



## INVESTING IN SPEAKING, BECOMING A TEACHER: IDENTITY, IDEOLOGY, AND CAPITAL AMONG PRE- SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Rudha Widagsa<sup>1</sup>, Dery Tria Agustin<sup>2</sup>, Andi Dian Rahmawan<sup>3</sup>,  
Pramugara Robby Yana<sup>4</sup>, Nevi Ana Amelia Hapsari<sup>5</sup>  
<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta

Email : [widagsa@upy.ac.id](mailto:widagsa@upy.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [dery.agustin@upy.ac.id](mailto:dery.agustin@upy.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>,  
[andi@upy.ac.id](mailto:andi@upy.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>, [pramugara@upy.ac.id](mailto:pramugara@upy.ac.id)<sup>4</sup>,  
[nevianaamelia443@gmail.com](mailto:nevianaamelia443@gmail.com)<sup>5</sup>

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### Abstract

This study examines how Indonesian pre-service English teachers invest in developing speaking competence and how such investment is mediated by identity, ideology, and capital. Drawing on a qualitative case study of two final-year teacher candidates, data were generated through interviews, observations, and collection of documents, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that investment is enacted through strategic engagement across formal, informal, and digital learning spaces, rather than through effort alone. Participants' investment is shaped by their emerging identities as future teachers, their negotiation of language ideologies, and their access to and mobilization of diverse forms of capital. The study argues that speaking development is inseparable from processes of professional becoming and social positioning. Highlighting alignment across identity, ideology, and capital, this current study extends the investment in language learning theory. This study also has implications for teacher education practices.

**Keywords:** *pre-service English teacher, Speaking, teacher identity, teacher ideology*

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## Introduction

In today's globalized landscape, English proficiency is increasingly viewed as an asset for academic, professional, and social advancement (Zamawi, et.al, 2025). Among the four core language skills, speaking tends to be a visible marker of competence, especially in educational and workplace settings where oral communication is required (Burns, 2019; Goh & Burns, 2012). Yet for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), achieving fluency in speaking remains a persistent hurdle. Studies have pointed to limited exposure to authentic language use, speaking anxiety, and a lack of interactional opportunities as key barriers to meaningful oral engagement (Horwitz, 2017; MacIntyre, 2007; Peng, 2014). These difficulties are particularly acute in countries like Indonesia, where English is mostly taught in formal classrooms and seldom used in daily life (Lamb & Coleman, 2008; Zein, 2017).

For pre-service English teachers, the importance of speaking proficiency is even more pronounced. In addition to serving as a tool for communication, speaking operates as a professional asset that actively shapes how students, peers, and institutions perceive future educators. (Richards, 2021; Yuan & Lee, 2016). In many EFL settings, a teacher's oral ability is tied to perceptions of pedagogical skill, credibility, and classroom authority (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Tsui, 2007). Consequently, speaking becomes a cornerstone of teacher identity, shaping not only how pre-service teachers envision their professional futures but also how they situate themselves within educational communities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Trent, 2016). Viewed this way, efforts to enhance speaking skills cannot be understood merely as a matter of individual learning preference. Instead, they are embedded in broader dynamics of identity formation, social expectation, and institutional control.

Despite the centrality of speaking in teacher preparation, much research on language learning has traditionally relied on the concept of motivation to explain learners' engagement. Motivation has been widely studied in second language acquisition (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). However, it has been critiqued for its limited capacity to account for the social, ideological, and structural conditions that shape learning opportunities (Norton, 2013; Ushioda, 2011). In response, Norton (1995, 2013) introduced the concept of investment, which reconceptualizes language learning as a socially situated practice embedded in relations of power. From this perspective, learners invest in a language not simply because they are motivated, but because they expect to gain access to symbolic and material resources, including social recognition, cultural capital, and future

opportunities (Norton, 2013). Investment thus foregrounds the relationship between language learning and issues of identity, access, and power (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

