provided with the opportunity to get a better understanding of how they were situated and how they situated themselves in the community of language teachers. Meanwhile, the teacher education programs were encouraged to reconsider the role of school memories and possible selves in course scheduling.

2. Literature Review

2.1 School Memories

In the early years of the 21st century, educational historians began to have an increasing interest in “school memory” as a historical object, owing to a shift in the epistemological foundations and heuristic objectives in this field of study (Meda & Viñao, 2016). Being seen as a historical process rather than merely as a historical source, school memory was not simply “from within” (i.e. what school was like), but also “from without” (i.e. how it was perceived by people) (Meda & Viñao, 2016). Thus, exploring school memories could not only inform us of the context of schools and school characteristics, it also provided insights into the underlying motivations of students’ behavior in the classroom, the interactions between educators and the educated which would support or prohibit students’ academic or social success in school.

Despite of limited research on school memories, it provided theoretical and empirical explanations for the way social exclusion was constructed among young adults with disabilities (Díez, 2009), the association between previous experiences of peer maltreatment during junior secondary school and negative indices of adjustment in early adulthood (Rosen et al., 2012), the correlation between forty-seven adult dyslexics’ unhappy and distressing school experiences and their cyclical pattern of failure at school (Hughes & Dawson, 1995), thirty-seven adult literacy students dropping out of school (Terry, 2009), and the feelings and thoughts of being marginalized in high school and university (Stoddart, 2001),

and the impact of the schooling experience on adolescents with specific learning disabilities (Karande, Mahajan & Kulkarni, 2009).

2.2 Memories and PSTs

School memories possibly accompany individuals throughout their lives, and they may be reactivated at different points of life, especially during points of educational transitions (Miller, DilworthBart, & Hane, 2011). As the pre-service teachers are beginning the transition from student to teacher, their school memories may be stimulated and active during the teacher education program.

However, there has been a dearth of how school memories affect the thoughts and behaviors of pre-service teachers. Through a self-reflection assignment, fifty-nine pre-service teachers were asked to write about their earliest significant school memories. The memories were found to influence those teachers' values, beliefs and expectations for future teaching practices (Hook, 2008). The study by Miller and Shifflet (2016) explored the writing samples of 69 elementary pre-service teachers and revealed that past memories of school could shape future visions of the teacher self. With four pre-service teachers revisiting their school memories, the role of experienced professionals in pedagogical identities formation was examined in the study by Rodreigues and his colleagues (2018). The findings revealed that the interactions with more experienced professionals might create tensions prompting student teachers to put in motion their knowledge of self, the profession, education at large (Rodrigues et al., 2018). In the autobiographical recollections of eighty-one pre-service teachers, it was found that the memories of failure or success were constructed through social referencing and future referencing, and they would affect their future academic and career preferences (Kaya, 2017). Adopting a mixed approach, Bächler and Salas (2021) investigated the role of thirty pre-service teachers' emotionally significant elementary memories in their conceptions about the relationships between emotions and teaching-learning processes. Still, relatively few qualitative studies exist on school memories, and even fewer ones focus on a specific discipline. As Boyd and his colleagues (2013) pointed out, there was little information available on how preservice teachers could begin to critically examine their past as they began to develop their future professional identities.

2.3 Possible Selves of Pre-service Teachers

Possible selves represent what kind of person individuals hope or fear to be in the future, and serve as benchmarks to judge their current progress and personal attributes (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In the field of teacher education, possible selves have been examined in various contexts. Hamman et al. (2010) explored the differences of possible selves between pre-service teachers and novice in-service teachers, and four main categories emerged from the analysis of desired and feared possible selves of novice in-service teachers: interpersonal relationships, classroom management, instruction and professionalism. It was found that pre-service teachers were more likely to formulate task-focused possible selves while in-service teachers formulate quality-focused possible selves. Differences between these two cohorts of teachers suggested an evolving journey potentially influencing the growth of a teacher's identity.

