



Research paper

International teacher education programme as a narrative space for teacher identity reconstruction



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Narrative space is suggested as a mediating concept for understanding the processes of identity reconstruction.
- Teachers' professional identity as narrative in which teachers narrate positioning and repositioning in the professional context.
- Identity repositioning is closely linked to the reinterpretation and reconstruction of narrative space.
- Indonesian teachers in this study describe learning experiences in Finnish programme based on a particular narrative space.
- The results may confirm the role of the reconstructed narrative space in offering opportunities for identity repositioning.

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ABSTRACT

The paper investigates the processes related to professional identity reconstruction in the context of an International Teacher Education Programme (ITP). It focuses on how participating Indonesian teachers in a Finnish master's degree programme described their experiences and what kind of positioning processes found in the participants' narratives. Findings suggest that participants constructed 'Birland', as a narrative space representing ITP that includes Indonesian and Finnish education. Constructed narratively, this space offers novel options for repositioning as teachers. This supports the theoretical assumption that professional identity reconstruction is mediated by the subjective construction of narrative spaces which enable identity repositioning and knowledge acquisition.

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1. Introduction

Teachers' pre-service education programmes typically focus on developing student teachers' competences, skills, or knowledge related to subjects and topics relevant to school education in a particular country (Goetz, Jaritz, & Oser, 2011; Sieber & Mantel, 2012). Teachers participating in an International Teacher Education Programme (ITP) may encounter different educational contexts due to varied national and cultural histories, differing school practices and roles of teachers compared to their earlier experiences in their home countries. Encountering such differences can be assumed to enhance reflection on their own school practices and professional identity in general (Kissock & Richardson, 2010).

Earlier studies on international teacher education programmes generally frame these differences as contexts that provide learning opportunities for teachers (Senyshyn, 2018). However, it may be supposed that participating in an ITP is not only a challenge for teachers' knowledge or competences but also for their professional identities, the ways of being a teacher and taking roles and positions in teaching situations (Buchanan, 2015; Leutwyler & Lottenbach, 2011). For example, Søreide (2006) highlighted the way certain narrative resources may differ in different settings. This indicates complex relationships between the context and identity construction, especially if a specific professional identity as a teacher is assumed to be "spatially and locally constructed" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Currently, we do not have enough research on the spatial nature of identity construction or the processes involved in this kind of construction and reconstruction of professional identities. Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) pointed out limited studies on how the context influenced the

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formation of teacher identity, including in the context of ITP (Smolcic & Katunich, 2017). In this study, we would like to explore the potential of space as a metaphor to conceptualize and further explore this relationship in the ITP.

This study will focus mainly on understanding what kinds of roles space, particularly narrative space, may have in teachers' professional identities. In this study, the ITP is assumed to be a subjectively represented space for studies and developmental processes in which the participants reflect on their professional identities during the programme. We aim to study 1) how, in their narratives, participants describe the ITP as a space for studies and renegotiation of identities and 2) what kind of positioning and repositioning can be identified in the participant narratives concerning their teacher identities.

2. Conceptual framework

In earlier studies on teacher identity and knowledge, space is a metaphor used to describe the dynamics of negotiation in teacher identity constructions while taking into account diverse contexts and layers. For example, the metaphor of space may be conceptualized narratively as 'meditational space' that supports teacher development through negotiation between externalisation and re-internalisation, emotion and cognitive domains, as well as personal and expert knowledge (Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Kayi-Aydar (2015) describes how a space constructed through social discourse and activity supports identity negotiations as it interacts with teacher agency. Alternatively, space as metaphor may also be used to describe the dynamics of negotiation in teacher identity construction in relation to knowledge construction. For example, Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) use landscape, as a spatial metaphor, to conceptualize multiplicity of layers in teacher practical knowledge, namely personal, in-classroom and out-classroom. Curwood (2014) also uses this metaphor to describe how teacher identity construction emerges among these layers during the process of technology integration. Juzwik (2006) uses the concept of narrative frame space to describe the negotiation process to establish teacher authority in particular topics and in the classroom with the students.

These studies describe how the metaphor of space enables the inclusion of diverse contexts in the teacher identity construction process that is relevant to ITP, where the contexts are inherently complex. In this study, the metaphor of narrative space will be used to explore participants' interpretations of this context and the negotiation possibly occurring in their narratives. The following section will describe the nature of narrative space as a metaphor used in this study and how possible layers of context in the ITP will be analysed using this concept. Then we will describe the positioning process as part of the teacher identity construction process in ITP in this space.

