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Tensions in an Identity-Oriented Language Teaching Practicum: A Dialogic Approach

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Abstract

In this study, we examine how teacher candidates navigate the tensions in their identity work as they complete the activities in the TESOL practicum course in Turkiye. Using the Bakhtinian approach to teacher identity, we conceptually maintain that identity work inevitably involves tensions that teachers encounter during their professional lives. We use a qualitative case study design to explore how two teacher candidates (Erdem and Murat) experience and understand identity tensions through dialogic engagement in an identity-oriented practicum course. We collected data from a series of identity-oriented activities that promote a dialogic space for teacher candidates to negotiate and enact their identities. We found that although their attempts to deal with the tensions varied, both teacher candidates made use of the self and community dialogues constructed through identity-oriented teacher learning activities. Pushing back at authoritative discourses of language teaching prevailing in the university program and the practicum school, they engaged in identity work by constructing their internally persuasive discourses which guided their practice. Facing the contextual demands, Erdem raised doubts about his ideal way of teaching he tried out in the practicum, whereas Murat went beyond the past and the present by foregrounding his imagined identity which served as a liberating aspiration.

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INTRODUCTION

"... learning to teach is not a mere matter of applying decontextualized skills or mirroring predetermined images; it is time when one's past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension. Learning to teach—like teaching itself—is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become." (Britzman, 2003, p. 31).

TESOL scholars who used language teacher identity (LTI) as a conceptual lens to make sense of teachers' learning and growth have echoed Britzman's (2003) argument above. That is, learning to teach does not mean "applying decontextualized skills or mirroring predetermined images" (p. 31). The existing LTI research concluded that learning to teach is constructing a professional teacher identity situated within socio-political discourses (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2017; De Costa & Norton, 2017; Uştuk, 2021; Uştuk & De Costa, 2022; Varghese et al., 2016) which is parallel to the research in broader teacher education (see Beijaard, 2019). One of the recurrent implications of LTI scholarship is to integrate identity as an organizing component or a central goal of teacher education pedagogies (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Varghese et al., 2016), as "a potential site of pedagogical intervention" (Morgan & Clarke, 2011, p. 825) or "a pedagogical tool" (Olsen, 2008, p. 5).

In the introduction to their *TESOL Quarterly* special issue, Varghese et al. (2016) made the following observation under the theme of LTI in transforming teacher education and curriculum: "it is rare if not impossible to actually find a teacher education program . . . that makes teacher identity its central organizing principle" (p. 557). They further raised questions about the ways LTI as a pedagogical goal can help transform teacher education practices: "what kinds of classes, structures, and experiences would serve that goal?" (p. 557). Responding to that question, TESOL teacher educators introduced and explored their pedagogical innovations to center teacher learning activities on teacher candidates' (TCs) identity work (Fairley, 2020; Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Lindahl et al., 2021; Martel & Yazan, 2021; Yazan, 2019).

In the current study, we contribute to this growing research and practice of identity-oriented TESOL teacher education and report on the implementation of a TESOL practicum course which we designed to make LTI a *central organizing principle* in the syllabus. More specifically, as we view tensions as integral to LTI by following Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic conceptualization of identity, we are interested in ways to support TCs' understanding and navigation of such tensions. We maintain that identity work inevitably involves tensions that teachers need to navigate during their professional lives (Akkerman &

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Meijer, 2011; Alsup, 2019; Menard-Warwick, 2014). Therefore, in our study, we examine how TCs deal with these tensions as they complete the Practicum Course as part of a university-based English language teacher education (LTE) program in Turkiye. Our purpose was to capture TCs' identity tensions in their dialogic engagements with selves and peers. Using a case study design exploring two TCs' identity work, our study addresses the following research question: *How do EFL TCs navigate identity tensions through dialogic engagement in an identity-oriented practicum course?*

A DIALOGICAL APPROACH TO IDENTITY AND TENSIONS

Teacher learning has received attention in TESOL research since the early 1990s and scholars explored the complexities involved in becoming a language teacher (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Starting in the 2000s, LTI has served as a framework for TESOL researchers to explore those complexities by theorizing the intricate relationship between identity, learning-to-teach, and teaching practice. LTI research situates the TESOL practitioner within the broader sociocultural context by highlighting the connection between the language classroom and societal ideologies which prevail in practices of language teaching and learning (Barkhuizen, 2017). It views "teachers as complicated, whole beings who actively alter - and are altered by - the personal and professional contexts and demands of their work" (Olsen, 2011, p. 259).

Additionally, LTI research has demonstrated the complex relationship between teacher identity, learning, and practice (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). To explicate, teacher identity informs and guides what decisions teachers make, how they assert their agency, and how they emotionally respond to and invest in experiences with students, parents, colleagues, and administration during their teacher-learning and teaching practices (Barkhuizen, 2017; De Costa & Norton, 2017; Varghese et al., 2016). In turn, every time teachers make instructional decisions, assert agency, take actions, engage in emotion labor, and make investments in certain practices, they negotiate, imagine, construct, roadtest, and enact their professional identities as teachers (Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Robertson & Yazan, 2022). Therefore, what teachers say about teaching (reflecting their beliefs, values, and priorities) and what they do as teachers in and outside the classroom provide evidence as to what kind of teacher they are and aspire to become.

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Scholars used varying theoretical orientations to approach, define, and theorize LTI (see Yazan, 2018 for the compilation of earlier definitions). We adopted Akkerman and Meijer's (2011) approach to teacher identity which relies on the Dialogical Self Theory grounded in Bakhtin's scholarship on language, philosophy, and literature. In order to provide a postmodern approach to identity by considering its "previous modern characterizations" (p. 310) at the same time, their dialogical approach "assumes a multiple, discontinuous and social nature of identity, while simultaneously explaining identity as being unitary, continuous and individual" (p. 310). Akkerman and Meijer support this concomitance of modern and postmodern characterizations of identity in this theorization, by turning to Gee's (1990) theoretical assumption in his postmodern theory of identity: we cannot "deny that each of us has what we might call a 'core identity' that holds more uniformly, for ourselves and others, across contexts" (cited in Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 310). In the following definition, Akkerman and Meijer bring together seemingly opposite conceptualizations of identity as part of their postmodern stance: "ongoing process of negotiating and interrelating multiple *I*-positions in such a way that a more or less coherent and consistent sense of self is maintained throughout various participations and self-investments in one's (working) life" (pp. 317–318). To bring this definition closer to Bakhtin's theorization of identity construction as "ideological becoming" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341), we concur that this ongoing process of identity is influenced by "immediate contexts, prior constructions of self, social positionings, and meaning [value] systems" (Olsen, 2016b, p. 139).

