NNES Pre-service Teachers' Motivation to Enter the TESOL Field

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Abstract

Even though motivation has long been studied in the language teaching field, it has mostly focused on learner motivation, while teacher motivation has largely been ignored. This survey study focuses on non-native English speaking (NNES) teacher candidates' motivation to enter the TESOL field. Two open-ended questions were used to elicit participant responses about their motivation to enter the teaching field in general and the TESOL field in particular. Three major themes - intrinsic value, social utility value, and prior learning/teaching experiences – were identified from the responses as the key motivational factors. The findings are compared with those from existing studies to offer a comprehensive representation of the motivational factors for NNES teacher candidates' initial career choice in order to encourage more future research on language teacher motivation. Implications for TESOL and related teacher education programs are also discussed.

Keywords: Non-native English Speaker teachers, language teacher education, teacher motivation, teacher's career choice

Introduction

Motivation has been a well-researched topic in the language teaching and learning field, beginning with the early studies by Gardner and Lambert. However, it has almost exclusively focused on language learner motivation. Research on language teacher motivation has been extremely scarce. Only until very recently have motivation researchers started to notice the gap in language teacher motivation. For instance, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) point out that even though recently there has been some attention given to teacher motivation in the fields of educational psychology and teacher education in general, language teacher motivation has remained largely under-researched.

This is truly troublesome given the critical impact of teacher motivation on student learning outcomes. As Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) state, the level of a teacher's motivation and commitment influences students' motivation and learning outcomes to a great extent. A motivated language teacher would be more likely to motivate students and bring about learning successes. Furthermore, teacher motivation, in and on itself, is a worthwhile topic that can promote a better understanding of the psychological processes that teachers go through at the various stages of their career. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to systematically investigate teacher motivation.

The present study is an attempt to better understand language teacher motivation. More specifically, this study investigates non-native English speaking (NNES) pre-service teachers' motivation to enter the TESOL profession. The choice of this particular group as the focus of the study is motivated by the increasing enrollment of NNES students in TESOL or related graduate programs in the U.S. and other English speaking countries (Liu, 1998; Shortall & Evans, 2005). NNES pre-service teachers choose to enter the TESOL field despite the widespread discrimination against NNES teachers in hiring practices and other aspects of professional lives (Braine, 2010; Kamhi-Stein, 2016). Thus, it is important to carefully investigate the reasons that have motivated these NNES teacher candidates to choose TESOL as their profession. It can greatly inform the innovation of TESOL or related graduate program, especially those with a relatively large enrollment of NNES pre-service teachers. It can also shed light on the design of support systems for in-service professional development to better help NNES teachers to succeed in their career.

In the following sections, a review of relevant literature is offered, first on general teacher motivation and then language teacher motivation, to identify the key aspects of teacher motivation. A few case studies of NNES teacher motivation are also discussed. Then the methodology of the present study and the results are reported. Theoretical and pedagogical implications are then discussed.

Review of Relevant Literature

Research on General Teacher Motivation

In the field of teacher education in general, teacher motivation used to be an overlooked topic but has seen a significant growth in the past decade or so, the zest of which is partially reflected in the publication of the special issue on Motivation for Teaching in the journal Learning and Instruction in 2008. This special issue includes five empirical studies on different aspects of teacher motivation, with a wide range of theoretical frameworks from expectancy-value theory (see Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) to goal theory (see Pintrich, 2000) to interest and self-determination theories (see Deci & Ryan, 2002; Krapp, 2002). The foci of these studies vary from pre-service teachers' motivation trajectories during their teacher education program, to the different types of teacher motivation and the impact of teacher motivation on students' learning outcomes (Watt & Richardson, 2008). With such a wide range of issues related to teacher motivation covered in this special issue, the editors point out that "teacher motivations are influential from the outset of their entry to teacher education" (p. 407), which is also the focus of the present study. To draw on the findings from general teacher education to inform the present study, a most relevant empirical study on teacher candidates' initial career choice is reviewed below. It is a study conducted by the two editors of the special issue and has presented an empirically validated framework for studies on teacher initial motivation.