2.1. Narrative space as a concept

First, we will describe the metaphors that will be used in this study for the concepts applied, such as narrative space. There are two commonly found metaphors of space, namely 'space as container' and 'space as network' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). When space is viewed as a container, it is typically associated with the view that culture, nation state or geographical location are the boundaries for the space. Differences in culture associated with home and host countries are often difficult to recognize and consequently this kind of definition of 'space as culture' can be seen to be based on a finite and indivisible notion of culture (Casinader, 2014). Yet different geographical locations and features as contrasting backgrounds for new experiences can give rise to

reflections on normality, habits and traditions and enlarge the frame of reference from which teachers might reflect on their understanding of educational contexts and systems, pedagogies applied and their roles as teachers (Leutwyler & Lottenbach, 2011).

Specifically, those changes, such as improved intercultural competences, language skills and personal growth may be directly or indirectly linked to changing practices in the classroom (Çiftçi & Karaman, 2019; Smolcic & Katunich, 2017). However, they may also result in identity-in-conflict, where home and host countries are seen as opposites in nature based on a binary way of thinking (Trent, 2011). Binary thinking views the existence of boundaries as oppositional, where affiliation rests with one position and limits the possibility to negotiate the changes in one's professional identity. On the other hand, when we look at 'space as a network', space is viewed as diverse, simultaneous and plural conjured up through social and relational practices (Brooks, Fuller, & Waters, 2012; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Using this perspective, we view boundaries to encountering experiences in international teacher programmes not as limitations, but as possibilities to expand (Engeström, 2016; Mesker, Wassink & Bakker, 2018).

The concept of 'narrative space' refers, according to Buchholz and Jahn (2005), to a 'physically existing environment in which characters live and move' (p.552). Ryan (2014, p. 5) explicates the description further by synthesizing the existing literature into five perspectives. These are spatial frames, setting, story space, narrative (story) world, and narrative universe (Ryan, 2014, p. 6–11). All these perspectives can be applied when describing the ITP as a narrative space in which the participants work, study, live and travel.

Spatial frame refers to places and locations (e.g. schools) and setting to the general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the programme takes place. In this case the setting is both Indonesian and Finnish. Story space refers according to Ryan (2014) to the space relevant for the plot. Narrative world and narrative universe are both related to the interpreters' understanding of the story and plot. As Ryan (2014, p. 9) writes:

narrative world is "story space completed by the reader's imagination on the basis of cultural knowledge and real While story space consists of selected places separated by voids, the narrative world is conceived by the imagination as a coherent, unified, ontologically full and materially existing geographical entity, even when it is a fictional world that possesses none of these properties".

In case of the current ITP, we will study how participants' narrative space of being a teacher is defined as their own mental representation in which experiences and memories of their own life histories, spatial frames and settings of becoming and being a teacher in the Indonesian context become mixed with new experiences of Finnish teachers, schools and education. This mental representation is a story having a plot that can be narrated in various forms depending on the context of narration. The story and plot can be assumed to be based on autobiographical, social and cultural elements and processes that participants can and may express in different kinds of narratives.

In this article we are particularly interested in analysing the participants' narratives from the perspective of the narrator's professional identity as a teacher. By professional identity we refer to how the informants perceive themselves as teachers (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). However, as participants also experience being students in this programme, their identity as both participants and students prior to this programme will be juxtaposed with their own perspective about their school students. In the end this additional positioning as students and participants will

enhance their understanding about their teacher professional identity.

2.2. Professional teacher identity construction in international teacher programme

The concept of positioning is essential for our analyses of the construction of professional identities (Harré & Langenhove, 1999). As participants learn and study on the ITP, we assume that they will reflect their mental representations of roles and positionings as teachers. Both existing and new positions will be negotiated within the narrative space, where participants dialogically reconstruct their understanding of who they are as teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Negotiation is typically viewed as an important mechanism for teacher identity construction and reconstruction within the narrative space (see Leigh, 2019; Søreide, 2006).

Positioning oneself or being positioned by others involves negotiations in both personal and social and cultural contexts. When participants are being positioned, offered new positionings, or are positioning themselves in a new way, they will “see the world from the vantage point of that positionparticular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned” (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 46).

