

CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

Chapter I provides a comprehensive introduction to this research, consisting of several interconnected sections. The first section presents the background of the study, establishing the contextual framework for understanding the research's significance. The second section systematically addresses the problem by presenting both problem identification and limitation, which helps focus the scope of this investigation. The third section outlines the research questions and objectives, followed by a detailed discussion of the study's significance in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). To ensure precise understanding, this section also includes definitions of key terms pertinent to the research context. This chapter serves as the foundational framework for examining EFL student-teacher identity formation during International Teaching Practicum, particularly focusing on the crucial aspect of language teacher competence perspectives. Through this structured approach, the chapter establishes a clear roadmap for understanding both the research problem and its significance.

1.1. Background of the Research

English proficiency is a fundamental competency in both academic and professional setting in the twenty-first century. In professional context, a study conducted by English First (EF) shows a strong correlation between professional success and proficiency in the English language. Individuals with strong English proficiency consistently demonstrate higher levels of creativity and competitiveness in the global business. This advantage goes beyond personal accomplishment and influences entire nations' economic health, as countries with higher English proficiency levels are generally associated with better economic indicators and more active participation in global trade. Several key elements describe how English proficiency drives economic competitiveness: expanded access to international business opportunities, improved ability to involve in global supply networks, better collaboration with multinational corporations, increased capacity for knowledge transfer and innovation, and greater ability to attract foreign investment.

In academic setting, English provides access to a worldwide academic and research resources. Kaplan's study (2000) shows proficiency in the language is essential for both academic performance and the advancement of research since approximately 85% of scientific and technological literature is published in English. English is widely used in academic writings including peer-reviewed journal articles, International conference proceedings, research databases, online learning materials, and academic collaboration networks. According to Crystal (2003), English proficiency removes barriers to translation and allows the scientist and students to interact directly with cutting-edge research. As a result, proficiency in the language is a basic requirement for academic success in the connected scholarly environment of today.

Even though mastering English is obviously important, Indonesia has many challenges in this regard. The 2023 English Proficiency Index (EPI) report showed a concerning situation. Indonesia is classified as having "low proficiency" and is ranked 13th out of 23 Asian countries and 79th out of 113 countries worldwide, in this report. This low proficiency rating, practically, restricts Indonesian professionals to: participate in international business opportunities; engage in social interactions with colleagues; navigate the tourism business; and to comprehend the professional communications. According to Kirkpatrick (2020), this disparity in proficiency could make Indonesia less competitive in the global economy, especially in fields like technology, banking, and hospitality that need for cross-border cooperation. Without addressing these language challenges, Indonesia risks missing crucial opportunities for economic growth and international integration in an increasingly interconnected world.

A comprehensive analysis of the interconnected elements contributing to Indonesia's low English proficiency levels is offered by Nurkamto's study (2003). The study reveals various structural issues such as the status of English as a foreign language that limits exposure and practical application opportunities. Indonesia's distinctive archipelagic topography also complicates the delivery of language instruction, while traditional cultural values sometimes discourage English learning motivation. Along with insufficient facilities and learning materials that restrict

instructional quality, the educational system itself poses several additional barriers including overcrowded classrooms that hinder effective language instruction and individual attention. Furthermore, current assessment systems may not effectively measure or promote language competency. Teacher-related issues, particularly regarding teacher competence, emerge as a critical component in this multifaceted problem. This aligns with Harris & Rutledge's research (2010) demonstrating that teacher quality has a direct impact on student achievement. The World Bank Document "The Promise of Education in Indonesia" (2020) reinforces this connection, stating that well-trained and motivated teachers as the most essential component for successful learning, following the students themselves.

It is important to pay attention to the fact that teachers as the main factor in English language education success. English teachers directly influence student achievement through various ways, such as providing quality instruction, boosting motivation, designing engagement learning environment, and etc. As linguistic models, proficient English teachers demonstrate appropriate grammar usage and communication strategies that students internalize through repeated exposure. They are able to design supportive classroom environment where allow students to speak English confidently. Competent English teacher adapt teaching methodologies to accommodate diverse learning styles and proficiency levels in order to ensure inclusive participation across heterogeneous classrooms. Furthermore, English teachers helps students recognize improvement areas and maintain motivation by providing constructive feedback throughout the challenging language learning journey. In the end, these proficient English teachers will prepare Indonesian students to be ready in global opportunities.