Watt and Richardson (2007), utilizing mainly the expectancy-value theory, developed an initial model to capture the factors that motivate teacher candidates to enter teaching, and then conducted a large-scale empirical study to validate and refine this model with two large cohorts of pre-service teacher candidates (N=488; 652) at two major universities in Australia. Five groups of motivational factors mentioned most frequently by the participants emerge from the data, which include: 1) intrinsic value, i.e., "the enjoyment one gets from carrying out a given task" (p. 171), 2) social utility value, i.e., "the strong desire to make a social contribution or give back to society" (p.173), 3) perceived teaching ability, i.e., self "perceptions of one's current competence at a given activity" (p. 171), 4) positive prior teaching and learning experiences, i.e., "had good teachers as role models", (p. 180) and 5) personal utility value, i.e., "job security, job transferability, time

for family, and bludging" (easy work schedule) (p. 157). These fivefactors are summarized in Figure 1 below. Other factors included in their model but less frequently mentioned by the participants include: task demand, task return, and fall-back career. This empirically validated framework can be valuable in guiding future researchon teacher motivation.

> 1. Intrinsic value – enjoyment from teaching
> 2. Social utility – desire to make social contributions
> 3. Perceived teaching ability – belief in one's own qualities suitable for teaching
> 4. Positive prior teaching and learning experiences
> 5. Personal utility value – job security, compatibility with family commitments, etc.

Figure 1. Top Five Motivational Factors to Enter the Teaching Profession. Adapted from Watt and Richardson (2007)

Research on Language Teacher Motivation

In the field of language teaching and learning, teacher motivation has remained largely scarce, with only a few recent exceptions. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) is one of the first few attempts that aims to synthesize the existing literature on language teacher motivation, including both conceptual models and empirical studies. For the conceptual aspects of teacher motivation, based on advancement from educational psychology and general teacher education, they highlight four unique characteristics of teacher motivation:

1. Intrinsic motivation (enjoyment from the educational process itself and from the subject matter) is a main component of teacher motivation.
2. Contextual factors (school-based and societal-level factors) play a significant role in teacher motivation.
3. Teacher motivation features a temporal axis.
4. Teacher motivation seems to be particularly fragile.

For empirical studies on language teacher motivation, they have identified a few that provide support for the significance of these four characteristics in shaping language teachers' motivation.

It is worth noting that Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2011) account of language teacher motivation is mainly intended to capture teacher motivation as a process

that changes throughout the teaching career, while Watt and Richardson's (2007) model is primarily focused on teacher candidates' initial motivation. Thus, it is not surprising that there are overlaps but also differences between the two accounts of teacher motivation. For instance, both sources stress the importance of intrinsic motivation, and there is also some overlap between what Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) consider as contextual factors, especially societal-level factors, and what Watt and Richardson (2007) label as social utility value. However, the continuously changing and fragile nature of teacher motivation in Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) is not emphasized in Watt and Richardson (2007) since they are mostly concerned with teacher candidates' initial career choice, rather than the developing process of motivation throughout their teaching career.

Research on NNES Teacher Motivation in TESOL

The particular focus of the present study is NNES teacher motivation in the TESOL field. To date, this area has been barely researched nor systematically theorized. Only a few published studies have touched upon this area. Hayes (2008) is a qualitative study that examined the factors that motivated seven NNES teachers in Thailand to enter the TESOL profession. The framework used in this study is adapted from Huberman (as cited in Hayes, 2008), which categorizes teachers' initial motivations into three domains: 1) active, which denotes that the teacher candidates deliberately chose the teaching profession because of factors such as "love of subject matter", "desire to influence young people socially"; 2) material, which includes factors such as "earning a living", "job security", and 3) passive, which refers to situations where the teacher candidates chose the teaching profession as a "tentative commitment" (p.474). The first domain includes largely both the intrinsic value and the social utility in Watt and Richardson's (2007) framework; the second domain largely corresponds to the personal utility value in Watt and Richardson's work, while the third domain roughly equals the fallback career in Watt and Richardson's work. Based on in-depth interview data, Hayes indicates that three out of the seven teacher candidates interviewed have primarily active motivation, while two others have a combination of active and materials motivation. The remaining two exhibit primarily passive motivation.

