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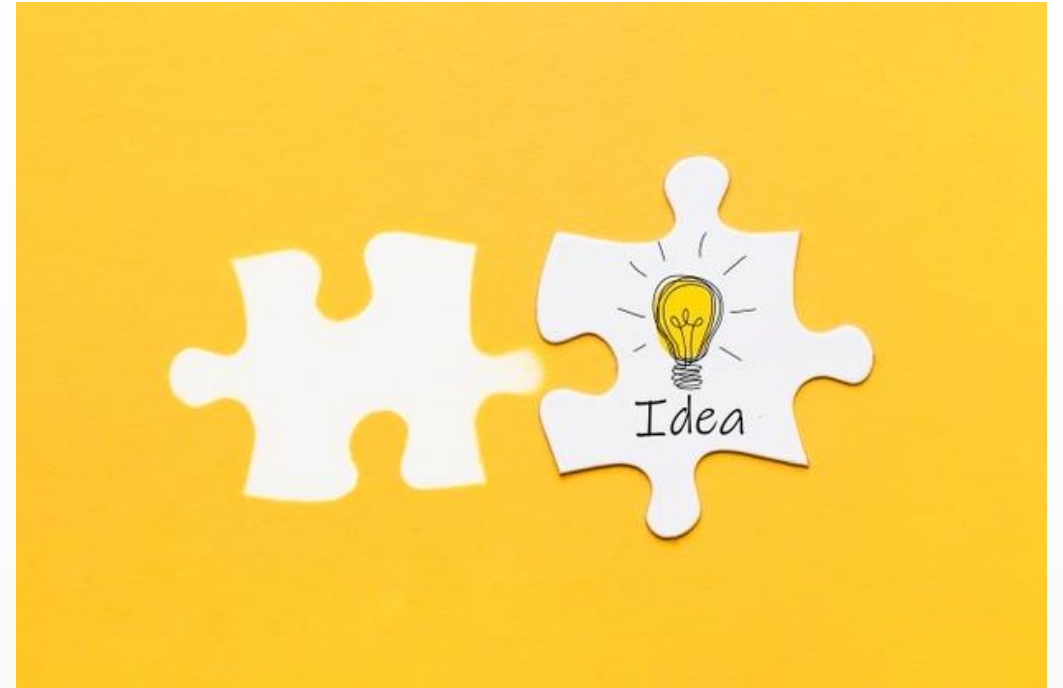
“Research that shares the story of identity construction: an evocative autoethnography”