Earlier studies in TESOL used Bakhtin's dialogical imagination to theorize LTI (e.g., Ilieva & Ravindran, 2018; Menard-Warwick, 2014; Vitanova, 2016) and building upon that scholarship, we contend that identity work is a process that includes teachers' dialogical selves (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Arvaja, 2016; Hermans, 2001) in their professional contexts. In other words, they become "speaking subjects" (Vitanova, 2010, p. 10) in dialogues with university-based teacher educators, mentors, colleagues, learners, and internally with themselves.

As Vitanova (2010) argues, "dialogue exists not only between the consciousness of the self and others' consciousnesses but also as an internal dialogue, a dialogue within the self's consciousness itself" (p. 25). Through those dialogues, teachers negotiate *authoritative discourses* and construct their *internally persuasive discourses* (Bakhtin, 1981). They "encounter authoritative discourse with its authority already fused to it... Its authority was already *acknowledged* in the past..." (p. 342). Britzman (2003) defines the authoritative discourse as "an a priori discourse that operates within a variety of social contexts and partly determines our 'symbolic practices,' or the normative categories that

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organize and disorganize our perceptions" (p. 42). On the other hand, internally persuasive discourses are "affirmed through assimilation, tightly interwoven with one's own world" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). As Britzman (2003) construes the creative and subversive nature of internally persuasive discourse, he notes that such a discourse "pulls one away from norms and admits a variety of contradictory social discourses . . . as we struggle to make it our own and as it clashes with other internally persuasive discourses, 'this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean'" (p. 43). These struggles and clashes are part of teachers' efforts to "negotiate and interrelate multiple *I*-positions" and sources of tension in teachers' identity formation (p. 43).

Tensions are inevitably integral to teacher identity work as teachers navigate authoritative discourses and negotiate their internally persuasive discourses (Alsup, 2019). Based on the previous scholarship (Alsup, 2019; Menard-Warwick, 2014; Pillen et al., 2013; Smagorinsky et al., 2004), we define identity tensions as teachers' internal struggles between their rendition of the professional expectations and their aspirations regarding the kind of teacher they would like to become. We use the concept of tension to (a) "capture the feelings of internal turmoil" that teachers encounter when "pulled in different directions by competing concerns," and (b) understand their challenges "in learning to recognize and manage these opposing forces" (Berry, 2007, p. 32). One of the major sources of tension that teachers tend to experience emerges through the interplay between teachers' personal history and institutional forces. Donato and Davin (2018) theorize such tensions with the concept of "history-in-person" which refers to "the generative fashioning of individual identity and self-making through their relationship with local conflictual practice in the past and present" (p. 741). The often-conflictual interaction between history-in-person and history-in-institutions (both dynamically re-remembered and re-written) leads to tensions and "contentious local practice in which an individual struggles with issues of identity and agency" (p. 741). They analyzed two novice language teachers' (Sue teaching Spanish, Brian teaching French) experiences with thought-based and practice-based data and found that Sue's history-in-person shaped beliefs and values about language learning, but her classroom practice was mostly informed by external forces. Brian's history-in-person was more predominant in guiding both his pedagogical values and discursive practices than the local conditions in the institutional context.

In sum, we understand LTI work as an ongoing dialogical process that is situated at the nexus of personal, political, social, local, and contextual dimensions of teaching and is fraught with tensions emerging from the interaction between those dimensions. Teachers'

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articulated values, beliefs, priorities, teaching practices, and learning to teach are important loci where identity work and corresponding tensions can be analytically observed. We argue that exploring how teachers deal with these tensions could afford us a new vantage point to gain insights into the complexities of teacher identities.

IDENTITY-ORIENTED TEACHER EDUCATION IN TESOL

There have been multiple clarion calls for reconceptualizing teacher education as a pedagogy of identity in general teacher education (Beijaard, 2019; Beijaard et al., 2004) as well as in TESOL teacher education (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Varghese et al., 2016). Responding to these calls, TESOL scholars varied in the ways they incorporated identity as an explicit goal in their teacher education practices. Some designed activities to help TCs explore their linguistic identities in relation to dominant language ideologies that impact what it means to be a TESOL practitioner in educational contexts. For example, Flores and Aneja (2017) revised their graduate-level sociolinguistics course for TCs and purposely included the discussion of native-speaker ideologies and translingualism as a framework for TCs to make sense of their language use and identities. This process of sense-making while engaging in translingual projects helped TCs position themselves as professionals by developing positive conceptualizations of themselves and an understanding of normative ideologies such as monolingualism. Their intervention was an example of how teacher education practices such as classroom discussions or projects can be used with an explicit focus on fostering identity-oriented practices in TESOL teacher education.

Similarly but with different pedagogical activities specifically designed to promote identity work, Lindahl et al. (2021) integrated multimodal, metaphorical activities of "language ideology trees" and "language portraits" in their undergraduate teacher education courses with future Latinx classroom and content area teachers. Those activities, as part of linguistically responsive instruction, were intended to help TCs identify the ideological orientations that circulate in the Southwest US-American sociopolitical context and shape TCs' raciolinguistic identities and imagined professional identities as teachers of emergent bilinguals. Canagarajah (2020) used the literacy autobiography as a writing genre to afford TCs narrative spaces to construct and negotiate their translingual and transnational identities in graduate second language writing courses. Canagarajah's students problematized and destabilized the nation-state ideologies that define and patrol the borders around nations, communities, cultures, and

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languages, and hence, confine the identity positions available for the TCs in their educational contexts. Likewise, Yazan (2019) designed critical autoethnographic narrative (CAN) as a teacher learning activity in a graduate-level linguistics course to help TCs develop an identity lens while narrating and analyzing their past experiences with language learning and teaching. CAN afforded TCs a discursive and experiential space to understand the ideologies around race, language, and nationality in their own autoethnographic stories and reflect on the ways those ideologies shape the images of TESOL practitioners they wish to become. Different from these studies, Varghese et al. (2019) foregrounded the relationship between race/racialization and teacher identity, and designed race-based caucuses as extra-curricular learning activities for elementary TCs in the US socio-political context. Meeting outside the coursework, teacher educators created small race-based communities of TCs to discuss the discourses of racialization in their own lives and how their teacher identities are hierarchically constructed in those discourses. Martel and Yazan (2021) revised a graduate-level practicum course to incorporate an identity approach in all course activities (e.g., classroom observations, feedback sessions, teaching philosophy, CV preparation) throughout the semester in a university-based teacher education program. They supported TCs' development of an identity lens towards teaching and learning to teach languages and they found one TC beginning to refashion himself as a social justice teacher. Finally, Uştuk (2022) utilized process drama to devise a metaxical approach that helps teacher candidates with limited field experience juxtapose their language learner and teacher identities and tensions in a drama-based undergraduate TESOL methodology course. These scholars theorize an important intersection between TCs' linguistic and professional identities, positionings, aspirations, and biographies.

In addition to the empirical work above, Fairley (2020) conceptualizes a teacher education program model with an explicit focus on the development of "transformative, agentive, and advocacy-oriented" LTI "to engage in ethical self-formation and promote social equity and change" (p. 1040). She suggests four key competencies for that purpose: critical reflexivity, emotional literacy, collaboration, and responsiveness. She offers activities to support these competencies such as narrative writing activities, artistic expression activities, TC-led activities, and dialogic reflexive activities.

