



**EXPLORING THE ROLE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
ON EMERGING TEACHER EMOTIONS AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER IDENTITY OF
EXPERIENCED EFL TEACHERS: A MULTIPLE CASE
STUDY**

Ph.D. DISSERTATION

Magdalena Maria KESKİN

Eskişehir 2025

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Ph.D. DISSERTATION

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December 2025

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FINAL APPROVAL FOR THESIS

This dissertation titled “Exploring the Role of Reflective Practice on Emerging Teacher Emotions and the Development of Teacher Identity of Experienced EFL Teachers: A Multiple Case Study” has been prepared and submitted by Magdalena Maria KESKİN in partial fulfillment of the requirements in “Anadolu University Directive on Graduate Education and Examination” for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Department of Foreign Language Education has been examined and approved on 18/11/2025.

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE ON EMERGING TEACHER EMOTIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER IDENTITY OF EXPERIENCED EFL TEACHERS: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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PhD in English Language Teaching Program

Anadolu University, Graduate School, December 2025

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gökhan ÖZTÜRK

This doctoral dissertation examined the interplay between language teacher identity development and teacher emotions during a reflective practice engagement through the experiences of three experienced EFL teachers working at a state university in Türkiye. The data collection process stretched over eight weeks and incorporated lesson observations, reflective journals, video-stimulated interviews, semi-structured interviews, and critical incident reports. The findings were analyzed within the framework of the dialogical theory of self and reflexive thematic analysis was implemented throughout the process. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured by data triangulation, member checking and peer debriefing. The findings revealed that the manner in which teaching experience was perceived by the EFL teachers played a significant role in fueling or impeding their identity development. Among other developments facilitated by reflective practice, a more student-oriented approach, an empathetic stance towards self and students, as well as increased adaptability in the face of unforeseen difficulties or varying student profiles were uncovered in the course of the study. Notable changes were also reported in the participants' emotions with increased confidence, decreased stress, and a heightened sense of responsibility for students. The interplay between teacher emotions and identity development was analyzed, placing emotions as potential triggers, catalysts, inhibitors, and products of reflective language teacher identity development. The results were discussed against the backdrop of extant literature and recommendations for teachers and policy makers were presented.

Keywords: English language teacher identity development, Teacher emotions, Reflective practice, Qualitative research, Dialogical theory of self.

ÖZET

DENEYİMLİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN GELİŞEN ÖĞRETMEN DUYGULARI VE ÖĞRETMEN KİMLİĞİNİN GELİŞİMİ ÜZERİNDE YANSITICI PRATİĞİN ROLÜNÜN ARAŞTIRILMASI: ÇOKLU DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

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Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı

İngilizce Eğitimi Programı

Anadolu Üniversitesi, Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Aralık 2025

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Bu doktora tezi, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde çalışan üç deneyimli İngilizce öğretim elemanının deneyimleri aracılığıyla, yansıtıcı uygulama katılımı sırasında dil öğretmeni kimlik gelişimi ile öğretmen duyguları arasındaki etkileşimi incelemiştir. Veri toplama süreci sekiz haftaya yayılmış ve ders gözlemlerini, yansıtıcı günlükleri, videoyla uyarılmış görüşmeleri, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeleri ve kritik olay raporlarını içermiştir. Bulgular diyalojik benlik teorisi çerçevesinde analiz edilmiş ve süreç boyunca yansıtıcı tematik analiz uygulanmıştır. Araştırmanın güvenilirliği veri üçgenleme, üye kontrolü ve akran bilgilendirmesi yoluyla sağlanmıştır. Bulgular, öğretim deneyiminin katılımcılar tarafından algılanma biçiminin, kimlik gelişimlerini geliştirmede veya engellemede önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Yansıtıcı pratiğin kolaylaştırdığı diğer gelişmeler arasında, daha öğrenci odaklı bir yaklaşım, kendine ve öğrencilere karşı empatik bir duruşun yanı sıra, öngörülemeyen zorluklar veya değişen öğrenci profilleri karşısında artan uyum yer almıştır. Katılımcıların duygularında da artan güven, azalan stres ve öğrencilere karşı artan sorumluluk duygusuyla birlikte dikkate değer değişiklikler de rapor edilmiştir. Öğretmen duyguları ve kimlik gelişimi arasındaki etkileşim, duyguların potansiyel tetikleyiciler, katalizörler, engelleyiciler ve yansıtıcı dil öğretmeni kimlik gelişiminin ürünleri olarak yerleştirilmesiyle analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar mevcut literatür ışığında tartışılmış ve öğretmenlere ve politika yapıcılara yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İngilizce öğretmeni kimlik gelişimi, Öğretmen duyguları, Yansıtıcı uygulama, Nitel araştırma, Diyalojik benlik teorisi.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Gökhan ÖZTÜRK for his unwavering support from the first class he taught me on the ins and outs of qualitative research, to countless creative discussions about this doctoral thesis. He is a truly inspiring scholar and academic mentor, and I consider myself incredibly lucky that he agreed to become the supervisor of my doctoral research. I would also like to extend my thanks to the wonderful members of my thesis committee and the jury members, Prof. Dr. Safiye İpek KURU GÖNEN, Prof. Dr. Ceyhun YÜKSELİR, Prof. Dr. Ali MERÇ, and Asst. Prof. Dr. Mustafa SARIOĞLU. Their positive attitude, cheerful presence, and valuable suggestions transformed our meetings into an experience I always looked forward to. To the participants of my research, I would like to thank you for being patient with me when we spent hours watching and discussing the recordings of your lessons. You shared your reflections with me with incredible honesty and openness and I feel honored to call you my friends. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their emotional and financial support during my doctoral journey. My parents were there for me when I needed help and they encouraged me to keep on going. Special thanks go to my daughter, Maya, and my husband Gökhan. Thank you, Maya, for putting up with seeing your mum always buried in a pile of articles, sometimes yelling in frustration at the computer screen. You were always there with a reassuring hug or a cup of green tea to calm my nerves, even when you were disappointed to learn that a doctor of philosophy and a doctor of medicine are not the same thing and your mum will not start to treat patients anytime soon. My husband, Gökhan, thank you for cheering me on and always believing in me. You are the joys of my life and I would not be able to complete my doctoral journey without you.

Magdalena Maria KESKİN

...../...../2025

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES

I hereby truthfully declare that this dissertation is an original work prepared by me; that I have behaved in accordance with the scientific ethical principles and rules throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis and presentation of my work; that I have cited the sources of all the data and information that could be obtained within the scope of this study, and included these sources in the references section; and that this study has been scanned for plagiarism with “Scientific Plagiarism Detection Program” used by Anadolu University, and that “it does not have any plagiarism” whatsoever. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

Magdalena Maria KESKİN

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DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE

I declare that I received support from generative artificial intelligence programs (Gemini) while preparing this dissertation. I have received support from generative artificial intelligence programs for the visualization of the participants' backpacks prior to and after their reflective journeys (Figure 4.2, 4.6, 4.8, 4.12, 4.14, 4.18). I declare that I have checked the accuracy of the information I received from generative artificial intelligence programs. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

Magdalena Maria KESKİN

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Problem

1.1.1. Origins of reflection

John Dewey's conceptualization of reflection

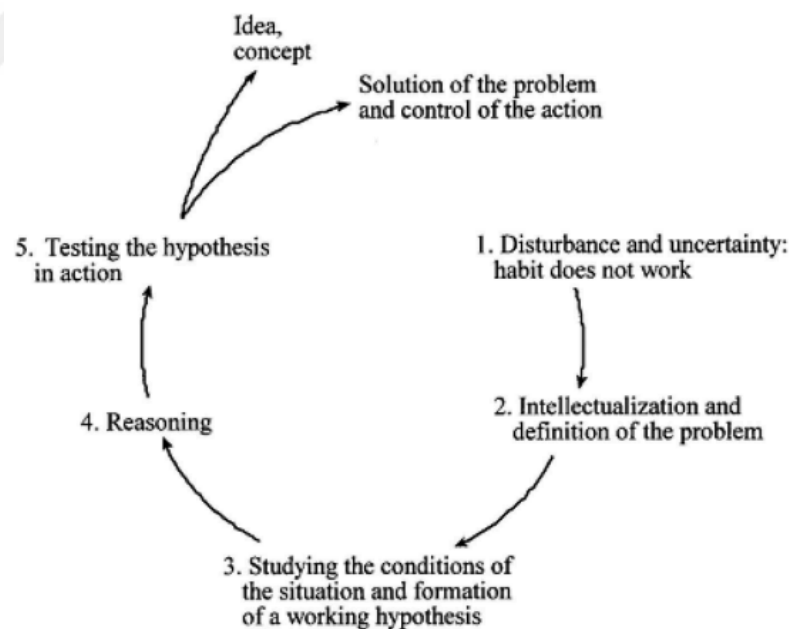
Reflection is a concept which can be traced back thousands of years to ancient Greece, China, and India (Farrell, 2022). The term reflection originates from the Latin word *reflectere* and can be directly translated as *looking back* (Valli, 1997). The process of reflection was later revitalized and schematized in the early twentieth century (Glasswell & Ryan, 2017). John Dewey, an American philosopher and educational reformer, is commonly acknowledged to be the founding father of modern reflective inquiry and is credited with introducing and developing the practice of reflection among educators and students (Baxter et al., 2021; Corrales & Erwin, 2020; de Leon-Pineda et al., 2022; Estaji & Fatalaki, 2023; Farrell, 2018; Farrell, 2022; Hunter, 2021; Kurosh et al., 2020; Marshall et al., 2021; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023; Tay et al., 2023). Thanks to his efforts, reflection ceased to be regarded as a process limited to the domain of philosophy and became popularized in the areas of psychology and education (Aydoğmuş & Şentürk, 2023). Dewey's teachings and philosophies were also instrumental in transforming the process of reflection from a loosely defined pondering upon past experiences to a much more systematic and methodological contemplation of past events (Aydoğmuş & Şentürk, 2023; Farrell, 2022; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). Dewey (1933) defined reflection as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the future conclusions to which it tends" (p.7). This definition elucidates the fact that reflection is not a passive process that happens automatically when prior experiences are contemplated upon, but it demands active involvement in the process of clarifying the problem, gathering evidence, and formulating hypotheses (de Leon-Pineda et al., 2023).

Dewey's understanding of the reflective process was based on five distinct yet interrelated stages. The first step involved brainstorming solutions to a recently encountered problem without placing any judgment on the ideas generated in the process. This step is triggered by being faced with a perplexity also referred to by Dewey as a forked-road situation (Dewey, 1933). In the subsequent intellectualization

stage, Dewey urges practitioners to refrain from relying on their emotional response to the situation and advocates for adopting a rationalized, intellectualized perspective on their past experiences. This stage also prompts practitioners to relate the problem to their prior experiences forging a link between the past and the present (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). The postliminary step involves a meticulous evidence-gathering process in order to collect as much data about the experienced situation as possible. In the fourth stage, referred to by Dewey as the reasoning stage, a probationary action plan is clarified and its effectiveness is later tested in the final stage of the reflective inquiry process known as hypothesis testing (Dewey, 1933). However, if the action fails to produce a gratifying outcome, the process cannot be deemed as ineffective. On the contrary, a supposed failure fuels future reflection processes by illuminating a new problem that needs to be reflected upon or triggering a reformulation and a refinement of the problem that was the subject of the original reflective inquiry.

Figure 1.1

Dewey's model of reflective thought and action (Kurosh et al., 2020)



These steps continue to exert influence on modern scholars and educators with Farrell (2022) and Burns (2010) describing them as precursors for contemporary action research in the field of education and foreign language teaching. Although the aforementioned steps may seem prescriptive and suggest a rigid progression through

neatly arranged stages, Dewey acknowledged that successful reflective inquiry does not need to involve all the steps and their configuration can also be altered implying that the process of reflection can often be iterative and irregular (Dewey, 1933).

Despite the utmost respect and importance harbored by scholars towards Dewey's contributions to popularizing and systematizing the reflection process, his conceptualization of reflective inquiry has not escaped criticism (Collin et al., 2013; Farrell, 2022; Hébert, 2015). For instance, Farrell (2022) took issue with the fact that Dewey's approach to reflective inquiry expects individuals to apply a third-person perspective when reflecting on their problems. In other words, the process of reflection becomes depersonalized and does not take into account an individual's identity, beliefs and emotions. Another aspect of Dewey's approach to reflection which has been critiqued is the emphasis on generating a solution as the inevitable outcome of the reflection process without allowing much room for ambiguity and uncertainty (Aydoğmuş & Şentürk, 2023; Farrell, 2022; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). For example, Hatton and Smith (1995) firmly disagreed with the notion that solution-seeking is an essential component of the reflective process. Despite these apparent shortcomings, Dewey's conceptualization of reflective inquiry continued to be built upon by other notable scholars such as Donald Schön and Jack Mezirow (Farrell, 2022).

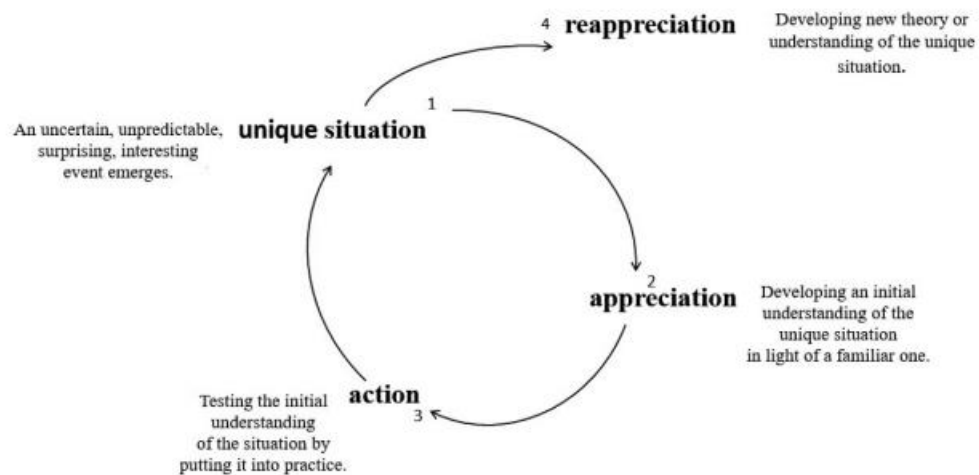
Donald Schön's conceptualization of reflective practice

Schön's and Dewey's conceptualizations of reflection bear significant resemblance in three aspects (Donohoe, 2023). Both scholars emphasized the fact that reflection is an active process which requires full engagement. They also attributed immense importance to experience as a vehicle for learning and development. Finally, they both accentuated the problem-solution nature of the reflective process. However, Schön extended the concept of reflection proposed by Dewey by introducing a distinction between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, defining reflection as "thinking back on what you have done in order to discover how our knowing in action may have contributed to an unexpected outcome...after the fact in tranquility or in the midst of action" (Schön, 1987, p.26). Reflection-in-action is activated when a routine action undertaken as a response to a problem fails to produce expected results. Schön metaphorically referred to such situations as swampy lowlands, understood as messy and confusing areas where technical knowledge and developed routines cease to be

effective (Schön, 1987). As a result, an impromptu, emergent, dynamic reflection is necessary to be conducted in the moment and it involves on-the-spot experimentation aimed at solving the problem (Farrell, 2018). Reflection-in action can also be illustrated as “the negotiations between the experiencer’s interactions and actions as the problem event occurs” (Tay et al., 2023, p.29). In other words, individuals converse with the problematic or surprising situations they encounter as if they were talking back to them, listening to the clues and information they provide to them (Schön, 1987). Schön (1987) differentiated between four stages of reflection-in-action, starting from a unique situation which serves as a trigger for reflection, analyzing the situation (appreciation), on-the-spot experimentation (action), and finally reappraisal, which allows teachers to deepen their professional expertise and knowledge and add new theories or solutions to their teaching repertoire.

Figure 1.2

Stages of reflection-in-action (Palacios et al., 2021)



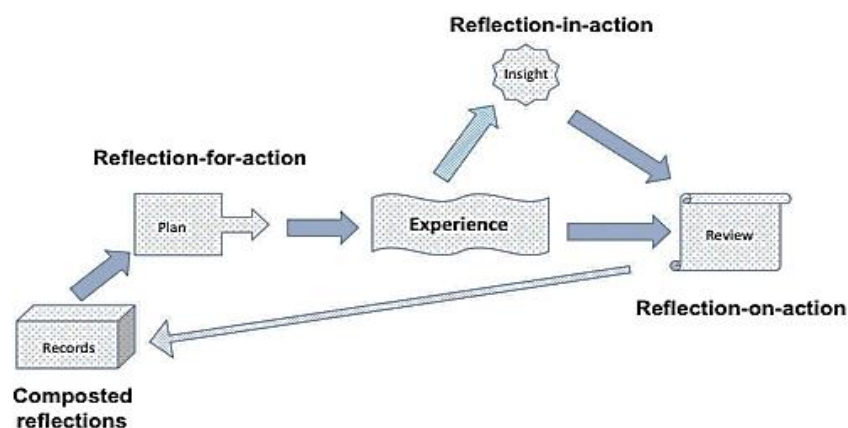
Consequently, the introduction of reflection-in-action divorced Schön’s model of reflection from Dewey’s with the former advocating for a required temporal gap between the time a problematic situation occurred and when it is reflected upon (Farrell, 2022; O’Connell & Dymont, 2013). In fact, it is also said to be the reason why Schön’s model is favored in the professional context, since it does not require professionals to suspend reflection and administer a temporal gap between the event and reflection, but encourages them to reflectively address a problematic event as it occurs without

interruptions (Farrell, 2022; Russell & Martin, 2017). Another reason why Schön's model is more commonly selected by in-service educators is its favoritism of practical experimentation over dependence on theoretical issues (Hughes, 2013; Hunter, 2021; Kinsella, 2007, Tan, 2020). While Dewey perceived abstract, academic theories as an essential reference point and an evaluative tool employed to assess and reflect on one's teaching experience, Schön recognized that the "technical rational" position, although helpful in some areas, is not applicable in a myriad of educators' challenges which can only be addressed by on-the-spot experimentation (Schön, 1983, p.43).