Applying possible selves in science teaching, Hong and Greene (2011) explored eleven pre-service teachers' hoped and feared selves, which included six categories focusing on the content knowledge, classroom management ability, teaching effectiveness, the caring role of teachers, attitudes toward students and teaching, as well as the relationship with fellows. These categories were primarily affected by student teachers' diverse past experiences related to teaching and learning. In the context of mathematics teaching, two types of possible selves were identified, decisive and irresolute selves, with six pre-service teachers narrating their mathematical experiences (Lutovac & Kaasila, 2014). Similarly, three pre-service music teachers also reported two types of possible selves, that was, positive possible selves as successful classroom music teachers, and feared possible selves as failing to clearly communicate ideas, classroom management, and fellow relationships (Dabback, 2017). These two types of possible selves bore some similarities to the decisive and irresolute selves mentioned before. Concentrating on the changes in pre-service science teachers' possible selves throughout their teacher preparation, the longitudinal study by Pellikka, Lutovac, and Kaasila (2022) interviewed three pre-service teachers about their future aspirations as science teachers from cognitive and affective dimensions at various time points. Affected by the science method course, a clear upward change was induced as the wish to have more content knowledge evolved into the more profound wish to be an expert. Besides, in the affective dimension, the hoped-for self of "shaking off prejudiced beliefs" was changed into "passing on a positive attitude" (Pellikka, Lutovac, & Kaasila, 2022). Brady (2019) contributed to this line of literature by bringing the possible selves into investigating the motivation of bilingual teachers. It was found that the dynamics of L2 selves could be facilitated or hindered by possible or ideal professional selves, which supported a deeper reflection on desires and responsibilities in overlapping self domains. Without focusing on a specific discipline, sixty-nine elementary preservice teachers were asked to write about their memories of elementary school and reflect on the meaning of those memories in the study by Miller and Shifflet (2016). The findings showed that memory might consciously or unconsciously construct desired and feared visions of the teachers they hoped or avoided to be.

However, the majority of studies on possible selves have rarely taken into consideration past school memories and focused on pre-service English teachers' perceptions of school memories and possible selves. The current study aimed to extend previously conducted research on possible selves by examining how the school experiences of a pre-service English teacher shape his possible selves. The following three guiding questions were posed: (1) What memories do the preservice teacher recall from secondary school and are they meaningful? (2) How does the preservice teacher connect his school memories and possible selves? (3) How does the preservice teacher negotiate the relationship between his school memories and future career?

3. Theoretical Framework

Possible selves, originally introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986), are individuals' future identity expectations. They are the cognitive components of hopes, fears, goals, and threats, and give the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization, and direction to these dynamics, serving as projections of what kind of person individuals could become, would like to become, and are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This diverse range of possible selves available to individuals often stem from their past experiences and historical backgrounds. Especially at transitional moments, memories and emotions can be triggered, impacting future thoughts and actions. Some memories can create a sense of optimism and hope for future selves that possibly include the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self. Others can evoke pessimistic images of dreaded identities, which could be the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self, or the bag lady self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This also goes for prospective teachers as they are in the transition from students to teachers, and their recollections of school experiences are easily reinvigorated. As for them, their hoped-for selves are those selves that they strive towards, such as, becoming "a knowledgeable teacher" or "a humorous teacher", and feared selves are those that they try to avoid, such as becoming "an irresponsible teacher" or "a boring teacher".

Possible selves perform two crucial functions: acting as incentives for future behavior and providing an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Firstly, possible selves exert motivational influence by providing incentives for individuals to achieve a hoped-for possible self, or avoid realizing a feared possible self (Hamman et al., 2013b). With individuals possessing an idealized self-image, they may be inclined to pursue their ideal self. Akin to goals, possible selves provide self-relevant targets that regulate an individual's efforts, persistence, and behavioral direction (Locke & Latham, 1990). Secondly, possible selves can serve informative and evaluative functions by providing individuals with insights into their progress towards achieving their desired or feared selves. According to Robinson and Davis (2001), these possible selves can act as behavioral blueprints that can prompt individuals to take action to move closer to their hoped-for selves or to avoid their feared selves. By monitoring their progress against these possible selves, individuals can receive timely feedback that can help them stay on track towards achieving their goals and aspirations.

Hence, the possible selves framework is supposed to be a promising approach for fostering self-reflection and facilitating personal growth among pre-service teachers, as it encourages them to reflect on their current behavior and make progress accordingly. Moreover, the application of this framework in the present study contributes to the literature on possible selves by addressing the underexplored role of past memories, which has been paid scant attention in previous research.

4. Methodology

Considering the exploratory nature of the research questions and the focus on examining the nature of participant's recollections of school and his possible selves, a qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate for this study. Additionally, a narrative approach was utilized as it was argued that the most effective means of capturing individuals' memories was through storytelling (Carter, 1993).