When we began our collaboration, we planned to join the above-cited colleagues in responding to the calls for more identity-oriented teacher education practices and we designed a TESOL practicum course in Özgehan's program to support TCs' dialogic engagement in identity work. In other words, we developed an identity-oriented

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practicum course with teacher learning activities that are based on identity work as their central principle. In the current study, building on the earlier research, we explore how two EFL TCs engage in identity work and navigate their tensions in their dialogic engagement throughout their TESOL practicum experience.

METHODOLOGY

Socio-Educational Context

Mirroring the global sociolinguistic trend, EFL has been the most prominent language taught in K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions in Turkiye since the 1950s. Public education involves English courses as early as Grade 2, even though rural areas and southeast regions of Turkiye have been suffering from English language teacher shortages. Especially since the early 2010s, the government-led projects initiated innovations in teaching English with a specific focus on the development of all four skills, collaboration with families and communities, and ongoing professional development (see Selvi, 2014 for a detailed discussion). Those innovations aimed to improve English instruction to address the critiques about grammar-heavy teaching that lacks actual practice or use of the language. Such language education policies are framed, at the macro level, within the government's efforts to become more competitive in the global economy with the future labor force. Within the neoliberal ideologies dominant in Turkiye, English is viewed as an essential qualification to be eligible for high-caliber jobs and for the country to become a prominent power in the international economy. English as a school subject has always been a high-demand area and English language teachers seemed to have a social, cultural, and professional capital to be employable in both public and private schools. Despite the value assigned to English and the constant demand for English language teachers, English language teaching (ELT) is not a well-paid job and graduates of ELT programs struggle to find jobs upon graduation. For public school jobs, they need to take a centralized exam that assesses their pedagogical knowledge and their score on that exam largely determines their appointment. That contextual reality conveys a contradictory message for EFL TCs in Turkiye which becomes one of the sources of tension for them. That is, while they keep hearing about the utmost importance of English for internationalization and the ever-increasing demand for English teachers in schools, they know they need to worry about their professional prospects despite the teacher preparation they receive.

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The other source of tension for EFL TCs in Turkiye is the mismatch between language assessment procedures that the Ministry of Education follows at the national level and language teaching curricula approved by the Ministry. For more than 10 years, EFL curricula promoted by the Ministry of Education have demanded teachers transform the dominant grammar-heavy teaching to English "as a tool of communication" (Kırkgöz, 2017, p. 249) approach in their pedagogies. However, national language proficiency exams still value grammatical accuracy, reading, and vocabulary as important language skills, while neglecting the fluency in productive skills of speaking and writing. One of the significant examples is the language proficiency exam EFL TCs take to be placed in a university program. In Turkiye, the national university entrance exam has a follow-up portion that assesses students' proficiency in foreign languages taught at K-12 schools. In addition to the general exam, high school graduates who want to become foreign language teachers complete this proficiency exam in the language they would like to teach. Solely in multiple-choice format, this exam includes direct assessment of grammar, vocabulary, and reading and indirect assessment of writing and speaking. As a washback effect, EFL TCs' language learning to prepare for the exam is largely shaped by classroom instruction geared towards their success in the exam (Hatipoğlu, 2016). That is, such exam-oriented policies in Turkiye "dictate" teachers' everyday practices (p. 143) which inform TCs' initial beliefs, values, and priorities in language education.

Once 'succeeding' in this standardized entrance exam, EFL TCs typically require a four-year university degree in teacher education programs in Turkiye regulated by the Higher Education Council, although there are alternate routes and certification programs. As the most common option, four-year degrees involve 240 ECTS credits of coursework[1] (212 theoretical credits, which include modules and 28 practical credits, which include community engagement and on-field teaching practice). The modules focus on language skills, ELT methodology, linguistics, language acquisition, educational pedagogy, and literature. TCs complete two practicum modules in the final academic year of their program, one each semester. Involving 25 credits in total, TESOL practicum modules are expected to help TCs "translate" their theoretical knowledge into practice. While practicum modules cover only 10.4% of the whole degree program, they represent 89.3% of the credits that include fieldwork. Thus, the TESOL practicum course is

[1] ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) is a Europe-based credit system across universities in the Bologna Process countries. A typical undergraduate program is composed of eight semesters, 30 ECTS each, 240 ECTS in total. One credit determines the weekly workload of a student. In this case, an undergrad student's workload is expected to be 30 hours a week.

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the most significant opportunity for TCs to engage in scaffolded practice teaching experience as part of their initial teacher education.

Researcher Positionality

As qualitative researchers, we share our pertinent identities and experiences in relation to the research topic, participants, and context. Learning English as an additional language in an EFL context, now we both identify as TESOL teacher educators and researchers of teacher education. Özgehan has served as the TESOL practicum course instructor and the academic (university) supervisor for 8 years at the university where the participating TCs received their teacher preparation. As a former EFL teacher, he experienced professional tensions in his early career due to the mismatch between his undergraduate studies and everyday teaching practice. As a teacher educator, he wanted to help TCs better navigate professional tensions that they encounter in initial teacher preparation programs and support their sense-making of those tensions. Therefore, he approached Bedrettin who is a teacher educator coming from a similar educational background and currently teaching in the US. Bedrettin also learned to teach in an ELT program in Turkiye and experienced identity tensions then and while teaching English afterward.

Design and Implementation

The TESOL practicum course took place in the 2020–2021 academic year in two phases. The first phase was in the fall semester (October to February). It included 1 hour of group meetings and 6 hours of classroom observation/teaching at a public school per week over 12 weeks throughout the semester. TCs completed the second phase in the spring semester (February to June), which required 2 hours of online class meetings with Özgehan and 6 hours of classroom observation/teaching each week for 12 weeks. Each TC planned and taught at least four lessons throughout the semester. The mentees taught topics from the national ELT curriculum. They also assisted the mentor teacher in their instructional duties. To support TCs, the practicum group met virtually every week for 1 hour throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. In those meetings, the groups participated in three different identity-oriented activities (see Table 1), and they shared lesson plans and activities they would use for the upcoming lessons, provided feedback on each other's work, and debriefed their field notes/observations each week.

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In both phases of the practicum, three major stakeholders constituted the working group; (1) a group of TCs (max. eight mentees per practicum group; they worked in two groups at different schools), (2) two mentor teachers, responsible for each working group, monitoring TCs performances, and giving feedback, and (3) one academic supervisor (Özgehan), responsible for the administration of the course. The supervisor facilitated the online meetings for TCs and the mentor teacher coordinated the classroom observations and teaching.