Nazarbayev Intellectual school in Nur-Sultan

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# Discovery

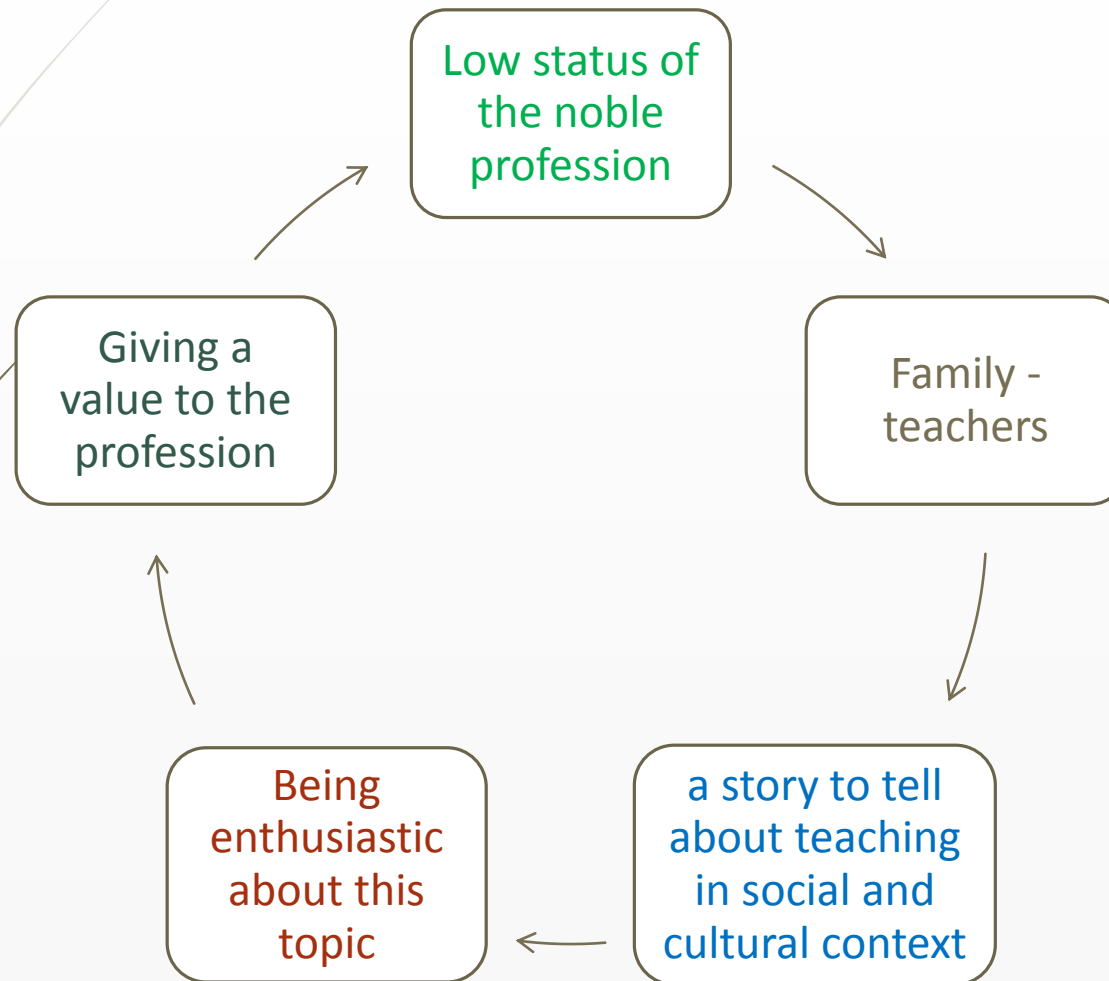
**Research:**  
Being the  
researcher and  
the participant



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# How I came to this research topic?

## Statement of the problem



- ▶ We need to **understand teachers** in order to understand teaching and learning. To understand teachers we need to understand the professional, cultural, political, and individual identities

(Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, Johnson, 2005)



# Why this research?

- ▶ first evocative autoethnography
- ▶ sociocultural perspective.
- ▶ **a method** that allows the researcher to concentrate on oneself as a **single-case**, thinking of oneself as a **writer**, promoting emotional and vulnerable writing and the knowledge delivered through **identification and self-examination** (Bochner & Ellis, 2016).



## Purpose

- ▶ Through the stories I wanted “to explore personal experiences to come to a deeper understanding of myself and practice” (Grossi, 2010, p. XV), giving a value to this noble profession while also inviting my readers to reflect on their experiences and practices.

### Research Questions:

- ▶ What constructed my teacher identity?
- ▶ How has my teacher’s identity changed?