Building on this framework, Darvin and Norton (2015) propose a model of investment that highlights the dynamic interplay between identity, ideology, and capital. Identity refers to how learners understand themselves and their imagined futures; ideology encompasses the dominant beliefs and norms that shape language practices; and capital includes the social, cultural, economic, and technological resources that learners can mobilize (Bourdieu, 1986; Darvin & Norton, 2015). These dimensions are not static; rather, they interact dynamically across time and space, shaping learners' opportunities to participate in language practices and to claim legitimacy as language users (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2013). This framework is particularly useful for examining pre-service teachers, whose language learning trajectories are closely intertwined with their emerging professional identities and their access to institutional and social resources (Varghese et al., 2005).

A growing body of research has applied the concept of investment to diverse language learning contexts, demonstrating how learners' engagement is shaped by their aspirations, social positioning, and access to resources (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Haneda, 2005; Kim, 2018). Studies have shown, for instance, that learners invest in language learning as a means of gaining membership in imagined communities, enhancing career prospects, and negotiating their identities in multilingual environments (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2013). However, several gaps remain. First, relatively limited attention has been paid to pre-service teachers as a distinct group of learners whose investment is linked to professional identity formation (Yuan & Burns, 2017). Second, while speaking is frequently acknowledged as a crucial skill, few studies have examined it as a specific site of investment, particularly in relation to identity and ideology (Burns, 2019). Third, there is a need for more contextually grounded research that explores how investment operates in underrepresented settings such as Indonesian higher education, where sociocultural and institutional conditions may shape learning in distinct ways (Zein, 2017).

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining how Indonesian pre-service English teachers invest in developing their speaking skills within a university context. Rather than treating speaking as a purely technical competence, the study conceptualizes it as a socially and symbolically mediated practice through which learners construct and negotiate their identities as future teachers (Norton, 2013; Richards, 2021). By focusing on the experiences of two pre-service teachers, the study provides an in-depth account of how investment is enacted in everyday learning practices, as well

as how it is shaped by broader sociocultural and institutional context. Specifically, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do Indonesian pre-service English teachers invest in developing their English speaking competence? and (2) In what ways do identity, ideology, and capital mediate their investment in developing English speaking competence?

## **Research Methods**

### ***Design***

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate how Indonesian pre-service English teachers invest in developing speaking competence and how such investment is mediated by identity, ideology, and capital. A case study approach was appropriate for generating a contextually situated and theoretically informed understanding of participants' experiences within a bounded institutional setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Consistent with interpretive traditions in applied linguistics, the design prioritizes meaning-making and the relational nature of language learning within specific sociocultural contexts.

### ***Participants***

The study was conducted at a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Purposive sampling was used to recruit information-rich participants capable of providing insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2015). Two final-year pre-service English teachers, referred to by the pseudonyms Johan and Danar, participated in the study. Both were enrolled in a teacher education program and were actively engaged in developing their English-speaking competence. Their familiarity with the researcher facilitated rapport and depth of disclosure, while necessitating ongoing reflexivity regarding positionality and potential bias (Berger, 2015). Ethical procedures were followed, and written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection.

### ***Data Collection***

Data were generated from multiple sources to capture participants' engagement across learning contexts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, beliefs, and future orientations related to speaking development. The interview protocol was designed to align with the research questions while allowing flexibility for probing and elaboration (Kallio et al., 2016). In addition, non-participant observations of classroom and learning activities were carried out to document patterns of participation and interaction. Relevant documents, including learning artifacts and records of digital engagement, were also

collected to provide contextual insight into participants' learning trajectories. This multi-source approach enabled triangulation and facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of investment as enacted across contexts (Denzin, 2012).

**Data analysis**

Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021), informed by the theoretical framework of investment (Norton, 2013; Darvin & Norton, 2015). The analysis proceeded iteratively through familiarization, coding, theme development, and refinement. Coding combined inductive attention to participants' accounts with theoretically informed interpretation. Key constructs such as investment, identity, ideology, and capital were operationalized as analytic lenses (see Table 1). Investment was identified through patterns of participation and strategic engagement; identity through self-positioning, imagined futures, and claims to legitimacy; ideology through beliefs about English and speaking norms; and capital through access to and mobilization of resources, following Bourdieu (1986). This approach enabled analysis of how speaking development is socially mediated through the interaction of these dimensions rather than determined by individual effort alone.