Additionally, Hayes (2008) also highlights two major themes emerging from the interview data. The first theme is the teacher candidates' own schooling expe-

rience, which may include positive experiences with a particular teacher or enjoy-
ment of a particular school subject. These early schooling experiences often instill
long-lasting passion for learning and teaching and later become one of the main
reasons that these individuals choose to enter the teaching profession. The other
theme is the sociocultural and economic situations that may have influenced the
participants' career choices. Familial expectations, socially constructed image of
teaching as a caring and empowering profession that promotes social mobility, and
restricted opportunities for career choices are among the prominent factors in this
theme. Both of these two themes are also among the five most influential themes
in Watt and Richardson (2007): the first one is prior teaching and learning experi-
ences; the second can be considered as a combination of social utility and personal
utility in Watt and Richardson's study. Hayes' (2008) study is an initial step to ex-
plore NNES teacher motivation in the TESOL field. However, due to the limited
number of informants and the unique sociocultural situation, (i.e., the Thai school
system), the findings may not necessarily reveal the full picture of NNES teachers
in different contexts.

Gao and Xu (2014) examined NNES teacher candidates' motivation to enter
the TESOL field by conducting interviews with 10 secondary school English teach-
ers from underdeveloped regions in China. Initially, most of the teachers inter-
viewed had chosen to pursue an undergraduate degree in education largely because
that was a way for people to leave their villages and move into more developed
regions. In addition, when it came time to choose a subject matter to teach, the
participating teachers had chosen English as their subject because they considered
English as a powerful tool to achieve social mobility. Interestingly, while being in
the teacher education program and starting to teach, their professional commitment
went through a process of changing and shifting. Some developed a greater sense
of achievement and a stronger sense of affiliation with the teaching profession,
while others became frustrated by the constraints they faced in the schools where
they were teaching. This changing and shifting process has been influenced by a
combination of complex contextual factors, such as the opportunities to experience
successful teaching first-hand but also having to meet the school mandates.

It is worth noting that in both Hayes (2008) and Gao and Xu (2014), the
teacher candidates had first chosen to become a teacher in general and then later
chose to become an English teacher as "a secondary consideration". This may sug-

gest that teacher candidates in the TESOL field may share similar types of initial motivation with teacher candidates in other subject areas, and their TESOL-specific motivation may largely be secondary reasons.

Yet another study that has touched upon NNES teacher motivation is Kumazawa (2013), in which possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) is used to interpret the motivation of four novice secondary school EFL teachers in Japan. In-depth interviews from over two-and-a-half-year period of time are the primary data sources in this study. It is worth noting that this study does not exclusively focus on teacher motivation. It discusses various aspects of teacher's experience in their early days of their teaching career and how these experiences shape their motivation. The results indicate that all of the four teachers in this study were enthusiastic about the subject matter of English language and culture, and three out of the four teachers also expressed their passion about the teaching profession in general.

As reflected in the studies reviewed above, it seems that the initial attempts to understand NNES teacher motivation in the TESOL field have mostly relied on interview data with just small groups of participants, each group from a single EFL country in Asia. It is necessary to continue this line of research by expanding it to include a more diverse group of NNES teachers. The present study, as a part of a larger study, is such an attempt, in that it aims to include a more culturally and linguistically diverse group of participants, to understand their initial motivation to enter the TESOL field. Additionally, with the increasing number of NNES students enrolled in TESOL graduate programs in the U.S. and other English-speaking countries, another goal of this study is to inform TESOL graduate programs so that they can better prepare NNES pre-service teachers for a successful career. Thus, the research question for the present study is: What are the factors that have motivated NNES pre-service teachers to enter the TESOL profession?