4.1 Participant and Context

The selected participant was a first-year male English pre-service teacher, Adam (pseudonym) who had little prior experience in teaching experience. He pursued a Master degree in subject teaching (English) after completing his Bachelor's degree in English. In the first year of the program, Adam had various courses related to curriculum and teaching methodology, educational psychology, academic writing, principles of pedagogy, among others. It was worth noting that the English teacher education program in the Chinese university where this study took place was a three-year program, with the goal of graduating students as qualified English teachers. As English student teachers in this program were primarily female, the inclusion of a male participant like Adam would provide valuable insights into the often-neglected aspects of English student teacher development from a male perspective. Furthermore, ethical approval was obtained from the participant before the study commenced.

4.2 Data Collection

We built on Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 20) who defined narrative research as "a way of understanding experience". Narrative methodology had proven to be advantageous in examining possible selves as written narratives often produced a great number of possible selves (Whitty, 2002). In this study, the recollections of the pre-service teacher pertaining to his educational experience in secondary schools were understood as narratives, and his possible selves were also examined through a narrative lens.

The present investigation drew upon a written narrative and oral accounts of Adam. Firstly, Adam was prompted to reflect upon memories pertaining to previous lessons and teachers, and to explicate the significance of these recollections. The primary prompts utilized to elicit his narrative were three-fold, inquiring: (1) what memories he retained from his secondary schools, (2) the meaning of these memories, and (3) his aspirations and apprehensions regarding his future role as a teacher.

The second oral accounts were collected from the interview with Adam, which sought to obtain more detailed evidence to confirm or disconfirm participant's statements in the written narrative, and to discover the connection between the school memories and possible selves. To ensure methodological consistency and rigor, the researchers utilized the structured protocols for interviewing and followed the wording and order of the interview questions. Additionally, the researcher might pose follow-up and probing questions as necessary. The interview, which last approximately sixty minutes, was fully audio-recorded and transcribed completely by the researchers. As it was crucial for the researchers to be reflective of and open with their own voices and positions in the research process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006), the writers assumed the role of qualitative researchers who engaged in ongoing negotiation and construction of meaning (Rui, 2016) with Adam by listening to his school memories and future incisions

and sharing the writer's own reflections during reading the narrative and interview. As a result, the spirit of "reciprocity" between researchers and participants in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2007) would be possibly achieved as the research might to some extent help Adam revisit his past school memories and gain deeper insights into his professional and cognitive development as a future educator.

4.3 Data Analysis

All of the collected data were subject to narrative analysis and categorical analysis of narratives was employed as the analytical technique (Lieblich et al., 1998) to reveal Adam's school memories and possible selves construction. Therefore, the collected narratives were analyzed in terms of their content and emerging categories one-by-one. The first step in analysis involved a holistic reading of the writing (Lieblich et al., 1998), which focused on identifying all the data excerpts containing Adam's future-oriented possible selves entwined with his recollections of school time. The second step was the actual analysis of narratives, which began with a careful examination of all the extracts in terms of their content. With no predetermined codes being utilized in the analysis, this step followed the inductive thematic coding which allowed themes and patterns to emerge from the data. The initial codes that were often descriptive in nature and were generated directly from the data were identified while researchers read through the data. Then, the researchers sought for patterns and connections between these codes and grouped them into broader themes or categories. Ultimately, the key themes and patterns in the data were identified, which was presented in the next chapter. Additionally, the data involved individual coding by each researcher, followed by a collective review of the coding when disagreements arose. After reaching a consensus, the researchers continued to code the remaining data and shared their coding with each other for review. This iterative process involved multiple rounds of cross-checking, which enhanced the reliability of the coding. The identified categories were also shared with Adam to invite his further comments, which also validated and enriched the data analysis results of the study.

5. Findings

This research investigated how a pre-service teacher's recollections of school might contribute to the possible selves development. The participant, Adam, provided a range of memories that shaped both his desired and feared selves in the teaching profession. Moreover, he displayed a deliberate effort to reconcile his past experiences with his future aspirations and formulated a concrete plan of action for his upcoming teaching endeavors. Through an inductive coding process, the data yielded four overarching categories, supported by relevant quotes and narratives.

5.1 School Memories

Adam recalled memories of five different teachers who served as great influencers for the kind of teacher he would like to become or not in the classroom.