Furthermore, as a narrative resource, positioning in a narrative space can be used as a mechanism to construct multiple identities through positive and negative positioning (Leigh, 2019). Positive repositioning implies identifying and recognising available positions, while negative positioning suggests distancing, opposition and/or rejection of the available position (Søreide, 2006). During learning, repositioning occurs when participants indicate their identification toward or distancing from a particular position. As participants compare and contrast diverse teaching and learning practices in their narratives, they express their affiliation toward a particular practice as mediated by their own experience in the programme. This affiliation process may be preceded by tensions, confusions and disorientation and may lead to temporary coherence (or not).

Additionally, based on the self-innovation process, earlier ‘positions’ and ‘positionings’ represent a particular space and time associated with diverse information and knowledge (Hermans, 2003, 2008). As participants encounter otherness on the programme, this then gives rise to a field of tensions between new and existing positions. This tension and the reflection influenced by it is also associated with the possibilities for new or hybrid positions to emerge (Hermans, Konopka, Oosterwegel, & Zomer, 2017). The introduction of new positions which are relatively autonomous and associated with new knowledge and information may stimulate the self-innovation process that will also involve memories, expectations and narratives associated with a particular position (Hermans, 2008). When identity is viewed as self-knowing (Hermans, 2003), we can view self-innovation as a process that is narrated as the process of identity construction. Thus, the expanding narrative space in ITP may stimulate the teacher identity reconstruction that will include both existing and new positions from both home and host educational contexts distinctive to this particular space.

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative study using a broad narrative approach in its data collection, analysis and interpretation (Stanley & Temple, 2008). The narrative approach in this study supports crossing between research and practice while considering the temporality and complexity of change as expressed in the stories of participants’ experiences in the programme (Creswell, 2013; Webster &

Mertova, 2007). In our analyses, participants’ narratives provide insights into how narrative space as a metaphor includes their past, present and future experiences in Indonesia and Finland. The following section will describe the context of the programme, data gathering and data analyses in more detail.

3.1. Finnish Master’s degree programme in Indonesia

The study is conducted in the context of an International Teacher Programme (ITP) between Finland and Indonesia between 2015 and 2017. The MA degree programme was organised by Tampere University in Finland and funded by Sukma Foundation in Indonesia for teachers teaching in three schools under its auspices. The schools were located in a province in Indonesia in three districts. Each school included elementary, junior high and senior high schools.

The co-operation between the foundation in Indonesia and the university in Finland in this context is possible due to recent changes in the provision of teacher education and development in Indonesia. In the reform era (1998 onwards), Indonesia implemented significant reforms to its teaching professions by implementing the Teacher Law of 2005. One of the impacts of this is an alternative pathway for teachers having graduated from non-education faculties to earn teaching credentials by gaining advanced qualifications such as a Master’s degree in education. Subsequently, there is a diversity of provision for teacher development programmes by various actors, namely school communities, teachers’ unions, private institutions and possible partnerships among these institutions (Sumintono & Subekti, 2014). The implementation of the current legislation enables partnership and collaboration for teacher development at the school level that will help participants in this programme gain further qualifications and competences.

The number of participating teachers was 30. The university admitted participants from about 45 applicants. They had diverse educational backgrounds, work experience and pre-service teacher education in education or other faculties. In the schools, they worked as primary teachers, junior high or high school teachers, and managerial roles, such as a principal, vice-principal, or department head. They had been teaching in their schools for one to ten years and had no prior teaching experience in other schools. During the programme, all participants lived and stayed in the campus dormitory, cooking and eating together. For this study, we invited all participants to be interviewed during the programme. Out of 30 participants, 13 volunteered to be informants. Some background information of the informants is presented in the following Table 1.

The programme was organised to run for 17 months, from

Table 1
Participants’ background information.