Unlike reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action is retrospective in nature and it allows for a more careful and thoughtful consideration of past experiences without an added burden of having to come up with action plans when the situation is still occurring (Schön, 1983). Reflection-on-action is also referred to as reflexivity (Ryan, 2005). The distinction between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action was later enriched by the addition of a third vital component, reflection-for-action by Farrell (2016). Also referred to as anticipatory reflection, reflection-for-action differs from the on-the-spot reflection-in-action and retrospective reflection-on-action since it is proactive and focused on future actions. Killion and Todnem (1991) claimed that reflection-for-action should be the final outcome of the reflection process incorporating insights gained from two other types of reflection in order to guide future actions. In other words, when individuals engage in reflection-for-action, they are able to anticipate problematic situations before they even occur, informed by their insights from reflecting in and on their actions (Farrell, 2022; Freeman, 2016).

Figure 1.3

Reflections and linkages (Cowan, 2017, p.161)



Similarly to Dewey's conceptualization of reflective inquiry, Schön's ideas have also come under heavy scrutiny. First of all, correspondingly to Dewey, Schön's model of reflection is predominantly structured around finding solutions (Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023). Hébert (2015) voiced his concern over the fact that, similarly to Dewey's reflective inquiry, Schön interpreted reflection as a causative chain with experiencing a problem as a necessary trigger and formulating solutions as a vital outcome, calling it an "ends-based model" (p.363). Secondly, whereas Dewey has been criticized for the depersonalization of the process of reflection, Schön has received criticism for decontextualising it and removing it from the social and cultural contexts experiences are embedded in (Boud & Walker, 1998; Farrell, 2022). Reflection does not occur in isolation and it is inextricably intertwined with the context and the environment in which it unfolds (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Piaget, 1967). If reflection is understood as a decontextualized process, individuals "may end up performing reflective introspection rather than reflective engagement with others" (Senese, 2017, p.105). As a result, Boud and Walker (1998) emphasized that in order for reflection to be effective, practitioners need to be aware of the cultural and institutional constraints and values, and be mindful of power relations they are entangled in. In other words, what is reflected upon is not only an individual's reality, but also the collective reality of other individuals within the same context (Baxter et al., 2021). In the process of reflection, power dynamics should not only be identified but also actively challenged to reduce inequality, boost compassion and eliminate the culture of silence (Brookfield, 2015). Thus, an interesting dissonance between the social aspect of reflective inquiry and its prevailing individual nature can be detected. Experience is a highly subjective entity and learning from experience as well as reflections on experiences are, by definition, subjective and personal processes. In other words, reflective practice is simultaneously significantly mediated by the context, but also independent of it as it is the individual who subjectively decides what to learn and what frame of reference to filter their experience through (Moon, 2005). Thus, reflection can be seen as an interplay between an individual and their social environment (Marton & Booth, 1997).

Jack Mezirow's conceptualization of reflective practice

Mezirow's valuable contributions to the conceptualization of reflective practice include a gradation of reflection into hierarchical levels and the introduction of frames of

reference. Mezirow also differentiated between three stages of the reflective process: thoughtful action (activating prior knowledge and experience), reflection (evaluating prior knowledge and experience), and critical reflection which grants access to a deeper and fuller understanding of one's experiences (Mezirow, 1990). The concept of critical reflection has later been developed by scholars such as Larrivee (2008) who defined it as "a conscious consideration of the impact of personal beliefs and values, assumptions, family imprinting, and cultural conditioning" (p.348). According to Zwozdiak-Myers (2012) and Moon (2005), critical reflection is commenced by the admittance of the uncertainty of knowledge and can only be effective if an individual takes under consideration wider historical, cultural, social, political and ideological contexts. This entails that one's own understanding of an experience, as well as the way others interpret it, is viewed with a critical lens. Moreover, in a metacognitive stance, the process of reflection itself is also critically reviewed (Alt & Raichel, 2020; Moon, 2005). Through the process of critical reflection, instead of focusing solely on the event, individuals' beliefs, assumptions and their perceptions of themselves are critically and introspectively examined (Anand et al., 2020; Baxter et al., 2021).

Critical reflection bears resemblance to critical thinking in the way it endeavors to critically analyze and challenge ingrained beliefs and assumptions (Alt & Raichel, 2020; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Guðjónsdóttir et al., 2017; Palacios et al., 2022). In fact, all aspects of critical thinking identified by Brookfield (2012), namely the hunting and evaluation of assumptions, analyzing experiences from different standpoints as well as taking action are also of pivotal importance in the process of reflection. However, critical thinking and critical reflection are not synonymous. Whereas both critical reflection and critical thinking require metacognitive awareness and an abandonment of a simplistic, dualist epistemological stance, critical thinking is much more focused on arriving at a judgment through thorough evaluation of available evidence (Nocetti et al., 2020; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012).

According to Mezirow, the way individuals interpret their experiences is filtered through the frames of reference they choose to apply in a given situation. These frames are structured upon habits of mind and points of view. Habits of mind are defined as "broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes", whereas points of view can be understood as

“constellations of belief, value judgment, attitude, and feeling that shape a particular interpretation” (Mezirow, 1997, p.6). Frames of reference are a vital concept which allows us to organize and compartmentalize information in the process of learning. However, while they are helpful, they can also constrain learning by allowing one’s suppositions and unfounded assumptions to block the assimilation of new information (Thompson, 2022). When a problematic situation which does not fit into an individual’s frame of reference is encountered, the experience can be rejected and further learning can be inhibited, or the frame of reference can undergo a transformation to assimilate the new experience and build knowledge (Anand et al., 2020). When experience is sufficiently reflected upon, the process of assimilation and transformation or stretching of existing frames of reference is facilitated (Moon, 2005). As a result, individuals are able to “begin to challenge previously held beliefs and really start to unpick how and why we see things the way we do” (Thompson, 2022, p.6).

Transformative reflective practice

However, perspectives are not the only elements transformed in the process of reflection. Dewey was the first scholar to remark on the transformative power of reflection which can not only transform one’s professional practice, but also the society as a whole (Dewey, 1916). Till this day, reflection, or rather reflexivity, is still regarded as a key instrument in transformative learning (alongside experience and rational discourse) and is referred to as an ideal environment for transformation to transpire (Anand et al., 2020; Eschenbacher, 2020; Gadsby, 2022; Glasswell & Ryan, 2017; Jones & Charteris, 2017; Mezirow, 2002). Reflexivity, also referred to as critical reflection, is perceived to be the deepest level of reflection which paves way for genuine, transformative learning (Moon, 2005). Transformative learning differs from a traditional view of learning as it precipitates changes in “how we know”, not just “what we know” (Eschenbacher, 2020, p.761). Transformative learning is a liberating process as it frees individuals who are “trapped by one way of looking at the world or being in the world that is forced on us” (Eschenbacher, 2019, p.258). It involves an introspective examination of one’s own thoughts, emotions as well as one’s actions and behaviour (Jones & Charteris, 2017; Thompson, 2022). Despite being criticized for a more autobiographical and self-focused approach to reflection, and disregarding the contextual and social nature of the process, both reflective and reflexive practice are

central in the process of reflection. Only by connecting the more inward-looking reflexive attitude with a recognition and analysis of a broader context can reflection realize its transformative power (Farrell, 2022). In the process of transformative learning, individuals are “prepared to abandon preconceptions and re-examine their fundamental assumptions about themselves, the subject matter and the nature of knowledge” (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012, p.161). Thompson (2022) highlighted that the outcome of reflection is not just the enhancement of professional practice, but its transformation. Paradoxically, transformative learning begins with a full acceptance of a practitioner’s current state, including any shortcomings or deep-seated assumptions and beliefs about oneself and one’s practice (Butler et al., 2018). As Lui (2015) stated, “if reflection stops with reflection, it cannot be transformative”, and critically challenging one’s assumptions and beliefs is an absolute prerequisite for transformation (p.147).

Thomas S.C. Farrell’s conceptualization of reflective practice

Critically reflecting on the conceptualizations and models of reflection put forward by Dewey, Schön, as well as Gibbs’s (1988) reflective cycle model and Johns’s (1995) understanding of reflective practice as a lifelong, continuous journey rather than a quick problem-fix, Farrell (2015, 2022) designed his own framework for reflective practice in language education. His model consists of five stages of reflection: philosophy, principles, theory, practice and finally, the beyond practice stage.

Figure 1.4

Framework for reflective practice (Farrell, 2022, p.21)



The first stage accentuates the intricate, yet often ignored and overlooked, connection between teachers’ practice and their background, including their ethnicity, religion,

personal values, cultural heritage etc. This convoluted web of influences, or as Farrell (2022, p. 20) put it, “teacher-as-person”, underlies teachers’ professional practice and reflecting on it can equip them with vital self-knowledge. In the second stage, teachers are encouraged to engage in reflection on their values and beliefs pertaining to language education, which are often subconscious and require an intentional and reflective effort to unpack. Echoing Schön’s (1987) distinction between espoused theories and theories in use, Farrell (2022) acknowledged that language teachers’ classroom practice is often dictated by “unofficial theories”, rather than verbalized “official theories” (p.21). Reflection on these theories constitutes the third stage in the model. Having reflected on the driving forces fueling, but also inhibiting one’s classroom practice, Farrell (2022) urged language educators to uncover links and potential incongruities between “what we do and what we think we do” (Knezevic, 2001, p.10). Unlike previously mentioned stages, in the beyond practice phase of the reflective practice cycle, Farrell (2022) followed in the footsteps of his predecessors, in particular Mezirow (1990) and Larrivee (2008), and emphasized the importance of adopting a wider perspective to reflective practice, reaching far beyond a language teacher’s classroom or their own personal and professional persona. Critical reflection on political and economic agendas and the impact of one’s practice on a larger community is an essential step in language teachers’ reflective practice as it allows them to build awareness, not only of themselves as professionals, but also of their place in the intricate and often confusing network we call the society.

1.1.2. Reflective practice in education

Reflective practice has been a focus of academic publications in a wide array of disciplines ranging from nursing and medical services (Aurora et al., 2023; Schwind & Manankil-Rankin, 2020; Tolosa-Merlos et al., 2023), social work (Mantell & Scragg, 2023) to psychology (Hyland, 2023). Nevertheless, the concept of reflective practice seems to have received most significant attention in the area of education (e.g. Aslan et al., 2022; Brandenburg & Jones, 2017; Brandenburg & McDonough, 2017; Derinalp, 2022; Estaji & Fatalaki, 2023; Foltyn, 2022; Ilmi et al., 2023; Kurosh et al., 2020; Palacios et al., 2022; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023; Thompson, 2022; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). In fact, Moon (2005) traced the origins of the application of reflective practice in a professional context to teacher education. According to Slepcevic-Zach and Stock

(2018), the centrality of reflective practice in education is evident in a shifting understanding of teaching from mere transmission of knowledge to “education understood as a reflective process, following the pedagogical tradition: I am constantly learning” (p.291). Consequently, the continuous nature of reflective practice is closely aligned with the continuous characteristic of teachers’ professional development (Kurosh et al., 2020; Marshall et al., 2021). Despite the fact that the original conceptualizations of reflective practice proposed by Dewey and Schön suggested that reflective practice has a specific endpoint, contemporary scholars emphasize that reflection in education should be an ongoing process which allows teachers and educators to constantly construct and transform their understanding and knowledge (Barrett et al., 2020; Palacios et al., 2022). Teachers are encouraged to adopt reflective practice as a “way of life” rather than “a way of approaching teaching” (Larrivee, 2000, p.306). Consequently, reflective practice is not limited to a quick problem fix, but becomes a constant presence in teachers’ lives both inside and outside their classrooms (Derinalp, 2022). Through continuous reflection, teachers are also able to continuously develop their expertise and skills, and ultimately become extended professionals (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). Engaging in reflection allows teachers to take charge of their professional development in an autonomous and self-directed manner (Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Derinalp, 2022; Farrell, 2022; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). In other words, reflection is a crucial element which is central to self-improvement and self-development in the teaching profession (Pollard, 2014). Teachers’ reflection can target various elements of their teaching practice ranging from the approaches they adopt, student engagement, learning objectives and others, and can serve as a source of vital information about any inadequacies or weaknesses in how they teach (Pendrey, 2022; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). Reflective practice is seen as a vital tool which should be applied by all teachers in order to scrutinize their teaching practice and their beliefs about pedagogical practices (Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023). When teachers teach reflectively, they actively engage in a continuous and systematic process of problem formulation, evidence gathering, and problem solving (Gustavsson et al., 2019; Marshall et al., 2021).

The role of critical incidents in reflective practice

The notion of a critical incident is often cited in extant literature as an optimal source and trigger for reflection (Brandenburg & McDonough, 2017; Butler et al., 2018; Hayden et al., 2013; Schutz et al., 2018; Thompson, 2022; Wetzel et al., 2015). Although the term suggests that such incidents are unexpected, unanticipated and somewhat unpleasant, the question of what constitutes a critical incident is extremely subjective (Clarke, 2021; Farrell, 2018; Tripp & Rich, 2012). An everyday event which would probably be ignored or remain unnoticed by one teacher, can have a powerful impact on another. What is more, even a commonplace, habitual event can become critical if it is reflected upon in a critical manner, for example by applying a different frame of reference to a standardized classroom scenario (Farrell, 2018; Moon, 2005). Butler et al. (2018) offered a helping hand to teachers struggling with identifying incidents in their practice which are worthy of reflection by asking them to tap into their emotions. They singled out three affective systems which are commonly activated when a critical incident is being experienced: threat system (connected to anxiety and anger), drive system (linked to excitement) and soothing system (associated with satisfaction and connectedness). Consequently, a critical incident might be an event which caused teachers a certain amount of discomfort or even made them irritated, but it can also be a moment which sparked joy and can be viewed as an example of professional excellence (Glasswell & Ryan, 2017).

1.1.3. Reflective language teaching

While the essential role of reflective practice in education has been widely established, many scholars point to the fact that its importance for language teachers is even greater (Chye et al., 2021; Farrell, 2022; Freeman, 2016; Walsh & Mann, 2015). Despite this, Farrell (2018) observed that reflective practice was adopted by the language teaching community much later than in other areas of education. Pennington (1992) became a precursor of reflective language teaching and is commonly credited with championing reflection as a means of boosting language students' performance and increasing language educators' confidence and motivation. She defined reflection for language teachers as "deliberating on experience and mirroring experience" as well as "the input for development" (p.47). Farrell (2018) defined reflective language teaching as:

A bottom-up approach to professional development that is based on the belief that experienced and novice teachers can improve their understanding of their own teaching by consciously and systematically reflecting on their teaching experiences (p.9)

Aydoğmuş and Şentürk (2023) emphasized the role of experience in reflection among teachers and defined it as “reflection on problem situations or everyday life by associating current learning with previous learning and experiences”, paying homage to the notion of teachers as perpetual learners.

Reflective language teaching in the post-method era

Although these definitions largely approximate a more general definition of reflective teaching with its emphasis on professional development and the continuous and systematic nature of the reflective process, the gravity of the concept of reflection for language teachers has been even more underscored by the post-method environment (Ayoobiyan & Rashidi, 2021; Farrell, 2022; Hunter, 2021; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023). Not being able to rely on prescriptive methodologies, which can be directly followed without unpacking any assumptions and beliefs about language education which underlie them, contemporary language educators need to rely on their own experiences and expertise when interacting with students. Consequently, reflective teaching became a necessity as it allowed teachers to hone their practice based on the actual experiences they collect in their teaching practice (Farrell, 2022). The post-method era made it essential for language teachers to “develop their own personal practical knowledge” (Clandinin, 1985, p.362). The recognition of context as a crucial variable in language teaching which came with the adoption of the post-method ideology also meant that language teachers need to constantly tap into their reflective abilities to be able to respond to unpredictable and dynamic situations in their classrooms (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Baxter et al., 2021; de Leon-Pineda et al., 2022; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023). Reflective language teachers are capable of “going beyond their daily experiences and perceiving teaching as a wider social and cultural phenomenon” (Baxter et al., 2021, p.503). Consequently, the changes precipitated by the post-method ideology aligned perfectly with a growing interest in reflective language teaching since it “empowers teachers to decide independently about the problems of their class and to lead their class without academic help” (Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023, p. 102). As a result, language teachers are not merely transmitters of

knowledge tasked with the enactment of a school curriculum, but reflective practitioners who are able to take advantage of reflective practice in order to formulate points of contention in their practice and efficiently address them (Aliakbari et al., 2020; Kurosh et al., 2020; Nocetti et al., 2020). Not only can language teachers' practice be transformed with the help of reflection, but they can also target deep-seated beliefs and assumptions they hold about language teaching, some stemming from their own language or teacher education (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Baxter et al., 2021). In other words, the more language teachers become aware of themselves and autonomous in their teaching, the better they are able to respond to everyday classroom situations (Aslan et al. 2022; Dehghani et al., 2023; Tay et al., 2023).

Challenges with reflective practice engagement in language teaching

Similarly to teachers in general, the difficulties that language teachers face when engaging in reflective practice are also connected with a misaligned understanding of what reflection is and what, if any, should its outcome be (Farrell, 2022; Glasswell & Ryan, 2017). As mentioned before, the problem-solving nature of reflection can often be disproportionately emphasized, leaving the critical nature of the process and its affective domain unexplored (Arefian, 2023). Farrell (2022) warned against using reflection as an evaluative tool and firmly asserted that reflective practice can never be successful in a top-down approach. Similarly, Mann and Walsh (2013) voiced their opposition towards externally administered and directed reflective practice in language teaching as “a total disregard to teacher personality” resulting in “a real loss of reflective spirit” (p.293). For example, although language teachers are formally expected to implement various instructional methods while maintaining a critical and reflective eye on their teaching practice, the transformative aspect of reflective practice is notably absent from the majority of documentation listing official standards and expectations for language teachers (Farrell, 2022; Glasswell & Ryan, 2017; Jones & Ryan, 2017).