5.1.1 'Why Did They Ignore Me'

As he was a junior secondary school student in grade nine, Adam encountered a new math teacher who exerted indelible influence on him. He had been struggling with math since fifth grade, but the first math teacher that came to his mind was the one from grade nine when he moved from a normal class to an elite class to seek "cure" for his poor academic performance.

...but I wasn't very good at school, especially at math. That math teacher was so pissed off that she asked me to go out to the corridor during class time and said "Why came to this class when you know nothing? Wasting space?"

This gesture of inhospitality happened on the first day Adam moved to the class. Adam recounted how his math teacher treated him differently from other students in the class, deliberately ignoring him while showing favoritism towards others. The tension lasted on and Adam was so discouraged that he "totally lost the confidence to learn math and didn't even want to attend the class".

Adam went on to recount an experience from his tenth-grade year, in which he was subjected to ridicule by his new math teacher after failing two finals with quite low scores. This incident left Adam feeling like a laughingstock and caused him to view math as a source of shame. Despite this setback, Adam still expressed a sense of optimism and "hope" for math learning.

In fact, I had this hope in me every time I met a new teacher, hoping that this teacher was somehow different, that I could somehow begin to make progress in math. Actually, I wanted to learn, but those teachers just didn't give me any chance to...I wonder why the teachers I met just wouldn't help. Why did they ignore me and just leave me there to fall?

This was all that Adam recalled about his math teachers in the interview. In an informal talk, he mentioned another math teacher who punished him for reasons forgotten with 100 squats. Adam struggled to complete even thirty squats, and started to feel increasingly uncomfortable as the teacher sat and laughed with other teachers. Adam speculated that this incident might have contributed to his weak foundation in math since it occurred when he was in seventh grade.

Adam's past experiences with his math teachers in school have had a lasting impact on him, influencing his feared teacher selves. In the written narrative, Adam clearly stated that:

I'm afraid of becoming the kind of teacher who delivers boring lessons, just going through the motions of teaching from the textbook, ignoring the problems that students face, being unfair, causing students' grades to drop instead of improving, and not being respected by students.

The math teachers' behaviors in class and the interactions between them left Adam feeling that they were unfair, uncaring for students, and even disrespectful to students. The teachers' teaching style was simply repeating what was written in the textbook, which made the classes dull and unengaging. These memories had a profound impact on Adam's psychology, causing him to develop a sense of fear and helplessness towards math learning. In addition, they shaped Adam's feared teacher self, one who resembled the math teachers that he had encountered in his own education.

5.1.2 'Then, They Saw Me'

Despite poor performance in math, Adam said that he had a gift for English. He had been influenced by an American singer and been practicing his songs since grade seven. He was confident about his ability to recite English readings but was never given the chance to showcase in front of his classmates. After one year of waiting, he was asked by the new English teacher to read a paragraph in the class, which was a success according to Adam because the teacher later asked him whether he had listened to BBC and said that he sounded like a native speaker. This was the first time that he had been praised in school as he could recall and it was such a great encouragement for Adam since he “found a sense of achievement in English”. However, the teacher never called his name again and was always teasing one of the students rather than teaching.

She was never really teaching. She just teased a boy in the class. I remember everyone was complaining and actually filed a complaint. But well, I kind of want to thank her because I was able to find a sense of achievement in English when I was never doing well at other subjects. I was glad that they saw me.

Following a positive experience of being acknowledged, Adam devoted a considerable amount of his time to improving his proficiency in English. However, the second time never came until two years later.

It was in the summer extension school that only open for the elite classes, but I managed to get in anyway. I was sitting at the last row, waiting for my chance to shine. Finally, the teacher called my name and I was asked to recite a whole passage, which was very long even for me. But luckily, I had been preparing for it and I recited in such a fluid way I could feel the whole class looking at me with admiration. As I finished, everyone started to applaud. I felt like I was at the top of the world, everyone cheering for me. It was amazing.

Adam emphasized the importance of praise, saying “if nobody praises you or applauds you, then you can’t know how good you are, can you?”. He ended this part of memory with the following words.

That’s so much I can recall about English teachers in secondary school. To summarize, I found my strength and I craved to be recognized but rarely had the chance.

In this recollection, Adam demonstrated his English talent by chance and received recognition and praise from his teacher, which filled him with confidence and a desire to showcase himself again in front of others. Although he had few opportunities to do so afterward, this experience allowed him to empathize with students’ yearning for opportunities and recognition from their teachers. This recollection also influenced his ideal self as a teacher, as he aspired to become “a caring, humorous, adaptable, capable, inspiring, and motivating teacher” for his students, which was written in his narrative.