While designing the identity-responsive content of the online meetings, our strategy was to (a) update the commonly-used teacher learning activities by capitalizing on their potential to lead to (self-)dialogic engagement, and (b) design new teacher learning activities that could mediate TCs' current identity work and tensions. Table 1 illustrates the identity-oriented teacher learning activities implemented in the practicum meetings.

When designing the activities, we followed Olsen's (2016a) suggestion: "we must view each teacher as a unique and three-dimensional learner—someone who combines life, learning, and practice to create individual understandings of, and relationships to, the world and him- or herself" (p. 27). The activities acknowledged and relied on what "funds of identity" (Banegas et al., 2021) TCs are bringing to teacher learning spaces of the practicum course and foregrounded the goal of having TCs story and re-story their language learning histories (Donato & Davin, 2018; Golombek & Johnson, 2021) as integral to their engagement with identity work (Canagarajah, 2020) and to their instructional practices (Shin & Rubio, 2022). Completing the activities,

TABLE 1
Identity-Oriented Teacher Learning Activities

Activities	Dialogic engagement
Flipgrid community video posts	a. Sharing thematic videos on identity work and b. Commenting on peers' video posts.
Teaching philosophy statement (TPS) sessions	a. Brainstorming professional priorities/values/beliefs, b. Concept mapping the content of the TPSs collaboratively, and c. Providing peer-feedback.
Lesson planning & observations	a. Collaborative lesson planning and b. Sharing experiences from practicum observations (e.g. critical incidents)

Note. Flipgrid (now, Flip, see https://info.flip.com/) is a video-based web tool. It is an online platform that allows users to create closed communities in which members can share short videos and comment on them.

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TCs were expected to bring their "past, present, and future ... set in dynamic tension" (Britzman, 2003, p. 31) and reflect on what kind of teacher they would be becoming within the contextual constraints. The activities were designed to enable TCs to engage in internal or peer dialogues while narrating and discussing their language learning and teaching experiences in the practicum course. For instance, on *Flipgrid*, they uploaded at least five videos on the following topics: (a) language learning histories, (b) critical incidents while learning a language, (c) language teachers who influenced them, (d) sharing language teacher narratives, and (e) their visions as a language TC. The screenshot from the Flipgrid platform in Figure 1 shows an example of task instructions and TCs' views, comments, and engagement.

In the *TPS sessions*, TCs participated in workshops on TPS as a writing genre as well as collaborative brainstorming on language teaching pedagogies. During these sessions, Özgehan asked TCs to share their TPS drafts and reflect on them collaboratively. Finally, we used the online class meetings to share practicum observations and lesson plans, and collectively reflect on the critical incidents that happened during the classroom observation and teaching (see Meijer et al., 2014). Özgehan scaffolded TCs' dialogic engagement by having them focus on articulating their professional priorities, values, and beliefs to peers and themselves and practicing their 'voice' in 'authoring' their teacher identity in a dialogue. Özgehan further mediated

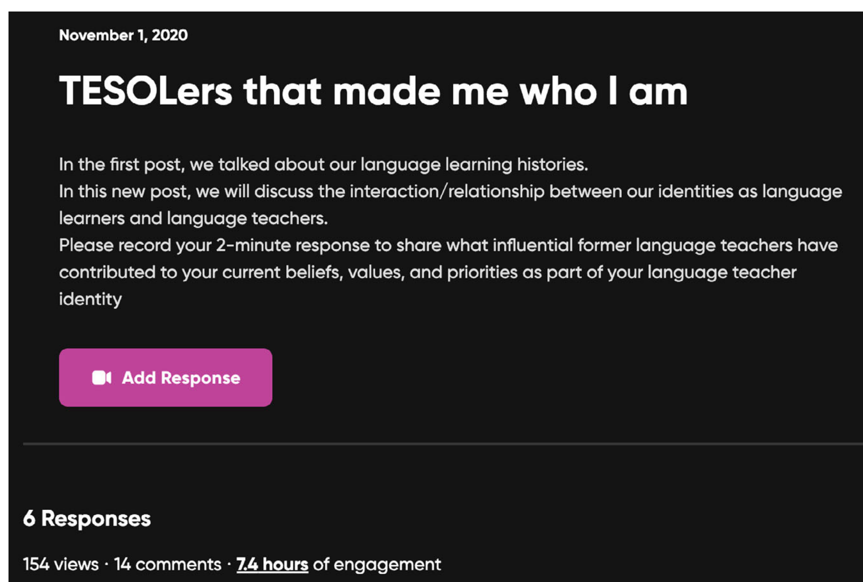

FIGURE 1. A screenshot of Flipgrid video task instructions.

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that engagement by asking follow-up questions (for elaboration, clarification, illustration, and exemplification), and commenting on Flipgrid posts with suggestions and questions, and providing feedback on collaborative writing/lesson planning activities. Therefore, the weekly meetings, facilitated by Özgehan, afforded TCs a dialogic space to discuss their lived experiences by unpacking history-in-person (Donato & Davin, 2018) and to negotiate their imagined professional identities (Barkhuizen, 2016).

Data Collection and Analysis

We followed a case study design to gain an "intensive [and] holistic description and analysis" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 232) of two EFL TCs' identity work in a practicum course. We used participants' Flipgrid video posts (transcriptions), TPSs, practicum artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, observation reports), as data from the class. Additionally, having reviewed the class data, we conducted one semi-structured individual interview (35–40 mins each) to discuss participants' learning experiences in the practicum course with the identity-oriented activities after the class ended. Özgehan interviewed each participant on Zoom in Turkish and audio-recorded interviews with Zoom's record feature. He then transcribed the audio recording and translated it into English for data analysis purposes.

We carried out our data analysis recursively and simultaneously during the practicum course which included most of the data collection. While designing and implementing the course as well as analyzing the data, we re-remembered our experiences as English language learners and teachers in the EFL context of Turkiye and the associated tensions we coped with in a grammar-heavy, test-focused language education context. Our main research focus was on TCs' identity tensions, but we brought in our experiences as former language learners and teachers in the same context as we interpreted our participants' data. Highlighting our researcher positionality, we reflected on our own identities, beliefs, and narratives back and forth, which transformed the entire research experience into a collaborative *reflexive* practice of meaning-making (Braun & Clarke, 2020). We maintained this reflexivity which is important to us as critical language teacher educators as we investigate our own teacher education practices to innovate our work with TCs (Sharkey et al., 2021), in this case, to integrate identity work as an explicit focus in TCs' ongoing language teacher learning.

To describe our coding procedures, we used MAXQDA (VERBI Software, 2019) to compile the data, code the initial recurring

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segments, and reach the analytic conclusions by following the thematic analytic procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2012). We coded the data iteratively to identify repeating segments such as concepts and in-vivo points and grouped these repeating segments to form code clusters. We had bi-weekly meetings over the 2 months to compare and calibrate our analytic procedures. During our meetings, we negotiated and decided on the code clusters in the data and collectively reached the themes presented in this paper. To illustrate our coding, we shared Table 2 below which demonstrates the themes with code clusters exemplified with excerpts from the data.