The role of teaching experience in language teachers' reflective practice

Although reflective practices can be successfully adopted by novice as well as veteran teachers, a large bulk of extant literature on the topic selects pre-service language teachers as desirable research participants (Arefian, 2023; Arslan, 2019; Azimi et al., 2019; Cadiz, 2021; Day et al., 2022; Farrell, 2021; Qing-li et al., 2018; Russell &

Martin, 2017; Yee et al., 2022; Yuan & Mak, 2018). This fact can be attributed to a belief that experiences which are novel serve as a superior trigger for experiential learning and reflection (Moon, 2005; Taylor, 1997). However, the fact that new and challenging experiences of novice practitioners can build a powerful foundation for successful reflective practice does not minimize the role reflective practice can play among in-service and experienced language teachers. Experienced practitioners are less likely to experience novel situations in their classroom practice, but even familiar experiences can be reframed and repeatedly problematized by engaging in skillful reflective practice (Moon, 2005). Thompson (2022) referred to this process as “the mirror approach”, based on “making the familiar strange” (p.32). Questioning ingrained teaching practices and challenging established assumptions as well as examining experiences from different perspectives are all invaluable techniques which can aid even veteran language teachers in fostering proper reflective behaviours.

Reflective practice and language teachers' identity development

Regardless of the amount of teaching experience, reflective practice is said to be a powerful vehicle for identity construction and development (Alsina et al., 2019; Cross Francis et al., 2018; Engelbertink et al., 2021; Hughes, 2013; Kurosh et al., 2020; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018; Steadman, 2023; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018). Reflection on teaching practice allows practitioners to refine their perception and understanding of themselves (Engelbertink et al., 2021). Through the process of continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of classroom practice facilitated by reflection, teachers are able to develop a better sense of who they are as professionals (Muchnik-Rozanov & Tsybulsky, 2019). What is more, reflective practice can be an effective tool aiding teachers during instances of identity shifts, allowing them to understand how and why their previously established values and beliefs underwent a transformation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Nelson, 2008; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018). In the process of reflection, “our identities are exposed, reconsidered, maybe even questioned, and then affirmed and reinforced” (Nelson, 2008, p. 208). Reflective practice can also mitigate the stress and difficulties brought about by the teaching profession by teaching educators how to accept and espouse uncertainties that they encounter throughout their careers (Steadman, 2023). By reflecting on one's teaching practice, teachers can, therefore, learn to accept their vulnerability as professionals and

open themselves to experiencing tensions which destabilize and develop their identities (Cross Francis et al., 2018). If such moments of strain and stress are not properly addressed through reflection, teachers face the risk of stagnating in their professional development and suppressing further growth (Cross Francis et al., 2018). Taking all these claims even further, Giddens (1991) argued that reflective practice is not only highly beneficial but rather fully indispensable in the process of identity building, as “rather than being seen as optional, the self has to be reflexively made” and the identity is “not something that is given but appears as something that has to be routinely created and sustained in reflexive activities of the individual” (p.3). As such, reflection is seen as a vital stepping stone in the journey to develop one’s identity and progressively graduate from “passive technician to a reflective practitioner through to a transformative intellectual” (Kubanyiova & Crookes, 2016, p.119). Reflective practice can also be conceptualized as an essential and continuous dialogue teachers hold with themselves in order to understand who they are, who they wish to be, and where they are within a larger scheme of personal, professional and societal constellations (Schutz et al., 2018) or an organizational mechanism allowing teachers to manage the complexities of their profession (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018).

1.2. Conceptualizations of Identity

The concept of identity has undergone a substantial transformation from a fixed, deep-rooted essence of a person to a more permutable and shifting perception of identity, thus moving more from a focus on an individual as a carrier of his or her identity and more to the acknowledgement of how identities adapt to varying professional and social contexts (Steadman, 2023). Identity ceased to be perceived as stable and tied to an individual, and it gained a relational, dynamic and flexible characteristic (Dimitrieska, 2018). Although the majority of scholars recognize and fully endorse the fluid nature of identity, the concept of identity is also commonly acknowledged to be incredibly complex and its definition largely depends on the theoretical framework adopted by identity theorists (Richardson & Watt, 2018). For instance, identity researchers ascribed to the poststructural approach emphasize the negotiated nature of the concept (Warren, 2019). In positioning theory, an individual’s identity is understood to be limited by how they are positioned in their social environment. In this view, individuals are seen as active constructors and deconstructors of their identities in response to how they

position themselves and how other actors in their professional or social contexts perceive them (Rex & Schiller, 2009). The proponents of the sociocultural lens in the conceptualization of identity underscore the continuous attribute of identity construction (Edwards, 2019). Vygotsky (1994) viewed identity construction as a constant realigning of one's own perception of self with how other people see us, and a perpetual interplay between an individual's motivations and their ideal self which is yet to be achieved. The role of context is also accentuated in the ecological perspective to identity analysis. According to this view, identity is shaped by three distinct but also interrelated contexts: macro-context (a broader historical and cultural context), meso-context (e.g. national institutional bodies) and micro-context (e.g. professional context of a given institution where an individual is employed) (Buchanan & Olsen, 2018). Identity formation is inextricably linked to its context and is simultaneously constructed by the individual and co-constructed by various influences in his or her environment (Beach, 1999).

1.2.1. Professional identity of language teachers

Similarly to the concept of reflective practice, identity has been studied in a myriad of disciplines, but it seems to have a distinctively well-established position in the field of language teaching (Steadman, 2023). Wenger (1998) argued that:

Education in its deepest sense ...concerns the opening up of identities- exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state...Education is not merely formative- it is transformative...issues of education should be addressed first and foremost in terms of identities and modes of belonging and only secondarily in terms of skills and information. (p.263)

Nevertheless, Steadman (2023) pointed out that language teachers are faced with numerous challenges constricting the development of their professional identities. For instance, teaching is firmly positioned in broader economic, political and social contexts which can heavily influence language practitioners' own identity development. This situation is particularly acute if there is a clash between what teachers value and wish to enact in their classroom practice and the desires and expectations of their school administrators or even national or international legislative bodies (Chye et al., 2021; Posti-Ahokas et al., 2021). Numerous educational dogmas and prescriptive approaches to language education left teachers in a position of an "avalanche of uncertainty" with countless, often conflicting ideas about what and how to teach and how to interact with students (Britzman, 2009). Consequently, the formation and further development of a

language teacher identity is marked by continuous and relentless negotiation of different I-positions in relation to the influences being exerted on language educators from multiple directions, including externally-situated forces such as school policies and internal turbulences caused by teachers' cumulative professional experience (Alsup, 2019). In addition, the development of language teacher identity can also be thwarted by persistent cultural myths about teachers and their profession. For example, the myth of "teachers as experts" strongly implies that teachers should always possess enough knowledge and skills to answer all their students' queries. Teachers who are not readily equipped with sufficient answers are deemed unprofessional and inadequate (Britzman, 2003).

The affective dimension of teacher identity has been well established as a vital part of educators' journey towards self-awareness (Clarke, 2021, Day, 2018; Schutz et al., 2018; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018). Clarke (2021) emphasized that knowledge gained through reflective practice not only affects one's self-knowledge, but also their emotional intelligence, since "self-aware individuals should also be emotionally intelligent people" (p.712). What is more, critical emotional events, understood as powerful and meaningful emotionally-charged instances occurring during interactions with students and other practitioners, are also important engines for identity development (Schutz et al., 2018). However, emotions are not only vital in the process of identity formation or development, but also its long term sustenance as emotional well-being is necessary for "sustaining a sense of a positive professional identity through which teachers remain committed and able to teach to their best and well" (Day, 2018, p.61). Zembylas and Chubbuck (2018) concluded that teacher identity and teacher emotions are intertwined and mutually influential concepts with the emotions teachers experience being shaped by their professional identities, and their beliefs and assumptions being affected by their emotions.

1.3. Conceptualizations of Emotions

Despite a growing interest in the issue of the affective domain, a clear and unanimously agreed upon definition of what emotions are remains to be drafted (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018; Lorette & Dewaele, 2015). Lack of clear conceptualization of emotions is a direct reflection of the complexity and ambiguity of the term (Fried et al., 2015; White, 2018). De Dios Martínez Agudo (2018) defined emotions as "subjective and

conscious feelings that usually evoke certain spontaneous and involuntary responses or reactions in individuals to a particular event” (p.2). Similarly to his understanding of emotions, Keltner and Shiota (2003) emphasized the reactive characteristic of the term and illustrated it as “a universal, functional reaction to an external stimulus event, temporally integrating psychological, cognitive, phenomenological, and behavioral channels to facilitate a fitness-enhancing, environment-shaping response to the current situation” (p.89). What is clear from the abovementioned definitions is that emotions are not static, but highly dynamic processes which exert impact on individuals’ behaviour and actions (Reis, 2015). Consequently, in contemporary renderings of emotions, they are commonly referred to as emotional processes, rather than emotional states (Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018). However, what is missing from these conceptualizations of emotions is a deeper understanding of the social dimension of emotions. Experiencing emotions is not an individual phenomenon, a person’s internal reaction to an external stimuli, but rather a social process triggered by interactions with the context and other people (De Costa et al., 2018; White, 2018). Despite many attempts at a clear conceptualization of emotions, the term continues to be misused in extant literature, as in the case of the false, yet often cited, synonymy of emotions and affect (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018; White, 2018).

1.3.1. Emotions in education

Research on emotions in education has been severely crippled by the supremacy of paradigms favoring cognition and rationality over an exploration of emotions which were perceived as highly subjective and, as a result, not technically measurable (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018; White, 2018; Xu, 2018). Emotions were described as “irrational, exclusively female, and hard to capture” and they were relentlessly vilified as adversaries to rational thought (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018, p. 1). In contrast to these claims, an exploration of human emotionality unearthed evidence for the inseparability of emotions from reason (Swain, 2013). The advent of the humanistic and affective turns in education shed light on the previously neglected affective sphere and drew attention to the inner worlds of educators subsuming their feelings, thoughts, and emotions (Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018; Lei, 2007). In fact, modern scholars acknowledge that emotions “underlie most, if not all, cognition” (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018, p.1).

In the domain of education, teachers' classroom practice is said to be heavily influenced by their emotions (Golombek & Doran, 2014; Xu, 2018). Classroom is not a sterile and rational environment but rather an emotionally charged place of practice where students' and teachers' behaviours are inextricably bound to their emotions (Chen, 2016; Xu, 2018). Conspicuously, some scholars argue that teaching and learning would not even be possible without a layer of emotions surrounding classroom interactions and communication (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018, Dewaele, 2015). Teachers who are not in touch with the emotional dimension of their practice are likely to struggle with forging authentic bonds with their students and ensuring a supportive emotional climate in the classrooms (Chen, 2016). What is more, teachers are not only expected to tolerate the emotional load of teaching, but also to actively and purposefully regulate, hide and manage their emotions, which is referred to by Hochschild (1983) as emotional labour.

1.3.2. Emotions in language teaching

Synonymously to the initial dearth of research into emotions in education, the affective aspect of language teaching has also been neglected. Borg (2003) famously defined language teacher cognition as “what language teachers think, know, believe, and do” (p.81). This conceptualization notably omits the emotional aspect of language teaching, which prompted Golombek and Doran (2014) to advocate for a broadening of the concept of language educators' cognition as “what teachers feel about what they think, know, believe and do” (p.103). Parallel to other educational professions, language teaching is “an emotionally intense practice, a complex process saturated with a wide variety of emotions” (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018, p.5). However, what differentiates language educators from other teachers, is a substantially higher level of emotional workload they need to carry. Learning a foreign language can trigger multitudinous negative emotional responses in learners, ranging from anxiety to crippling fear (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Xu, 2018). The fact that the mother tongue is not used in classroom communication generates anxiety not only in students, but also among the teachers themselves, particularly if they live and work outside of their home countries (Liu, 2016). The heightened state of anxiety further exacerbates language teachers' emotional labour. Dewaele et al. (2018) compared language teachers to conductors of an orchestra whose goal is to “manage the emotional tenor of the classroom” (p. 126).

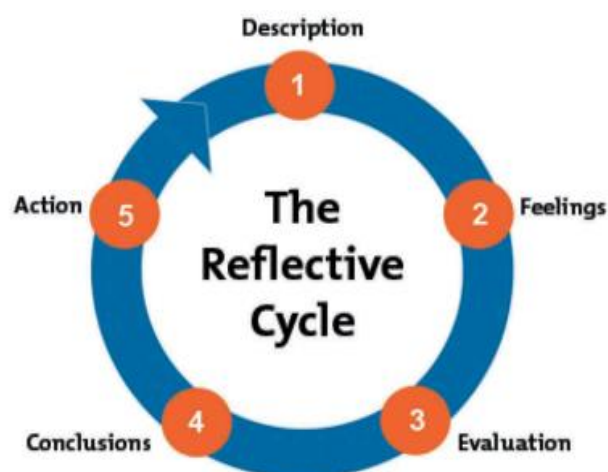
Language teachers need to control and regulate their own emotions as well as the emotions of their students in order to create a harmonious learning environment where emotions are acknowledged and properly managed. This tall order requires language teachers to build resilience and remain in control despite emotionally-challenging circumstances (Arefian, 2023; Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018). Consequently, self-awareness of emotions is a prerequisite for skillful language teaching and a hallmark of language teachers' professionalism (Bullough, 2011; Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018).

1.3.3. Teacher emotions in reflective practice

The development of the affective domain within the academic discourse on reflective practice is characterized by the same tardiness as the inclusion of teacher emotions in the exploration of teacher cognition. The first model of reflective practice which incorporated emotions was Gibbs's (1988) framework of reflective practice originally developed for the nursing profession. Reflection on emotions in the model was placed immediately after the description of a meaningful event and preceded the evaluation stage.

Figure 1.5

The reflective cycle (Gibbs, 1988)



Contemporary scholars reached a consensus that emotions are an inextricable component of teachers' reflective practice (Farrell, 2022; Holmes, 2010; Muchnik-Rozanov & Tsybulsky, 2019; Thompson, 2022). Reflective practice cannot be separated

from teachers' emotions owing to the fact that teaching itself is an emotionally loaded process (Farrell, 2022). When teachers reflect on their practice, they do not only reflect on the events that took place but also on the feelings triggered by these events. Unfortunately, narrowing the concept of reflective practice to a problem-solution strategy can often result in a detachment of the teacher from the experience, as if the issues that the teachers are striving to resolve exist outside of the teachers themselves (Farrell, 2019). This flawed understanding of reflective practice marks a notable point of criticism towards traditional models of reflection proposed by Dewey and Schön (Collin et al., 2013; Hébert, 2015; Marathe and Sen, 2021). Marathe and Sen (2021) observed that "even if an event is viewed from a distance, devoid of any emotions, emotions cannot be detached from it because every event an individual encounters results in an automatic affective response" (p. 567). Consequently, a reflective process cannot be successful without attending to the emotions generated by an experience which is being reflected on (Holmes, 2010).

Reflective practice is considered to be a key to an increased awareness of teachers' emotions, allowing them to understand what emotions they experience and why a particular experience triggered these emotions (Marathe & Sen, 2021). The awareness of one's emotions is further refined if a practitioner is able to engage in genuine critical reflection. According to Yee et al. (2022) critical reflection awards practitioners with "a self-conscious awareness of how it is that one comes to feel what he feels, an awareness of the assumptions, reasoning, evidence and justification that underpins his values and beliefs" (p.561).

Reflective language educators who reflect on their emotions become empathetic reflectors who are able to cultivate emotional competence and empathy towards themselves, their peers and their students (Marathe and Sen, 2021). Emotional competence subsumes "the individual's knowledge and abilities, including the consciousness of one's emotional state, the sense of emotion, and the range of abilities that govern emotion" (Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018, p. 408). Parallel to attitudes for reflection championed by Dewey, emotional competence includes a number of necessary attributes such as enthusiasm (bearing similarities to Dewey's wholeheartedness), power (echoing the attitude of responsibility) and the characteristic of being relational towards one's students (similar to Dewey's open-mindedness). As a

result, emotional competence and reflective practice are in a mutually conducive relationship, with engagement in reflective practice increasing teachers' emotional competence and a high level of emotional competence being a prerequisite for successful reflection (Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018).

However, emotions which are not properly acknowledged and reflected on can also derail the process of reflective practice by “steering judgments and influencing frames of reference that are adopted” (Moon, 2005, p.57). In turn, emotions can be metaphorically perceived as a double-edged sword in the process of reflection. On the one hand, emotions can reveal genuine insights into teachers' beliefs, assumptions and actions, but they can also cloud their understanding of their teaching practice and filter what is being reflected on (Arefian, 2023).