A comprehensive and well-structured teacher education programs is required to produce proficient English teachers. According to Akyeampong et al. (2013), teacher education program provide essential knowledge foundations and practical skills that are needed for future teacher's career. Align with Akyeampong, Braksick's (2022) study highlights well-prepared teachers are able to navigate their critical first year, to implement more effective instruction and to boost students' achievement. Effective

teacher preparation programs must incorporate theoretical frameworks with extensive practical experience, including language acquisition theories, pedagogical methodologies, curriculum development, assessment strategies, classroom management, and culturally responsive teaching methods. Mentorship, peer collaboration, reflective practice, and continuous professional development should be all part of this program. By implementing this multifaceted approach, English teachers enter classrooms with confidence and competence to facilitate meaningful language learning experiences.

Several domains of knowledge that are essential for effective teaching are included in the theoretical framework for teacher preparation. According to Shulman (1986), content knowledge (understanding the subject matter), pedagogical content knowledge (knowing how to teach specific subjects effectively), and pedagogical knowledge (understanding general teaching principles and practices) are three essential components that new EFL teachers must master. These components come together to provide effective instruction. Building on this framework, current research highlights the importance of contextual knowledge, understanding learners' cultural backgrounds and diverse learning needs. In addition, technological pedagogical content knowledge has emerged as a fourth essential domain, reflecting the digital transformation of education. Effective teacher preparation programs must integrate these knowledge domains through practical experiences, reflective practice, and continuous professional development. This comprehensive approach ensures that educators develop the multifaceted competencies required to navigate complex classroom environments and foster meaningful learning experiences for all students.

Building upon this foundation, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) emphasize that identifying and implementing what student-teachers need to know and be able to represent the cornerstone of quality teacher preparation. This understanding helps shape curriculum development, practical training experiences, and assessment methods within teacher education programs. Through careful attention to these

elements, teacher preparation programs can ensure that new educators enter the classroom with the necessary knowledge, skills, and pedagogical competencies to foster meaningful student learning. Effective teacher preparation requires a comprehensive approach that integrates theoretical understanding with practical application. Student-teachers must develop deep content knowledge alongside pedagogical content knowledge—understanding not just what to teach, but how to teach it effectively to diverse learners. This includes mastering classroom management techniques, differentiated instruction strategies, and assessment practices that inform instruction. Additionally, preparation programs must cultivate reflective practitioners who can adapt their teaching methods based on student needs and learning outcomes, ensuring continuous professional growth throughout their careers.

Practical training experience serves as a cornerstone in the development of high-quality teachers, offering invaluable opportunities for hands-on learning and professional growth. Farrell (2008) emphasizes that teaching practice represents one of the most critical components of teacher education programs, as it provides aspiring teachers with authentic classroom experiences that cannot be replicated through theoretical instruction alone. This practical exposure allows student-teachers to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and actual classroom implementation. The significance of teaching practicum in teacher preparation has been well-documented in educational research. Zhao and Zhang (2017) identify the teaching practicum as a fundamental developmental stage that significantly influences the production of quality teachers. During this crucial period, student-teachers assume the full responsibilities of classroom teachers within a real educational context, allowing them to develop essential skills such as classroom management, lesson planning, and student engagement. This immersive experience provides opportunities for: applying theoretical knowledge in real-world situations; developing practical classroom management strategies; understanding diverse student needs and learning styles; building confidence in instructional delivery; receiving mentorship from experienced educators, and ; reflecting on teaching practices and professional growth. Through

these practical experiences, student-teachers not only develop their teaching competencies but also begin to form their identity as educators.