**Results and Discussion**

**Results**

This section presents the findings organized by themes aligned with each research question (RQ) (see Table 3). RQ1 examines how pre-service teachers invest in developing speaking competence, highlighting differing strategies and engagement patterns between Johan and Danar. RQ2 explores how identity, ideology, and capital mediate this investment, shaping their learning trajectories. Each theme integrates analytical focus, empirical patterns, theoretical constructs, and interpretive claims to explain how speaking development is negotiated within specific sociocultural contexts.

Table 1. Organization of the findings

| Research Question                                     | Thematic Category            | Analytical Focus                                           | Empirical Pattern (Johan vs. Danar)                                                                 | Theoretical Constructs                      | Interpretive Claim                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| RQ1: How do pre-service teachers invest in developing | Strategic Learning Practices | Allocation of time and engagement across formal, informal, | <b>Johan:</b> Structured, self-regulated (apps, recording, online groups)<br><b>Danar:</b> Routine- | Investment; Capital (technological, social) | Investment is enacted through <b>strategic and context-</b> |

|                                                                 |                                                       |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                                           |                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| speaking competence ?                                           | and digital spaces                                    | based, socially embedded (peers, media, class participation)                                                                             |                                                                                                           |                                           | <b>sensitive learning practices</b> , not merely time spent                             |
| Economic Investment and Resource Use                            | Financial commitment and access to learning resources | <b>Johan:</b> High financial investment (courses, subscriptions)<br><b>Danar:</b> Selective/limited spending; reliance on free resources | High Capital (economic, technological, social)                                                            | Capital (economic, technological, social) | Capital shapes <b>forms of investment</b> , not the presence of investment              |
| Effort, Persistence, and Affective Engagement                   | Sustained effort despite anxiety and self-doubt       | Both participants persist despite low confidence; actively seek practice opportunities                                                   | Investment; Identity (future orientation)                                                                 | Investment; Identity (future orientation) | Investment is <b>agentive and affectively negotiated</b> , sustained by long-term goals |
| RQ2: How do identity, ideology, and capital mediate investment? | Identity as Future Teacher                            | Professional identity shaping learning priorities                                                                                        | <b>Johan:</b> Family-based, continuity identity<br><b>Danar:</b> Experience-based, aspirational identity  | Identity; Investment                      | Identity provides <b>direction and intensity</b> for investment                         |
| Language Ideology (Intelligibility vs. Nativeness)              | Beliefs about “good” English and legitimate speaking  | Both reject native-speaker norms; prioritize communication; Johan retains partial correctness orientation                                | Both reject native-speaker norms; prioritize communication; Johan retains partial correctness orientation | Ideology; Identity; Investment            | Ideology acts as a <b>regulatory and enabling framework</b> for participation           |
| Capital Mobilization and Conversion                             | Use of available resources to sustain learning        | <b>Johan:</b> Multi-capital access (economic, social, technological)<br><b>Danar:</b> Adaptive use of limited capital; strong            | Multi-capital access (economic, social, technological)                                                    | Capital; Investment                       | Investment depends on strategic mobilization and conversion of capital                  |

|                                        |                                                     |                                                                                                            |                                      |                                         |                                                                                  |  |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|                                        |                                                     |                                                                                                            | reliance on social/digital resources |                                         |                                                                                  |  |
| Interplay of Identity-Ideology-Capital | Dynamic interaction shaping investment trajectories | Both identity (teacher), ideology (communication), and capital (resources), but through different pathways | align                                | Identity; Ideology; Capital; Investment | Investment is a <b>relational and emergent process</b> , not an individual trait |  |

*Investment in the Development of English Speaking Competence*

This current study found that participants' investment in developing English speaking competence is best understood as a situated and agentic process, enacted through their engagement with multiple learning environments and shaped by their emerging trajectories within English language education. Rather than reflecting a linear accumulation of time, effort, or financial resources, investment appears to be organized through strategic practices, differentiated resource mobilization, and sustained affective negotiation. Three interrelated themes are presented to capture these dynamics: (1) strategic and self-directed learning practices, (2) differentiated economic investment and resource mobilization, and (3) sustained effort and affective negotiation.