Methodology

Instruments and Participants

To answer the above research question, an online survey was used to collect data from NNES pre-service teachers. This online survey was designed and piloted for a larger study, in which a demographic information section and two open-ended

questions were specifically for the present study. Since previous studies (e.g. Gao & Xu, 2014; Hayes, 2008) have indicated that pre-service teachers may first choose to enter the general teaching field and then decide the specific subject area for their teaching career, the two questions were aimed to address these two levels of motivation – motivation to enter the teaching field in general and motivation to enter the TESOL field in particular. The survey questions were first piloted with three NNES pre-service teachers enrolled in an MA TESOL program in the United States. The pilot participants met with the researcher to complete an earlier version of the survey using the think-a-loud approach. Possible confusions they had when interpreting the questions were discussed, and necessary revisions to the wording of the questions were made based on the feedback from the pilot session. The finalized version of the two questions for this study was: 1) Why have you chosen the profession of teaching in general? and 2) If different from your previous answer, why have you chosen the TESOL profession in particular?

After the finalized version of the survey was put online, a recruitment email was sent to the contacts of TESOL or related graduate programs in the United States (found on the tesol.org website) to recruit participants. Those contacts who agreed to assist this study then forwarded the link of the finalized survey to the NNES students enrolled in their programs at the time of the study. A total of 52 NNES graduate students participated in the online survey. However, because two participants only answered the demographic information without providing responses to the questions in the later sections, they were excluded from the following analysis. Thus, the following analysis and discussions are based on 50 valid, completed surveys.

Based on the self-reported demographic information in the survey, the native languages of the participants included Arabic, Chinese, German, Indonesia, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian, Uyghur, and Zarma. Most of the participants (44) were enrolled in Master's level programs at the time of data collection, while 6 were enrolled in doctoral level programs. Almost all of the participants (88%) had studied English for ten years or longer. About half of the participants indicated they had been in their current programs for less than a year, and about one third indicated they had been in the program for more than one year but less than three years. Only a few had been in the program for three years or more. With most participants at this relatively early stage of the teacher training process,

it was hoped that their responses would most accurately reflect their initial motivation to enter the TESOL profession.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data of participant responses to the two open-ended questions were analyzed following the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to generate the themes of motivational factors. Additionally, the double coding method (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was employed to ensure the reliability of the data coding. More specifically, for the first round of coding, two raters analyzed the data independently to identify meaning units and categorizing similar meaning units into a theme. The emerging themes were constantly compared among themselves, during which the similar themes were further collapsed together while a theme that became too diverse would be divided into new themes. After analyzing the data independently for the initial round, the two raters met to compare their lists of themes and their categorization of meaning units into these themes. Any disagreement was discussed by precisely defining the themes, and finally, a mutually agreed-upon list of themes was generated as the result of the meeting. Then the two raters used the amended list of themes to code the data for a second round. The percentage of agreement between the two raters was then calculated to measure the inter-rater reliability of data coding, which was 85.7% for the first open-ended question and 83.6% for the second open-ended question. For the remaining disagreement, the two raters met for a final round to discuss again until a 100% agreement rate was reached.

It should be mentioned that a few participants, when answering these two questions, mixed the answers together (i.e.: included answers to both questions in the answer to the first question). This was probably partially due to the way these two questions were asked and ordered and partially due to the inherent connection between motivation for teaching in general and motivation for teaching a particular subject matter. When analyzing these few mixed responses during the first round of data analysis, the two raters separated the multiple meaning units within a single response and placed them into the respective categories according to the actual meaning expressed in each meaning unit: either motivational factors for teaching in general or motivational factors for teaching ESL/EFL in particular.

Results

This section presents and compares the themes generated from the responses for the two questions. Table 1 illustrates the themes generated for motivation to enter teaching in general, in the order of frequency of mention by the participants. The sub-themes for each major theme are also included here to elucidate what each of the major themes may include.