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Reflective practice is regarded as “an essential attribute of the good teacher” (Glasswell & Ryan, 2017, p.6). It is commonly used in the context of language teacher education as well as among in-service language educators as an evaluative tool and a vehicle for continuous professional development. Reflective practice among language teachers has gained a status of an absolute necessity, rather than a preference and is referred to as an essential 21st century skill (Ahmed, 2020; Aydoğmuş & Şentürk, 2023; Brownhill, 2022; Estaji & Fatalaki, 2023; Farrell, 2022; Senese, 2017; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). The importance of reflective practice is evident in the extant literature on the topic with scholars forging links between reflection and an increase in professional artistry, autonomy, teaching effectiveness, empowerment and the overall quality of teaching (Ahmed, 2020; Brownhill, 2023; Hunter, 2021; Ilmi et al., 2023; Palacios et al., 2022; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). Despite numerous claims of the advantages of becoming reflective language teachers, Farrell (2022) warned that the relationship between reflective practice and teaching quality might not be as straightforward and unquestionable as other sources suggest. Thompson (2022) reiterated this concern by pointing out that only reflective practice which is properly executed can allow teachers to reap its benefits. This endeavor becomes even more challenging due to the fact that reflection is a complex skill which escapes any straightforward definitions or prescriptive strategies on how to engage in it (Brownhill, 2023; Farrell, 2022; Greenberger, 2020; Greenberger & Or, 2022; Marshall et al., 2021; Murphy &

O'Mahony, 2023; Taylor et al., 2021). Even if prescriptive guidelines are provided, they often differ greatly from one another and are even contradictory in nature, as in the case of the role of theory in Dewey's and Schön's models of reflective practice (Anderson, 2019; Brownhill, 2022; Fendler, 2003; Greenberger, 2020; Greenberger et al., 2022; Hughes, 2013; Hunter, 2021). Furthermore, despite the widespread application of reflective practice in the educational community, more evidence is needed to account for the impact of reflection on language educators, particularly in the higher education context (Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023; Moon, 2005; Palacios et al., 2022). More importantly, while a large bulk of extant literature on reflective practice in the educational context focuses on measuring the impact of reflective inquiry on teaching performance, there is a considerable lack of empirical research into what role reflection plays in the development of teachers' professional selves (Ayoobiyan & Rashidi, 2021; Cowan, 2020; Engelbertink et al., 2021; Farrell, 2022; Ilmi et al., 2023). In addition, even if reflective practice is studied in the context of teacher identity, the vast majority of such studies are conducted among pre-service ELT practitioners or novice in-service teachers, leaving the population of active and experienced language teachers understudied (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Aslan et al., 2022; Brandenburg & Jones, 2017; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Dexter & Wall, 2021; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Farrell, 2018; Gadsby, 2022; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023). To conclude, existing studies pertaining to reflective practice in the educational context are limited in both their focus and context.

Echoing the complex nature of reflective language teaching, Steadman (2023) asserted that the concept of identity is a "complex and slippery term" and described research on teacher identity as "both extensive and inconclusive" (p.2). Not only is teacher identity research ambiguous, but it is also plagued by the same methodological flaw as numerous studies on reflective practice; a strong preference for exploring student-teachers' identity development with a disproportionately lower interest in how experienced ELT practitioners cultivate their professional identities (Day, 2018; Dimitrieska, 2018; Hong et al., 2018, Palacios et al., 2021, Richardson & Watt, 2018).

A limited research focus is also a feature of many studies pertaining to emotions in language teaching. Even if research projects are conducted within the cohort of in-service practitioners, they are often monopolized by the exploration of negative

emotions such as anxiety and burnout without due recognition of the interplay between emotions and professional identity construction and development (De Costa et al., 2018; de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2018; de Dios Martínez Agudo & Azzaro, 2018; Xu, 2018). Similar calls were also made by researchers based in Türkiye, who urged for more studies linking teacher emotions and teacher identity development in the context of ELT practitioners employed in their native country (Kırmızı & Sarıçoban, 2020; Kocabaş-Gedik & Ortaçtepe, 2017; Kocabaş-Gedik & Ortaçtepe Hart, 2021; Kurtay, 2020), as well as teacher emotions and teachers' classroom practice (Kırmızı & Sarıçoban, 2020; Kış, 2021), particularly by adopting a qualitative approach to data collection (Alev, 2019). Many scholars have also noted a substantial paucity of research combining the exploration of reflective practice and teacher emotions (Farrell, 2022; Marathe & Sen, 2021; Muchnik-Rozanov & Tsybulsky, 2019; Murphy & O'Mahony, 2023; Teng, 2017; Yoshihara et al., 2020).

Pertaining to the interplay of identity and emotions, Tsang and Jiang (2018) and Barcelos and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2018) all observed that the concepts of teacher identity and teacher emotions are closely intertwined and an in-depth exploration of the development of identity cannot be devoid of an analysis of the affective dimension of teaching. Emotions are both the cause and consequence of the processes behind teacher identity development and cannot be separated from them because "emotions provide meaning to self" (Tsang & Jiang, 2018, p. 76). Consequently, "emotions are part of the very fabric that constitutes the teacher's self" (Teng, 2017, p.118). As a result, an exploration of the role of reflective practice in the development of teacher identity should also include a parallel investigation into teacher emotions (Nagamine et al., 2018). The extant literature on teacher emotions is also in need for further investigation into how reflective practice and, in particular, the use of reflective journals impacts language teachers' ability to acknowledge and control their emotions and facilitate empathic reflection (Marathe & Sen, 2021; Yoshihara et al., 2020).

1.5. Significance of the Study

Apart from bridging the gap in extant literature by exploring experienced ELT practitioners' development of teacher identity and their emotions through an extended engagement in reflective inquiry, the current study has significant implications for language teachers as well as school administrators, policy makers and teacher educators.

First and foremost, the results of this study provide valuable insights into how reflective practice tools can be used in order to facilitate teachers' development. In-service language teachers will be able to adopt the practices examined by the researcher into their own teaching practice in order to advance their professional development, gain more awareness of their actions and emotions, and, ultimately, become reflective practitioners. Reflective practice is said to offer a wide range of benefits to language teachers ranging from personal gains such as increased proactiveness, boosted confidence and decreased anxiety (Farrell, 2022), to elevated teaching practice by allowing teachers to deepen their pedagogical knowledge and inform their practice with data-based, critical reflections (Moon, 2005). Being taught by a reflective practitioner can also have positive effects on students' performance by making teachers more attentive to their learners' needs (Kurosh et al., 2020; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). Other known benefits of reflective practice include refined metacognitive skills (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012), providing a safe platform to scrutinize one's practice (Pendrey, 2022), equipping teachers with efficient strategies to cope with painful and dramatic episodes in their careers (Thompson, 2022), and an opportunity to empower teachers' professional development by helping them identify potential areas for future improvement (Thompson, 2022). However, it needs to be reiterated that these benefits are only accessible to teachers who engage in reflective practice with an appropriate attitude, proper tools and a clear understanding of what reflective teaching is and what it is not (Farrell, 2022). By analyzing the experiences of three university ELT practitioners narrated in this study, in-service teachers will be able to identify potential oversights in their current reflective practices, clear out any theoretical and practical inaccuracies in their understanding of reflective practice and gain access to all the benefits that adopting a reflective attitude can offer to them and their students. Secondly, it is the researcher's hope that teacher educators and school administrators will be able to take advantage of the findings of this study to assess how reflective practice is implemented in their educational institutions, and how they can transform it from an obligatory, one-dimensional evaluative tool, into a deeply transformative, critical and empowering mechanism assisting teachers in the development of teacher identity and building their emotional competence (Farrell, 2022).

1.6. Aim of the Study

The aim of the current study is to examine the role of reflective practice in the development of teacher identity, the role teacher emotions play in the midst of reflective practice, as well as the interplay of identity and emotions during reflective practice among experienced, in-service ELT practitioners in the higher education context over the course of two months. The researcher was guided in her exploration by the following research questions:

1. How does the participants' language teacher identity evolve through their engagement in reflective practice?
2. What types of language teacher emotions emerge during the participants' engagement in the reflective process?
3. How are language teacher identity and language teacher emotions interconnected during the EFL teachers' reflective practice engagement?

1.7. Definitions of Key Terms

- Critical incident is an interpretation of a significance of an event, produced by the way we look at a situation (Tripp, 2012, p. 28)
- Critical reflection is a conscious consideration of the impact of personal beliefs and values, assumptions, family imprinting, and cultural conditioning (Larrivee, 2008, p. 348)
- Emotional regulation involves physiological, behavioral, and cognitive processes utilized by every individual to monitor, evaluate, and modulate their emotional experiences (Namaziandost et al., 2022, p. 2296).
- Emotions are temporary voiced I-positions which define the way of perceiving the world, the self and others (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka 2010, p. 429)
- Experience is a moving force grounded in situation, rooted in interaction and connected to the entire unity of one's life (Nelson, 2008, p. 208)
- I-positions are speaking personalities bringing forward a specific viewpoint and story (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 311)
- Language teacher identity refers to language teachers' dynamic self-conception and imagination of themselves as teachers, which shifts as they participate in varying communities, interact with other individuals, and position themselves (and are positioned by others) in social contexts (Yazan, 2018, p.21)

- Reflection is an essential, engaging process that allows the reflector to frame and reframe their reality that is being experienced moment by moment. It requires us to utilize skills of communication, to become our own person-centered therapist, understanding ourselves in relation to experiences we are about to have, are having or have had, empathically and with accuracy, then stepping beyond the self and using this knowledge gained to understand how we may then have impacted on those around us (Clarke, 2017, p. 8)
- Reflection with empathy (RWE) entails the practitioner revisiting the event, labelling his/her emotions, analyzing the situation and also analyzing the emotions of others in the event (Marathe & Sen, 2021, p. 569)
- Reflection without empathy (RWOE) entails the practitioner seeing the problem in the event as existing outside him/her, over which the reflector has no control (Marathe & Sen, 2021, p. 569)
- Reflective journals are written documents that individuals create as they think about various concepts, events, interactions over a period of time for the purposes of gaining insights into self-awareness and learning (Thorpe, 2004, p. 328)
- Reflective language teaching is a bottom-up approach to professional development that is based on the belief that experienced and novice teachers can improve their understanding of their own teaching by consciously and systematically reflecting on their teaching experiences (Farrell, 2018, p. 9)
- Teachers' emotions are heightened states of being that change as a result of their reflections on past and future teaching practices and interactions with the dynamics of their teaching context and with their colleagues and students (Lasky, 2005, p. 901)
- Teacher identity is an ongoing process of negotiating and interrelating multiple I-positions in such a way that a more or less coherent sense of self is maintained throughout various participations and self-investments in one's working life (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 315)
- Self is an ever-shifting conglomeration of potentially autonomous I-positions, which, at any point in time, can re-locate to a different part of the system's space-time field (Henry, 2019, p.266)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section of the present doctoral thesis is dedicated to providing an overview of extant literature on the topic of reflective practice, identity and emotions. Adopting a funnel perspective, it begins by an examination of reflective practice in education, with a particular interest in reflective journals, as they constitute one of the data collection tools implemented in the current study. Then, the perspective is narrowed down to the context of reflective engagement in ELT, and a synopsis of the challenges language teachers face when engaging in reflective practice such as misconceptualization of reflection, lack of time and training as well as shallow reflection. A separate section is devoted to the correlation between teaching experience and reflective practice, juxtaposing accounts from preservice, novice and veteran teachers. Finally, reflecting the context of the current study, research conducted on reflective practice among ELT practitioners in Türkiye is analysed. After providing an overview of extant literature on reflective practice, the subsequent section is devoted to language teacher identity, especially the impact of external factors and personal experiences on teachers' identity development. The researcher's lense is also directed at language teacher identity studies conducted in Türkiye, revealing tensions created by being non-native English speakers. Since the aim of the current study is to explore the correlations between reflective practice and identity development, a separate section is devoted to an overview of studies aimed at investigating how teacher identity is shifted during reflective engagement. Among the principal findings stemming from the review of extant literature, an increase in self-awareness and self-confidence are explored together with strengthened teacher autonomy. With teacher emotions being of great importance for the current doctoral thesis, the next section of the literature review explores language teacher emotions with anger caused by top-down management and the importance of self-regulation at the forefront of extant research. The interrelation between emotions and reflective practice is further investigated with reflective practice observed to raise teachers' awareness of their emotions. Finally, the interconnectedness of emotions and language teacher identity is explored with extant literature revealing that emotions can serve as a trigger for identity development and further emphasizing the protective role of emotional resilience during identity conflicts and shifts.

2.1. Reflective Practice in the Context of Education

A large bulk of extant studies on the application of reflective practice in the area of education has been centered on evaluating various methods of engagement in reflection. Reflective journals are among the most widespread channels of reflection (Ahmed, 2020; Alt & Raichel, 2020; Altalhab et al., 2021; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Draissi et al., 2021; Gadsby, 2022; Gudeta, 2022; Hunter, 2021; Kelly, 2022; Murphy & O'Mahony, 2023; Schussler, 2020; Seitova, 2019; Tkavashvili, 2021a; Tkavashvili, 2021b; Valtierra & Siegel, 2020; Wahyuni, 2023; Yee et al., 2022; Yoshihara et al., 2020). For instance, a study conducted by Gadsby (2022) aimed at assessing reflective journals produced by students enrolled in a Postgraduate Certificate in Education by means of a reflective writing typology designed by the author. The participants' reflective journals illustrated a development of their reflective skills as they progressed through four levels of reflective writing, from heavily descriptive reports, through self-questioning and meta-cognition, finally arriving at a wider awareness of their teaching practice. Congruent results were obtained in a study of science students' utilization of reflective journals with enhanced critical thinking skills and metacognition listed as benefits of reflective journaling (Draissi et al., 2021). Likewise, Tkavashvili (2021b) urged teachers to turn to reflective journals as an effective professional development tool based on a quantitative study of a group of teachers in Georgia. By comparing the results of an experimental and a control group, she identified that keeping a reflective journal had the most significant impact on the teachers' reflective thinking skills, but it also exerted a weaker, yet still positive, influence on their communicative and professional skills. Pertaining to the format of reflective journals, Alt and Raichel (2020) compared two types of reflective journals (semi-structured and unstructured) and found that providing question prompts stimulated deeper levels of reflection and prevented the participants from focusing on descriptive reporting. However, not only can teachers benefit from writing reflective journals, but they can also reap the benefits of reflective practice engagement by qualitatively coding their own written reflections (Valtierra & Siegel, 2020). In the study, school teachers from Pennsylvania were first coached on how to code data and were then asked to approach their own journals as researchers. As a result, the participants were able to discern clear links between their personal dispositions as teachers and their teaching practice.

Unlike the studies narrated above, Bray and Fotheringham (2022) did not predetermine the use of a method of reflection in their study and became interested in how teachers in the higher education setting select the channel of reflection if they have uninhibited freedom in their choice. Despite the ubiquitous nature of technology in the modern world, they established that the vast majority of the faculty showed a strong preference for hand-written reflection. However, they were not able to forge meaningful links between the participants' favoritism of traditional hand-written reflective journals and their demographic characteristics pointing to its nebulous and intrinsic nature. Contrary to the previously cited research study, a study conducted among novice teachers employed in Quebec colleges demonstrated that the participants strongly preferred technology-based reflective tools such as videos rather than traditional pen-and-paper journals (Lefebvre et al., 2022). This preference was explained by the fact that written reflection requires teachers to spatially and temporally distance themselves from the event, whilst videos allow for a more interactive and dynamic reflective experience.

2.2. Reflective Practice in Foreign Language Teaching

2.2.1. Reflective practice in the ELT setting

Reflective practice among ELT professionals is inhibited by a persistent conceptual confusion about what reflective practice among language teachers should involve, and what models should be adopted to facilitate reflective practice in this particular context (Brownhill, 2023; Derinalp, 2022; Gadsby, 2022; Greenberger & Or, 2022; Hayden et al., 2013). Rodgers (2002) identified several major problems resulting from multiple interpretations and implementations of reflective practice. Firstly, some teachers struggle to differentiate systematic reflective practice from a loose, unstructured pondering on past experience. Furthermore, confusion around the concept of reflective practice makes it virtually impossible to assess it and research its effectiveness in a reliable manner. A study of Iranian EFL highschool teachers illuminated several obstacles which suppress the beneficial effects of reflective practice (Aliakbari & Adibpour, 2018). Mirroring the results from other studies conducted in the educational setting with teachers of a wide variety of subjects (Ahmed, 2020; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Greenberger, 2020; Hora & Smolarek, 2018), ELT practitioners identified hectic schedules and time constraints as major inhibitors of reflective practice. However, the most pressing and widespread challenge was a belief that reflective practice is irrelevant

for teaching practice. What is more, not only did the participants of the study find reflective practice to be inapplicable in the context of language teaching, but they even deemed it harmful and damaging to certain aspects of their classroom practice such as classroom management. In contrast to the previously mentioned study, Seitova (2019) reported that student teachers in Kazakhstan had only positive attitudes to reflective practice engagement, praised it as an awareness-raising activity and vowed to continue utilizing reflective tools such as journals or diaries even after the point of graduation. Attempting to shed more light on how ELT practitioners define and conceptualize reflective practice, Derinalp (2022) interviewed novice teachers of English in Indonesia and reported that their understanding of reflective practice was largely limited to a quick problem-solution technique. What is more, they also described reflection as a solely retrospective activity, exhibiting a total disregard for its potential anticipatory and future-oriented aspect. In line with these findings, an investigation of Chilean ELT teachers' conceptions of reflection established that while their attitudes to the reflective process were predominantly positive, they viewed it as a method of improving professional action rather than a deeply transformative, holistic experience (Nocetti et al., 2020). Hayden et al. (2013) attributed the restricted interpretation of reflective practice prevalent among ELT teachers to the fact that "practicing teachers live in the classroom moment and are greatly affected by their teaching environments, which often demand quick responses and may inadvertently privilege the quick fix" (p.146). In contrast to this statement, a study conducted among ELT teachers in Oman demonstrated that despite the dynamic nature of teaching, the participants displayed low awareness of reflection in action and engaged in reflection on action and reflection for action much more frequently (Salih & Omar, 2022). The researchers sought an explanation for this finding in the stressful and demanding teaching conditions precipitated by an emergency switch to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Confusion about what reflective practice entails was also identified as a major shortcoming of reflective practice cultivated among Armenian ELT teachers (Cirocki & Farrelly, 2016). For example, major irregularities were reported in the way the teachers identified themselves as reflective practitioners, with some drastically undervaluing their reflective thinking skills and others labeling ordinary, everyday teaching practice as successful reflection engagement.