Strategic and learning practices

This first theme highlights how participants organize their engagement across formal, informal, and digitally mediated spaces. Johan's investment is characterized by a relatively structured and reflexive approach, in which he combines participation in online communities with individualized practice strategies. He described how he regularly engages in self-monitoring activities to improve his speaking:

“When I'm at home, I like to practice speaking in front of a mirror... I also sometimes record my voice and listen to it again for improvement.” (Interview with Johan, 23-24)

This finding is further supported by Johan's voice recordings collected during the study, which demonstrate that he regularly recorded and reviewed his own speaking practice as part of his learning process. (Johan Doc 03)

This form of engagement suggests a deliberate orientation toward speaking as a skill that requires continuous evaluation and refinement. In

addition, Johan participates in online discussion groups, which he perceives as valuable sites for practice and exchange:

“I joined a group on Telegram with students from different regions... we often have discussions about speaking.” (Interview with Johan, 35-36)

By contrast, Danar’s investment is less formally structured but no less consistent. His engagement is embedded in everyday practices and social interaction, indicating a more relational and routine-based orientation to learning. He explained:

“I often watch videos on YouTube... sometimes I practice speaking directly with my friends.” (Interview with Danar, 48-49)

Classroom observation field notes documented Danar actively speaking in English with his classmates during classroom activities, confirming his interview statement regarding his speaking practice. (Danar Observation 01)

Rather than relying on tightly organized routines, Danar integrates English use into his daily activities. This suggests that investment may also be enacted through habitual exposure and socially situated practice. Across both cases, these patterns indicate that investment is realized through learners’ capacity to strategically configure participation across diverse learning environments, rather than through intensity alone.

#### *Economic investment and resources*

The second theme foregrounds how access to and use of resources mediate the forms that investment takes. Johan demonstrates a relatively high level of economic investment, allocating personal funds to support his speaking development. He explicitly noted:

“I take a speaking course outside of campus and pay for it myself, because I feel that relying only on classroom lessons is not enough.” (Interview with Johan, 41-43)

This orientation suggests a belief in the added value of structured and formalized learning environments, particularly in developing accuracy and fluency. In addition to paid courses, Johan also invests in learning materials and digital tools, indicating a multi-layered deployment of economic and technological resources.

In contrast, Danar operates within more limited economic conditions, yet demonstrates a capacity to strategically mobilize alternative resources. Rather than enrolling in formal courses, he relies on freely available opportunities and selectively invests in accessible digital media:

“I attend extra speaking classes led by my lecturer... I also often watch videos on YouTube and use Netflix to learn.” (Interview with Danar, 56-57)

This pattern reflects a form of adaptive investment, in which social and technological resources compensate for limited financial capital. Importantly, these differences do not appear to produce unequal levels of commitment; rather, they generate distinct pathways of engagement, suggesting that capital shapes how investment is enacted rather than whether it occurs.

#### Effort, Persistence, and Affective Engagement

This third theme draws attention to the role of persistence and emotional regulation in maintaining investment over time. Both participants report experiencing anxiety and lack of confidence, particularly in relation to speaking performance. However, these affective challenges do not result in disengagement; instead, they are negotiated as part of the learning process. Johan described his approach as follows:

“Sometimes I feel not confident, but I keep practicing and repeating until I feel better.” (Interview with Johan, 77-78)

Similarly, Danar emphasized his willingness to participate despite nervousness:

“Even though I feel nervous, I still try to speak in class.” (Interview with Danar, 112-113)

These accounts suggest that investment entails not only cognitive and material engagement but also emotional labor, where learners persist despite perceived inadequacies. Such persistence appears to be sustained by a future-oriented orientation, in which present efforts are linked to anticipated professional roles as English teachers. In this sense, investment is closely tied to learners' imagined trajectories within the educational field, where speaking competence is positioned as a key resource for future practice.