Identity emerges as a crucial element in early instructional theories, playing a fundamental role in understanding teaching and learning processes. In their comprehensive analysis of instructional theory development, Ritchey et al. (2011) identified four seminal instructional theories that have significantly shaped educational thought: Tyler's Principles of Curriculum and Instruction, Carroll's Models of School Learning, Bloom's Theory of Human Characteristics and School Learning, and Bruner's Cognitive Theory of Instruction. Among the ten elements commonly found in instructional theories, only two elements consistently appear across these four foundational theories: active participation and student identities. This convergence highlights the enduring recognition that learners bring unique backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics to educational environments. Student identity encompasses not merely demographic factors, but also cognitive abilities, prior knowledge, cultural perspectives, and individual learning preferences that fundamentally influence how instruction should be designed and delivered. The persistent presence of identity considerations across these diverse theoretical frameworks suggests that effective instruction must acknowledge and respond to learner variability rather than treating students as uniform recipients of information.

The significance of identity in educational theories emerges as a fundamental thread connecting diverse theoretical frameworks across several decades. Tyler's groundbreaking work (1949) established the foundation by emphasizing the critical importance of understanding learner characteristics and identities in curriculum development, recognizing that effective educational programs must account for who students are as individuals. Carroll's influential model (1963) further advanced this concept by incorporating learner identity as a crucial variable in his comprehensive theory of school learning, explicitly suggesting that individual differences and personal characteristics significantly influence learning outcomes and academic success. Bloom's mastery learning theory (1976) built upon these foundations by explicitly

addressing the multifaceted role of student characteristics and identity in the learning process, emphasizing how personal, cultural, and cognitive factors directly affect educational achievement and student progression. Similarly, Bruner's constructivist approach (1966) highlighted the paramount importance of learner identity in both cognitive development and instructional design, arguing that understanding students' identities enables educators to create more meaningful and effective learning experiences.

This consistent emphasis on identity across these foundational theories has particular implications for teacher education. When applied to the context of student-teacher development, these theories suggest that the formation and understanding of professional identity is crucial for effective teacher preparation. As Korthagen (2004) notes, the recognition of identity's importance in these early theories has influenced modern approaches to teacher education, particularly in understanding how student-teachers develop their identities during their preparation period. The theoretical foundation established by these early frameworks provides essential scaffolding for contemporary teacher education programs. This emphasis on identity formation recognizes that becoming a teacher involves more than acquiring pedagogical skills and content knowledge; it requires a fundamental transformation of self-concept and professional understanding. Student-teachers must navigate the complex process of integrating their personal beliefs, values, and experiences with emerging professional competencies. This identity development process is neither linear nor uniform, as each individual brings unique backgrounds and perspectives to their teacher preparation journey, requiring personalized approaches to professional development and mentorship.

The identity that emerges during student-teachers' teaching practicum serves as a foundational element that significantly influences their future career trajectory in education. According to Beijaard et al. (2004), professional identity formation is not merely a process of adopting a predetermined role, but rather a complex, ongoing journey of personal and professional development that begins during pre-service

training. This identity formation process is particularly intensive during the teaching practicum period, where student-teachers first experience the full scope of educational responsibilities. Research has demonstrated that the development of teacher identity during practicum experiences has far-reaching implications for professional growth and career success. Hong (2010) found that teachers who develop a strong professional identity during their practicum period demonstrate greater resilience when facing classroom challenges and are more likely to remain committed to the teaching profession. This finding is further supported by Lamote and Engels (2010), who observed that student-teachers who successfully develop their professional identity during practicum show enhanced self-efficacy and more effective decision-making capabilities in their subsequent teaching careers.

The practicum period provides crucial opportunities for identity development through various professional experiences and interactions that fundamentally shape novice educators. Day et al. (2006) emphasize that this emerging identity profoundly influences how beginning teachers approach their pedagogical responsibilities, establish meaningful connections with students and colleagues, and construct visions for their long-term career trajectories. The relationships formed and challenges encountered during practicum experiences become foundational elements in professional identity construction. Furthermore, Pillen et al. (2013) note that the professional identity crystallized during this formative period creates lasting impacts that extend far beyond initial teaching placements. This emerging sense of professional self directly influences teachers' instructional decision-making processes, classroom management philosophies, and their comprehensive approach to ongoing professional development throughout their entire careers. The practicum thus serves as a critical juncture where theoretical knowledge transforms into practical wisdom, establishing patterns of professional behavior and belief systems that guide educators' future practice.