Table 1. Themes for motivation to enter the teaching profession

	Frequency (n=50)
Intrinsic value found in teaching in general • Passion for teaching in general • Sense of reward/achievement • Enjoyment of interacting with students • Interest in life-long learning	29
Social utility • Opportunity to empower students • Power of education in society	13
Prior experience • Inspired by own teachers • Relevant past teaching or learning experience • Influenced by family and/or friends	9
Self-perception • Innate traits suitable for teaching	7
Personal utility • Flexible schedule • Relaxing working environment • Financial considerations	3
Fallback career choice • Belief that women should be teachers • Not ultimately interested in teaching	2
Total number of meaning units:	63

As shown in Table 1, there are 63 meaning units identified from the 50 participants' responses. That is, a participant could have more than one meaning unit in his or her response. For example, one of the participants answered the first question with "I think teaching is a very rewarding job. A teacher can open a whole new world to his students." Two meaning units were identified from this response:

1) sense of reward, and 2) opportunity to empower students. These two meaning units were then categorized into two themes respectively: intrinsic value and social utility.

Among all the themes identified for motivation to enter the teaching profession in general, the most frequent theme is the intrinsic value found in teaching, mentioned by more than half of the participants. There seems to be four sub-themes in this group. Some participants mentioned their passion for teaching in a general way such as "I love teaching", and others were more articulate in their responses (e.g.: "a rewarding job", "sense of achievement"). Yet others explained specifically that they either "enjoy interacting with young children" (as their anticipated student population) or believe that teaching provides the opportunities for "life-long learning".

The second most frequently mentioned motivational theme for choosing the teaching profession is centered on the perceived social utility of teaching. Slightly less than one third of the participants acknowledged the importance of education in society in general or the opportunity to empower students in particular.

The next few themes include prior learning or teaching experience (a few participants have had part-time teaching experience), self-perception of innate traits suitable for teaching, and personal utility. Only two participants indicated that teaching was just a fallback career choice for them. Additionally, it is interesting that even though seven participants mentioned in one way or another that they possessed certain innate personal traits that made them suitable for the teaching profession, none of them included what exactly these personal traits were. Two representative responses for this theme were "I was born to be a teacher" and "Teaching … is part of my personality". It seemed that they had some vague and inexplicit idea that they were innately suitable for the teaching profession.

For the second open-ended question (i.e. the motivation to enter the TESOL profession), as illustrated in Table 2, there are 85 meaning units identified among participant responses, which were then categorized into six major themes. These six themes are the same as those for the first open-ended question, but the order of frequency is somewhat different this time.

Table 2. Themes for motivation to enter the TESOL profession

	Frequency (n=50)
Intrinsic value found in the subject matter of TESOL • Interest in the English language and culture • Interest in language acquisition processes • Enjoyment from learning diverse cultures and languages • Sense of reward/achievement from teaching the English language/culture	31
Prior experience with learning/teaching English • Past experience with own language teachers • Influence from parents or friends	21
Social utility • Desire to support students in learning English • Empathy for students' linguistic and cultural struggles • Importance of being proficient in English in society	18
Self-perception • Talent for language learning	5
Personal utility • Financial reward/stability • Job opportunities • Opportunity for travel	5
Fallback career choice • Not interested in teaching ESL any more • Limited choices that led to TESOL	5
Total of meaning units:	85

The most frequently occurring theme is still intrinsic value, with a frequency of 31 out of 50. This theme includes sub-themes such as interests in the English language and culture as well as other languages and cultures, interest in language acquisition processes, and sense of reward/achievement from teaching the English language/culture.

The second most frequent theme is prior experience, including the participants' own experience with learning English or teaching English part time or influence from their parents or friends, mentioned by slightly more than 40% of the participants. Two representative responses for this theme were: "I started [learning]

English as my second language since secondary school, and it is always my all-time favorite subject to learn … so I chose TESOL" and "My mother is a teacher of English... As a kid I was present at her lessons and they inspired me."

A close third theme is social utility, mentioned by slightly less than 40% of the participants. This includes sub-themes such as desire to support students in learning English, empathy for students' linguistic and cultural struggles, and importance of English proficiency in society. Other themes included self-perception of talent for language learning, personal utility, and fallback career choice, each mentioned by only five participants.