# Literature Review

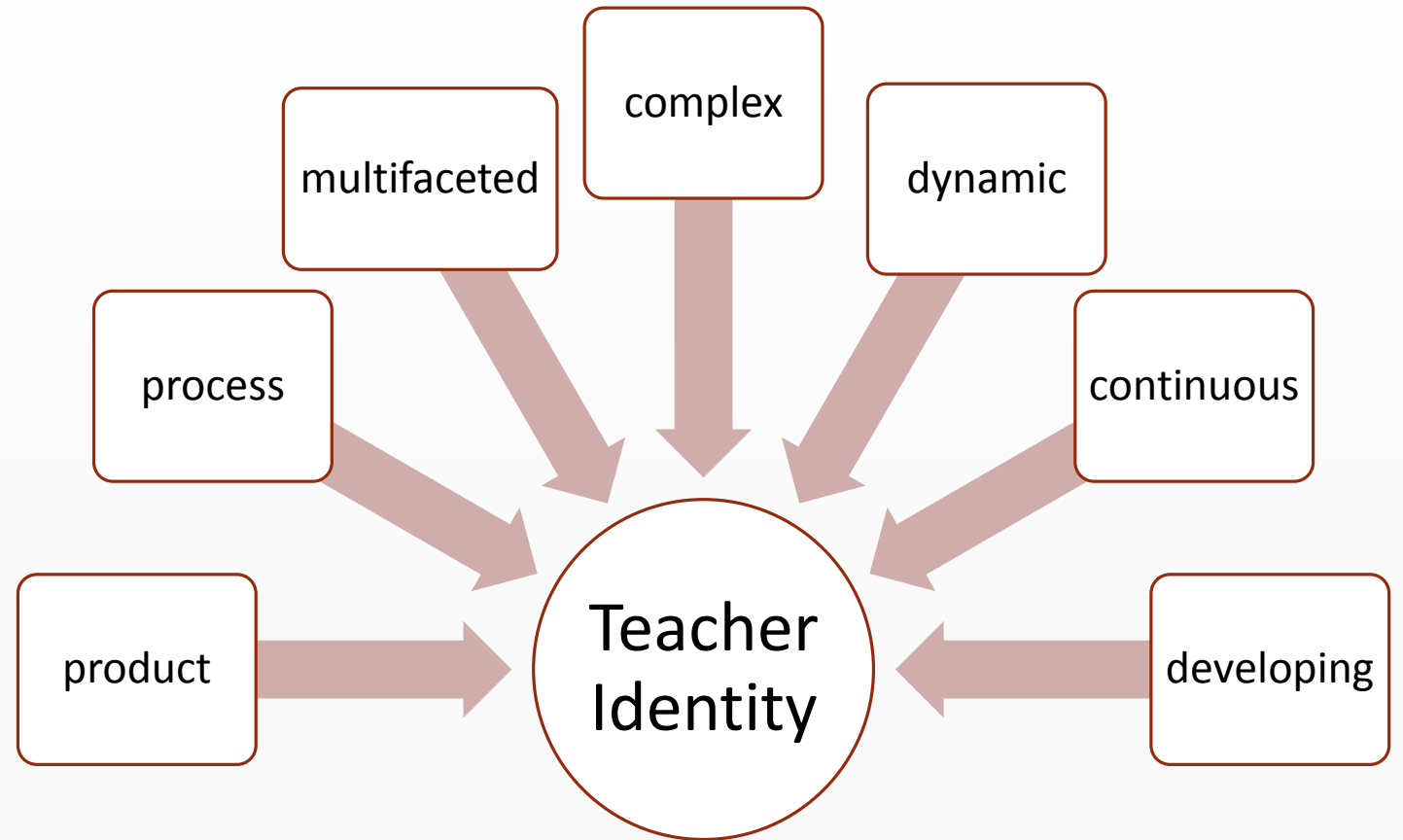
## Understanding Teacher Identity

- A full understanding of identity is challenging

(Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009)

- Teacher identity in teacher development is important

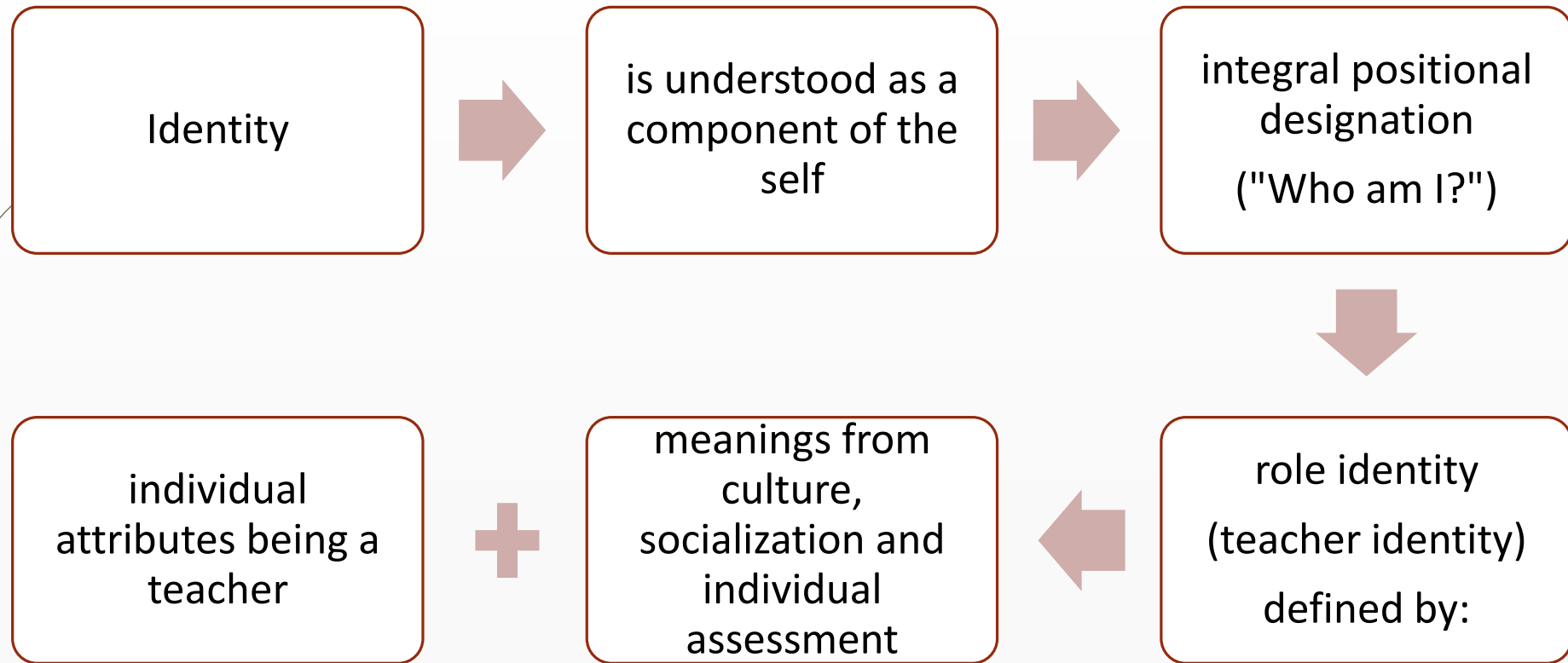
(Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Lasky, 2005, O'Connor, 2008; Reio Jr, 2005; Van Veen, Slegers & Van de Ven, 2005; Zembylas, 2003, 2005)