5.1.3 'Finally, He Came and Saved Me'

Apart from English, Adam did not exhibit a significant level of academic engagement during his senior secondary school years. Despite the intense preparation for college entrance examination, he still maintained a rather lackadaisical attitude towards his studies, even when it came to the second semester of grade twelve. However, his attitude changed when a Chinese teacher “came and saved” him.

He was different from all the teachers I had met. He ushered me into the world of literature with fine language and enlightened me to pursue knowledge. He didn't approach me with the cliché that "you should study more and go to college to change your life". He achieved the same "awakening" effect in his lectures, subtly and unconsciously. I started to dived into all the papers to catch up and even tried to consult my classmates about math problems.

Adam's countenance lit up as he recounted his memories with the Chinese teacher whom he described as charming, romantic, and life-changing. This particular teacher had the ability to transform the previously boring Chinese class for Adam into an engaging and captivating one, leading him to the realization of the charm of knowledge. For the first time in the interview, Adam talked about his possible selves.

His wisdom really got into me. There were no class activities. It was just him talking, in an engaging and enlightening way. He is the teacher I want to become. He literally came and saved me.

What Adam mentioned here was his desired self, the teacher he wanted to become, to be an inspiring teacher like this Chinese teacher. Owing to the teacher's intervention, Adam ultimately achieved an unexpectedly high score in his college entrance examination, which he described as being "rescued" by the Chinese teacher.

5.2 Negotiating the Past and Future

In order to explore the potential implications of Adam's school memories for his future career in the teaching profession, a detailed examination of the written narrative and oral telling was conducted, which uncovered how Adam intended to utilize these experiences in his negotiation of the past and future.

5.2.1 'No More Acting Against My Beliefs'

As previously mentioned, Adam admired to be a "good" teacher like the Chinese teacher who had left a profound impact on him. However, during an internship, he found himself acting in a manner that contradicted his beliefs and had been haunted by the guilt ever since. He was teaching two classes that were not doing well academically and were notorious for misbehavior. To cope with this challenge, Adam had made great preparations for it. However, it did not play out as he expected.

I wanted to get close to the students, to know them, and let them know that they mattered. It worked at first, but as I got busy later, I started to get loose and didn't prepare for the class as seriously as before. That was not the kind of teacher I wanted to become, not in the slightest. Sometimes I really feel guilty. I blame myself for pushing the kind of teacher and class that I despised on those students.

This experience of inconsistency between belief and practice had a huge impact on Adam. He referred to it as a "memory of failure" and recounted it as an experience that he preferred not to recall. The account of negotiation came later after he talked about the meaning of being a teacher on his own initiative.

When you see a confused student, shouldn't you provide extra help? Teachers need to be able to see the needed student, to see students' signal for help. This is the meaning of teacher, isn't

it? Thus, these math teachers that I met had quite an influence on me. As you said, I don't want to see what happened to me happen to others... What I have learned these years in the master's program also has a positive impact on me. I get to reflect on myself as I read the TPD literature and become better. I quite look forward to the future, applying what I have learned. I feel like I am ready now. I will not act against my belief anymore.

We then asked Adam what he thought would be the challenge ahead, to which he answered:

The kids now know so much. I have to enrich myself to become well-rounded enough to get to these kids in the class, which is already a huge challenge already. I want to have a positive influence on them, but that's extremely difficult. I will do my best to let them sense the fun of learning.

Although Adam did not provide a detailed account of his plan for self-improvement, he acknowledged the challenge at hand and recognized the need for action to cope with it.

6. Discussion

This study examined the potential impact of school memories on the possible selves of an English pre-service teacher. The findings indicated that these memories could significantly shape the conscious and subconscious construction of their desired and feared selves. Given these results, it was recommended that teacher education programs enhance their reflective practices by incorporating both retrospective and future-oriented reflection, rather than solely relying on coursework to prepare students for their future careers.