For instance, we grouped data excerpts (e.g. "... I started to think like a professional in this conversation.") according to their content and conceptual/thematic relevance to one another. We labeled these groups and constituted the code clusters (e.g., "identity work through dialoguing"). By further grouping the code clusters, we constructed our themes in connection with our Bakhtinian theoretical framework (e.g., "Dialogic space for identity work"). We drew particularly on two TCs (Erdem and Murat) because their cases indicated two different trajectories of

TABLE 2
Sample Code-Clusters and Data Excerpts

Theme	Code-cluster	Corresponding data excerpts
Dialogic space for identity work	Identity work through peer-dialoguing; Contextual constraints and identity tensions;	"You say something, and then you talk about it. After a point, I started to think like a professional in this conversation." (Murat, Interview) "I wish I had a teacher like your ... teacher... I want to be like him." (Erdem, Video comment) "I know this is the sad reality; teachers teach coursebooks but I also had higher expectations than that" (Murat, Flipgrid video 5) "I said in my TPS I would not focus too much on discrete forms but rather teach grammar or vocabulary inductively but now I say, it is not that easy [in Turkiye]" (Erdem, Interview)
Internal dialogue and tensions	Identity work through self-dialoguing *History-in-person*'s internal dialogue	"I simply asked myself, OK, Erdem, what do you want to do to be happy?" (Erdem, Interview) "Ok, I said something but how would I actually do this in the classroom?" (Murat, Interview) "My friends only aimed to pass the class not to speak a foreign language... [In Australia] I used to learn in a naturalistic way." (Erdem, Flipgrid video 1) "Nobody asked me what kind of teacher I want to be. [Practicum] was an opportunity to ask this question..." (Murat, Interview)

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English language learning. Erdem[2], was a senior in the ELT program. He completed his practicum at a middle school (Grades 5–8) in the Fall and a primary school (Grades 1–4) in the Spring. Erdem's family emigrated to Australia when he was a primary school student and he lived and studied there until his family moved back to Turkiye when he was a high school student. Murat was a member of the same cohort and completed his practicum at the same schools. Contrary to Erdem, he completed all his K-12 education in Turkiye and learned EFL with a grammar-heavy curriculum in the public school system.

FINDINGS

Case 1: Erdem

Dialogic identity work: Addressing tensions between learning and teaching narratives. We found that Erdem utilized the Flipgrid community as an engaging way of creating and sharing professional narratives and tensions about language learning and teaching. For instance, Erdem would be expected to teach grammar-based EFL in the context of Turkiye, a practice ideologically valued through high-stakes assessments and textbooks, but this expectation did not fit in his emerging teacher identity which was mostly informed by his language learning experience in Australia. That mismatch led to recurrent tension in his practicum experience. For example, he remarked the following in one of his videos:

> Excerpt 1
>
> I think language teaching at schools must not be that grammar-oriented. It was what I experienced in my high school years. [Teachers] did not worry about speaking or language functions that much. My friends only aimed to pass the class not to speak a foreign language. So they did not see the functional value of speaking in a foreign language. When I was an ESL student in Australia, I used to learn in a naturalistic way. This way, my students can see its value.
>
> (Flipgrid video 1, Oct 20, 2020)

Erdem built his imagined teacher identity on his language learning history. He shared his contrastive experiences (as a source of tension) from when he was learning English "naturalistically," and when his learning heavily focused on grammar to have a high score in a high-stakes university entrance exam in Turkiye. Re-remembering his

[2] All names are pseudonyms.

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transition between educational contexts in Australia and Turkiye, he highlighted the conflict between his history-in-person informing his beliefs about language teaching and contextual conditions forcing him to teach against those beliefs.

Additionally, he believed the way he had learned English in Australia would inform his teaching practice. Erdem also engaged with his peers' language learning histories as part of the community dialogue in which he negotiated his LTI.

Excerpt 2

> I wish I had a teacher like your high school [EFL] teacher. I was not that lucky. I want to be like him.
>
> (Comment on a peer's Flipgrid video 2, Nov 5, 2020)

The teacher mentioned in the video had her students play various classroom-based games such as quiz shows rather than focusing on particular grammar points and drills to prepare for the gate-keeping university entrance exam. Erdem's peer mentioned how her approach boosted his exam scores while also using the language they learned in these games and motivated him to pursue ELT as a career. Based on this narrative, Erdem interjected and recalled his exam-oriented EFL learning in his high school years (after he returned from Australia to Turkiye). Additionally, in the interview, Erdem commented on the Flipgrid community and discussed how such dialogic exchanges created a professional learning space for him.

Excerpt 3

> These videos allowed me to see my friends differently, this time as a language learner and a teacher. I saw different perspectives. After a while, this made me reflect on my experiences more deeply because when I started learning from their videos, I wanted to contribute to them with my learner experiences, which is not so usual. My friends also asked a lot of questions about my experiences in Australia.
>
> (Interview, July 16, 2021)

Erdem elaborated on how professional dialoguing via this community helped him negotiate a teacher identity that is based on his language learning history. He positioned himself both as a learner and a teacher while learning about his classmates' experiences. He also started viewing them as colleagues whose language learning and teaching experiences could provide insights for him to reflect on.

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Internal dialogue: Navigating tensions through practicum practices. Through dialogic engagement, Erdem unpacked the relationship between his professional practices and authoritative discourses of language teaching to which he was exposed in the LTE program. This unpacking led to his realization of the tension between what kind of teacher he would like to become and what is expected of him by authoritative discourses.

Excerpt 4

> I started constantly thinking about it with the video recording assignments and later with the TPS to get clear on it; what kind of teacher am I? What do I want to do with the kids in the classroom? I simply asked myself, OK, Erdem, what do you want to do to be happy? Getting clear about that was particularly challenging because times are also changing very swiftly; I learned English in a completely different context and conditions, and I need to keep up. I also need to clearly know what I shall do, if it is too much for kids, or if it is enough.
>
> (Interview, July 16, 2021)

Erdem was still trying to figure out what kind of teacher he needed to be. In his internal dialogue, self-imposed questions opened up a space for identity work. His tension that originated from a sense of ambiguity was the starting point of his engagement with identity work.

He kept reflecting on this ambiguity and addressed the tension in his lesson plans. Initially, his plans reflected the influence of authoritative discourses. He gravitated towards gamification as a pedagogy because of his interpretation of the role of games in his language learning, and he designed the activity in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5

Practice (to assess learning)	• *Pick one of the animal flashcards without showing it to the students.* • *Tell students that they are going to receive three hints, and they should try to find that animal, so they need to listen carefully. For example 1. I'm small. 2. I'm green. 3. I can jump. What's this? (This is a frog.)* • *A student who answers the correct name of the animal in the first hint gets three points and in the second hint gets two and in the last hint gets one point. The students will be rewarded with a zoologist badge.*

*Lesson plan excerpt, Jan 14, 2021 (Submission date)

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In his TPS, Erdem glorified the impact of gamification in teaching languages and pointed out that gamified practice can provide motivating opportunities for learners to learn the target language inductively. In his sample practice exercise above, he aimed to include such opportunities for language learners.