Comparing the major themes for choosing teaching in general and choosing TESOL in particular, there are some similarities as well as differences. For example, for both questions, intrinsic value emerges as the most common theme, and social utility value of the profession and prior experience appeared as either the second or third most common theme. However, there are also some differing patterns in the responses to the two questions. A closer look at the responses reveals that participants' responses to the first question, in terms of intrinsic value are generally rather vague, with a representative example being "I love teaching and want to be a teacher", while those to the second question are relatively more specific, with a representative example being "I am interested in language [acquisition] ... By becoming a language teacher, I have the opportunity to see other people's [journey] thru language acquisition". Another differing pattern is that the participants tend to give more specific and concrete reasons for choosing TESOL than for choosing teaching in general. This is also partially reflected in the total frequency numbers - there are only 63 meaning units identified in the responses for the first question, while 85 were identified for the second question. It seems that the participants have had more reasons to offer when talking about their motivation to choose the TESOL field.

Discussion and Implications

The salience of intrinsic value as the top motivational factor in this study for both teaching in general and TESOL in particular is not surprising, as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) have claimed that intrinsic motivation is one of the four major aspects of teacher motivation. This finding from the present study adds to the evidence that support this claim. It is also in consistency with empirical results from

studies in both general teacher education (e.g. Watt & Richardson, 2007) and NNES teacher motivation (e.g. Hayes, 2008; Kumazawa, 2013).

However, the two other salient themes also found in this study for both teaching in general and TESOL in particular – social utility value and prior experiences – are not among the four features highlighted by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011). This is perhaps because their discussion, as they clearly state, is not intended to focus on teachers' initial career choice. Rather, their primary concern is on the extended process that teachers' motivation takes shape during their career trajectory. Nevertheless, in a study from the field of general teacher education, Watt and Richardson (2007), as reviewed earlier in this article, do focus on teachers' initial career choice, and both of these two themes are found to be significant. Thus, together with the results from the present study, it is clear that these two motivational factors – social utility value and prior experiences – are also prominent factors that have motivated language teachers to enter the field.

Furthermore, the salience of social utility value in this study seems to suggest that pre-service teachers hold a highly idealized notion about the profession upon entrance – to help better the society. If this idealized notion is not fully grounded on the day-to-day reality of teaching, which may be the case for some pre-service teachers due to their lack of experience with the daily teaching in the social and school contexts, there is likely to be a setback in their motivation once they start their teaching career. This fluctuation in motivation may further exemplify the other three aspects of teacher motivation highlighted by Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2011) – influence from contextual factors, temporal dimension, and fragility. All these together may partially explain the high burnout rate that is often found in the first year or so of teaching.

What is also worth discussing is the emergence of prior experiences as a major motivational factor for pre-service teachers' initial career choice. Even though this is not included in Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2011) four prominent aspects of teacher motivation, the results from this study, together with those from some other studies (e.g. Hayes, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2007), suggest that individuals' past learning/teaching experience may be especially influential for pre-service teachers' career choice. This is probably because pre-service teachers, generally speaking, lack extensive experience and systematic pedagogical knowledge and thus they mostly

rely on their own previous learning/teaching experience to visualize the daily work in the profession.

Overall, the largely positive motivational factors that pre-service teachers bring with them when choosing to enter the profession are very promising to the TESOL field and to the society in general. They are generally motivated by intrinsic value, social utility value, and past positive learning/teaching experience. However, as teacher educators, we also need to think of ways that will help sustain and channel this positive view of teaching so that it will lead to a healthy and long-term positive development of teachers' professional life. For instance, for teacher education programs, it may be necessary and beneficial to prepare teacher candidates for the reality of the job so that they will have less of a reality shock when they start their first year of teaching. Possible ways include integrating more discussion topics on teachers' daily life in the classroom, inviting in-service teachers to share their work experience and advice as guest speakers, building in more field experiences where teacher candidates can observe not only in-service teachers teaching in classrooms but also get involved in school administration, parent-teacher communication processes, and other aspects that consist of a significant part of teacher's daily life.