No	Pseudonym	Educational Background	Duration of Teaching
1	Fitri	Faculty of Education	3–5 years
2	Nardi	Subject-Based Faculty	3–5 years
3	Sofia	Faculty of Education	3–5 years
4	Angga	Faculty of Education	3–5 years
5	Sinta	Subject-Based Faculty	5–10 years
6	Jaka	Subject-Based Faculty	5–10 years
7	Tina	Subject-Based Faculty	2–5 years
8	Intan	Subject-Based Faculty	3–5 years
9	Alya	Subject-Based Faculty	3–5 years
10	Yanti	Subject-Based Faculty	<2 years
11	Zikri	Faculty of Education	3–5 years
12	Maya	Faculty of Education	<2 years
13	Santi	Faculty of Education	<2 years

December 2015 to April 2017. Before this programme, participants already started with an English preparatory programme for three months organised by the Foundation that also served as a selection process for the programme. The programme was also implemented to increase collaboration between institutions that educate teachers and those who will employ them and support the integration of theory and practice. Previously, the gap between these institutions has been cited as one of the significant obstacles to reform teacher education and development in Indonesia (Buchori, 2007; Nielsen, 1998). Hence the programme is implemented at the school location in Indonesia with university-level courses and research activities utilising both online and face-to-face interaction. Most Teacher Educators from Finland travelled to Indonesia once a month and spent one to two weeks on the local campus.

The programme was 120 ECTS long and similar to the international teacher education MA programme offered on the main campus in Finland. Based on the concept of developing teachers' pedagogical thinking and acquiring a research orientation in practice, the programme aims to support participants and enable them to make decisions based on theories and research in daily practice that is directed toward supporting students' learning in their context (Tirri, 2014). The whole group of participants studied in Finland for the last five weeks of the teaching period. During this period, they took both university courses and visited nearby schools discussing teachers' work, daily practices and observing classrooms.

3.2. Data gathering

Based on the conceptualization of narrative identity construction as negotiations in space, we use narrative methodology as a broad approach, specifically 'text-based work in narrative practice' (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Riessman, 2008). Data were collected by interviews during the last month of the programme in April 2017. The interviews lasted between 40 and 105 min and were conducted by the first author in Bahasa Indonesia to enable participants to express themselves in their native language.

Although all 30 participants were invited to the interview, 13 participants voluntarily took part as informants. This was partly due to the schedules of the participants in finishing the degree assignments during the last months of the programme. The participants who agreed to be interviewed gave written informed consent. They had access to the transcribed interviews and could indicate if they wanted to exclude some parts of their written narratives. Interviews were conducted during participants' free time during the last part of the programme on different premises.

The interviews were semi-structured and narrative. The main questions and themes were introduced to the informants using the metaphor of traveling: 'How do you see your journey so far on this programme?'. The metaphors helped participants to reflect on the topic from temporal and spatial perspectives (Mikkonen, 2007). In some cases, those questions stimulated informants' reflection that expanded to narratives of their previous learning experiences prior to their teacher studies and initial teaching experiences in Indonesia up to the point of being in Finland during the programme. The recorded interviews were then transcribed in Bahasa Indonesia for further analyses.

3.3. Data analyses

Data analyses were based on thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008), in which common themes are identified across participants. The themes were categorized based on their relation to spatiality and temporality. The positioning and repositioning of the informant in the narrative were also identified. During the

analyses, the transcripts were translated into English. Atlas.ti software was applied in the analysis process.

The analyses were done in the following order. First, transcripts of interviews were read carefully to get an overall 'feeling' of how participants 'presented themselves' in their narratives, the way they described their experiences on the programme and how they made sense of those experiences. After the initial reading, the second step was to identify and describe short narratives of common episodes in relation to the metaphoric traveling along one's life course. Third, we focused on the informants' positioning and repositioning in the narratives that they told. Both positive and negative positioning were included. Also, the informants' positionings in the narratives were categorized. We identified the direction of repositioning as positive if they seemed to create another position to replace the previous one and negative if they distanced themselves from a particular position (Søreide, 2006).

3.4. Researchers' positioning

This section will describe our involvement in the programme that may influence our positioning in this study by taking into account possible performative and situated aspects of the narrative approach in our research and how it might influence how participants located themselves socially in the act of telling their narratives during our interview (Bamberg, 2005).

The first author has more than ten years' experience as an Indonesian teacher and school principal. She knew most of the informants before the programme. During the first part of the MA programme she also served as its Indonesian coordinator. Hence, this contextual knowledge and Bahasa Indonesia language competences are considered beneficial for the quality and relevance of data collected. The contextual understanding was also necessary to interpret the data. The second author served as the head of the programme, both he and the third author were actively involved in teaching the course modules and supervising the participants' master's theses.

These involvements may influence our positioning in relation to access toward the site of study, the participants including narratives they share about the programme. However, it also contributes to achieving what Bruner (1986) describes as verisimilitude, where the interpretation in this study can be deemed "true to conceivable experience" (p. 52).