Later, he discussed how his negotiation of LTI based on authoritative discourses of gamification was challenged by the classroom reality.

Excerpt 6

> I found some of my early recordings quite funny when I saw them later. I had stated in the videos or later in my TPS, I said I would do this, I would do that; communicative language teaching, gamification, and so on. When you started experiencing this in practice, it turned out different from your expectations. For example, I said in my TPS I would not focus too much on discrete forms but rather teach grammar or vocabulary inductively but now I say, it is not that easy [in Turkiye].
>
> (Interview, July 16, 2021)

Erdem's internal persuasive discourse that he had created through the dialogic engagement in the practicum and the contextual expectations raised tension for him. Challenged by the difficulty of implementing theoretical knowledge in the classroom context, Erdem was surprised that his *gamified* instruction was not as motivating for all students. In the rest of the interview, he also remarked that he learned English with game-like activities when he was in Australia, and he was particularly interested in this pedagogy that he learned in the *ELT Methods* course. He constructed his internally persuasive discourse of gamification pedagogy, but then he realized that he needed to revise it by considering the contextual expectations.

Finally, in the interview, Erdem shared his identity tension with regard to becoming an English language teacher in Turkiye:

Excerpt 7

> I was too critical of the English language teachers in Turkiye before because I thought they teach too much grammar only deductively. But now, I can understand them. I mean, I still do not approve but it was my first classroom teaching experience, and it was super difficult to teach something inductively. Maybe because my lesson was online, maybe I would feel differently face-to-face. I tried to get students engaged with games and points but I had almost no reaction. I thought they did not understand anything at all. No, they did not. It raised some doubts for me. So I mentioned this in my video.
>
> (Interview, July 16, 2021)

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Making himself vulnerable, Erdem asserted agency to share his tension with the Flipgrid community of the practicum group. The pedagogical approach he adopted did not yield desirable outcomes, which led to "some doubts." He leaned towards using games in language teaching to resist the grammar-oriented or testing-oriented language education in Turkiye but also to replicate his own language learning success by following popular ELT methods at the same time. His doubts seemed to be an indication of his tension.

Case 2: Murat

Dialogic identity work: Challenges from peers about new ways of being a language teacher. Murat utilized the online practicum community as a space to dialogically engage in identity work by externalizing his values, priorities, and values as a language teacher. He differed in the way he experienced tensions. That is, Erdem's identity work involved foregrounding his language learning history through dialogic engagement. Erdem used the Flipgrid community and other activities to demonstrate his identity positions (*I*-positions) and construct narratives of past language learning. He did not seem to have any identity tensions until he faced the contextual expectations in the school placement. For Murat, the tension emerged before contextual constraints challenged his early positions. Murat initially believed that his *I*-position as an English language teacher and corresponding narratives seemed very clear and coherent to him. This belief changed later when he was introduced to other *I*-positions. He shared in the interview:

Excerpt 8

> The conversations after uploading videos were very interesting to me. When I first uploaded a video, I was like, that was it, that was my analysis of the issue, and it was almost perfect. Then a colleague left some comments, and then I told myself that I had never thought of it that way. It was weird when that happened a couple of times. I think this was because I had not had opportunities to receive feedback on what I thought about teaching and stuff.
>
> (Interview, July 10, 2021)

When Murat seemed to have felt some tension between what he believed language teaching should be and what his peers advocated for, i.e. his and his peers' internally persuasive discourses. Becoming aware of that tension or his attempts to address that tension has led him to reconsider the kind of language teacher he is or wants to

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become. He realized he did not have a clear sense of LTI until he dialogued with peers. Similar to Erdem's assertions in Excerpt 3, Murat pointed out that he did not only reflect on the content created by his colleagues but also back on their narratives. That way, he performed a (self-)dialoguing going back (and forth) to their own experiences and identities.

Murat also engaged in (self-)dialogic identity work through collaborative TPS writing on which he comments in the interview:

Excerpt 9

> No matter how clear I had been about what I shared on my videos or wrote in my TPS; when my friends asked some questions in their TPS feedback and required me to clarify some points, they made me question what I had believed from a critical perspective. Then I had to give some examples, elaborate intellectually on what I had said.
>
> (Interview, July 10, 2021)

Murat thought he was "clear" about his beliefs about language teaching, but he found the collaborative TPS writing process challenging and effective in further clarifying to himself and others what his ideal language teacher should be and do. For instance, in his TPS, Murat stated that "[he] intend[s] to make [his] students independent learners who are able to find interesting materials to enjoy in their lives and handle possible problems while they continue learning outside the classroom." He further states that increasing language learner autonomy and helping students develop their own learning strategies would make his classes more beneficial than "filling their memory with grammar topics." When the class was discussing this issue, a TC noted that Murat seems to downplay grammar teaching and asked Murat for clarification about that statement in his TPS. Murat added that it would not make sense to entirely abandon grammar instruction in Turkiye where language exams typically assess grammatical competence. He later revised his TPS with this example: "For instance, [I will] introduc[e] online platforms that students can find interesting materials in the target language, online dictionaries and grammar reference sites... " He underlines that promoting a sense of learner autonomy that also helps students learn grammar points on their own is subsumed under his definition of "good" language teaching.

Moving forward, through community dialoguing, his peers expected and 'pushed' Murat to flesh out and concretize his rendition of "good" teaching in practical terms.

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Excerpt 10

> By posting videos only or writing an essay on what you believe as a teacher, you share what you think and start worrying about the next assignment but with this [dialoguing based on sharings], no. You say something, and then you talk about it. After a point, I started to think like a professional in this conversation. That was particularly challenging: Ok, I said something but how would I actually do this in the classroom? These were cool words but how would I make them work in my lesson plans? I realized it was very tiring to make my beliefs concrete because it was not concrete to me in the first place. But it was a good kind of tiring; like getting tired after gym but intellectually. You feel tired but healthy.
>
> (Interview, July 10, 2021)

Murat's experience of figuring out how to operationalize his pedagogical beliefs in everyday practice was an "intellectual" sport for him and the dialogic engagement made him "think like a professional." He received clarification questions and requests for examples for the beliefs laid out in his TPS, which led him to imagine himself putting philosophy into practice. He needed to navigate the potential tensions in the way he would road-test his LTI. He relied on his dialogic double-voiced discourse, a discursive practice in which the speaker articulates both addresser's and addressee's semantic intentions in one discourse (Arvaja, 2016; Bakhtin, 1981). While juxtaposing his identity work and tensions within his discourse, Murat created a self-dialogic space in which he challenged his "cool words" and invested effort in "mak[ing] them work in [his] lesson plans." For example in excerpt 10, Murat's internal dialogue positioned himself both as the addresser and the addressee and demonstrated his identity tension (i.e. struggles to reconcile his narrated and enacted identities in Kanno and Stuart's (2011) conceptualization). Using the workout analogy, he viewed the challenges in self and community dialogues as "healthy" identity work.