One of the most significant identities that emerge during teaching practicum is language teacher competence, which encompasses a complex interplay of knowledge,

skills, and attitudes essential for effective language instruction. During this crucial phase of teacher development, pre-service teachers begin to construct their professional identity through classroom experiences, mentor feedback, and self-reflection (Farrell, 2018). The development of language teacher competence involves not only mastering pedagogical techniques but also building confidence in using the target language and understanding diverse teaching methodologies. This multifaceted competence extends beyond technical proficiency to include cultural sensitivity, adaptability to various learning contexts, and the ability to create inclusive environments that accommodate different learning styles and backgrounds. Pre-service teachers must also develop emotional intelligence to manage classroom dynamics effectively while fostering positive relationships with students. The practicum experience serves as a transformative period where theoretical knowledge intersects with practical application, enabling future educators to refine their instructional approaches and develop authentic teaching personas that reflect their evolving professional values and beliefs.

Research has shown that teaching practicum serves as a transformative period where student teachers develop their teaching philosophy and classroom management skills while navigating the challenges of real-world teaching situations (Richards & Farrell, 2021). This period of practical training allows aspiring language teachers to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, leading to the formation of a more robust professional identity. According to Borg (2019), the development of language teacher competence during practicum is significantly influenced by factors such as mentor support, institutional environment, and opportunities for autonomous decision-making in the classroom. Moreover, the emergence of language teacher competence during practicum encompasses various dimensions, including linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and pedagogical content knowledge (Johnson, 2020). These components gradually integrate to form a comprehensive professional identity that continues to evolve throughout a teacher's career.

International teaching practicum serves as an exceptional pathway for developing comprehensive language teacher competence, offering unique advantages that surpass traditional domestic teaching experiences. Through immersion in diverse educational contexts, pre-service teachers develop enhanced linguistic flexibility, cultural sensitivity, and pedagogical adaptability that are crucial for effective language instruction (Anderson & Liu, 2022). Research has demonstrated that student-teachers who participate in international practicum programs show significant improvement in their instructional strategies, classroom management skills, and cross-cultural communication abilities compared to those who complete only domestic practicum (Martinez & Wong, 2021). The exposure to different educational philosophies, teaching methodologies, and learning styles in international settings enables pre-service teachers to construct more robust and versatile teaching approaches (Thompson, 2023). Additionally, Yoshida and Smith (2020) found that international teaching experiences significantly boost teachers' confidence in using the target language and their ability to create culturally responsive learning environments. This enhanced preparation is particularly valuable in today's globalized educational landscape, where language teachers must be equipped to address the needs of increasingly diverse student populations while maintaining high standards of instructional effectiveness.

The importance of preparing competent pre-service teachers has become a primary concern for various stakeholders, including SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization). In 2017, SEAMEO launched the Sea-Teacher Program, which serves as a platform for pre-service teachers in Southeast Asia to gain international teaching experience (SEAMEO, 2018). This golden opportunity has been embraced by various universities across Asian countries, including those in Indonesia, with institutions sending their best students to practice teaching in other countries. Universitas Jambi has been actively participating in this initiative since 2017, sending its outstanding students to acquire knowledge and experience related to teaching in international contexts (Hadiyanto et al., 2021). In 2023, Universitas Jambi, specifically

the English Education Program, sent four students to participate in SEA-Teacher Batch 9, with the Philippines as their destination country. This particular placement is intriguing given the distinct cultural differences and varying status of English between Indonesia and the Philippines (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2019). While English serves as a second language in the Philippines, it remains a foreign language in Indonesia, creating unique dynamics for teaching and learning experiences (Martin, 2020). These contextual differences provide a rich environment for investigating language teacher competence perspectives as they relate to EFL student-teacher identity development during international teaching practicum.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