A study conducted among language teachers in the UK proved that a flawed understanding of reflective practice has a direct impact not only on the depth of reflection, but also on how teachers evaluate their own reflective thoughts (Hunter, 2021). For example, even though the teachers produced more critical reflections in their journals, they still identified descriptive accounts as the most valuable. Analogous misalignment between ELT teachers' attitudes to reflection, particularly the way they self-assessed their reflective thinking skills, and their written reflections was also detected among in-service ELT teachers in a study conducted by Gudeta, (2022). Even though the participants were very confident when evaluating their reflective thinking abilities, upon closer examination it was revealed that their reflective narratives were still at a pre-reflection level. Parallel discrepancies between in-service ELT teachers' self-perception of their reflective thinking skills and their actual abilities to engage in reflective practice were identified within a group of teachers working at a private language center in Vietnam (Le Thanh et al., 2023). The findings of the study prompted the researchers to compel future researchers exploring teachers' reflective practice to rely on multiple data collection tools instead of supporting their research with self-reported data. Similar results were also obtained from a larger international study conducted in the context of higher education which aimed to measure the levels of reflective narratives produced by the participants (Engelbertink et al., 2021). The results showed that only one participant was able to fully advance to the level of critical reflection. A study of novice Saudi ELT teachers' reflective diaries revealed analogous struggles in prompting teachers to reflect critically (Altalhab et al., 2020). The vast majority of diaries analyzed in the study were descriptive with a very limited application of a critical perspective towards teaching techniques and classroom activities. Equivalently, an analysis of Indonesian ELT teachers' journals demonstrated that although they were able to problematize their teaching practice, they were not able to hypothesize possible solutions and plan their future actions accordingly (Istihari, 2023). Finally, Kayapinar and Alkhaldi (2023) focused on the reflective practices of higher education faculty and they collected data from over 250 members of faculty from twenty different countries in order to establish how effectively they engage in reflective practice. Surprisingly, although their participants scored very high in the areas of teaching awareness and self-assessment, less than a half of the faculty received satisfactory scores in the construct of reflective thinking. Many faculty members

displayed ignorance in their inability to substantiate their teaching with meaningful reflection and a widespread ineptitude to reflect on and address shortcomings in their teaching practice.

Chye and her co-researchers (2021) attempted to explore how digital reflective portfolios can help Singaporean ELT teachers deepen the level of their reflective practice. The reflections of their participants displayed shallow levels of reflective thinking with a limited occurrence of critical reflection. However, instead of attributing this fact to the teachers' limited understanding and experience in reflective practice, they identified the underlying cause of the problem to be the participants' culture which favors collectivism and defines teachers as civil servants expected to comply with official guidelines. In fact, Moon (2005) noticed that the word denoting reflection is nonexistent in some cultures and "without a word to label the concept, there may be considerable difficulties in grasping the concept itself" (p.134). What is more, cultures in which sharing one's emotions is severely frowned upon can have a particularly detrimental effect on teachers' affective reflective practice (Brandenburg & Jones, 2017; Thompson, 2022).

2.2.2. The interplay of ELT teachers' reflective practice engagement and their language teaching experience

Another strand of research explored the quality and depth of teachers' reflections in relation to their teaching experience. Studies conducted among novice practitioners established that the quality of reflection is refined with an accumulation of teaching experience and expertise (Azizah et al., 2018; Bessette & Duquette, 2003; Lefebvre et al., 2022; Vause, 2009; Wetzel et al., 2015). For example, Lefebvre et al. (2022) found that reflections of novice teachers were often devoid of links to more theoretical aspects of teaching and contained more shallow, descriptive accounts of the participants' teaching experiences compared to more experienced educators. In line with these findings, a study of Malaysian EFL teachers' reflective journals yielded similar results with most novice teachers producing descriptive reflections (Yee et al., 2022). Specifically, guided by the six-stage framework of reflective practice, the researchers found that the participants were able to report on their experiences in a descriptive way, but failed at reaching the final level of the framework at which novel ideas on one's practice are formulated and translated into further actions. The difference in the depth of

reflection executed by novice and experienced ELT practitioners was also validated in a quantitative study of almost 200 Iranian teachers conducted by Dehghani and his associates (2023). Through the use of detailed questionnaires, they measured the depth of their participants' reflective thoughts and reported that experienced teachers scored considerably higher in the area of critical reflection. Another study conducted in Iran (Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023) also revealed a statistically significant relationship between the quality of reflective practice and teaching experience. In light of the findings, the researchers urged novice ELT practitioners to consult with their more experienced colleagues when engaging in reflective practice. Data collected in a mixed-method research study of Ukrainian ELT teachers' reflective practices also singled out teaching experience as a major differentiating factor in the quality of reflection (Kharlay et al., 2022). Experienced participants were found to reflect more frequently than their novice counterparts and they were also reported to engage more effectively in critical reflections on the social and political dimensions of their teaching practice. According to Vause (2009) the dissociation of reflective practice among novice and experienced teachers can be attributed to the fact that the latter cohort possesses higher levels of crafted knowledge which can only be developed with time. Nevertheless, in a study of Malaysian ELT teachers' awareness of reflective practice and its inhibitors, Jemadi et al. (2023) proved that teaching experience alone is not a sufficient predictor of the quality of reflective practice. Results from the survey distributed among in-service teachers revealed that the participants were not aware of the concept of reflective teaching and, in rare instances when they did engage in reflection, they focused their attention on students' performance instead of critically examining their own teaching practice. What is more, other similar studies (Alipour & Akbarpour, 2022; Dexter & Wall, 2021; Tay et al., 2023) produced mixed results with no clear correlation between teaching experience and the depth and quality of reflective practice engagement. For instance, Alipour and Akbarpour (2022) invited 100 Iranian ELT teachers with teaching experience ranging from 5 to 20 years to complete a questionnaire assessing their reflexivity but found no correlation between how long they have been professionally active and how high they scored on the survey. Similarly, a different correlation study conducted among Iranian ELT practitioners strongly suggested pedagogical knowledge, not teaching experience, is a strong predictor of language teachers' reflective thinking skills (Dastgoshadeh & Jalilzadeh, 2022). In conclusion, the high inconsistency in

reported findings further validates a need for more research exploring the reflective practice engagement of experienced ELT practitioners (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Aslan et al., 2022; Brandenburg & Jones, 2017; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Dexter & Wall, 2021; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Farrell, 2018; Gadsby, 2022; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023).

2.3. Reflective Practice in the ELT Context in Türkiye

2.3.1. Turkish ELT teachers' engagement in reflective journaling

Correspondingly to extant research studies conducted in other international contexts, the exploration of Turkish ELT professionals' reflective practice experiences can also be divided into several distinct strands of research. Pertaining to the exploration of various methods of reflective practice, Tuncer and Özkan (2021) analyzed the depth of reflective journals collected from preservice teachers over a ten-week practicum period. Mirroring the findings of extant research on the topic (Azizah et al., 2018; Bessette & Duquette, 2003; Lefebvre et al., 2022; Vause, 2009; Wetzel et al., 2015), they recorded low levels of reflexivity. However, it was also reported that skillfully utilized question prompts can significantly improve the depth of student teachers' reflective writing if an adequate amount of time is given to the participants to gradually hone their reflective thinking abilities under their mentors' supervision. A qualitative exploration of preservice teachers' reflective diaries conducted by Sahin and her colleagues (2019) corroborated the findings of the previous study. Specifically, although the journals were found to be a valuable tool which can be used to gain insight into teaching practice and evaluate one's actions in the classroom, the participants' reflective writing lacked depth and the critical dimension of reflection was very limited, particularly in the failure of the majority of preservice teachers to connect teaching theories and methodologies to their actual practice. A comprehensive review of extant studies on reflective practice conducted in Türkiye (Kış & Yükselir, 2021) corroborated these findings and reported that the majority of participants in the reviewed studies failed to reach critical levels of reflection. Yüksel and Başaran (2020) turned to reflective peer feedback as a method of guiding ELT practitioners towards deeper and critical reflection. The study produced mixed results as the participants, guided by a rubric designed by the researchers, were able to provide sufficiently reflective feedback on their colleagues' performance, but

their evaluations were highly subjective and overly optimistic resulting in a decrease of reliability.

2.3.2. The use of technology-enhanced reflection among ELT practitioners in Türkiye

Aslan et al. (2022) attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative video-enhanced reflection among a group of K12 ELT teachers in Ankara. Echoing the findings of similar studies conducted in Australia (Baxter et al., 2023), the Philippines (de Leon Pineda et al., 2022), the United Kingdom (Palacios et al., 2022), Colombia (Corrales & Erwin, 2020), Quebec (Lefebvre et al., 2022) and America (Reichenberg, 2022), Turkish teachers reported positive outcomes from their collaborative reflective practice engagement such as enhanced reflexivity, increased pedagogical knowledge and bolstered collaborative skills. Balıkcı and Seferoğlu (2023) explored the video-enhanced reflective practice engagement of teacher candidates during their practicum and, similarly to the previous study, reported on positive attitudes of the participants to video recordings of their lessons as a tool allowing them to notice elements in their teaching practice that would otherwise remain obscure. Önal (2019) also examined the role of video recordings of ELT preservice teachers' lessons and combined it with the microteaching technique. In the study, the participants planned and taught lessons in front of their supervisors, watched the recordings of their lessons multiple times and engaged in reflective writing in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their performance. Their reflections served as a crucial basis for the re-planning and re-teaching phases of the microteaching circle. Despite limited teaching experience and little to no previous engagement in reflective practice, the researcher reported that his participants were able to produce ample amounts of critical reflection and engaged in all modes of reflection including reflection-on-action, reflection-for-action, and reflection-in-action. This finding stands in stark contrast to the majority of studies which explored reflective practice of preservice ELT teachers in which the participants exhibited very limited abilities to reflect critically (Azizah et al., 2018; Bessette & Duquette, 2003; Lefebvre et al., 2022; Vause, 2009; Wetzel et al., 2015). Er and his colleagues (2022) also concentrated on the effectiveness of video-enhanced reflective practice, but they turned their focus to in-service ELT practitioners. The teachers were asked to reflect on one recorded lesson per week over the period of twelve weeks. Interviews conducted

before and after the implementation of video-based self-reflection proved that watching and reflecting on the recorded lessons prompted the participants to refine their teaching practice and implement major changes in their teaching methodology such as an addition of more student-centered activities. What is more, the participants voiced regret that they were not able to utilize this reflective tool during their student teacher years, urging teacher educators to take advantage of video recordings when guiding preservice teachers through reflective practice.

2.3.3. Barriers to Turkish ELT practitioners' reflective practice

Despite the promising findings from extant research on reflective practice conducted in Türkiye, several research studies shed light on a number of challenges which inhibit the beneficial power of reflective practice among ELT practitioners. In line with corresponding international studies (Ahmed, 2020; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Greenberger, 2020; Hora & Smolarek, 2018), Fakazlı and Kuru Gönen (2017) singled out insufficient time as a major inhibitor of reflective practice among EFL university instructors. The participants' thoughts and opinions on their engagement in reflective practice were collected over the course of fifteen weeks through multiple data collection tools including interviews, open-ended questionnaires and reflective diaries. The use of multiple data collection instruments allowed the researchers to gain an insight into how each reflective tool was perceived and experienced by the participants. For example, even though reflective diaries were praised as an effective tool to raise teachers' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, they were also criticized due to the amount of time required to engage in systematic diary keeping. Identical commentary was also reported on the use of video recordings as an instrument for reflection. Following a similar study design, Tuncer and Özkan (2021) evaluated the effectiveness of four reflective tools (diaries, videos, portfolios and blogs) in the reflective practice of ELT practitioners. Even though all instruments were found to be highly effective in sustaining the teachers' professional development efforts, increasing their self-awareness and forging links between theory and practice, lack of time and a decreased commitment to the process resulting from it was found to be a challenge preventing the efficient use of reflective diaries, portfolios, and blogs. Apart from that, language anxiety stemming from the fact that the participants of the study were not native users of English was also listed among common challenges, particularly in the use of

reflective diaries. Köksal and Genç (2019) focused their research on novice teachers who graduated from English Language and Literature departments in order to explore how their educational background affects how they reflect on their teaching practice. The participants also complained about insufficient time to fully engage themselves in reflective practice, but they simultaneously praised the process as a vehicle for professional development and raising awareness of their teaching practice.

2.3.4. The role of teaching experience in the reflective practice engagement of Turkish ELT teachers

One of the major challenges in fostering reflective practice identified in international studies was an insufficient understanding of the concept or its faulty conceptualization (Brownhill, 2023; Derinalp, 2022; Gadsby, 2022; Greenberger & Or, 2022; Hayden et al., 2013). Analogous findings were reported by Ilin (2020) in her study of ELT student teachers' written reflections. Disheartened by the descriptive quality of the participants' reflective journals, she conducted a series of interviews to investigate the underlying reasons behind their unsatisfactory performance. She was able to identify a persistent misconception about the nature of reflection with student teachers interpreting reflective practice as nothing more than a detailed description of what happened in their classrooms. Limited teaching experience was singled out as another potential reason for the participants' superficial reflective practice. By analogy, in their exploration of reflective writing and collaborative reflective discussions of the participants of an Instructional Planning and Evaluation course, Ünver and Yurdakul (2020) hinted at a possibility that insufficient professional experience can be an underlying reason for a lower quality of reflective practice exhibited by their participants. The findings of their study suggested that experience is a prerequisite for reflective practice since it allows to make necessary connections between theory and practice, consequently corroborating the results of similar studies conducted in other national contexts (Azizah et al., 2018; Bessette & Duquette, 2003; Lefebvre et al., 2022; Vause, 2009; Wetzel et al., 2015). This observation was further supported by a study of veteran secondary school ELT practitioners whose teaching experience ranged from 11 to 20 years (Orakçı, 2021). Through a detailed analysis of the teachers' reflective diaries and a series of semi-structured interviews, the researcher observed that the participants produced reflective accounts on all levels, including critical reflection. Moreover, they engaged in all modes

of reflective practice, including dynamic reflection in the classroom as well as retrospective reflection. Consequently, the findings provide a strong evidence base for the belief in the instrumental value of teaching experience in reflective practice.

2.4. Language Teacher Identity

A substantial amount of extant research on teacher identity has been focused on exploring how specific contexts influence the process of identity formation and development. For example, a joint study conducted by researchers based in Türkiye and the United States (Yazan et al., 2023) targeted the impact of teaching and neo-nationalistic ideologies in underserved communities on a large group of Turkish and American ELT instructors' identity. The results showed that, in response to the pressures precipitated by their teaching context, the teachers assumed the roles of advocates for minority students who were marginalized due to their national and social backgrounds. What is more, English was found to be an equalizing force, helping teachers to diminish the animosities between local students and their immigrant counterparts. The impact of educational reforms on teacher identity was explored through the perspective of a Chinese ELT practitioner caught between her student-centered beliefs and a result-oriented, commercialization taking place across higher education institutions in China (Wang et al., 2024). In consequence of these tensions, the teacher assumed a position of "an optimistic warrior", remaining hopeful and resilient as she narrated her battle for maintaining students' well-being against the backdrop of the educational reforms in her country (p.16). Identity tensions were also identified in a study of three ELT teachers who relocated to the US (Yazan et al., 2022). For example, a Turkish participant of the study grappled with accommodating his identity of an experienced ELT practitioner in an unfamiliar context of teaching emergent bilinguals, and was able to gradually develop a new identity of a transnational language teacher-educator, simultaneously boosting his self-reflexivity.

Abstracting from a broader, national context, Weng and his colleagues (2023) revealed how personal qualities of an ELT teacher working in China and the US affected his teacher identity development. The participant of their study who identified as cisgender, gay and Catholic, was found to experience tensions between his multiple personal and professional identities. For example, forging connections between identity and emotions supported by the adopted theoretical framework of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1999) and

the use of photo-elicited interviews, the study revealed that the teacher's religious background had a facilitative effect on his identity as a caring, devoted professional, but stood in opposition to other personal aspects of his identity. Teacher's personal background and its influence on teacher identity was also at the center of a study narrating the experiences of a non-native teacher of Chinese origin who found herself teaching in the new context of New Zealand (Wang & Mason, 2023). Adopting the novel conceptualization of teacher identity through the Identity Triangle Model, encompassing and combining the psychological (emotions, beliefs, values), behavioral (teacher roles), and relational (relation between internal and external positioning) domains of teacher identity, the study focused on nativeness as a factor in the identity development of the participant. The findings suggested that her new employment opportunity helped her to solidify her teacher identity and break the mold of an imposter she locked herself in due to self-doubt and low self-confidence.

2.5. The Identity of ELT Teachers in the Turkish Context

Research on teacher identity conducted to this date in Türkiye encompasses a variety of teaching contexts and data collection methods in an attempt to provide a detailed picture of Turkish ELT professionals' beliefs and self-perceptions. For example, Kimsesiz (2023) asked ELT teachers working across different educational levels to categorize their teacher identity by means of metaphors and emojis. The findings painted a positive and reassuring portrait of English language teaching in Türkiye with the participants identifying themselves as problem-solvers, nurturers and inspirers, and selecting smiley faces as symbols of their teacher identities. In contrast to the positive findings of this study, an autoethnographic exploration of a Turkish ELT teacher's identity shed light on the issues of illegitimacy and inadequacy fueled by the persistent belief in the superiority of Inner-Circle teachers (Kemaloglu-Er & Lowe, 2023). Inadequacy was also one of the main themes discovered in a narrative inquiry study conducted with a Georgian ELT teacher who relocated to Türkiye (Kucukali, 2017). The experiences of the participant revealed major identity transformations in the teacher's intercultural, social and personal sub-identities resulting from the transnational experience. For example, the teacher's severely limited knowledge of Turkish forced her to communicate solely in English and empowered her as a proficient English language user. Moreover, diverse student profiles she encountered in Türkiye pushed her to focus

on her professional development and deepened her reflexivity. Finally, the development of her teacher identity progressed from her initial position of an individual teacher to a team worker who enjoyed and cherished collaboration with her new colleagues.