Internal dialogue: Between aspirations for creativity in language and limitations of textbooks. Murat engaged in professional exchanges with his peers regarding their teaching philosophies and interests throughout the practicum. For instance, Murat was interested in promoting creativity among learners. He mentioned in one video that his language learning experience had not provided any opportunities for him to use the target language creatively. Sharing that experience, he decided to promote creativity in his work with language learners. Below are two excerpts; one is from his practicum lesson plan and the other is Murat's justification of that lesson.

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Excerpt 11

Post-reading production phase	• *Students do an Internet search and pick up a Polish name for themselves.* • *Students write a 50–100 words long diary page imagining that they are one of the rebels with the name that they have picked. They must use the three words that they picked from the song[3] in their diary.* • *Students post their diaries on the activity's Padlet page.*

*Lesson plan excerpt, Jan 12, 2021 (Submission date)

Excerpt 12

When I was writing my TPS, I started to think about my future classrooms, not my ideals about what kind of practice is the best or what methods are completely wrong. The lesson plans and my TPS were communicating to one another in a way that I find significant practically, not in a way that was glorified [in my studies]. Nobody asked me what kind of teacher I want to be. That was an opportunity to ask this question and answer with my teaching.

(Interview, July 10, 2021)

He developed the activity (Excerpt 11) as a production activity following a reading passage about *the Warsaw Uprising* in a lesson. In his TPS, Murat framed his LTI as a teacher who fosters language learners' creativity to "pave students' way to a more autonomous learning" (Murat's TPS, submitted on Dec 12, 2020) and he believed his LTI was "communicating" (Excerpt 12) with his classroom teaching activities and lesson plans. This communication points to the relationship between LTI and practice. He thought the identity-oriented practicum activities afforded him the space to assert agency and attend to the question: What kind of teacher do I want to be? In that space, he found the opportunity to construct his internally persuasive discourses (via Flipgrid, lesson planning, collaborative TPS) as opposed to the authoritative discourses which provided him with "normative categories" (Britzman, 2003, p. 42) to define "best" or "wrong" practices in ELT.

Both Erdem and Murat experienced tensions resulting from discrepancies between their imagined teacher identities and contextual expectations in the practicum school. While the contextual constraints

[3] In the beginning of the lesson, Murat used a song about the Warsaw Uprising and vocabulary activities based on target words from the song.

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made Erdem have "some doubts" about his LTI, Murat's identity work appeared more agentive in his responses to what the context demands. That is, through internal and community dialogues, Murat asserted agency to imagine an LTI that seemed to move beyond the past (e.g., learning/teaching histories) and the current (practicum practices). For example, he elaborates on the tension:

Excerpt 13

> I got a bit confused. Our mentor teacher assigned us to teach a particular part of the curriculum and the pages of the coursebook. I know this is the sad reality; teachers teach coursebooks but I also had higher expectations than that. Such assignments demotivated me from the very beginning. I thought this was not the way of teaching I envisioned for myself. You say to yourself 'write this and that in your TPS', all these brainstormings about language education... And you find out that your assignment is to teach this grammar topic or that vocabulary list.
>
> (Flipgrid video 5, Feb 22, 2021)

Murat felt being pulled in two opposing directions: between what he was expected to do in his practicum and what kind of teaching he "envisioned for [himself]." He was not content with the *coursebook teacher* identity, and he wanted to align his teaching practice with his pedagogical beliefs. He did not see any value in what his mentor teacher assigned him to do. He commented on the tension in the interview: "the challenge was to align such assignments into [his] philosophy and somehow synthesize [his philosophy and what the assignments required]. That was the tension."

Unprompted, the tension Murat referred to was productive in his identity work because he needed to navigate that tension in the identity-oriented activities of (self-)dialoguing. In the excerpt below, he describes his imagined LTI:

Excerpt 14

> I want to start teaching at a public school in the East[4]. I dream of myself in my classroom, it is the beginning of the school year. I see a clean piece of white paper on my desk. I list the kinds of activities that my students may like, I tell myself 'I will do this, I will do that'. This

[4] Murat refers to the underserved schools in Eastern Turkiye where cultural and linguistic diversity (and minorities such as the Kurdish or Arabic speaking communities) is traditionally more than the West of Turkiye. Most of the teachers employed in the public school system start working in the East of Turkiye for at least 4 years as a mandatory appointment.

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makes me happy and prepares me for the future. I was almost completely limited in my teacher education and also in my practicum school. Thinking about what kind of teacher I want to become and how I will put this into practice is liberating. I am not a senior teacher candidate in a public school anymore; which was like a bubble around me, a small one. I think I will be freer.

(Interview, July 10, 2021)

Murat found the identity-oriented practicum experience "liberating" from the earlier teacher education practices in the ELT program that mainly involved his formal introduction to authoritative discourses. He was able to imagine an LTI beyond the restrictions of the teacher education program as he participated in dialogues with peers and himself through the online community and the collaborative TPS writing process. He sees his first job teaching English to underserved and minoritized communities in the East of Turkiye, as a new start resembling "a clean piece of white paper" and as an escape from the contextual demands he faced in his practicum school.

Finally, he has a clearer image of the kind of language teacher he wants to become as he reflects below:

Excerpt 15

I can see now what kind of teacher I will be. I knew this from before but not in the same way. I mean that was like a cloud of gas for me over my head. Now it is something that I can point out.

(Interview, July 10, 2021)

Murat was particularly interested in reflecting explicitly on his identity and his experiences throughout the course, and developing an identity lens for ELT. This reflection helped him better navigate the tensions by participating in safe dialogic spaces of the online practicum community where the TCs exchanged personal language learning histories and questioned authoritative discourses about some *best practices*, or teaching philosophies. He feels like he fashioned an LTI out of that "cloud of gas over his [head]."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, we investigated how two TCs navigated identity tensions through dialogic engagement during an identity-oriented yearlong TESOL practicum. We planned the practicum course, which is

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the only practical component in the EFL teacher education programs in Turkiye, as a learning process that makes LTI a "central organizing principle" (Varghese et al., 2016, p. 557). We drew on Bakhtinian dialogism from the research on language teacher education (Arvaja, 2016; Vitanova, 2016), teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011), and identity tensions (Alsup, 2019; Menard-Warwick, 2014), and viewed dialogic engagement (i.e., becoming "speaking subjects" in Vitanova's (2010) words) as the driving discursive and experiential force of the identity work in practicum experiences.