# Theoretical Framework

## Part 1: Identity theory

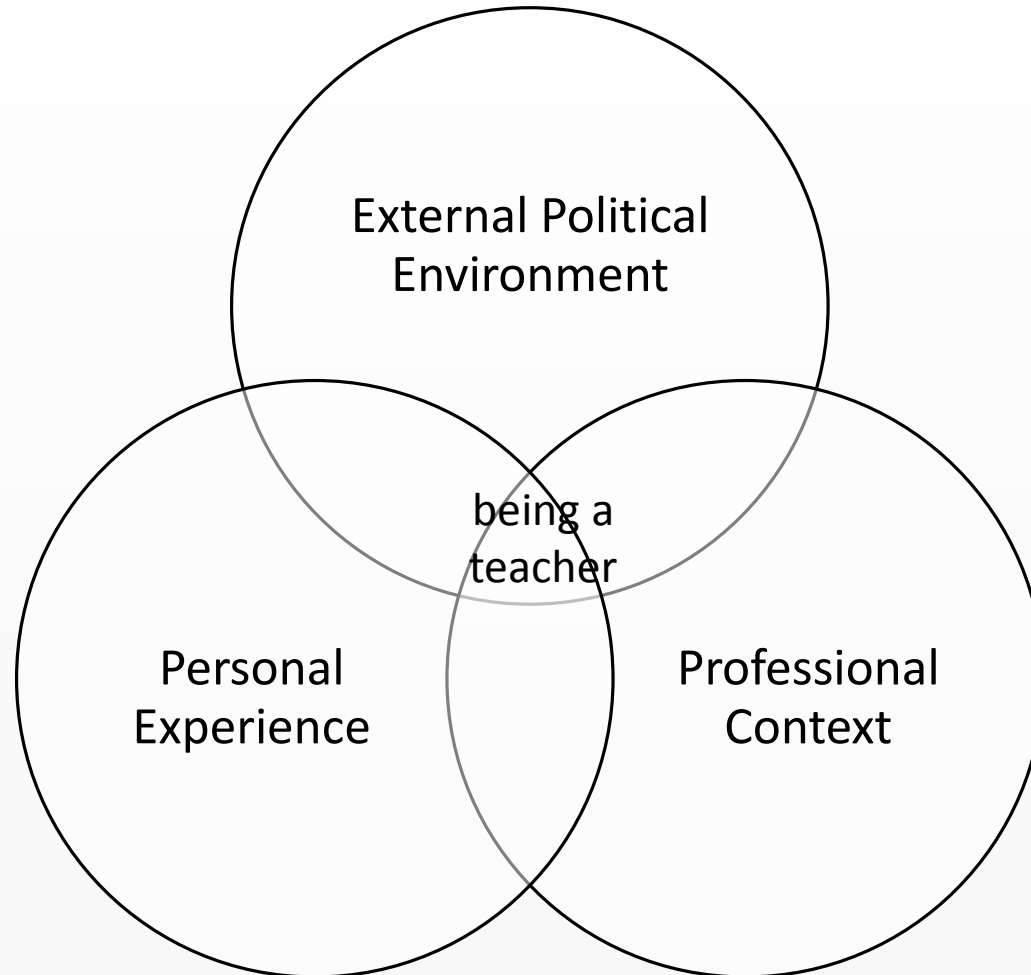
(Stryker & Burke, 2000 as cited in Carter & Mireles, 2016)