The critical importance of English proficiency in academic and professional contexts of the twenty-first century has positioned language teacher preparation as a cornerstone of educational development, particularly in countries where English serves as a foreign language. While the significance of competent English teachers in facilitating student success is well-established, the complex relationship between language teacher competence and professional identity formation during international teaching practicum remains insufficiently explored, creating substantial gaps in our understanding of effective teacher preparation. This knowledge deficit presents significant challenges for educational institutions seeking to develop comprehensive training programs that adequately prepare future educators for the multifaceted demands of contemporary language instruction across diverse cultural and linguistic environments within increasingly globalized educational landscapes.

Indonesia's concerning position in global English proficiency rankings—classified as having "low proficiency" and ranked 79th out of 113 countries worldwide according to the 2023 English Proficiency Index—highlights the urgent need for enhanced English teacher preparation programs. This low proficiency rating practically restricts Indonesian professionals from participating effectively in international business opportunities, engaging in meaningful social interactions with global colleagues, and comprehending professional communications in an increasingly interconnected world.

The implications extend beyond individual limitations to affect the nation's economic competitiveness and international integration capabilities. Indonesian companies struggle to establish meaningful partnerships with international firms, while talented professionals face barriers accessing global job markets and advanced educational opportunities abroad. This linguistic gap undermines Indonesia's potential as a regional economic hub, limiting foreign investment attraction and hindering the country's participation in knowledge-based industries that drive modern economic growth and technological advancement.

Despite extensive research establishing the theoretical foundations of teacher identity formation and the acknowledged importance of practical training experiences, several critical problems persist in understanding how language teacher competence emerges and evolves during international teaching practicum. First, while Shulman's framework of content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge provides essential theoretical grounding, there remains insufficient empirical evidence regarding how these knowledge domains specifically manifest and interact within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student-teachers during international practicum experiences. This gap is particularly problematic given the unique cultural, linguistic, and institutional challenges that characterize international teaching contexts. Second, current research inadequately addresses the dynamic nature of identity negotiation that occurs when student-teachers encounter unfamiliar educational systems, diverse student populations, and varying cultural expectations regarding teaching practices.

Second, although foundational instructional theories consistently emphasize the importance of learner identity—as evidenced by its presence across Tyler's behavioral objectives framework, Carroll's mastery learning model, Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, and Bruner's constructivist approach—the application of identity theory to understanding how EFL student-teachers construct their professional identity during cross-cultural teaching experiences remains significantly underexplored. The existing literature acknowledges that professional identity

formation is crucial during practicum periods and represents a transformative developmental phase, yet lacks comprehensive investigation into the specific mechanisms through which language teacher competence contributes to this complex identity construction process. Furthermore, the intersection between cultural adaptation, pedagogical skill development, and emerging professional self-concept presents a particularly rich area for investigation that could illuminate broader patterns of teacher preparation and professional socialization within international educational contexts.

Third, while international teaching practicum programs such as SEAMEO's Sea-Teacher Program have gained recognition for their potential to enhance teacher preparation, empirical research examining the actual impact of these experiences on language teacher competence development remains limited. The unique contextual differences between countries—such as the distinct status of English as a second language in the Philippines versus a foreign language in Indonesia—create complex dynamics that warrant systematic investigation to understand their influence on student-teacher identity formation. These cross-cultural educational exchanges expose prospective teachers to diverse pedagogical approaches, varying levels of technological integration, and different classroom management styles, yet the mechanisms through which these exposures translate into measurable improvements in teaching effectiveness are poorly understood. Furthermore, the temporal dimension of identity transformation during these brief but intensive international placements requires longitudinal studies to capture the sustained effects on professional development and teaching philosophy beyond the immediate practicum experience.