Sağlam and Alan (2018) also focused on the impact of a new teaching context on the formation and development of teacher identity. However, instead of targeting ELT practitioners with a transnational experience, they explored the transition from a preservice to an in-service context. They tracked the identity formation of the participants undergoing an intensive induction programme consisting of regular classroom observations, extra-curricular activities and workshops. The findings emphasized the crucial role of classroom observations which, despite being time-consuming and taxing for the participants of the study, significantly expedited the process of novice ELT teachers' identity formation. Ertürk (2020) combined the investigation of the budding professional identity of a Turkish teacher entering the teaching profession with an evaluation of reflection-focused classroom observations as a facilitator of teacher identity development. The participant of the study was asked to observe her colleagues' classes and share her reflective thoughts over a period of the first three years of her teaching career. The study revealed how teaching experience and a prolonged exposure to and interaction with students provoked a shift in the teacher's core values and beliefs about the teaching profession. For instance, whilst she initially emphasized the role of content knowledge as the primary prerequisite for successful teaching, she later began to prioritize skill and ability as an absolute necessity in the ELT context.

In contrast to previously mentioned studies which explored the changes and fluctuations in the participants' teacher identities, the study of four in-service teachers working at a state school in Türkiye was structured around the exploration of teacher identity maintenance and its stabilization (Taşdemir & Seferoğlu, 2023). Adopting the Figured Worlds conceptualization of identity which are defined as “socially and culturally organized realms of interpretation in which a particular set of characters and actors are recognized”, the researchers identified commitment to teaching and fascination with English to perform a role of identity stabilizers which anchored the teachers' professional identities against the ever-changing and dynamic nature of the teaching profession (p.4). What is more, teacher agency was found to be a crucial facilitative

factor for teacher identity stabilization as it provided the participants with opportunities to adapt the teaching materials to their teacher beliefs and philosophies.

2.6. The Role of Reflective Practice in the Development of Language Teacher Identity

Another strand of research targeted the connection between reflective practice and teacher identity. For example, Dikilitaş and Mumford (2023) tracked the experiences of a British ELT teacher pursuing a PhD degree at a Turkish university in order to explore how his teacher identity was impacted by a prolonged engagement in reflective practice. A combination of interviews and critical incident reports painted a picture of a teacher whose reflections allowed him to achieve higher self-realization and construct a new professional identity of a writer. He was also able to gain enough self-confidence to break free from a language error-focused practice imposed on him by his school, and prioritize creative writing skills over grammatical accuracy of his students. Another study conducted in the Turkish context focused on preservice teachers' identity development achieved by means of reflective journals (Köksal & Genç, 2019). The findings showed that reflective writing combined with regular meetings with teacher educators facilitated the process of professional identity development and allowed the participants to transition their perception of themselves from students to teachers. Turgut Dost (2021) examined the impact of reflection-oriented courses on a group of preservice ELT teachers at a Turkish university. The findings from this longitudinal study suggested that reflective practice influenced the way the participants perceived themselves as teachers, even though the flow of the courses was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and a mandatory switch to online education. For example, their beliefs about teaching were transformed through reflections on the courses they took as they gradually broke free from the dominance of grammar heavy and exam-oriented teaching and built their reformed teacher identities on the belief in the supremacy of communication-centered activities.

Similarly, ELT teachers participating in video reflections also reported a development and strengthening of their individualized identities (through reflective narratives) and a collective, social identity (through collaborative reflection) (Maclean & White, 2007). Collaborative reflection was also found to be a catalyst for teacher identity development among a group of three Indonesian ELT teachers who were asked to reflect on their

practice during a professional development course (Ardi et al., 2023). The teachers were guided to first reflect individually and then engage in a reflective conversation on various aspects of teaching including teacher personality, teaching as a mission, and teacher generosity. The findings suggested that sharing reflections in a collaborative setting facilitated the process of teacher identity development by fostering interconnectedness and positivity among the participants.

Yang and Bautista's (2008) study implemented reflective letters and art to explore how reflective practice can mold language teacher identity of a Korean ELT teacher. They found that reflective practice allowed the teacher to break away from the persistent expectations of complete compliance with educational and societal rules, and develop her own identity. Nelson (2008) explored the role of reflection in the development of teacher identity of a group of teachers at a work placement in Kenya. She provided vivid examples of the participants' experiences adopting a narrative inquiry design and narrated several major identity shifts that the teacher experienced while accommodating to their new and strikingly different teaching contexts. Kızıldağ (2022) conducted an autoethnographical research to explore how reflective practice facilitated her twenty-year journey from an ELT teacher, to a reflective teacher educator. She described a gradual development of her reflective thinking skills and nominated reflective practice as an essential tool allowing her to transform and develop her professional identity. At the same time, she underscored the continuous nature of reflection and emphasized that reflective practice should be conducted with proper intent and at regular intervals of time.

2.7. Language Teacher Emotions

The extant research on EFL teachers' emotions has adopted various methods to explore the affective dimension of English language teaching. For example, Goetze (2023) focused his exploration on anxiety-provoking classroom situations by adopting a vignette-based study design. An online survey consisting of eight anxiety-provoking scenarios was distributed among over 250 teachers of multiple nationalities. The participants were asked to rate the vignettes on a scale in order to identify the situations which they found to be most damaging to their emotional well-being. The results of the study corroborated the complex and unanticipated nature of teacher emotions with anxiety rarely being the dominant, singular emotion aroused by the presented scenarios.

In fact, the teachers' responses to the vignettes consisted of an average of six emotions, ranging from anxiety to determination and optimism.

A similar study design was utilized by Nazari and Karimpour (2023), although the researchers opted for visual prompts which were designed to provoke a variety of positive and negative emotions instead of limiting their research focus to anxiety-provoking scenarios. The study culminated in a presentation of a framework portraying the nexus of emotions and identity construction through identity-related emotional understanding. In other words, when talking about the prompts, the ELT teachers who participated in the study referred to their own experiences and, as a result, gained more awareness of their teacher emotions and the beliefs they held about their profession.

Vitanova (2024) adopted a narrative inquiry lens in order to capture the storied dimension of two female language teachers' daily emotional experiences spanning over five years of teaching in a private language school. Their narratives portrayed a complex web of connections between the teachers' race, gender, social class and their emotions. For instance, one of the participants of Asian-American descent, narrated how social and professional marginalization she experienced led her to endure severe emotional trauma. The interplay of emotions and identity was intersected with the notion of nativeness in a study of two Chinese ELT teachers' experiences (Li & Lv, 2022). Affected by the deeply-rooted native-speakerism ideology (Holliday et al., 2015) which is still prevalent in the Asian context, the participants of the study wrestled with feelings of insecurity and inferiority resulting in lowered self-efficacy and an inhibited professional identity development. Implementing a similar study design, Nazari and Molana (2023) utilized narrative frames to investigate how assessment policies affected the emotions experienced by Iranian EFL teachers. Structuring their exploration around the concept of emotional labor, understood as self-regulation and self-management of emotions with an aim to satisfy the demands of the teaching profession, they revealed conflicts between the emotions the participants were expected to experience, and their actual affective responses to the policies. However, despite negative emotions precipitated by top-down assessment policies, the teachers exhibited resilience and high levels of motivation in their quest to align the institutional expectations with their own teaching philosophies. Encouraged by the potential of narratives to raise teachers' awareness of their emotions and fuel their identity development process, Yazan (2023)

constructed a professional development activity, a critical autoethnographic narrative, which can aid teachers in unlocking their deeply-held beliefs and making sense of their emotional responses. The tool was tested on a group of student teachers at a university in the United States and generated promising results. Specifically, the activity guided the teachers in the exploration of their identities on meso and macro levels and allowed them to look back at emotionally-charged events from their practice, explore them, and reinterpret them in light of their developing teacher identity.

Adopting an ecological approach to emotions, Chen (2020) conducted a quantitative exploration of Chinese teachers' emotions at five different levels including the microsystem (classroom level), mesosystem (school level), exosystem (community level), macrosystem (societal level) and the chronosystem. The findings showed that teachers displayed a propensity to experience more emotions in closer levels with most significant differences between the microlevel (37 emotions identified) and the chronosystem (6 emotions identified). What is more, all emotions reported in the macrosystem were negative, providing strong evidence on the effect of unrealistic educational reforms and rigid promotional policies on teacher emotions. Anger, demoralization and frustration were also revealed to be direct products of top-down educational policies among in-service female ELT teachers teaching in the higher education context in Saudi Arabia (Alzaanin, 2021). In contrast, another study which adopted an ecological lens to the exploration of EFL teachers' emotions revealed that joy was the most common emotion experienced by a large group of Chinese university teachers (Han et al., 2023). Other emotions included enjoyment derived from collegial interactions, sadness and helplessness resulting from poor work-life balance and anger towards an unfair performance evaluation system.

2.8. The Interplay of Teacher Emotions and Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is said to have a powerful impact on raising teachers' awareness of their emotions, consequently increasing their well-being and reducing the stress connected with teaching (Farrell, 2022; Frenzel et al., 2016). A study conducted among novice EFL teachers in Iran was designed to substantiate the positive impact of reflection on teachers' emotions (Arefian, 2023). The accounts of the participants gathered through regular interviews proved that affective reflective practice aided the participants in building a deeper understanding of their emotional turbulences,

addressing and controlling negative emotions and becoming more receptive to external feedback. Similarly, a study of Malaysian EFL teachers' reflective journals revealed that emotions can be a powerful catalyst for the reflective process as they encouraged the participants to reflect at a more profound and deeper level (Yee et al., 2022). However, beneficial results of reflection on teacher emotions can also be unlocked by exploring students' reflective thoughts on teachers' professional practice. For example, Song (2021) combined her own reflections on an online ELT course she conducted with her students' reflections on her performance and their overall experience of taking the course. Grappling with frustration and resentment caused by the students' low engagement and participation, the teacher succeeded at utilizing regular reflections to make sense of her emotional responses to these adverse teaching conditions. However, she gained even more insights into her practice by analyzing her students' reflective journals which revealed that, in contrast to her own negative emotions, they found the online environment to be a safe and comfortable space.

2.9. The Interplay between Teacher Emotions and Language Teacher Identity

2.9.1. Emotional resilience and control as mediating factors in ELT teachers' identity development

Despite abundant research into teacher identity and teacher emotions as separate strands of inquiry, there is a dearth of studies which examine these concepts in combination with each other (Weng & Troyan, 2023). However, studies which explored the interplay between teacher emotions and teacher identity identified various ways in which they interact. For example, a study of Chinese ELT teachers working in the higher education context revealed that emotional resilience is a mediating factor in teacher identity development, particularly at times of identity conflicts and identity shifts (Yang et al., 2022). Specifically, the teachers who exhibited low emotional resilience caved under the combined pressures of teaching and conducting research, which resulted in the development of a “disheartened performer” identity riddled with crippling, negative emotions. On the other hand, the teachers who were able to regulate and control their emotions were successful at curbing their anxiety and integrated their sub-identities of teachers and researchers. Emotion regulation was also at the center of a study of two Ukrainian ELT practitioners who fled their war-torn homeland and found shelter in Poland (Kałdonek-Crnjaković & Czopek, 2023). Adopting positioning theory as the

theoretical backbone of the study, the researchers identified multiple positions that the teachers assumed including a caregiver and a supporter, providing emotional support to Ukrainian EFL learners through online classes and spreading positive attitudes in their new professional communities. The participants displayed high levels of emotional labor as they strove to establish interpersonal peace and shield their students from the horrors of the armed conflict. The instrumental role of emotional resilience as a mediating factor in the development of teacher identity and work engagement was also evidenced in a review of extant studies conducted in the Chinese context (Xing, 2022). For example, positive emotions experienced during teaching practice were reported to decrease the risk of teacher burnout and simultaneously create suitable conditions for the development and strengthening of teacher identity. Resilience to emotional turbulence of teaching combined with high emotion control was also identified as a key factor in developing Saudi ELT teachers' teacher identities (AlHarbi & Ahmad, 2020). The context of Saudi Arabia was found to be particularly relevant for the exploration of teacher emotions due to the fact that the vast majority of Saudi EFL learners do not have any intrinsic motivation to learn English and have a reputation for being undedicated and disinterested in the process of learning a foreign language (Alrabai, 2016). Consequently, emotion control was reported to be a necessary skill needed to lessen these adversary contextual characteristics and protect the participants' teacher identity and agency.

2.9.2. Teacher emotions as triggers for the development or deterioration of language teacher identity

The narratives of ELT teachers who terminated their employment in state schools and moved to the private sector, can serve as an evidence for the triggering power of emotions in the process of teacher identity deterioration (Hempkin, 2023). For example, the case of one of the participants of the study revealed that negative emotions of self-doubt precipitated by difficulties in finding employment provoked a process of dismantling of the teacher's professional identity, lowered his teacher agency and left him questioning his core beliefs. Likewise, negative emotions such as anger and frustration were also identified as disruptive forces in the teacher identity development of an EFL female teacher employed at an elementary school in Korea (Kang, 2022). Even though the teacher exhibited high levels of emotional intelligence which allowed

her to become aware of the growing anger she experienced when struggling with classroom management issues and her students' performance, the emotional labor she was expected to perform in order to control her resentment and annoyance proved to be too great of a burden. In order to combat the adverse effect of negative teacher emotions on the process of teacher identity development, Méndez López (2022) explored how reflection on emotions can increase emotion regulation and foster the formation and sustenance of teachers' professional identity. The story of a Mexican ELT practitioner narrated in the study is brimming with confusion, fear, and embarrassment caused by the teacher's self-perceived incomplete and insufficient educational background. However, reflecting on the emotions she experienced during her teaching practice, her teaching education and even her family life, allowed the teacher to unlock her fears and disarm them by identifying the underlying assumptions that triggered them. As a result, the study identified reflection on emotionally-charged events to be an important factor influencing the process of teacher identity development.

Pertaining to the positive effects of teacher emotions on ELT teachers' professional identity development, a study conducted among Chinese ELT practitioners focused on the role of teacher emotions in the construction of novice teachers' budding teacher identities (Sun & Zhang, 2023). Data collected from participant interviews and reflective journals suggested a dire need for better-suited professional development and professional induction efforts which could address the negative effects of emotions such as worry and disappointment with the inability to translate teaching theories into practice, and even emotional exhaustion and depression. However, in the case of the participants of the study, students' high performance and encouragement mitigated the disruptive effects of emotional and professional burnout, and allowed the teachers to strengthen their teacher identities and perceive themselves as resilient and confident professionals.

Apart from interviews and journals, which were predominant data collection methods in previously mentioned studies on teacher emotions and teacher identity, metaphors were also used as a novel technique of exploring the connection between what teachers feel and who they are as professionals. For example, Iranian ELT teachers were asked to represent various emotions by means of metaphors (Derakhshan et al., 2023). The findings suggested a strong interconnection between teacher emotions and the

sociocultural aspect of the participants' teaching practice which is deeply embedded in the broader, societal context of power struggles and hierarchies in Iran. In addition, particularly interesting results were found in relation to anger which was simultaneously perceived as a positive (establishing teacher's voice) and negative emotion (teacher's rage). The social dimension of emotions was also emphasized in a duoethnographic study of two ELT teachers, exploring their identities as former school teachers, language teachers, parents and language teacher educators (Rokita-Jaśkow & Werbińska, 2023). The researchers proposed that teacher identity construction is a life-long journey and "a story of becoming", unveiling through interactions with others and molded by the emotions experienced along the way (p.20). For example, frustration with the importance attached to high-stakes assessment helped the participants to become more compassionate teachers and teacher educators who refrain from perfectionism in their professional practice.

2.9.3. The interplay between teacher emotions and teacher identity in the Turkish context

Pertaining to the context of English language teaching in Türkiye, Kocabaş-Gedik and Ortaçtepe Hart (2021) tracked the identity development of two native speakers of English during their first year as teachers at a private university in Ankara. The researchers identified emotional labor as a crucial factor in the teachers' identity development. For instance, confidence they had in their linguistic abilities minimized the emotional suffering they experienced as a result of their new positions and allowed them to become legitimate participants in their new community of practice. Kırmızı and Sarıçoban (2020) studied the connection between teacher beliefs and teacher emotions among a group of EFL teachers and found a clear connection between certain teaching styles and specific emotions. For instance, the participants who grappled with sadness and fear in their teaching practice showed a strong tendency for adopting the knowledge transmission approach to English language teaching. The results of the study echoed the findings of an earlier research project conducted among ELT teachers in Australia in which teachers who experienced positive emotions were found to favor student-centered approaches to ELT, whereas those who endured negative emotions were much more likely to prefer the teacher-centered style in an attempt to relieve the fear and frustration they felt by exerting dominance over students (Trigwell, 2012).

Focusing on the specific context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Gök Kaça (2022) conducted an autoethnographic self-study in order to reflect on how online teaching impacted her teacher emotions and transformed her teacher identity. Her personal narratives including private text messages, voice recordings, email correspondence and journal entries, revealed that she passed through several distinct stages in her online teaching practice, each associated with different emotions and identity shifts. For example, the excitement she felt at the onset of her journey fueled her professional development and laid groundwork for building a new identity as an effective online instructor, but it was quickly followed by frustration with an increased teacher talking time, which stood in stark contrast to her teaching philosophy, and culminated in a stage of worry about the seemingly dwindling quality of teaching she was able to provide to her students.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The exploration of the role of reflective practice in three experienced in-service teachers' emotions and their identity development was grounded in a dialogical conceptualization of identity and emotions. The dialogical framework derives from the scholarly work of a Russian philosopher and linguist Mikhail Bakhtin. The dialogical perspective emphasizes three distinct features of identity; its social nature, its multiplicity and its dynamicity (Henry, 2019; Scartezini & Monereo, 2018). Teacher selves are "mental spaces in which, through language and inner speech, a teacher develops meaningful personal understandings of the professional world and his/her own way of being a teacher in a particular professional scenario" (Monereo & Badia, 2020, p. 6). Teachers develop their identities through interactions in their social context. A teacher's self is established and continues to be shaped through relationships and communication they have with their students, peers, and other actors in the educational scene. Consequently, who teachers are is a blend of inner elements positioned within them as well as external factors present in their environment. Scartezini and Monereo (2018) described teacher identity as "interdependent and shaped by teacher's perceptions of himself, and also how he is perceived by others" (p.43). In other words, identity development is a dualistic process which can be concurrently described as individual and social (Henry, 2019). Identity development is understood as an adjustment of teachers' I-positions in response to their educational context. I-positions are defined as "manifestations of the teacher's identity in the personal or public space at a specific time and place" (Badia et al., 2020, p. 870). The adjustment of the I-positions necessitates continuous negotiations between multiple teacher selves, which are often contradictory, in order to maintain a fairly consistent sense of identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Henry, 2019). Negotiations of I-positions are not straightforward processes and they bear more resemblance to a struggle, than a smooth progression (Britzman, 2006). In the end, the negotiations can result in a creation of a novel I-position, an activation of previously subdued I-positions, or a coalescence of different I-positions into a new sub-identity (Stenberg & Maaranen, 2021).