# Theoretical Framework

## Part 2: Three dimensions that construct teacher identity

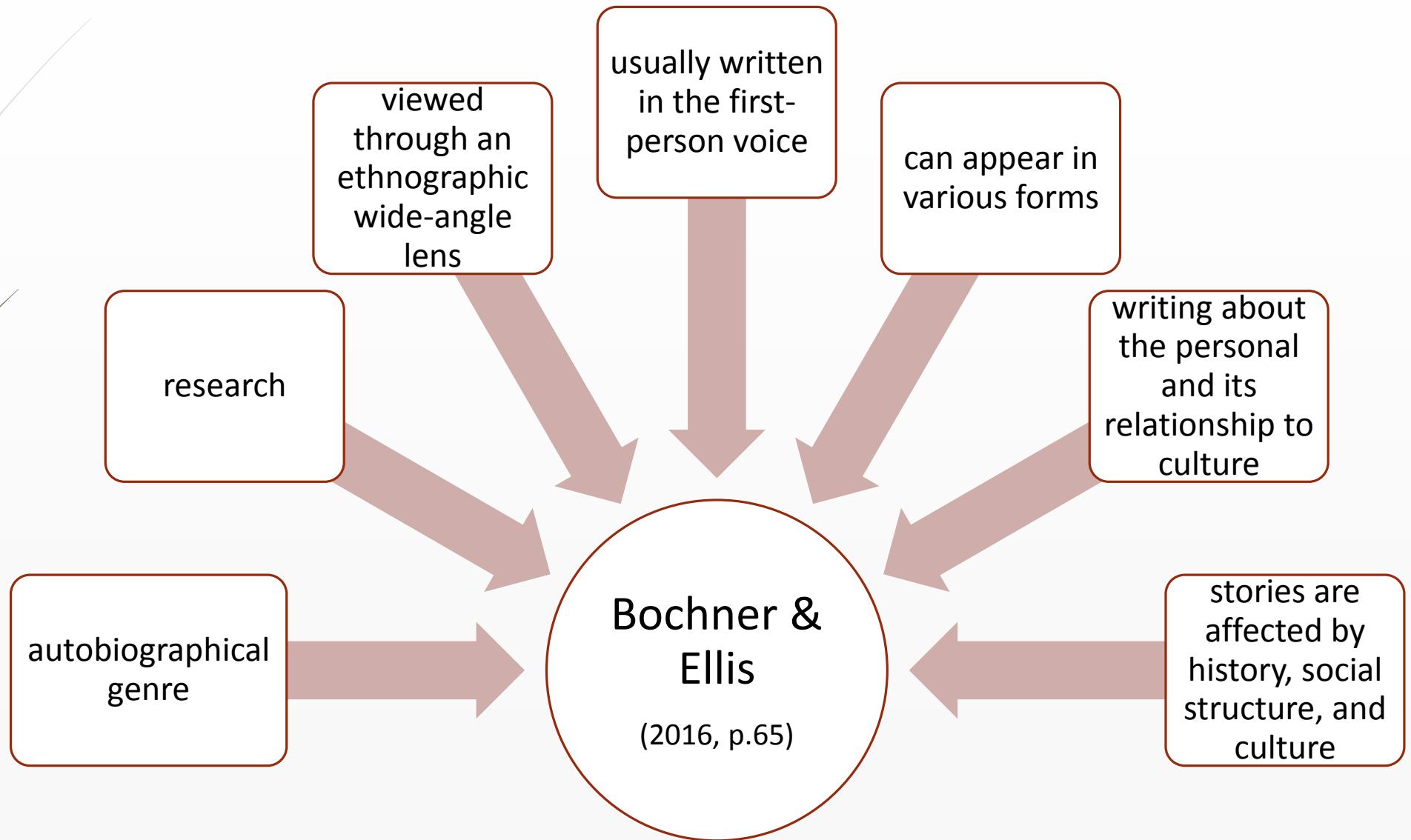
(adapted from Mockler, 2011)