4. Findings

The purpose of the study was to describe and understand the processes related to the reconstruction of teachers' professional identities in the context of the International Teacher Education Programme. We were particularly interested in finding out 1) how participants described the ITP as a space for their studies and 2) what kind of positioning and repositioning processes could be found in the participant narratives concerning their teacher identities. We will start with the first question and then continue to the second one.

4.1. Birlander as group identity and Birlan as narrative space

In the analyses of respondents' narratives, we identified the name of a fictitious geographical location that many participants used. The name was 'Birlan' and the explanation was that it was a blend of initial part of the place of the school, Bireuen, and the last part of the word Finland. It was evident that being a Birlander, as the participants called themselves, presented them with a narrative universe in which Indonesian and Finnish educational cultures merged.

‘During the programme we are called Birlander ... but we are still part of the school community, and when we go back to school there will be no distinction, we will be welcomed with open arms.’ (Yanti)

Initially, Birlander can be understood as a sign of group membership which participants started to use to identify and differentiate themselves from other teachers in their school communities. The above quote from Yanti is typical of the expressions informants used to describe their new relations to both the other participants and original school communities they used to work for before the programme started.

Although Birlan refers to a place or location and Birlander to membership, it was evident from the data that participants constructed the space ‘Birlan’ in their stories in different ways. In participants’ stories, Birlan is constructed by describing what they do in the programme including activities outside the classroom as they live together in the school dormitory and travel together to Finland. Furthermore, Birlan also helped them to formulate how and what they wanted to be in the future based on their insights gained from being in the programme (refer to Table 2).

Consequently, our interpretation is that Birlan is a narrative place, and a space in which participants study, live, experience and share their experiences. In the analyses of the characteristics of Birlan as a narrative space, we apply Ryan’s (2014), categories namely, setting, spatial frame, story space and narrative world. The following excerpt is from Zikri’s interpretative story that we will provide as an example of the functions of Birlan as a narrative space in his story (refer to Table 3).

From Zikri’s story, we can identify that Birlan opens new perspectives on being a teacher. As a result of this perspective Zikri is ready to reposition himself concerning special needs students. Being in the narrative space serves as a setting for new perspectives and positioning. On the surface, Zikri is describing the programme requirements such as foreign language competence. Those requirements challenge the person to learn to be able to continue as a member of the Birlan group. Zikri described various activities that took place in Birlan when the ITP was moving from one particular location to the next. The description of the location where specific activity happens can be referred to as a spatial frame and it moves following participants’ movement as described in their stories (Ryan, 2014). In Zikri’s story, spatial frames also include actions conducted at locations both in Indonesia and Finland. For example, the classroom as a spatial frame in Zikri’s story moved from observing a special needs classroom in Finland to his classroom in Indonesia in the past. Alternatively, a classroom where he was a student on the programme and also a participant in teacher training in his previous experience.

The movement of spatial frames in Zikri’s story might include

different classrooms where he learned, taught and observed both in Indonesia and Finland. These might be related to his activities on the programme as well as those related to his past teaching and learning experiences. In each of these spatial frames his positioning might differ, for example his positioning as an observer in Finnish special needs classroom who notices teachers’ patience and trust in their students. It is followed by his positioning as a teacher of special needs students in his own classroom in Indonesia, where he reflects on his own difficulty.

Zikri’s narratives contain diverse spatial frames that are relevant to his plot. When these frames are linked together based on that individual plot, it includes participants’ actions and thoughts, it is referred to as story spaces (Ryan, 2014). Zikri’s story spaces might differ from those of other participants, reflecting narratively significant events that influence his narrative identity reconstruction on the programme. From the above excerpts, Zikri’s narrative space might contain descriptions of his reflections and descriptions of changes in attitudes and beliefs. The reflection might lead to his comment toward the end on finding confirmation about creating positive learning experiences by considering students’ learning needs and readiness. This confirmation strengthens his previous positioning, integrated with new understanding about students’ needs and readiness.

When we look across Zikri and other participants’ individual narrative spaces, we can see that participants’ narratives contain their imagination of Finland and Indonesia which is linked together and exists as Birlan. Birlan as a narrative world is a location that exists only in the participants’ stories, where they metaphorically study, live and learn. Birlan supports participants to negotiate different contexts that belong to two different countries by using diverse positions available in this narrative space. It helps them to arrive at a new understanding of themselves as teachers. This process will be described further in the next section.