Furthermore, while one's own learning/teaching experiences can be memorable, have long-lasting effects on one's career choices, and remain as an asset that novice teachers can draw on for ideas and inspiration for their own teaching, past experiences can also be misleading and/or restricting, if novice teachers rely solely on their own past experience, and thus detrimental to the long-term development of novice teachers. After all, we may teach in a context that is very different from our past experiences. Our experiences, while being our greatest strengths, can also be our biggest limitations that may lead to biases. Thus, teacher education programs, while creating opportunities for pre-service teachers to systematically reflect on their prior experiences, should also encourage them to critically analyze their prior experience and its impact on their own teaching development and increase the opportunities to expose teacher candidates to contexts and teaching methods that are different from their previous ones, so that they can add a wider variety of teaching experiences into their teaching repertoire.

It is also worth discussing that some participants have claimed that they have some innate traits that make them suitable to be teachers, but most are not able to

pinpoint what exactly these innate qualities are. All effective teaching is conscious teaching. Having the confidence in one's personal qualities that would lead to effective teaching is good but not sufficient. In order to have a sustained long-term development in the profession, all teachers, novice and experienced, need to be consciously aware of what exactly makes one an effective teacher, rather than simply believing they have "some" of the qualities from birth. Teachers need to know exactly what personal strengths that they can play to as a teacher and what other aspects they may need to nurture and develop to expand their repertoire of assets for teaching.

This point has some important implications for teacher education programs. As teacher educators, we need to build into our curriculum more opportunities for teacher candidates to consciously reflect and explicitly articulate the qualities that make one a competent teacher, and identify aspects they may be able to draw on as well as those that they may need to develop in order to grow professionally as a language teacher. For example, it may be necessary not just to have an opportunity for these teacher candidates to reflect on their own beliefs about the traits that make one a successful language teacher but also the ones that may be obstacles for effective language teaching. It is also necessary for them to conduct literature reviews to see what the existing literature has to say about the picture/profile of a successful language teacher, and compare the findings from the literature search with their own belief, and apply information from both personal experience and literature reviews to help them make an action plan for their own long-term professional development.

Finally, based on the results from this study as well as existing studies (e.g. Watt & Richardson, 2007) and with the hope to facilitate future research on language teacher motivation, a comprehensive representation of the motivational factors for NNES pre-service teachers can be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Motivational factors for NNES pre-service teachers' career choice

Conclusion

This study is an attempt to identify the factors that have motivated NNES pre-service teachers to choose the TESOL field. The emergence of intrinsic value, social utility value, and prior experiences as the top three themes suggests that NNES pre-service teachers enter the field with a highly positive attitude. This is very promising and also encourages teacher educators to sustain this high level of motivation. On the other hand, this highly idealized outlook may come into clash with daily challenges when these teacher candidates start teaching. Thus, teacher education programs should also prepare teacher candidates for the realistic challenges that they will face in their classrooms. Doing so will help eliminate the potential

burnout that novice teachers typically face at the initial stage of their teaching career and promote sustainable long-term professional development.

A potential limitation of the present study is its exclusive focus on the initial motivational factors for NNES teacher candidates enrolled in TESOL or related programs in the United States. It is not clear whether the findings from this study can be generalized to other groups, such as NNES teacher candidates who are enrolled in teacher education programs in their home countries. Additionally, no information about the participants' gender was collected in the demographic section of the online survey in this study. In the study from the field of general teacher education (Watt & Richardson, 2007), gender does not seem to be a differentiating factor in term of career motivation. However, for the language teaching field, it seems that many TESOL or related graduate programs, especially at the Master's level, are female dominated. It may be worthwhile for future research to explore if gender plays a role in language teachers' initial career choice. It is hoped that the identification of the major motivational factors in this study will encourage more future research on language teacher motivation, which can help us better understand the teacher development process and in turn bring about greater teacher resiliency and better learning outcomes in students.

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