“Represents the processes whereby teachers are ‘formed’ and come to understand themselves as teachers, the interplay between their motivations for entering the profession and their experiences as teachers”

(Mockler, 2011, p.518)

# Methodology: autoethnography





# Research Design: Evocative Autoethnography

## Participants

I am both the **researcher** and the **participant** (Bochner & Ellis, 2016)

## Data sources

Stories

Memory

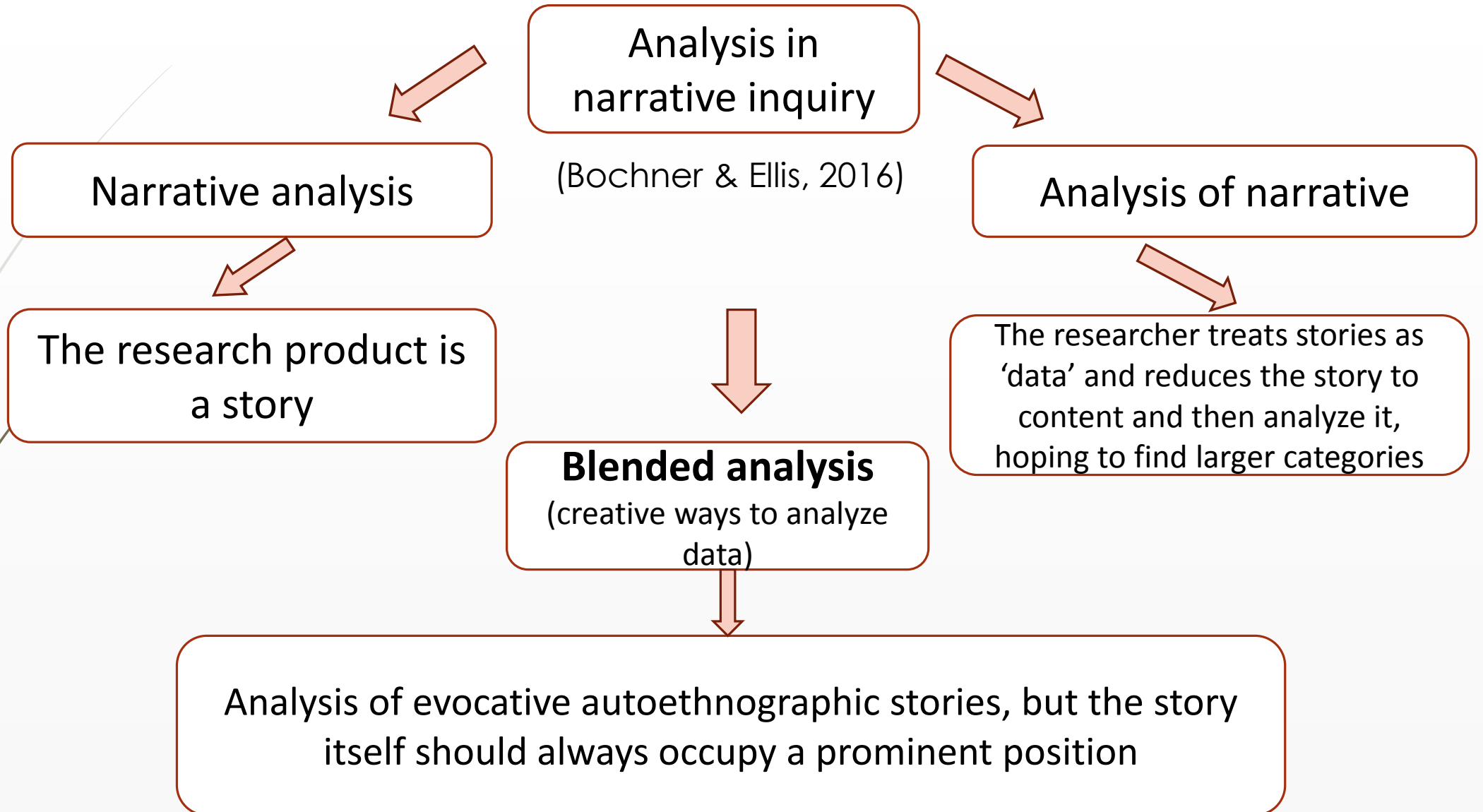
Field notes

Personal diary

**Data collection: Systematic sociological introspection** (Ellis, 2009)

- Data collection continued along with data analysis and interpretation (Chang, 2008)
- Data was collected and analyzed as part of autobiographical writing (B. Curtis & C. Curtis, 2011)