4.2. Teacher professional identity repositioning in narrative space

In our second research question, we wanted to find out about the identity positionings of the participants. Since we made these analyses from the interview data, we assume that all the positionings took place in the narrative world that they called Birlan. The following Table 4 describes the identity positions identified and their sample statements from the participants’ narratives.

It is evident that the narrative world in which participants experience living seems to provide options for repositioning both as a student of the programme and as a school teacher. Specific programme arrangements and learning situations offer new identity positions, such as ‘observer of Finnish classrooms’ or ‘student-oriented teacher’. Some identity positionings seem to refer to a new sense of privilege and feelings of gratefulness, such as ‘scholarship

Table 2
Participants’ descriptions of their experiences in Birlan.

Quote	Spatial Interpretations of Birlan
“Living together and learning on the programme also provided me with role models and collaboration opportunities that support learning on the programme” (Maya)	Birlan as collaborative and explorative space with diverse role models
“We also meet every night to discuss our living arrangements and distribute [household] tasks. We made sure our assignments and research processes are progressing and those who need help find the support they need from our group” (Sinta)	Birlan as space that supports living and learning together in the programme
“Living and learning with the cohort also made me learn a lot about myself and other people. I am growing a lot on this programme, to be more mature. I am better now at managing my emotions and communicating with different people” (Intan)	Birlan as reflective space that supports personal development
“... we have to educate our students to accept and learn to live with different people ... living and learning together on this programme helped me to understand this. I think the group can serve as a collaborative team across different school locations in the future.” (Nardi)	Birlan as a space that supports living in a diverse community

Table 3
Construction of Birland as narrative space and repositioning within the space.

Zikri's Narrative excerpts	Positioning
"Initially, studying in the programme was very hard for me ... my English ability is not yet good enough for a postgraduate level. So, the English preparation programme and our study group really help me a lot."	Positioning as incompetent English language user, describing English preparation class in Indonesia as part of getting the requirements as a participant in ITP
"The style of teaching from Finnish lecturers is also different from what I was used to. I guess in our [teacher] training, I am used to a lot of games and gimmicks. While these Finnish lecturers are very flat. After a while though, I found it getting easier ..."	Positioning as a participant of the programme, comparing previous experiences in teacher development programmes with current experience of the Finnish-based programme, both conducted in Indonesia
"During learning, I reflected a lot about my previous practice and I realized that I made a lot of mistakes. For example in assessment, I think I emphasized more 'grading' rather than 'assessing'"	Positioning as a reflective practitioner describing previous assessment practices in his own classroom in Indonesia
"The visit to Finland was also an eye opener for me, especially when we went to a school with special needs students I am surprised at teachers' patience and belief in these students."	Positioning as observer in a Finnish classroom, describing his observations in a special needs classroom in Finland
"I had experience before with special needs students and know how hard it is ... I found confirmation about making learning a positive experience for students. I realized that we should first always consider their needs and learning readiness"	Positioning as teacher with special needs students in Indonesia, describing new insights about learning as a positive experience and the importance of taking into account students' needs and readiness

recipient' and 'group member'. One participant positioned her/himself as an 'inexperienced/inadequate teacher' referring to his/her feelings of incompetence as a teacher. This can be regarded as a professional identity before the programme, still existing in the last part of the ITP. It seems that those participants without the basic degree from the Faculty of Education had these inferior ideas of themselves as teachers more often than those who had graduated from an education faculty. Seven out of thirteen participants describe these ideas in their initial motivation to participate in the programme.

Other positions might be related to the way learning is organized by the Finnish University for this particular programme, for example, positions such as 'autonomous and adult learner' and 'observer'. Another position, such as 'researcher', although existing during the programme, can be used as part of the new teacher identity. Participants' positioning as 'student-oriented teachers' is commonly found in the participants' narratives as they compare their past teaching practices to their present understandings of what teaching is. The narrative where this positioning is expressed typically also contains descriptions of their new awareness about students' individuality and the need to teach students accordingly. Consequently, this kind of positioning can be assumed to express the emergence of a revised professional identity as a teacher that may influence future classroom practices.

