

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presented a literature review related to the primary focus of the study. Three main sections will be discussed in this chapter. The first section reviews the definition, role, and characteristics of tuition centers in non-formal education. The second section discusses teaching English to Young Learners in Tuition Centers, including the definition, challenges, and special needs of teaching Young Learners. The final section examines the concept of identity formation, focusing on how teaching experiences contribute to the identity formation of an English instructor. These three aspects are structured to provide a theoretical basis that supports the analysis of participants' experiences in the context of teaching in tuition centers.

#### 2.1. Tuition Centers

A tuition center, also commonly referred to as a tutoring center or supplementary education center, is a non-formal educational institution that provides additional learning support outside regular school hours. Unlike formal schools, tuition centers are typically more flexible in structure, focusing on specific subjects or skills to complement students' formal education. They often operate in smaller class sizes and offer more personalized attention to meet students' individual learning needs (Bray & Kwo, 2014).

Students and parents constantly seek ways to improve their academic achievement in an increasingly competitive educational landscape. One form of support that is gaining popularity is through tutoring centers. In recent years, tutoring centers have played a crucial role as supplementary learning venues, providing a comfortable, flexible environment that focuses more on individual student needs (Nawaz, 2024). With smaller class sizes, tutoring centers create a more personal interaction between students and instructors, enabling a more structured and effective learning process (Kim et al., 2024).

Tuition centers also serve as a secondary learning environment after formal school. Students can receive more attention and additional support when facing challenging subject matter. According to Sahito et al. (2017), tutoring centers significantly improve students' academic performance because they provide a more intensive space for mentoring. This finding is further supported by the findings of Azmat et al. (2021) in their study in Pakistan, which showed that students who took supplementary lessons at tutoring centers demonstrated better critical thinking skills and could handle various exam question formats.

The popularity of tuition centers continues to grow, primarily due to their ability to foster student motivation and interest in learning. Dey & De (2019) observed that tuition centers have been shown to significantly improve student academic achievement in regions like West Bengal, India. As demand and student enrollment increase, a new challenge arises: ensuring the quality of instruction remains maintained amidst rapid growth. To address this challenge, some centers, such as Bright Kids in Malaysia, have begun adopting digital management systems

to improve operational efficiency and learning quality (Wei Chun & Mostafa, 2021). This innovation allows tuition centers to remain competitive and provide a fun and effective learning experience.

Behind all this, the role of instructors is crucial in maintaining the quality of learning at tuition centers. Instructors must recognize each student's strengths and weaknesses, adapt appropriate teaching methods, and create an engaging and motivating learning environment (Bray & Kwo, 2014). Tuition centers are not just about achieving academic results; they also foster a continuous love of learning. Therefore, skilled and responsive instructors are crucial to ensuring that tuition centers truly become effective and meaningful educational resources.

In the context of this research, tuition centers serve as a relevant setting for understanding the formation of an instructor's identity. Mario, the primary participant in this study, has worked in a tuition center environment for many years. His experiences and reflections as a teacher in a less formal, yet challenging, space provide a unique perspective on how the role of an instructor is formed and developed outside the traditional school system.

## **2.2. Teaching English to Young Learners in Tuition Centers**

In today's era of globalization, English is receiving increasing public attention due to its crucial role in communication and education. English language skills are certainly not developed instantly but through a gradual process that should begin early. The principle of “the earlier, the better” by Chang et al. (2011) emphasizes that language learning is more easily absorbed by children when

introduced from a young age. However, teaching English to young learners certainly presents its challenges. Unlike adult learners, young learners require an interactive, fun, and structured approach to maintain focus and engagement in the learning process. Copland et al. (2014) noted that children often struggle to maintain focus, so active involvement during learning is essential. Furthermore, diverse learning styles and ability levels also challenge teachers in classroom management.

Another common difficulty is the complexity of English itself. Young students often struggle with understanding vocabulary, pronunciation, and complex grammatical structures in a foreign language. Therefore, teachers must develop adaptive teaching strategies and create a positive learning environment (Nguyen, 2021). Engaging, varied, and enjoyable learning is key to overcoming these obstacles. One proven practical approach to teaching children is the game-based method. This technique can include games, songs, films, and role-playing, capturing students' attention and improving their language skills (Pertiwi et al., 2020). Furthermore, storytelling and peer collaboration have also improved students' comprehension and speaking skills, making learning more lively and interactive (Kim et al., 2024).