# How did I analyze personal data?



# Excerpt: Story 1

...As usual he begins his lesson with a phonetic drill, explaining grammar and follow-up exercises. "Today we are learning to pronounce the sound [æ]. Repeat after me cat, map, sat, fat." Then writes down on the black board: A black cat sat on a mat and ate a fat rat. We are repeating after him...

"Ok, dear students let's start from your homework." I say with my loud childish voice. "Who is on duty today? What date is it today?"

"I am on duty today!" says clearly Yerlan.

"What's the weather like to today?" I ask again.

"It's warm"

"What day is it?"

"It's Tuesday"

"Thank you, sit down, please. Now I will ask your homework. Your homework was to learn by hear a poem and new words" I say coldly, but confidently, trying to copy my teacher's manners...

# Narrative Analysis Technique: Story 1

"Let's go back to your first English teacher. **How did he influence you?**"

"This was my first English teacher who **raised a great motivation** and passion for the language and to become an English teacher. Certainly, I have had different English teachers since that time, but my first English teacher will stay in my heart forever because he was a great teacher, mediator, mentor and motivator for me. Also he is a very **honest and responsible person**, who was also **devoted to his profession**. When some of the parents came to talk to him during his lesson, he would request them to wait till the break time, he never allowed someone to disturb his *sacred* lessons."

"Yeah, he must be very passionate about teaching!" interrupts V.

# Excerpt: Story 3

*"...What if I cannot get the scholarship? What if I choose the wrong university or faculty? How will I survive in another city? What profession should I choose with my English? What if I will not be accepted with my 101 scores? I am trying to stop worrying and calm myself down. ... I don't want to be poor. I am tired of being poor trying to make both ends meet. I want to make my mother happy and afford to buy clothes that she wants to wear... I want to help my siblings because I'm the eldest. Well, take everything easy...."*

*"My darling, everything is going to be OK. Don't worry. Let's finish with our application. Choose the teacher training faculty. Anyway with this diploma you can always find a job. You can even become an interpreter if you know the language," she encourages me. I sighed and ticked the Romano-Germanic philology first and the teacher faculty the second at this prestigious university. "OK, mom, I have made my choice"...*

*"Goodbye! We are looking forward to seeing you as our Bachelor student in our university then" says the manager.*


*"Thank you, dear" says mom and we exit from the building and hug each other hoping the decision was right for us. I am relieved...*

# Narrative Analysis Technique: Story 3

When I was studying in secondary school, the social **status of teachers was low** and their salaries were very small as well. I knew it because my mother was a teacher at another public school. ... I am not sure about other teachers because it depended on their pedagogical mastery level they attained. Despite that fact, after leaving school, I still entered a **teacher training faculty** in another city of Kazakhstan. My group mates were not happy to choose the same faculty, but they did it **because of state grants** or they were not aware of the fact that it was a teacher training faculty. Getting the grant was also important for me at that time, but I was **happy to have chosen that faculty.**



# Ethical issues

- ▶ Case-by-case basis
  - ▶ Flexible
  - ▶ Changing the names
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# Findings

| Stories | Findings                                  | Analysis/Discussion  |
|---------|---|--|
| Story 1 | Teaching experience at the primary school | Childhood experiences and interests<br>English teacher's image and his devotion<br>Learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches<br>Current teachers' image |
| Story 2 | The first day of teaching                 | Physical conditions at school<br>My motivation to teach<br>Socialization as a novice teacher   |
| Story 3 | Applying for the undergraduate program    | Economic and social conditions in the country  |
| Story 4 | Critical review                           | Reasons of becoming a teacher<br>Opportunities and drawbacks of being a teacher  |