The hallmark of the dialogical theory of identity is that each I-position within an individual has a voice (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Individuals make

meaning of their experiences through a conversation between their own voices and the voices of others within them (Badia et al., 2020; Stenberg & Maaranen, 2021). The voices of other actors in an individual's environment "become a structural part of their thinking" (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 314). These voices are simultaneously distinct and interrelated "within a mesh of dialogical relations" (Henry, 2019, p. 265). When an identity shift happens, a different I-position gains a dominant voice while other voices are subdued (Henry, 2019).

The role of reflective practice in the dialogical perspective is closely related to identity development. Applying a metaphor of a journey, Bakhtin (1986) painted a vivid picture of identity development as walking through a landscape. According to Bakhtin, "if a hero traveling through space and time remains untouched and unchanged, that is self-centered, the hero remains under-developed" (p.53). Reflection allows individuals to "learn to read the landscape" and "look with a slower eye" which increases their awareness of the landscape around them and allows them to develop a more complete sense of self (Bakhtin, 1986, p.53). If teachers' selves are conceptualized as maps, reflective practice allows practitioners to walk from one point on the map to another with more attentiveness and focus.

In the dialogical framework, an emotion is defined as "an inextricable part of awareness, knowledge and the potential of and for action" (White, 2018, p. 21). Thus, the investigation of emotions through a dialogical lens enabled the researcher to draw parallels between the teachers' increasing state of self-awareness expedited by a prolonged engagement in reflective practice and the affective domain of reflection. Scholars ascribed to the dialogical perspective view emotions as an integral part of identity formation and development and a crucial factor in how individuals position themselves and others (Vitanova, 2010; White, 2018). Consequently, the adoption of a dialogical perspective on teacher emotions in the current study further emphasized the interconnectedness of the participants' identity and their emotions, especially the relationship between how they feel and what beliefs they hold about their own teaching practice and themselves as educators (Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018).

In conclusion, the dialogical framework was found to be an optimal fit for the current doctoral dissertation due to a number of reasons. First of all, adopting a dialogical lens allows researchers to "study both the intrapsychological dimension and the

interpsychological dimension of teacher inquiry” (Badia et al., 2020, p. 870). The present study is concerned with both intrapsychological aspects of teaching such as teacher emotions and teacher identity, as well as external manifestations of these concepts glimpsed through teacher actions during lesson observations. Secondly, Moate (2023) highlighted that the dialogical perspective is particularly valuable for researchers investigating teachers’ experiences due to the fact that it underscores the interactional nature of identity development. According to her, “education is irreducible to technique or theory; education always involves relationships with particular others in unrepeatable moments with profound implications” (p.6).

3.2. Research Design

The present doctoral dissertation follows a multiple case study research design. A case study is “bounded by time and place, and its borders can clearly be separated from the larger context of which it is a part” (Creswell, 2016, p. 6). The multiple case study encompassed in the present doctoral dissertation is focused on the exploration of three in-service teachers’ experiences with reflective practice in the course of eight weeks and in the context of a school of foreign languages at a state university in Türkiye. Case studies provide a detailed description of the participant or participants’ experiences in order to shed light on a problem or an issue (Creswell, 2016; Stake, 1995). In the case of the current study, the issue being illuminated is the role and interplay of reflective practice and teacher emotions in the development of teacher identity. The use of case study methodology was dictated by the fact that case studies facilitate a deeper and more insightful rendering of the participants’ experiences, particularly in the exploration of events marked by high complexity such as identity and emotions (Farrell & Ives, 2015; Stake, 1995). A case study is also an optimal design for studies incorporating multiple data collection tools within real-life contexts, as is the case of the current doctoral dissertation (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2009). The experiences of three in-service ELT practitioners participating in the current study were exhaustively described and contrasted with each other in a cross-case comparison in order to gain an understanding of the interaction between reflection, identity and emotions and present the commonalities and variations in the participants’ experiences.

Qualitative research methods were selected by the researcher owing to the ambiguous and abstract nature of the concepts of teacher identity and emotions. “Qualitative

research is often not about providing a singular, direct Q&A-style answer to a research question, so much as offering an insight and understanding around the topic of interest” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.33). Both identity development and teacher emotions are complex processes which unfold over time and lend themselves to a qualitative exploration of numerous nuances, instabilities and dynamic shifts (de Dios Martínez Agudo & Azzaro, 2018; Xu, 2013; Xu, 2018). What is more, since the purpose of this study was not to achieve generalizability by objectively measuring the level or the effectiveness of the participants’ engagement in reflective practice, but rather to provide a thick description of their experiences, qualitative methodology was favored due to the importance it attaches to idiosyncratic and subjective human experiences (Hatch, 2002).

3.3. Research Participants

The participants of the project were selected through a process of purposive, criterion sampling. This sampling method was selected by the researcher in order to bridge the gap in extant research on reflective practice in the educational sector. First of all, a number of scholars have shed light on the paucity of research into in-service ELT practitioners’ reflective practice experiences, particularly experienced educators (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Aslan et al., 2022; Brandenburg & Jones, 2017; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Dexter & Wall, 2021; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Farrell, 2018; Gadsby, 2022; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023). Secondly, the literature on reflective practice requires more accounts of language educators engaging in reflective practice in the higher education context (Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023; Moon, 2005; Palacios et al., 2022). The choice of a public higher education institution instead of a privately-owned school was also an intentional effort on the part of the researcher to address the gap in extant research on reflective practice by providing more in-depth data about public schools’ ELT instructors’ experiences with engaging in reflective practice (Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023). Taking these numerous calls for further research under consideration, the researcher posited the following criteria in the selection of the study participants:

- Actively working as an ELT educator
- Having at least 10 years of teaching experience
- Working as an in-service teacher in the Turkish EFL context
- Being currently employed at a state higher education institution

After a list of participants who fit the above criteria was drafted by the researcher in the process of criterion sampling, convenience sampling was implemented to determine three participants who were available at the time of the study and willing to grant their full participation in the process. The search for potential candidates culminated in the selection of three female ELT teachers: Sena, İpek, Buse (pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' real identities). The participants were briefly interviewed prior to accepting them into the current research study in order to determine whether they met the sampling criteria specified above. During the interviews, the participants were asked about their teaching experience, in particular the length of their teaching careers, their prior experiences with reflective language teaching as well as more general queries about their teaching philosophies. After all the participants were vetted and officially accepted as study participants, the data collection procedures employed in the study were explained in order to ensure that all the teachers would be willing to regularly provide reflective journal entries, critical incident reports and accept having their lessons video-recorded. Finally, the participants were given consent forms which they carefully read and signed. In the context of the present study, the terms EFL teachers, ELT teachers, and ELT practitioners are used interchangeably to refer to the study participants.

Participant 1: Buse

The first participant of the present doctoral research project is a 36-year-old female teacher of Turkish nationality. She holds an MA degree in ELT and, despite completing two years of a PhD programme in Child Education, decided to withdraw from the programme in order to focus on her current teaching position and taking care of her elderly parents. She started her teaching career in 2010, and worked mostly in higher education institutions in different cities of Türkiye. She has been employed at her current institution for approximately two years. Apart from teaching duties, she is also part of the Testing Office and is directly responsible for creating assessment tools for students at an upper-intermediate level of proficiency, including writing, reading, vocabulary, listening and grammar-oriented examinations and assignments. Her decision to become a teacher was motivated by her interest in foreign cultures and languages. She vividly remembers when she heard a group of tourists in her village speak in a foreign language when she was about five years old. Previously convinced

that Turkish was the only language spoken in the world, she discovered her passion for languages and made a commitment to herself to one day learn a foreign language and teach it to others. She appreciates the working conditions facilitated by her institution, especially job security her position as a lecturer at a state university offers. She describes herself as a fun-loving and cheerful person with a passion for making her students laugh and enjoy their time in her classroom. At the same time, she admits to being highly result-oriented and driven by a motivation to help students achieve their full potential as language learners. Although Buse is a frequent participant of workshops and webinars conducted at the university, she has never been engaged in any professional development activities centered around reflective practice. Despite having no empirical experience of engaging in reflective practice, she remains optimistic and excited about the possibility to reflect on her teaching practice, particularly the opportunity to watch video recordings of her lessons.

Participant 2: İpek

İpek is 40 years old and her academic career is characterized by a lot of variety. After completing her BA in International Relations she switched her interests to teaching and was awarded an MA diploma in English Language Teaching. Despite her enthusiasm for the teaching profession, she opted to enroll in a doctoral program in Politics and she completed it in 2021. Her current research interests are also marked by a high variety of subjects ranging from ELT coursebook analysis to female leadership. She started teaching in 2006 and became a lecturer at her current university in 2016. Similarly to Buse, she decided to become a teacher in recognition of the stability and security this profession provides, especially to women in Türkiye. She described teaching as a “tidy job”, an optimal context for a long and safe career. She sees herself as a sociable, people person, and she finds teaching to be a good opportunity to cultivate this part of her personality. She referred to herself as a “disciplined, but enjoyable teacher” who is adept at classroom management but also strives to create a friendly atmosphere for her students. During her CELTA training, she was asked to write brief reflections on her own teaching practice as well as lessons of other course attendees she had an opportunity to observe during the course. She found this experience to be valuable, but her engagement with reflective practice ended on the day she completed the course and she has not been involved in any reflective practices ever since. However, she is looking

forward to a chance to reflect on her teaching practice and feels excited about being part of the current research project.

Participant 3: Sena

Sena is a 40-year-old teacher of foreign origin who came to Türkiye when she was 13 years old. She holds both BA and MA degrees in ELT. Sena's initial career plan, strongly encouraged by her father, was to study engineering. However, despite her father's wishes, she quickly understood that engineering is not her area of interest. Inspired by her own journey learning Turkish, she decided to pursue her love for languages and became an ELT teacher.

She describes herself as a student-centered practitioner who values genuine communication and her students' well-being. Her priority is to foster a strong and friendly relationship with her students. She also considers lesson planning to be an essential skill for all ELT practitioners and has a low tolerance for any deviations from her plans. She has never engaged in reflective practice, but she has been observed by her fellow teachers as well as university lecturers. She finds lesson observations to be a scary experience aimed at identifying weaknesses and mistakes she makes.

Table 3.1

Information about study participants

	Buse	İpek	Sena
Age	36	40	40
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Education	BA in ELT MA in ELT	BA in International Relations MA in ELT PhD in Politics	BA in ELT MA in ELT
Years of teaching experience	14 years	18 years	10 years
Current position	English language lecturer at a preparatory school of a state university	English language lecturer at a preparatory school of a state university	English language lecturer at a preparatory school of a state university

3.4. Research Context

The present doctoral research was conducted in a School of Foreign Languages at a state university in Türkiye. The university was established approximately thirteen years prior to the commencement of the current study. There are 45 lecturers employed in the

School of Foreign Languages and the vast majority of them are of Turkish nationality. Classes are conducted from October till early June, spanning throughout four teaching quarters, each lasting for seven weeks of classes and one week of examinations and final assessment. The groups and instructors change every quarter and the instructors are generally assigned to three different groups in each teaching quarter. There are currently six different levels taught at the institution ranging from A2 to C1. The School of Foreign Languages has a separate Continuous Professional Development workgroup which is responsible for arranging one annual cycle of peer lesson observations (mandatory for all instructors) and approximately six professional development workshops which are attended on a voluntary basis. The topics of the workshops are predominantly practical in nature and they are usually focused on presenting various technological tools which can facilitate English language education (e.g. Chat GPT) or functional classroom activities targeting students' speaking skills and boosting their lesson engagement. Reflective practice has never been directly addressed in any of the professional development sessions conducted to this date at the institution and there are no activities or events, whether organized by the Continuous Professional Development workgroup or the school administration, which encourage or require the lecturers to engage in continuous reflective practice, neither for educational nor evaluative purposes.

3.5. Data Collection Tools

The present doctoral thesis utilized five data collection tools in order to gain a deeper insight into what role reflective practice plays in the development of the participants' teacher identity and their emotions. The tools included:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Reflective journals
- Lesson observations
- Video-stimulated interviews
- Critical incident reports

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews aided the researcher in granting the participants sufficient latitude to express themselves with an opportunity to verify and deepen her understanding of the participants' experiences with follow-up, probing questions

(Norton, 2019). In order to gain a deeper understanding of the role of emotions in the participants' identity development during reflective practice, the researcher was supported by the question framework for empathetic reflection developed by Marathe & Sen (2021). The addition of interview questions specifically targeted at reflection on emotions, provided the researcher with a greater access into the participants' affective processes accompanying their engagement into reflective practice.

Table 3.2

Empathic reflection question framework (Marathe & Sen, 2021)

Content component	Emotion component	Emotional perspective of other people
• What happened? • Why did it happen? • What led to it? • What was the result? • What were my expectations? • Why did I expect this? • What were others' expectations?	• What do I feel? • Why do I feel it?	• What did the other person feel? • Why does he/she feel that?

In order to increase the reliability of gathered data, interview questions for all types of interviews implemented in the current doctoral study (semi-structured interviews and video-stimulated interviews) were sent to two experts experienced in conducting qualitative research aimed at exploring language teachers' emotions and their identity. Their research topics included a wide range of contexts, ranging from pre-service and novice teachers to experienced language educators in the context of higher education and K12 education. What is more, both experts have previously delved into the subjects of reflective language teaching and reflective practice. The first expert has written and published two research articles on the role of reflective practice in in-service teachers' professional development while the second expert has researched reflective practice habits of pre-service language educators.

Reflective journals

Reflective journals are considered to be an elemental tool in becoming a reflective practitioner (Donohoe, 2023; Draissi et al., 2021; Hunter, 2021). Echoing the findings of Ahmed (2020) and Thompson (2022), the journals remained unstructured in order to

ensure enough latitude for the participants to reflect on the selected aspects of their teaching practice without limiting or skewing the content or manner of their engagement in reflective practice. A valuable advantage offered by reflective journals as a data collection tool is that they possess “the capacity to record an internal reality representing the individual’s own values and personal meanings” (Lefebvre et al., 2022). What is more, the use of reflective journals opens up possibilities of expressing teachers’ underlying beliefs, assumptions and emotions which are all fundamental forces shaping practitioners’ identities (Altalhab et al., 2021; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023). Furthermore, the utilization of reflective journals is “useful in capturing teachers’ reflection on past emotional experiences and eliciting responses and the sharing of emotions through narratives” (Xu, 2018, p. 40).

Lesson observations

Observations are of paramount importance in research on reflective practice among language educators since “it is necessary to link teachers’ reflective functioning to actual observed teacher behaviors” (Dexter & Wall, 2021, p.762). In addition, lesson observations conducted by the researcher ensured that the data collected in the course of this study were not solely self-perceived by the participants, but included a blend of self-reported experiences and a third-person perspective (Foltyn, 2022). An addition of observations to the array of data collection tools is particularly valuable in research on teacher emotions since it increases the methodological rigor by triangulating participant-driven accounts of emotions with an observer’s perspective (Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018; Xu, 2018). The approach to lesson observations adopted in the current doctoral study was a naturalistic, non-participant observation, which entails that the phenomena under observation are observed in their natural environment (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This type of observation allows the researcher to tap into the participants’ genuine classroom experiences and collect data which are more authentic and richer in nature (Derinalp, 2022).

In the course of data collection and analysis, the researcher in the current study utilized detailed observation notes drafted during the classroom observations and expanded upon them after each lesson observation. The researcher acknowledges that observation notes can never be purely factual and objective, as they constitute the researcher’s interpretation of an observed event (Miles et al., 2014). Taking this under consideration,

after the transcription process, the notes were enriched with the researcher's reflections on the observed lesson and her own assumptions and beliefs that might have borne influence on her interpretation of the observed lesson. After drafting raw field notes during the observed lessons, the researcher transcribed and expanded her notes by creating more formal write-ups devoid of abbreviations and mental shortcuts privy only to the researcher. According to Miles et al. (2014), this process culminates in "an intelligible product for anyone, not just for the field-worker, which can be read, edited for accuracy, commented on, coded, and analyzed" (p.78). True to the iterative process of qualitative data analysis, the notes were revisited multiple times in the course of the study and the analysis of collected data.

Video-stimulated interviews

Videos are also a powerful tool utilized in research on reflective practice since they yield numerous benefits for researchers and practitioners alike (Seedhouse, 2022). First and foremost, videos offer an opportunity for teachers to reflect-on-action and systematically analyze their teaching practice while adopting an observer's lens (Lefebvre et al., 2022). Secondly, videos refresh teachers' memories of the events that took place in their classrooms and can be instrumental in illuminating aspects of their practice they were unaware of (Gaudin & Chaliès, 2015). From the perspective of research into teacher emotions, video stimulated interviews allow researchers to "examine moment-by-moment experiences" of the practitioners and witness their raw emotional responses to the footage (Xu, 2018, p.41). During the video-stimulated interviews, the participants were encouraged to share their reflections on the recorded lessons in a spontaneous and unfettered manner without fear of being scrutinized or evaluated.