Therefore, approaches such as game-based learning, storytelling, peer collaboration, and project-based learning are highly recommended (Kim et al., 2024; Pertiwi et al., 2020). These activities help improve English language skills and create a more enjoyable and meaningful learning experience for children. In addition, other interactive methods can also be applied, such as using songs and chants to strengthen vocabulary retention and pronunciation, simple role-play

activities to simulate real-life communication, and incorporating movement-based techniques to keep children actively engaged. Visual aids, including flashcards and puppets, are also effective in supporting comprehension and sustaining young learners' attention (Gürsoy & Korkmaz, 2012; Kim et al., 2024). All of these approaches emphasize the importance of creating an active and student-centered classroom that responds to the developmental needs of young learners.

In this context, tuition centers or tutoring centers offer a solution for young learners to find a suitable learning environment. With smaller class sizes and a more personalized approach, tuition centers allow teachers to focus more on each student's development. The rapid growth of tuition centers in various Asian countries reflects the belief that these institutions can help students catch up and achieve better results in school (Chan & Mongkolhutti, 2017). Nawaz (2024) also stated that tuition centers are a supportive alternative for early childhood learning because they can bridge academic gaps and provide a more supportive environment. However, behind the success of tuition centers, there is a high demand for instructors, who must continually adapt their teaching methods to suit students' needs. Instructors need to balance creativity, patience, and flexibility (Hanum & Maskhurin, 2023), mainly because the atmosphere of a tuition center tends to differ from that of a formal school.

All of these challenges and dynamics are vividly reflected in the experience of Mario, a participant in this study, who has taught children in a tuition center for over six years. Mario's experience serves as a concrete example of how a teacher must continually adapt and shape his identity as an instructor when dealing with

early childhood students with unique and energetic characters. Through Mario's journey, readers gain a closer look at the real world of teaching children in a tuition center a world that requires more than just language proficiency, but also a reflective awareness of one's role and identity as an educator.

### 2.3. Identity Formation

Identity is essentially how a person understands and recognizes themselves, including how they view their role in everyday life. Identity encompasses not only personal characteristics but is also influenced by social relationships and the environment in which a person finds themselves. In other words, identity is dynamic and continuously evolves along with an individual's life experiences (Pishghadam et al., 2022). Identity is often identified through the social labels society uses to describe individual types. For example, terms like "*Social Butterfly*" describe people who easily get along, while "*Workaholic*" refers to individuals who are highly dedicated to their work. These labels demonstrate that identity is often shaped through social interactions and public perceptions of a person's role. This aligns with Gee's (2000) argument, which states that identity is a way of identifying "types of people" within a social context. However, identity is not static or instantaneous. It is formed through a complex and reflective process, involving personal experiences, social interactions, and life choices. Waterman (1984) describes identity formation as an act of creation, suggesting that individuals actively shape themselves through their decisions and experiences.

One of the most widely cited theories in the study of identity formation is that developed by Wenger (1998). He stated that identity is formed through a dual

process: identification and negotiation of meaning (Tsui, 2007). Identification involves a person's recognition of and connection to a particular community or social role. At the same time, negotiation of meaning relates to how a person gives meaning to what they do in that role. Wenger (1998) identified three main aspects of the identification process: engagement, imagination, and alignment. Engagement refers to active participation in the community, such as direct interaction with students or involvement in daily teaching practices (Shu, 2022). According to Baptista et al. (2025), imagination is an individual's ability to see themselves within a broader context, both temporally and socially, and project new meanings onto themselves. Wenger (1998) emphasized that imagination is how we create new images of ourselves and the world beyond the boundaries of time and space. Meanwhile, alignment is adapting to the expectations, rules, or values within the community or institution to which one belongs (Alagaraja et al., 2015). These three processes complement each other in shaping a person's identity. Furthermore, the negotiation of meaning also plays a crucial role. In the educational context, the negotiation of meaning reflects how a teacher interprets their profession and how they feel engaged, grow, and construct meaning through their practice (Tsui, 2007).

Previous research also shows that the context in which a teacher works influences how their identity is formed. Xiong et al. (2022), for example, found that English instructors working at a tutoring center in China experienced an identity formation process influenced by socioeconomic factors, institutional expectations, and a competitive work environment. Conversely, more flexible settings and

smaller class sizes allowed them to develop creativity, pay more attention to students, and reflect on their practice (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