Our findings lead us to make three main arguments. First, the identity-oriented LTE affords a dialogic space for both TCs in which they narrate and (co)create their language learning histories. The previous literature has shown TCs would still be developing their professional identities without an explicit identity focus in their teacher education classes. However, when TCs have intentionally-designed learning opportunities that help them make the connection between their teacher learning, practice, and identities, they tend to feel more empowered and agentive to chart the contours of their identity development and purposely invest their energy and time into their imagined teacher identities. The identity approach in our study intended to add another layer to this purposeful engagement with identity work by integrating a community dialogue through asynchronous and synchronous online collaboration. Thereby, it built upon and extended the self-dialogic space that TCs created through language trees and language portraits in Lindahl et al. (2021) and transnational literacy autobiography writing in Canagarajah (2020). That is, our practicum activities opened up such a space with self- and community dialogues through Flipgrid video posts and collaborative work on lesson planning and TPS writing similar to the collaborative in-class video review in Martel and Yazan's (2021) enactment of the identity approach. More specifically, in our study, the dialogic exchange occurred both among the peers (as in Erdem's case) and among the TC's multiple *I*-positions (as in Murat's case). Erdem mostly utilized this space as an opportunity to narrate his unique language learning history. The narrative practice helped him position himself as a resource to his peers and make his language learning background relevant to his teaching practice. On the other hand, the dialogic engagement urged Murat to re-narrate his language learning histories and to better understand the impact of authoritative discourses in the LTE program. He used the dialogic space to re-create his narratives and construct his internally persuasive discourses through internal and community dialoguing. He had the discursive and experiential space to make explicit to himself and his peers what his pedagogical values, priorities, and beliefs are and what they mean for his practice. Based on our analysis

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of Erdem's and Murat's experiences, our findings support the main argument in earlier studies that when provided identity-oriented teacher learning activities, TCs can rewrite and reinterpret their personal language learning histories and make connections with the current discourses to which they are introduced (see also Canagarajah, 2020; Flores & Aneja, 2017) and with their teaching practices (Shin & Rubio, 2022). They can explicitly see how their past experiences and future aspirations in relation to how they are currently learning to teach English language learner, which points to the "dynamic tension" Britzman (2003) discussed. What an identity approach in teacher education can accomplish is to make this tension 'visible' to TCs, acknowledge it as an organic component in their development, and facilitate their navigation of corresponding emotional experiences. Therefore, TCs' personal histories and *funds of identity* (Banegas et al., 2021) can be powerful for an identity-oriented LTE as they negotiate their professional teacher identity through practice teaching. Similarly, Donato and Davin (2018) argued that novice teachers' history-in-person (more than history-in-institution) can be used to analyze their discursive practices in the classroom and such analysis could be used in assessing language TCs' classroom practices.

Second, participating in the practicum course activities, TCs experience identity tensions in their initial introduction to the real classroom teaching practice. They need a space in which they can share and unpack such tensions in dialogue with peers and the teacher educator. The design of the practicum course we explored in this study aimed to provide such a space for TCs to reflect on their emerging tensions in relation to their teacher identities. Similar to the experiences of TCs in Alsup's (2019) and Smagorinsky et al.'s (2004) studies, Erdem's and Murat's tensions emerged when they realized the mismatch between authoritative discourses in the ELT program and their internally persuasive discourses. This realization is typical when TCs are introduced to the *I*-position as a student-teacher, a transitional and transformational position. They tend to find themselves stuck and struggling between seemingly or actually contradictory approaches to language teaching (see Karina's case in Robertson & Yazan, 2022). They grapple with their "borderland discourse[s], the weaving together of various discourses and associated subjectivities to create a professional teacher identity with which they can live and work as new teachers" (Alsup, 2019, p. 15–16). Erdem had a challenging experience navigating those tensions that made him question his LTI. Murat's plans to promote creativity in EFL classes were also constrained by contextual demands. However, in both cases (perhaps more explicitly in Murat's), TCs could identify authoritative discourses and start scrutinizing their impact on ELT practices. We contend that engaging with

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identity tensions within the dialogic space, internally and through community, led TCs to begin treating such tensions as healthy and “productive” (Alsup, 2019, p. 40) experiences of constructing an LTI. However, we recognize that the way TCs approach and respond to such tensions could vary across different incidents.

Third, although the participants’ use of self-dialoguing could lead to ‘doubts’ about their LTI, it also promotes their “reflexivity” (De Costa, 2015; Fairley, 2020; Sharkey et al., 2021; Uştuk & Çomoğlu, 2021) to articulate the relationship between their LTI and teaching practices. For example, Murat’s reflexivity was evident in his double-voiced discourse which made his self-dialoguing practice even more visible. He extensively relied on self-dialoguing to navigate through the tensions he experienced during the practicum. He strategically built temporal relationships across his language learning history, his current practices, and his aspirations as an EFL teacher. He focused on his imagined LTI as “a clean piece of white paper,” to refer to a future teaching setting where he would not have the same tensions as his practicum school. The idea of a fresh start in his teaching job with the decision-making power maintains Murat’s excitement by creating an imagined identity that is independent of the parameters of being a student-teacher, but his future imagination does not account for the potential tensions he would be experiencing in that job. Erdem did not build these temporal relationships; he seemed more preoccupied with the challenges of the here-and-now context. We could attribute this distinction to the fact that Murat extensively engaged in identity work that relies both on dialoguing with peers and internal dialoguing, whereas Erdem focused mostly on dialoguing with peers.

The Bakhtinian approach also showed that dialogic engagement in LTE is a powerful tool for teachers and TCs to figure out the discourses that inform their everyday practices, but we acknowledge that during this dialogic engagement, TCs “must negotiate conflicting subject positions and ideologies while creating a professional self” (Alsup, 2019, p. 6). Our findings imply that critical dialoguing (similar to Varghese et al.’s (2019) race-based caucuses) could be complemented with intentional and strategic use of identity tensions in LTE to facilitate the eventual integration of “personal and professional subjectivities” (Alsup, 2019, p. 6). Teacher educators can include tensions explicitly in their curriculum by following the earlier implementations such as “at-tension program” (Meijer et al., 2014). In such a program, the goal would be “transforming professional identity tensions into learning moments” (p. 306) by sharing tensions, thinking of ways to cope with them, discussing emotions, and reflecting on tensions as part of professional identity development.

Closing our paper, we invite more teacher educators to have TCs engage in dialoguing during the TESOL practicum course to further

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understand their LTI in relation to their language histories (past), practicum practices (present), and practices when they start teaching (future). Similar to the TCs in previous studies (e.g., Canagarajah, 2020; Flores & Aneja, 2017; Lindahl et al., 2021), both Erdem and Murat found this engagement as a challenging experience to reflect on the relationship between their LTI, teacher learning, and teaching practices. They asked important questions such as what they need to do to be "happy" teachers or "what kind of teachers" they want to become and reflexively sought ways to deal with the tensions emerging in their answers to such questions. We believe all TCs could benefit from ongoing scaffolded dialogic engagement with tensions, individually and as a community, as part of their professional identity construction during initial teacher education and beyond.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest.

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