Taken together, these themes indicate that investment in speaking competence among Indonesian pre-service teachers is a contextually situated and relational process, shaped by the interaction between individual agency, access to resources, and the demands of their educational context. While Johan and Danar exhibit different configurations of practice and resource use, both demonstrate sustained and purposeful engagement, oriented toward the development of communicative competence as a professionally relevant capacity. These findings provide a foundation for further analysis of how such investment is mediated by identity, ideology, and capital.

#### The Mediation of Investment through Identity, Ideology, and Capital

The analysis of this study indicates that participants' investment in developing English speaking competence is not solely a matter of individual effort or strategic engagement, but is systematically mediated by the interplay of identity, ideology, and capital within their educational

trajectories. These dimensions do not operate independently; rather, they shape the conditions under which investment becomes meaningful, possible, and sustainable. Three interrelated themes are presented to capture this mediation: (1) identity as a prospective English teacher, (2) language ideology and the negotiation of legitimacy, and (3) capital mobilization and the structuring of opportunity.

#### Identity as a Prospective English Teacher

Participants' investment is strongly anchored in their emergent identities as future English teachers, which function as a central organizing force in shaping their learning priorities and commitments. In both cases, speaking competence is constructed not merely as an academic requirement, but as a core marker of professional legitimacy and readiness. For Johan, this identity is closely tied to his familial background in education, which appears to produce a sense of continuity and responsibility. His understanding of speaking as essential to teaching is reflected in his concern about professional adequacy:

“If I myself cannot speak well and confidently, how can I teach my students later?” (Interview with Johan, 89-90)

This statement suggests that speaking is positioned as a visible and evaluative dimension of teacher competence, through which he anticipates being judged in his future role. His active participation in classroom discussions and campus organizations may therefore be interpreted as forms of identity enactment, where present practices are aligned with an imagined professional self.

In contrast, Danar's identity appears to be shaped less by familial continuity and more by prior learning experiences, particularly his encounters with teachers who influenced his motivation. His investment reflects a sense of personal responsibility toward his future role:

“I believe that mastering speaking skills is part of my responsibility as a prospective teacher.” (Interview with Danar, 123-124)

Here, speaking competence is framed not only as a skill but as an ethical and professional obligation, indicating that identity operates as a form of moral positioning within the educational field. Despite differences in background, both participants orient their investment toward becoming legitimate and effective English teachers, suggesting that identity provides both the direction and intensity of their engagement.

#### Language Ideology and the Negotiation of Legitimacy

Participants' investment is further mediated by their language ideologies, particularly their beliefs about what constitutes legitimate English use and competent speaking. The data suggest a shared orientation toward intelligibility and communicative effectiveness, rather than strict adherence to native-speaker norms. Johan explicitly distances himself from the goal of native-like pronunciation:

“I don't really focus on speaking like a native speaker... what matters most is that the person I'm speaking to understands what I mean.” (Interview with Johan, 101-103)

He further acknowledges the presence of his local accent, but reframes it as acceptable within communicative interaction:

“My Javanese accent still comes out sometimes, but I'm not ashamed of it... as long as communication works, that's enough.” (Interview with Johan, 108-109)

Similarly, Danar articulates a pluralistic view of English, emphasizing variation and accessibility:

“Every region and every country has its own accent... as long as it can be understood, it should not be a problem.” (Interview with Danar, 131-132)

These perspectives suggest an orientation aligned with English as an international language, in which legitimacy is grounded in communicative success rather than conformity to native norms. Such an ideological stance appears to have enabling effects on investment, as it reduces anxiety related to pronunciation and encourages greater willingness to participate in speaking activities. At the same time, traces of more dominant language ideologies remain, particularly in Johan's emphasis on correctness and clarity. This indicates that ideology is not fully transformed but rather negotiated, with learners navigating between competing discourses of what counts as “good” English. In this sense, ideology functions as a regulatory framework, shaping both the goals of learning and the conditions under which learners feel authorized to speak.