6.1 How School Memories Influence Possible Selves

The findings uncovered that Adam's possible selves were influenced by both positive and negative school memories. Drawing upon his positive school memories, Adam sought to incorporate "fun", "inspiring", and "innovative" teaching methods into his own classroom activities. His recollections of the Chinese teacher who served as his model teacher left a lasting impact on his desired teacher self. This tendency could be understood through the lens of apprenticeship of observation (Borg, 2004), which posited that students observed their teachers' teaching practices and internalized the teaching values they observed (Conner & Vary, 2017). The observations of the Chinese teacher's pedagogical activities contributed to Adam's conceptualization of desired teacher self. This process of how school memories influenced possible selves also highlighted the necessity of pre-service teachers to have suitable role models to observe and learn from, which could be facilitated by providing mentoring relationships between pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. The significance of mentoring for preservice teachers has also been repeatedly addressed and supported in the existing literature (Valencia et al., 2009). In addition, it is suggested that teacher educators need to have awareness and consciousness that their relationships with pre-service teachers could function as a context where preservice teachers could develop role models (Hong & Greene, 2011).

Apart from Adam's positive school memories, his negative school experiences constituted a larger proportion in both oral telling and written narrative. These negative memories played a crucial role in shaping Adam's desired self, highlighting the intricate relationship between negative memories and the construction of possible selves. This formation of Adam's desired self can be understood through the lens of the anti-apprenticeship of observation, a concept explicated by Moodie (2016), which described how negative prior language learning experiences impacted teachers' cognition and instructional practices. Adam's negative school memories of being subjected to corporal punishment, verbal aggression, and unfair treatment by his English and mathematics teachers prompted him to become a compassionate and inspiring educator, who could foster a positive classroom atmosphere and take meticulous care of his students' learning needs. These negative memories as a learner fueled his intention to adopt a different approach to teaching, distinct from the English and mathematics teachers he encountered, which reflected the impacts of negative learning experiences on teachers' cognition. Additionally, the process of how negative memories influenced the possible selves could be categorized into three steps: (a) negative school memories as learners, (b) intention to do something different as a teacher and (c) possible selves and beliefs about teaching.

The recollections of both positive and negative school memories created conditions for the pre-service teacher to reflect, act and build his possible selves, which could be understood through the lens of observation of apprenticeship and anti-observation of apprenticeship. Therefore, it was significant for pre-service teachers to gain some cognitive control over their previous experience in order to adapt to new learning and practice (Borg, 2003).

6.2 Teacher Reflections

The process of becoming a teacher involved more than just acquiring theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills. Rather, it was a complex and ongoing process of identity development that was deeply intertwined with the teacher's past experiences and memories. In this regard, the pre-service teacher's attitudes and reflections towards their past school memories played a crucial role in shaping their possible selves and facilitating the negotiation between past school memories and future teaching career. By reflecting on past school memories, pre-service teachers could use these memories to construct possible selves, imagining the kind of teacher they wanted to be and the impact they wanted to have on their students. What's more, the pre-service teacher was able to disrupt and transform the cycle of reproduction in teaching that might perpetuate ineffective teaching practices and to navigate the complex relationship between past memories and future career aspirations through critical reflection.

However, the process of reflection could be challenging, particularly if pre-service teachers had negative memories of their own schooling experiences, as Adam's school memories showed. In such cases, teacher training programs should provide support and guidance to help pre-service teachers cope with these memories and use them constructively. In addition to individual reflection, collaborative reflection could also be a powerful tool for pre-service teachers. By sharing stories and experiences with one another,

pre-service teachers could gain new perspectives on teaching and learning and develop a deeper understanding of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their future students.

Overall, prospective reflection was a critical tool for pre-service teachers as they navigated the complex process of becoming a teacher. By reflecting on their past school memories and constructing possible selves, they could develop a strong sense of professional identity and a commitment to lifelong learning and growth. Teacher training programs should therefore value the development of reflective practices among pre-service teachers, providing them with the support and resources they need to succeed.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated how a pre-service teacher's past school memories influenced the development of their professional identity, specifically with regard to their desired and feared selves as a teacher. Employing a case study approach, the study involved interviewing one English pre-service teacher and prompting him to reflect on his experiences with various teachers, both positive and negative. The findings indicated that the pre-service teacher utilized both positive and negative memories to construct his desired and feared selves, with negative memories comprising a larger proportion of his memories. The participant also demonstrated the intention to negotiate between past experiences and present expectations, and had formulated a plan of action for his future career. Reflective practices played a critical role in facilitating this negotiation, underscoring the importance of cultivating reflective habits within teacher training programs.