These new positions are often associated with narratives describing different ways of being and doing, specifically as learners and teachers. It seems plausible that Birland as a narrative educational world opens and encourages participants to compare previous experiences and practice to what they perceive and experience in the new educational context the programme offers regarding Finnish education, schools and teachers. Feeling

empowered through being repositioned and eventually repositioning themselves brings the ideas for revising one's identity as a teacher. In their narratives, participants can be seen to apply some of these new positions by positively repositioning themselves. These positions, linked to new perspectives, seem to lead to the acquisition of new knowledge and the creation of new insights. As a result, participants often described differences, comparisons and contrasts related to change. The following quote from Alya may describe this process in more detail (see Table 5).

This part of Alya's narrative might be viewed as a narrative space that contains a series of spatial frames organized around a particular plot. In the above segment, the plot is that Alya seems to reach a new understanding about teacher-student relationships. In the first spatial frame, Alya is gaining an understanding of the way theories and knowledge of students' developmental phases might inform teachers' responses in a Finnish classroom. In this classroom, the teacher educator (and Alya) position themselves as having knowledge and understanding of teenagers' development. Furthermore, this position is strengthened when Alya observes classrooms in Finland in the next frame. As she reflected on her own previous experiences of teaching and observing classrooms in Indonesia, she identified a 'mindset of accepting students as they are' as the probable effect of this comparison between her earlier and current understanding of teenagers. In the end, a repositioning occurs when she associates herself with a teacher 'who accepts and appreciates students and is patient with them'. This positioning represents what she believes is a way to respond differently to students in the future. This is also indicative of her new teacher identity at that particular moment.

Alya's repositioning happens across several classrooms showing that certain spatial frames can enhance and support repositioning.

Table 4
New positions and sample statements from the data.

New Positions	Sample of Statements
Scholarship recipient	"When i feel unmotivated ... I remind myself that this is a scholarship, I can't do mediocre work" (Tina)
Group member	"We live and learn together ... we strive together ... the feeling of camaraderie in this group is strong ... we support each other" (Sinta)
Autonomous learner	"The lecturers come once a month so they already put tasks, instructions and resources online ... they do not constantly reminding us, it is up to us how we want to work on our assignments" (Angga)
Adult learner	"The programme is intense and compact as an adult learner, I need to be independent, self-motivated" (Naidi)
Researcher	"Research experience was very valuable for me ... in the future I want to do more research ... I want to know how to make students more collaborative rather than competitive" (Fitri)
Observer of Finnish classroom	"I visited the classroom in Finland, the teacher goes straight to the point, a bit of opening then topic in our classroom, opening can take up some valuable time (using state-mandate format of lesson plan)" (Jaka)
Student-oriented teacher	"we need to acknowledge students' uniqueness I sometimes force students to do something that they do not want to do, they need to follow meI realised that I need to teach according on their needs" (Yanti)

Table 5
Process of repositioning and gaining new perspectives.

Excerpts from Alya	Positioning
"I don't think Indonesian and Finnish [teachers] are very different, one significant difference though, is in our mindset to accept students the way they are."	Positioning as as Indonesian teacher with a mindset differing from that of a Finnish teacher regarding accepting students, identifying crucial differences between Indonesian and Finnish teachers
"In our last session in Finland, one of our University lecturers commented that teenagers have their own developmental stage, we need to be aware of this and understand it. I think to myself 'yeah, we need to accept this too'"	Being position by teacher educators as a teacher who understands about students' development, repositioning oneself as a teacher with this understanding during a session in the university in Finland
"When I visited schools here in Finland, I saw teachers are patient, calm and consistent in their treatment toward students. "	Positioning as observer in a Finnish classroom who has this understanding, describing the manifestation of this understanding in their behaviour toward and treatment of students
"Our [Indonesian] teachers have a lot of creative and different methods but are not very consistent in terms of accepting our students, being patient and appreciating them. I think this mindset to accept students as they are is a start."	Repositioning as a teacher who accepts students and describes new ways of relating to students based on this understanding in her future classroom in Indonesia