# Research Question: What constructed Teacher Identity?

| Three key domains              | Findings  | Data sources       | Discussion  |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Personal Experience            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My own experience at school (my first English <b>teacher and his teaching style</b>)</li> <li>• Family context (my mother's <b>child raising</b>, her advice <b>to choose the profession</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Childhood interests</b> (loving stationaries, books, writing)</li> </ul> | Story 1<br>Story 3 | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Theoretical framework</b></p> <p>“Teacher professional identity is formed and re-formed over the course of a career and mediated by a complex interplay of personal, professional and political dimensions of teachers’ work” (Mockler, 2011, p.518)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supported by other scholars:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Teacher identity is shaped by multiple social, cultural, political, historical contexts” (Buchanan, 2015, p.704)</li> <li>• Education programs, interacting with others, agency, reflection, narrative and discourse and school environment construct teacher identity (Beauchamp &amp; Thomas, 2009)</li> <li>• Teacher identity is founded in personal biography and beliefs, perception, and interceptions are nurtured in a family (Bukor, 2011)</li> </ul> |
| Professional Context           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professional learning experience</b> (early career experience, experience in particular schools)</li> <li>• <b>Teacher Education</b> (leveled courses, attestation)</li> </ul>  | Story 2<br>Story 4 |   |
| External Political Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government policy</b> (trilingual policy, state grants)</li> </ul>  | Story 4            |   |



# Conclusion

**This study helped to understand what constructed teacher identity and how it changed**

- My teacher identity was constructed from personal experiences, professional context and external political environment
  - My teacher identity is constantly changing and evolving
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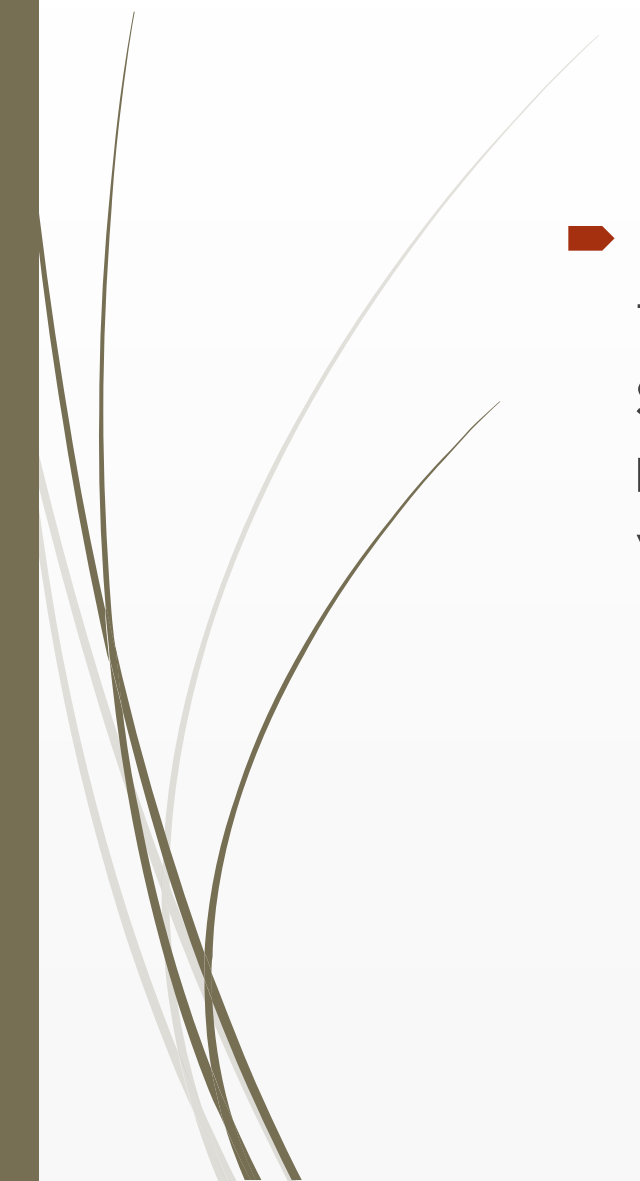
# Implications

**The findings were consistent with previous literature. Therefore, teacher identity can be used as a political tool**

- To change educational programs
- To change the professional context
- To understand yourself to become a better teacher



# Why if not we?

- ▶ If practitioners develop their knowledge, understand their practice and are able to recognize and respond to such knowledge, they can become reflective and truly responsive to the needs, issues, and concerns that are so vital in shaping teachers' practice (Loughran, 2002).
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# Thank you for your attention!

*“We are the ones who walk into the room when everyone else is walking out; we talk and listen and teach and learn, and there is no barrier between us and the people we lead” (Bennet, 2012, p.2).*

Contact me if you want to know more:

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