Given the significance of reflective practices in pre-service teacher development, it is necessary to prompt students to reflect on their school memories and prospectively contemplate how these memories may intersect with their future teaching responsibilities. Adequately preparing teachers for their future classrooms should not solely involve textbooks and lectures, but rather, should value the development of reflective habits that will persist throughout their careers. By encouraging pre-service teachers to consider the impact of past school memories on their future selves as teachers, teacher training programs can establish a foundation for sustained and critical reflection, thereby promoting continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

However, the study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration. One limitation is related to the terminology used in the prompt that the use of the term "negotiation" may have been interpreted differently by the participant. Additionally, the study had a small sample size, as it only included one participant. Therefore, future research should aim to recruit a more diverse sample of pre-service teachers to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between possible selves and school memories.

References

- Avraamidou, L. (2019). Stories we live, identities we build: how are elementary teachers' science identities shaped by their lived experiences? *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, 14(1), 33-59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-017-9855-8>
- Bächler, R., & Salas, R. (2021). School Memories of Preservice Teachers: An analysis of Their Role in the Conceptions About the Relationships Between Emotions and Teaching/Learning Process. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.690941>
- Balli, S. J. (2011). Pre-service teachers' episodic memories of classroom management. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(2), 245-251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.004>
- Borg, M. (2004). The apprenticeship of observation. *ELT Journal*, 58(3), 274-276. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/58.3.274>
- Borg, S. (2003). Teacher cognition in language teaching: a review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do. *Language Teaching*, 36(2), 81-109. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444803001903>
- Boyd, A., Gorham, J., Justice, J., & Anderson, J. (2013). Examining the apprenticeship of observation with preservice teachers: The practice of blogging to facilitate autobiographical reflection and critique. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 40(3), 27-49.
- Brady, I. K. (2019). Possible Teaching Selves: The Challenges of Becoming a Bilingual Teacher. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 8(2), 145-154. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.8n.2p.145>
- Carrier, S. J., Whitehead, A. N., Walkowiak, T. A., Luginbuhk, S. C., & Thomson, M. M. (2017). The Development of Elementary Teacher Identities as Teachers of Science. *International Journal of Science Education*, 39(13), 1733-1745. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2017.1351648>
- Carter, K. (1993). The Place of Story in the Study of Teaching and Teacher Education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 5-12, 18. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X022001005>
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative Inquiry: A Methodology for Studying Lived Experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27(1), 2-81. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X060270010301>
- Conner, J., & Vary, G. (2017). Confronting Apprenticeships of Observation: How Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnership Complicates Conceptualization, Understanding, and Practice of Effective Pedagogy. *International Journal for Students as Partners*, 1(1), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v1i1.3179>
- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. London: Sage.
- Cross, S., & Markus, H. (1991). Possible Selves across the Life Span. *Human Development*, 34(4), 230-255. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000277058>