#### Capital Mobilization and the Structuring of Opportunity

The third theme highlights how participants' investment is mediated by their access to and mobilization of various forms of capital, including economic, social, and technological resources. These forms of capital shape the opportunities available for engagement, while also being actively reconfigured by learners. Johan's trajectory reflects access to multiple forms of capital, which he mobilizes to support a structured and resource-intensive approach to learning. He participates in online communities, enrolls in paid courses, and utilizes digital tools to enhance his speaking practice:

“I join Telegram groups... take a speaking course... and use apps to improve my pronunciation.” (Interview with Johan, 28-29)

This configuration enables him to engage in a range of learning activities that extend beyond the classroom, suggesting that capital can facilitate expanded and diversified participation.

In contrast, Danar's investment is shaped by more limited economic capital, yet he demonstrates a capacity to strategically convert available resources into learning opportunities. He relies on lecturer-provided extra classes, peer interaction, and digital media as key sites of practice:

“I attend extra speaking classes... practice with friends... and learn from YouTube and Netflix.” (Interview with Danar, 32-33)

This pattern illustrates how capital is not merely possessed but activated and transformed, allowing learners to sustain investment even under constrained conditions. While differences in capital lead to distinct forms of engagement, both participants remain actively invested, suggesting that capital shapes the pathways rather than the presence of investment.

## Discussion

This study examined how Indonesian pre-service English teachers invest in developing speaking competence and how such investment is mediated by identity, ideology, and capital. The findings support a view of investment not as an individual disposition, but as a socially situated, relational, and temporally structured process shaped by learners' positioning within broader sociocultural and institutional conditions. In line with Norton (2013) and Darvin and Norton (2015), investment is embedded in power relations and identity negotiation; however, this study extends the framework by demonstrating how investment is actively configured across distributed learning ecologies and aligned with learners' imagined professional trajectories.

The findings show that investment is enacted through strategic participation across formal, informal, and digitally mediated spaces. Rather than accumulating effort linearly, learners selectively engage with contexts offering meaningful affordances. Johan's structured, self-regulated practices and Danar's socially embedded routines illustrate heterogeneous yet purposeful trajectories, supporting Norton's (2013) view of learners as active negotiators of access. Extending this perspective, recent work conceptualizes such participation as embedded in sociomaterial conditions, where agency is distributed across human and technological infrastructures (Darvin, 2025). Digital engagement, therefore, is not peripheral but constitutive of investment, shaping how access and legitimacy are negotiated. While prior

studies highlight the role of informal learning (Lai, 2019; Sockett, 2014), the present findings show that such engagement is strategically aligned with imagined professional identities (Kanno & Norton, 2003), positioning investment as both spatially distributed and future-oriented.

The analysis also complicates deterministic interpretations of capital. Although economic resources influence the intensity and form of engagement, they do not determine whether learners invest. This aligns with Bourdieu's (1986) view of capital as structuring but not determining practice and with Darvin and Norton's (2015) emphasis on its dynamic interaction with identity. Recent research similarly demonstrates how learners actively convert and reconfigure available resources under structural constraints (Rahaman, 2025). Johan's reliance on institutionalized resources reflects the symbolic legitimacy of formal learning (Block, 2013), whereas Danar's use of freely available and socially mediated resources illustrates adaptive capital conversion (Darvin, 2016; Warschauer, 2003). However, such adaptability does not eliminate inequality; instead, it produces differentiated pathways shaped by uneven access to valued resources. Capital is thus best understood as dynamic yet unevenly convertible, reinforcing the need to address structural disparities in teacher education.