The relationship between language teacher competence and professional identity formation presents a multifaceted challenge that extends beyond traditional understanding of teacher preparation. Current research has not adequately addressed how the intersection of linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and pedagogical content knowledge contributes to the emergence of authentic teaching personas during international practicum experiences. This gap is particularly significant given that

language teachers must navigate unique challenges related to target language use, cultural sensitivity, and diverse methodological approaches that distinguish them from teachers in other subject areas. These complexities are further compounded by the dynamic nature of language learning environments, where teachers must simultaneously serve as linguistic models, cultural mediators, and pedagogical facilitators. The formation of professional identity in such contexts requires continuous negotiation between personal language competence and instructional effectiveness, often challenging preconceived notions of what constitutes teacher readiness and authentic classroom presence in multilingual educational settings.

The problem is further complicated by the transformative nature of international teaching experiences, which expose student-teachers to different educational philosophies, teaching methodologies, and learning styles that challenge their existing assumptions about effective instruction. These immersive encounters force pre-service educators to confront cultural biases embedded within their pedagogical frameworks while simultaneously navigating unfamiliar classroom dynamics and diverse student populations. While research suggests that such experiences enhance instructional strategies and cross-cultural communication abilities, the specific processes through which these enhancements occur and their lasting impact on teacher identity remain inadequately documented. The mechanisms underlying professional growth—whether through cognitive dissonance, reflective practice, or cultural adaptation—lack systematic investigation. Furthermore, questions persist regarding how these transformative experiences translate into sustainable changes in teaching practice once educators return to their home contexts, where institutional constraints and familiar cultural patterns may either reinforce or diminish internationally-acquired competencies.

The temporal dimension of identity formation during international practicum presents multifaceted complexity that warrants deeper investigation. While established research demonstrates that professional identity crystallized during practicum periods creates lasting impacts extending throughout teachers' careers, significant gaps remain

in our understanding of language teacher development. Specifically, there is insufficient comprehension of how language teacher competence evolves during these intensive cross-cultural experiences, particularly regarding the interplay between cultural immersion, pedagogical skill acquisition, and professional self-concept formation. Furthermore, the mechanisms through which this evolution influences long-term professional development trajectories remain unclear. The accelerated nature of identity transformation in international contexts may compress typical developmental processes, creating unique opportunities for growth while simultaneously presenting challenges that could have enduring consequences for career satisfaction, teaching effectiveness, and professional resilience across diverse educational settings.

The lack of comprehensive research addressing these interconnected issues represents a significant obstacle to improving teacher preparation programs and, consequently, to enhancing English language education quality. Without a thorough understanding of how language teacher competence serves as the foundation for professional identity formation during international teaching practicum, educational institutions cannot effectively design and implement preparation programs that adequately prepare EFL teachers for the complex demands of contemporary language instruction. This research gap perpetuates a cycle of inadequately prepared educators entering classrooms without the necessary pedagogical foundations or cultural competencies required for effective cross-cultural language teaching. The absence of empirical evidence linking competence development to identity formation during international practicums leaves program administrators without critical insights needed to optimize pre-service training experiences, ultimately compromising student learning outcomes and teacher retention rates.

This dissertation addresses these critical gaps by investigating the multifaceted relationship between language teacher competence and professional identity formation through the lens of English student-teachers' international teaching practicum experiences, specifically examining the case of Indonesian student-teachers participating in the SEAMEO Sea-Teacher Program in the Philippines. The research

seeks to provide empirical insights that will inform the development of more effective teacher preparation programs and contribute to the theoretical understanding of language teacher identity formation in cross-cultural contexts.

1.3.Limitation of the Research

Several limitations are acknowledged in this study. First, regarding geographical scope, this research is confined to examining student-teachers from a single sending institution, Universitas Jambi, who completed their teaching practicum in the Philippines. While this focused approach allows for detailed analysis, the findings may not be generalizable to other Indonesian universities or other countries participating in the SEA-Teacher program. Second, the sample size presents another notable limitation, as the study only involves four students from the English Education Program who participated in SEA-Teacher Batch 9. This small sample size, while allowing for in-depth qualitative analysis, may not fully represent the experiences and perspectives of the broader population of Indonesian EFL student-teachers engaging in international teaching practicums. Third, in terms of temporal constraints, the study is limited to SEA-Teacher Batch 9 conducted in 2023. The short-term nature of the teaching practicum program may restrict the observation of long-term developments in teacher identity formation and competence building, which typically evolve over extended periods of professional practice.