Certain narrative elements are picked and well represented in Alya's narrative frame of the classroom situation she had observed, leading to new understanding of teachers, students and their relations. At the same time, classrooms in Alya's story, as part of different spatial frames, were also located in different geographical and temporal contexts. Geographically, classrooms in Finland and Indonesia were associated with two different images about educational practices. Historically, these classrooms were also associated with practices based on two different understandings, before and after the programme. Birland as a narrative space might support these kinds of processes by combining diverse spatial frames about classrooms into story spaces offering a chance to start the repositioning process. In this context, Birland seems to provide a narrative representation of Indonesian and Finnish education for participants to negotiate and renew their teacher identities based on both Finnish and Indonesian contexts.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In this study, we wanted to understand the kinds of roles space, particularly individually and socially interpreted narrative spaces, may have on teachers' professional identities. Subsidiary questions to this overall aim included finding out how participants describe ITP as a space and what kind of positioning and repositioning can be found concerning teachers' professional identities. The general picture emerging from our findings describe the ITP as a narrative space, a socially shared mental representation that seems to make a contribution to teachers' professional identity reconstruction during the International Teacher Education Programme.

The findings suggest that participants create and reconstruct new positions in the narrative space called Birland, representing what the programme offered, such as Indonesian and Finnish education systems and practices. Some of the positions were reconstructed by participants through their own reflections; Finnish teacher educators or school teachers offered some others. In some cases, participants distanced themselves from earlier Indonesian positionings adopting a new or starting a process to construct a new positioning. The repositioning in this process enables the participants to view their previous teacher roles and practices from new perspectives supporting the acquisition of knowledge and new understanding.

Differing contexts in international teacher programmes have typically been viewed as boundaries to be overcome (Mesker, Wassink, Akkerman, & Bakker, 2018) or as temporary displacements to break the habitus of teaching (Allen, Hyde, Whannel, & O'Neill, 2018). Earlier studies on ITPs have often portrayed the differences between two countries as oppositional (Casinader,

2014). However, contexts in ITP are not merely a backdrop when we consider its interpretation as narrative space. The findings support the notion that teacher identity construction in this study is "spatially and locally constructed" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Based on participants' individual plots, Birland represents a network of diverse contexts where their positionings are dynamically and narratively negotiated in particular situations.

Furthermore, by adopting a different theoretical approach, specifically, those concepts related to understanding teacher development as a negotiation and dialogue, we aimed at understanding the processes of identity construction as a narrative process. Those processes occur in contexts that are mentally represented, having both individual and autobiographical interpretations, and socially and culturally shared elements. Instead of using the concept of context, we applied the concept of narrative space as our theoretical framework for describing the forum of identity negotiations. 'Narrative space' emphasizes the importance of interpretations related to the contexts in which the programme took place. Overall, we assume that human understanding of existence and oneself is basically narrative in nature (Ropo, 2019; Zen, Ropo, & Kupila, 2021). Consequently, the understanding of Indonesia or Finland or one's own identity is a narrative and narratively constructed.

Our findings describe learning on an ITP as a narrative process in which participants negotiate meanings by positioning themselves in a particular narrative space that includes autobiographical, social and cultural perspectives (Ropo, 2019). During this process teacher professional identity is constructed through repositioning according to plot, story spaces and spatial frames that exist in narrative space as described in Zikri's story. At the same time, these new positions also stimulate tensions and questions about what they have previously known and understood in their previous position, which serve as new sources of identity development (Alsup, 2005). Alya's story describes this process and highlights changes in her knowledge and understanding that are linked to her repositioning process in the narrative space. Concerning this, the ITP as a learning context provides an opportunity to 'enlarge and reorganize the repertoire of positioning' (Ligorio, 2010, p. 96) supported by narrative space as unifying the mental representation of differing contexts between Indonesia and Finland.

Using a narrative approach in our study means it is guided by ethical considerations that reflect the nature of the methodology described as 'relational responsibility' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). The relationship facilitates our efforts to gather participants' stories that are 'living, dynamic, interactional' (Atkinson, 2012, p. 123). At the same time, these stories also provide reasonable accounts of their practices and knowledge (Caduri, 2013).

Because of this, we take care to disguise any details that might reveal our participants' personal information and those who are portrayed in their stories. We are also aware that our position as interpreters of these stories is focused on finding 'narrative truth' that may indicate a teleological connection between their stories and their professional knowledge (Caduri, 2013). This ethical perspective guided the process of both the research and the writing of the study.

The study contributes to a new understanding of teachers' professional identity reconstruction as a narrative process in the international teacher programmes. The study also demonstrates that narrative space is a useful metaphor to explore the multiplicity and historicity of contexts in ITP as it is interpreted in relation to the teacher identity construction process. Further studies are needed to look into the factors affecting these narrative processes.

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