A key contribution of the study is its attention to affective negotiation. Supporting Norton's (2013) claim that investment is tied to desire and struggle, in this study, participants persist despite anxiety and self-doubt. This aligns with the affective turn in applied linguistics, which conceptualizes emotions as socially mediated and dynamic (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Pavlenko, 2013). Notably, confidence emerges through participation rather than preceding it, consistent with sociocultural perspectives on co-constructed competence (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Learners' persistence is sustained by future-oriented identities, reinforcing the temporal dimension of investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015) and echoing identity-based motivation (Ushioda, 2011). These findings highlight the importance of addressing affective dimensions of speaking within teacher education.

Identity functions as a primary structuring force shaping investment. Both participants orient their learning toward becoming legitimate English teachers, positioning speaking competence as central to professional legitimacy. This supports Darvin and Norton's (2015) framework while extending it to teacher education, where identity is closely tied to institutional expectations. Recent scholarship further emphasizes that investment is inseparable from teacher identity formation (Uysal et al., 2024). Speaking competence thus operates not only as a communicative skill but also as a symbolic resource for claiming professional identity. This contributes to teacher identity research (Barkhuizen, 2017; Varghese et al.,

2005) by showing that language competence and professional identity are co-constructed rather than sequential.

Ideology plays a dual role in enabling and constraining investment. Participants' orientation toward intelligibility reflects Global Englishes perspectives (Galloway & Rose, 2015; Rose & Galloway, 2019), supporting more inclusive participation. However, ongoing concerns about correctness indicate the persistence of native-speakerist norms (Holliday, 2006; Kubota, 2012). This tension suggests that ideology shapes what counts as legitimate speaking while delimiting acceptable variation. Consistent with Pennycook (2007), learners actively negotiate rather than passively adopt these discourses. This underscores the importance of critical engagement with language ideologies in teacher education to support more equitable forms of participation.

The findings also reinforce the relational nature of capital. Learners mobilize economic, social, and digital resources in sustaining investment. Johan's diversified access contrasts with Danar's reliance on socially mediated and technologically enabled practices, highlighting the growing importance of digital capital (Darvin, 2016; Warschauer, 2003). Yet the uneven convertibility of capital across contexts points to persistent structural inequalities (Block, 2013), indicating that agency alone cannot offset systemic constraints. Taken together, the findings advance a reconceptualization of investment as a process of alignment across identity, ideology, and capital within shifting sociomaterial conditions. Extending Darvin and Norton (2015), the study shows that investment is shaped by learners' efforts to align who they are becoming, what they believe about language, and what resources they can access. Building on recent work (Darvin, 2025), this alignment is increasingly mediated by digital infrastructures, where opportunities remain uneven yet navigable.

The study contributes to investment theory by foregrounding professional identity formation and capital conversion in teacher education. It shifts the focus from participation alone to the conditions under which participation becomes meaningful and sustainable, echoing recent empirical work on structural inequality and learner agency (Rahaman, 2025). Situating investment within teacher education, this study extends discussions of teacher identity (Uysal et al., 2024), emphasizing that language learning is inseparable from becoming a professional subject.

## Conclusion

This study shows that investment in speaking competence among Indonesian pre-service English teachers is not an individual attribute but a

socially mediated, temporally oriented process shaped by identity, ideology, and capital. Learners strategically engage across formal, informal, and digital spaces, aligning participation with imagined professional identities as future teachers. Speaking development thus emerges as inseparable from processes of becoming a legitimate professional subject. The study contributes by (1) conceptualizing investment as alignment across identity, ideology, and capital, (2) highlighting the role of affective negotiation in sustaining participation, and (3) demonstrating the dynamic yet uneven convertibility of capital, particularly in digitally mediated contexts. Pedagogically, the findings call for teacher education programs that integrate identity aspect, critical engagement with language ideologies, and equitable access to speaking opportunities. More broadly, they reinforce that language learning is embedded in power relations and social positioning. Future research should trace how investment evolves longitudinally across professional transitions and institutional contexts.

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