Fourth, the context-specific nature of this research also presents limitations. The study focuses exclusively on the Philippines as a destination country where English holds second language status, creating a unique linguistic and educational environment. Consequently, the findings may not be directly applicable to international teaching practicum experiences in countries where English has different status or patterns of usage. Fifth, regarding the scope of analysis, the research primarily examines language teacher competence. While these aspects are crucial, other significant dimensions of international teaching practicum experiences might not be fully explored. Lastly, methodological limitations should be considered. The study's theoretical framework, which emphasizes identity development and competence perspectives, may restrict the

exploration of other potentially relevant variables. Additionally, the distinct status of English between Indonesia (as a foreign language) and the Philippines (as a second language) may affect the transferability of teaching experiences and complicate the interpretation of findings.

1.4. Research Questions

This research explores the pivotal role of Language Teacher Competence in shaping EFL student-teacher identity formation during International Teaching Practicum experiences. The international practicum setting presents unique challenges and opportunities that influence how student-teachers perceive themselves as language educators and develop confidence in their teaching abilities. By exploring the intersection between teacher competence and identity development, this study aims to illuminate the complex processes that occur when EFL student-teachers engage in cross-cultural teaching experiences. The following research questions guide this investigation:

- 1) How do EFL student-teachers interpret and experience the integration of language teacher competence into their identity during International Teaching Practicum?
- 2) What new insight and skills in teaching English do the EFL student-teachers acquire during the international teaching practicum?
- 3) What are the pivotal experiences during the international teaching practicum that shape the development of language teacher competence as EFL student-teacher identity?

1.5. Objectives of the Research

The intersection of language teacher competence and professional identity formation represents a critical area of inquiry in contemporary English language education. This dissertation investigates the multifaceted relationship between language teacher competence and the evolving identity of English Foreign Language (EFL) student-teachers participating in International Teaching Practicum Programs. As globalization continues to reshape educational landscapes, understanding how

competency frameworks influence identity construction becomes increasingly vital for teacher preparation programs. The international practicum context provides a unique lens through which to examine these complex dynamics, as student-teachers navigate cross-cultural pedagogical environments while simultaneously developing their professional identities. Based on the research questions outlined above, this research aims to:

- 1) Explore how EFL student-teachers interpret and experience the integration of language teacher competence into their professional identity during international teaching practicum
- 2) Investigate the new insight and skill in teaching English that develop during the international teaching practicum.
- 3) Explore the pivotal experiences during the international teaching practicum that shape the development of language teacher competence as the foundation of professional identity.

1.6. Significance of the Research

This research holds significant importance in understanding the complex development of language teacher competence and professional identity within international teaching practicum contexts. As globalization continues reshaping educational landscapes, the demand for competent language teachers capable of navigating diverse cultural environments becomes increasingly critical. This study contributes essential insights into how international teaching experiences influence aspiring language teachers' competency development, thereby informing teacher education programs and educational policymakers about the substantial value and transformative impact of international practicum opportunities. The findings illuminate crucial pathways for professional growth that extend beyond traditional classroom boundaries, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of teacher development in contemporary educational settings.

The research specifically addresses a critical knowledge gap regarding how student-teachers cultivate their competencies and professional identities while teaching

in foreign cultural contexts. Through comprehensive examination of their lived experiences, encountered challenges, and personal transformations during international teaching practicum, this study provides invaluable insights into the dynamic, evolving process of language teacher competency development. This understanding proves essential for teacher education institutions as they prepare future language teachers to function effectively as educators in increasingly diverse, multicultural classroom environments. The research findings possess the potential to fundamentally reshape and significantly enhance teacher preparation programs, better supporting robust professional identity development among aspiring student-teachers throughout their formative educational experiences.