- Dabback, W. (2017). A Longitudinal Perspective of Early Career Music Teachers: Contexts, Interactions, and Possible Selves. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 27(2), 52-66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1057083717727268>
- Díez, A. M. (2009). School memories of young people with disabilities: An analysis of barriers and aids to inclusion. *Disabilities & Society*, 25(2), 163-175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590903534346>
- Furlong, C. (2013). The Teacher I Wish to Be: Exploring the Influence of Life Histories on Student Teacher Idealised Identities. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(1), 68-83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2012.678486>
- Hamman, D., Wang, E., & Burley, H. (2013b). What I Expect and Fear Next Year: Measuring New Teacher's Possible Selves. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 39(2), 222-234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2013.765194>
- Hamman, D., Coward, F., Johnson, L., Lambert, M., Zhou, L., & Indiatzi, J. (2013a). Teacher Possible Selves: How Thinking about the Future Contributes to the Formation of Professional Identity. *Self and Identity*, 12(3), 307-336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2012.671955>
- Hamman, D., Gosselin, K., Romano, J., & Bunyan, R. (2010). Using Possible-Selves Theory to Understand the Identity Development of New Teachers. *Teaching and Teaching Education*, 26(7), 1349-1361. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.03.005>
- Hong, J., & Greene, B. (2011). Hopes and Fears for Science Teaching: The Possible Selves of Preservice Teachers in a Science Education Program. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*, 22(6), 491-512. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10972-011-9247-y>
- Hook, C. W. (2002). Preservice teachers reflect on memories from early childhood. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 23(2), 143-155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1090102020230206>
- Hudson, P., Usak, M., Fancovicová, J., Erdog an, M., & Prokop, P. (2010). Preservice teachers' memories of their secondary science education experiences. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 19(6), 546-552. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10956-010-9221-z>
- Hughes, W., & Dawson, R. (1995). Memories of school: Adult dyslexics recall their school days. *Support for learning*, 10(4), 181-184. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9604.1995.tb00037.x>
- Karande, S., Mahajan, V., & Kulkarni, M. (2009). Recollections of learning-disabled adolescents of their schooling experiences: A qualitative study. *Indian Journal of Medical Sciences*, 63(9), 381-391. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5359.56109>
- Kaya, G. I. (2017). Construction of academic success and failure in school memories. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 13(1), 12-20. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2017.3422>
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research: Reading analysis and interpretation*. London: Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412985253>
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Lutovac, S. (2020). How failure shapes teacher identities: Pre-service elementary school and mathematics teachers' narrated possible selves. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 94, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2020.103120>
- Lutovac, S., & Kaasila, R. (2014). Pre-service teachers' future-oriented mathematical identity work. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 85(1), 129-142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10649-013-9500-8>
- Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible Selves. *American Psychologist*, 41(9), 954. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.41.9.954>
- McGarr, O., & Gavaldon, G. (2019) Recycled teacher memories and upcycled teacher memories: categorising pre-service teachers' recollections of past teachers. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 49(5), 623-635. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2019.1581136>
- Meda, J., & Viñao, A. (2017). School Memory: Historiographical Balance and Heuristics Perspectives. In C. Yanes-Cabrera, J. Meda, & A. Viñao (Eds.), *School Memories*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44063-7_1
- Miller, K., Dilworth-Bart, J., & Hane, A. (2011). Maternal recollections of schooling and children's school preparation. *School Community Journal*, 21(2), 161-184.
- Miller, K., & Shifflet, R. (2016). How memories of school inform preservice teachers' feared and desired selves as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 53, 20-29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.10.002>
- Moodie, I. (2016). The anti-apprenticeship of observation: How negative prior language learning experience influences English language teachers' beliefs and practices. *System*, 60, 29-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.05.011>
- Oyserman, D., & Markus, H. (1990). Possible Selves in Balance: Implications for Delinquency. *Journal of Social Issues*, 46(2), 141-157. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1990.tb01927.x>
- Pellikka, A., Lutovac, S., & Kaasila, R. (2018). The Nature of the Relation between Pre-service Teachers' Views of an Ideal Teacher and Their Positive Memories of Biology and Geography Teachers. *Nordic Studies in Science Education*, 14(1), 82-94. <https://doi.org/10.5617/nordina.4368>
- Pellikka, A., Lutovac, S., & Kaasila, R. (2022). The change in pre-service primary teachers' possible selves in relation to science teaching. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(1), 43-59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1803270>
- Robinson, B. S., & Davis, K. L. (2001). *The occupational possible selves of low-income women*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, CA.
- Rodrigues, L. A., Pietri, E., Sanchez, H. S., & Kuchah, K. (2018). The role of experienced teachers in the development of pre-service language teachers' professional identity: Revisiting school memories and constructing future teacher selves. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 88, 146-155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2018.02.002>

- Rosen, L. H., Underwood, M. K., Gentsch, J. K., Rahdar, A., & Wharton, M. E. (2012). Emerging adults' recollections of peer victimization experiences during middle school. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 33(6), 273-281. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2012.07.006>
- Stoddart, K. (2001). People like us: Memories of marginality in high school and university. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7, 171-191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040100700203>
- Terry, M. (2009). Through the eyes of the beholders: adult literacy students' recollections of regular school. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 33(1), 31-41.
- Trotman, J., & Kerr, T. (2001). Making the Personal Professional: Pre-service teacher education and personal histories. *Teachers and Teaching*, 7(2), 157-171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600120054955>
- Valencia, S., Martin, S., Place, N., & Grossman, P. (2009). Complex interactions in student teaching: Lost opportunities for learning. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60, 304-322. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109336543>
- Wall, C. R. G. (2016). From student to teacher: changes in preservice teacher educational beliefs throughout the learning-to-teach journey. *Teacher Development*, 20(3), 364-379. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2016.1149509>
- Whitty, M. (2002). Possible selves: An exploration of the utility of a narrative approach. *Identity: An international Journal of Theory and Research*, 2, 211-228. https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532706XID0203_02