From a pedagogical perspective, this research offers substantial, meaningful contributions to the comprehensive field of language teaching methodology and educational practice. By systematically investigating how student-teachers perceive, understand, and progressively develop their teaching competencies within challenging international settings, the study illuminates the complex relationship between theoretical knowledge acquisition and practical teaching skill application. This nuanced understanding proves crucial for developing more effective, evidence-based approaches to language teacher preparation and ongoing professional development initiatives. Additionally, it helps identify specific competencies that language teachers must cultivate to achieve success in diverse cultural contexts, thereby significantly enriching current understanding of comprehensive language teacher education and professional growth trajectories.

The study's significance extends meaningfully into the realm of cultural competence development and intercultural communication within language teaching contexts. As student-teachers navigate complex international teaching environments, they simultaneously develop critical intercultural skills that profoundly influence their teaching approaches and overall professional growth trajectories. This research provides valuable insights into how transformative cross-cultural experiences fundamentally shape their evolving understanding of effective language teaching and

learning methodologies. Such knowledge proves particularly relevant in today's increasingly globalized educational landscape, where teachers must consistently demonstrate cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and inclusive practices in their daily teaching interactions with diverse student populations from various cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, this research carries important implications for educational policy formulation and comprehensive program development initiatives. Through systematic examination of student-teachers' perspectives and lived experiences during international practicum placements, the study provides robust evidence-based insights that can effectively inform the strategic design and successful implementation of more effective teacher preparation programs. This includes developing deeper understanding of necessary support structures, mentoring approaches, and comprehensive assessment methods that optimally facilitate language teacher competence development in international contexts. Such invaluable knowledge serves educational institutions and policymakers in creating more robust, meaningful, and transformative international teaching practicum experiences that genuinely prepare future educators for global teaching challenges.

The study contributes significantly to the broader, evolving field of teacher education research and scholarly inquiry. By exploring the complex intersection of teacher competence development, professional identity formation, and transformative international experience, it opens innovative avenues for future investigation in teacher education research. The comprehensive findings serve as a solid foundation for subsequent research examining various aspects of international teaching experiences and their lasting impact on teacher development. This includes understanding how different cultural contexts influence teaching approaches, how student-teachers adapt pedagogical strategies, and how these experiences contribute to long-term professional growth, career satisfaction, and educational effectiveness in diverse teaching environments.

Finally, this research possesses practical significance for future language teachers and dedicated teacher educators worldwide. The valuable insights gained from this comprehensive study can effectively help prepare student-teachers for the various challenges and opportunities they may encounter during international teaching experiences. It also provides teacher educators with deeper understanding of how to support student-teachers in developing their competencies and professional identities during international practicum experiences. This knowledge can lead to more effective mentoring strategies and comprehensive support systems that significantly enhance the overall value and transformative impact of international teaching practicum programs, ultimately benefiting the entire educational community.

1.7.Operational Definition

1) Language Teacher Competence

The comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional attributes that enable effective language teaching. The comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional attributes that enable effective language teaching. It encompasses pedagogical knowledge, linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and teaching methodologies. It Includes classroom management skills, assessment capabilities, and ability to adapt teaching strategies

1) EFL Student-teacher

The college of English language students who are learning to teach and practicing to teach in secondary school under the supervision of lecturer and certified teacher in order to qualify for a degree in education.

2) Professional Identity

Professional Identity means who they are as a teacher.

3) International Teaching Practicum

The term of international teaching practicum refers to the Sea teacher program. It is a program launched by the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) which aims to provide opportunity for student-

teachers from Southeast Asian Institutions to gain teaching experiences in schools in other Southeast Asian nations

4) *Experience*

Experience refers to the direct psychological, emotional, and professional encounters of the student-teachers as they integrate language teacher competence into their professional identity

5) *Interprete*

Interpretation is how the student-teachers make sense of and construct meaning from their experiences

6) *Insight*

An insight is a deep, transformative understanding that goes beyond surface-level knowledge. In the context of this study, insights represent profound realizations about teaching that fundamentally change a student-teacher's professional perspective.

7) *Skills*

A skill is a specific, practical competency developed through practice and experience.

8) *Pivotal Experience*

A pivotal experience is a transformative moment or process that significantly shapes professional identity and competence.