In order to maximize the effectiveness and clarity of interview questions used in the interviews, an interview protocol was designed and implemented by the researcher. Particular attention was paid not only to the content of the questions, but also to their order. Following guidelines from Cohen et al. (2018) and Derinalp (2022), the interviews were conducted to follow a gradual progression from more general questions to more specific aspects of the participants' experiences with reflective practice engagement. What is more, the questions about the participants' beliefs and assumptions about English language teaching were asked before the questions

concerning their actual teaching practice. The rationale behind this sequence was to prevent the teachers from filtering or adjusting their beliefs in order to match the observed behaviour and allow them to discern potential discrepancies between their self-articulated values and their actual classroom conduct.

Critical incident reports

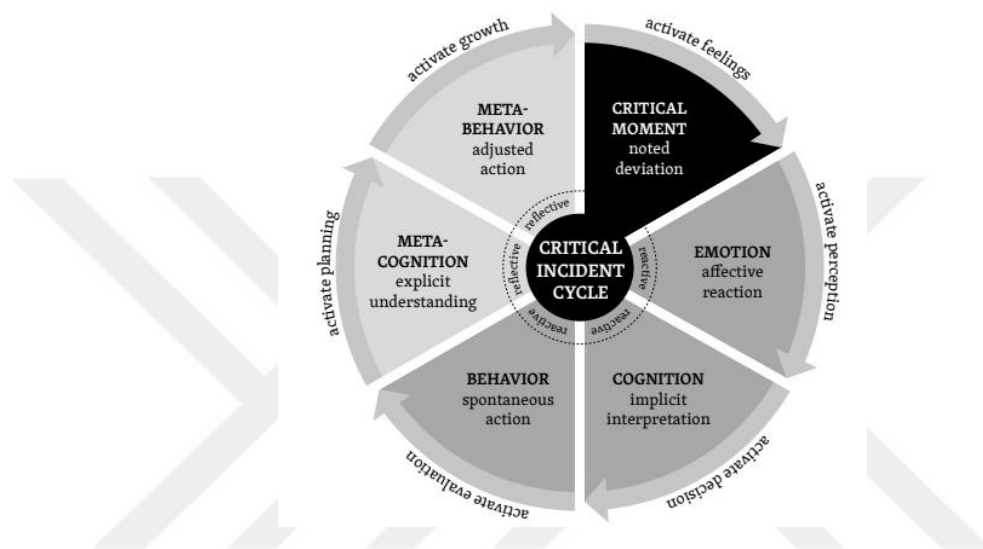
The critical incident technique has been widely utilized in studies on teacher identity (Atai & Nejadghanbar, 2016; Atai & Nejadghanbar, 2017; Farrell, 2008; Griffin, 2003; Karim et al., 2024; Nazari & De Costa, 2022; Nazari et al., 2023; Nejadghanbar, 2021; Shafiee et al., 2018; Sisson, 2016) and teacher emotions (Anselma & Mbato, 2023; Gkonou & Miller, 2020; Nazari et al., 2023; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011; Wardhani et al., 2021). The implementation of critical incidents is believed to foster the participants' ability to reflect on their teaching practice and adopt a critical perspective to their beliefs and actions (Farrell, 2017; Lengeling & Mora Pablo, 2016). As a result, critical incidents as qualitative data collection instruments "problematize teachers' emotional knowledge and current courses of action through which teachers develop their self- and other knowledge" (Nazari et al., 2023, p.2). As such, the use of critical incidents in the study allowed the researchers to forge links between the participants' engagement in reflective practice, the emotions which occur in the process, and the impact reflection exerts on the development of the teachers' identities.

The implementation of critical incident reports in the current study was based on the framework put forward by Sieglová (2023) and referred to as the Critical Incident Cycle. The framework distinguishes between five reactive and reflective stages that teachers are engaged in when faced with transformative moments in their teaching practice. First, teachers identify a critical incident by noticing a deviation in their classroom practice. In the second phase of the cycle, positive or negative emotions are induced as an immediate response to the incident. In the subsequent stage, the emotional response is replaced by a cognitive reaction characterized by extracting meaning and interpretation of the event by reference to teachers' prior experience as well as their pedagogical and socio-cultural knowledge. The affective and cognitive reactions to a critical incident are followed by a behavioral reaction in a form of immediate action or a series of actions undertaken as a response to the event. As the reactive face of the cycle comes to an end, teachers engage in reflection perceived as a metacognitive process

targeting their initial response to the incident against the background of their immediate context as well as a broader sociopolitical and cultural examination. In the final stage of the cycle, known as meta-behavioral processing, teachers take advantage of the previous stages in order to introduce a positive change in their practice and prevent future occurrences of the experienced dilemma.

Figure 3.1

The Critical Incident Cycle (Sieglová, 2023, p.48)



The Critical Incident Cycle represents an appropriate fit for the study as it allows the researcher to gain an insight into the emotions triggered by the reflective process as well as the impact of the process on the participants' teaching practice and their teacher identity with a particular focus on their beliefs and assumptions. It also fosters critical reflection by an emphasis on the exploration of the broader context the participants' professional practice is embedded in.

In an attempt to guide the participants through the aforementioned aspects of reflection on critical incidents, the researcher adapted a set of reflective prompts designed by Tołoczko (2020). The prompts accompanied the participants through three stages of reflection on critical incidents: description, analysis and evaluation.

Table 3.3*Reflective prompts for critical incident reflection (adapted from Toloczko, 2020)*

Stages	Prompts
Phase 1: Description of a critical incident	• describe the background to the situation (e.g. level of the students, type of lesson taught) • narrate the actions taken by you and other participants in the event • describe the critical incident • describe the emotions you experienced during the incident • describe the emotions you think other participants experienced during the incident
Phase 2: Analysis	• explain the reasons why you found this particular incident to be critical • analyze the underlying cause(s) of the incident • list the question(s) the incident provoked you to ask • examine alternative scenarios/ courses of action
Phase 3: Evaluation	• evaluate the effectiveness of your response to the incident • explain the implications the incident had for your and for your students • evaluate the value of the incident by referring to a wider context of language teaching, your knowledge and prior experience, ELT methodologies etc. • evaluate and describe the impact the incident will have on your future teaching practice

The use of this particular form in the researcher's exploration of experienced Turkish ELT practitioners' reflective practice engagement was dictated by the fact that it encompasses two vital concepts of interest in the current research study: teacher identity manifested in the participants' classroom practice as well the emotions they experienced during the critical incidents. It also incorporates an analysis of the behaviour and emotions of other parties involved in the incident which allowed the participants to extend and refine their reflections by integrating perspectives which might differ from their own.

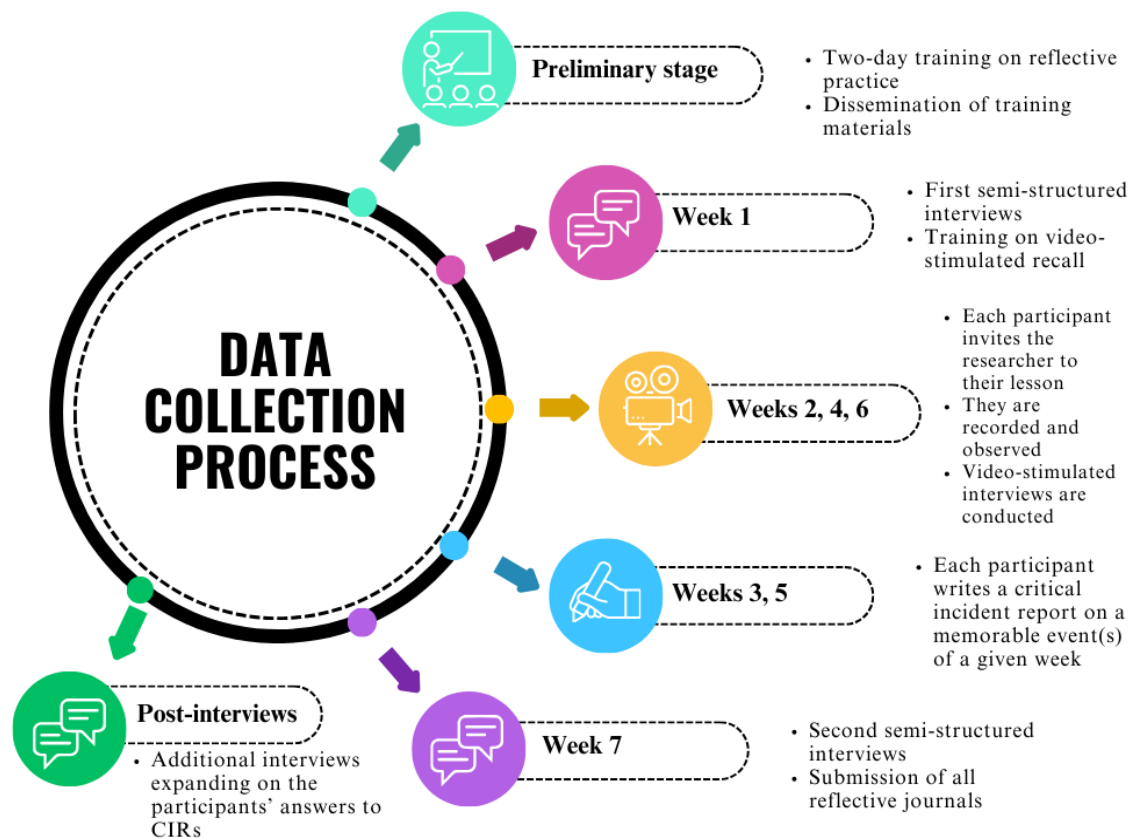
3.6. Data Collection Process

The data collection process for the current study stretched over eight weeks of teaching, which is a full teaching quarter at the institution where the participants are employed. The process commenced and concluded in semi-structured interviews conducted individually with each participant. Weeks 2-6 were planned in an intermittent manner, switching between two modes of data collection: critical incident reports and lesson

observations accompanied by video-stimulated interviews. The participants were advised to keep their reflective journals throughout the entirety of the data collection process.

Figure 3.2

Data collection process



Preliminary Stage (training on reflective practice, video recall, critical incidents and reflective journaling)

Before the data collection process commenced, all the participants of the current doctoral study were required to attend a workshop on reflective practice conducted by the researcher. Taking the participants' limited prior engagement in structured reflective practice, it was vital to ensure that their understanding of reflection and reflective language teaching is grounded in reliable literature on the subject and not tainted by potential misconceptions and misconstrued conceptualizations of reflective practice. Proper and comprehensive training on reflective practice is essential to facilitate effective engagement in reflection and minimize the risk of the participants being

trapped into inhibiting constraints of confirmation bias or unconstructive self-criticism (Brownhill, 2023; Farrell, 2022; Moon, 2005; Thompson, 2022).

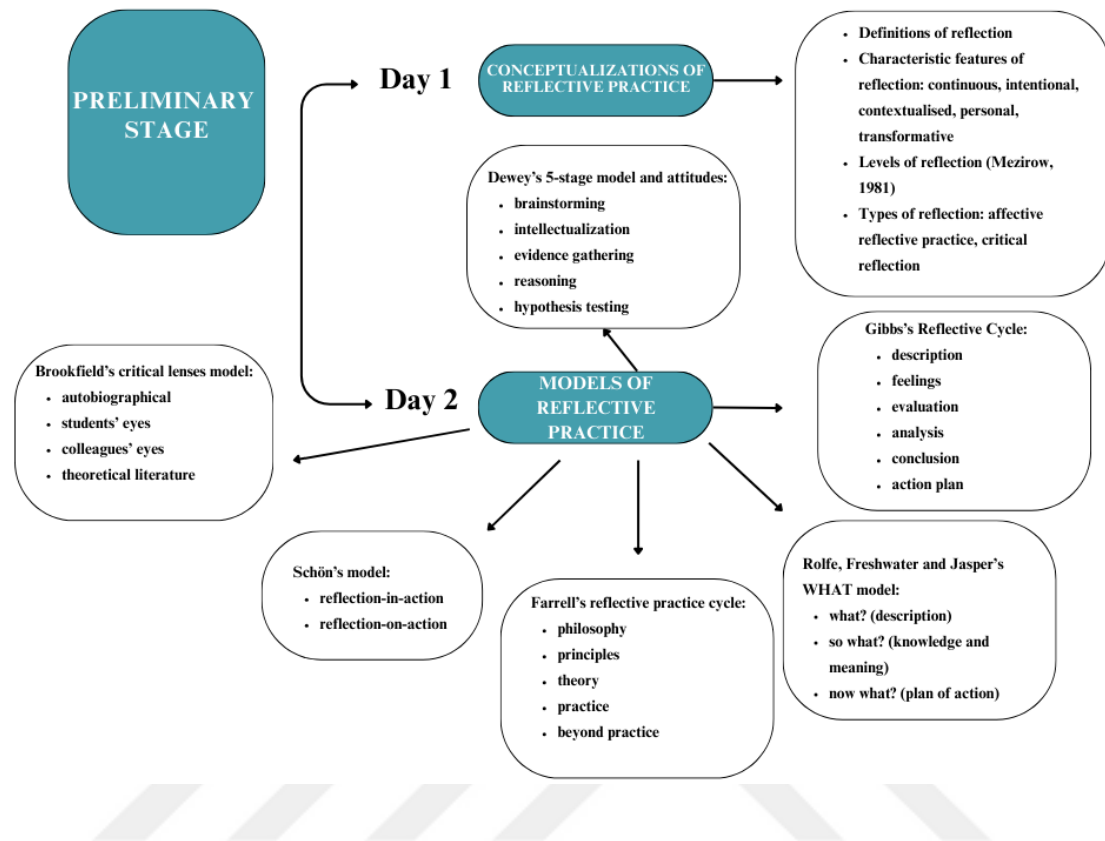
The training spanned over two sessions, with theoretical underpinnings of reflective practice and critical incidents discussed on the first day, and a more practice-oriented approach to reflection involving presentation of different models of reflective practice and critical incident reflective prompts presented on the second day. Throughout the training, the participants were encouraged to ask questions and share their opinions and reactions to the presented material. All participants were granted resources aimed at familiarizing them with the concepts of reflective practice and critical incidents in order to deepen their understanding of the concepts. These materials included a selection of research studies on reflective practice and critical incidents conducted in the subject domain of ELT which illuminated different aspects of the process (e.g. critical and transformative reflection) as well as various models of reflection. The participants were not coerced in their selection of the model or models which they would like to structure their reflections on. Models of reflective practice play an instrumental role in structuring and guiding the process adding to its systematicity and ensuring a more methodological approach to reflecting on prior experiences of language educators (Marshall et al., 2022). However, patterns of reflective practice illustrated in extant literature can never be adopted and followed without a prior critical and careful examination (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). Thus, selecting a model of reflective practice should be a personalized and thoughtful decision on the part of the participants, ensuring that the model or models they embrace are aligned with their teaching context, personality and expectations (Pendrey, 2022). Consequently, rather than imposing a prescriptive model that all the participants of this research project needed to follow, the researcher opted to present the teachers with different models without favoring one over another. Furthermore, during the final semi-structured interviews the participants were asked to justify their selections which created an opportunity to deepen the researcher's understanding of their conceptualization of reflective practice. The participants were encouraged to keep reflective journals from the very beginning of their participation in the study in order to capture not only the potential transformations in their teacher development and teacher emotions throughout the data collection process, but also their initial emotions, assumptions and beliefs about embarking on a journey to reflective language teaching. In order to facilitate maximum levels of autonomy and flexibility,

the participants were ensured that their reflective journal entries could be made using traditional pen-and-paper methods or by incorporating technology in the form of audio recordings, video recordings, blogging etc. Lack of prescriptive guidelines for the participants regarding a specific mode or format of journaling, enabled them to produce genuine accounts of their thoughts and emotions in a manner which best suits their mood or preferences in any given week (Ahmed, 2020; Thompson, 2022).

The participants were also trained on the application of video lesson recordings in video-stimulated interviews. To this end, the researcher made a 10-minute recording of a lesson selected by each participant. The choice of the lesson was given to the participants in order to respect their autonomy and mimic the actual procedures which would be utilized once data collection process commenced. The recording were later viewed by the researcher and the participant with each participant being encouraged to reflect on what they saw. Interview questions for video-stimulated interviews designed by the researcher were also taken advantage of in order to guide the teachers through the process and stimulate the quality and length of their responses to the recording. These interviews would not be used as data collection tools and their aim was to familiarize the participants with the idea and process of having their lessons recorded on video and subsequently reflected upon with the researcher present.

Figure 3.3

Preliminary stage procedures



Beginning of week 1 (Semi-structured interviews)

The data collection process commenced by a round of semi-structured interviews conducted individually with each participant. In the interviews, the teachers participating in this research project were asked more detailed questions about their experiences (if any) with engaging in reflective practice, their teaching practices, as well as their beliefs and assumptions about English language teaching in their specific context. The participants also received guidelines about responding to video-recordings of their lessons. One of the most prominent benefits of video-stimulated interviews is their potential to foster teacher agency during the interview process (Lefebvre et al., 2022; Reichenberg, 2022). Taking this into account, during the training on video-stimulated recall, the participants were reassured that they can interrupt the viewing of their lesson recordings whenever they identify an important detail or event in the lesson. As such, the video-stimulated interviews were participant-driven, with the researcher assuming the role of a moderator, rather than fully directing the interview. Furthermore, following the guidelines for video-stimulated interviews suggested by Aslan and her

colleagues (2022), the participants were also informed that the recordings can be rewound and rewatched whenever they deemed it necessary or helpful. Finally, as emphasized by Ilmi et al. (2023) in their study incorporating video-stimulated reflection and reflective journals of an in-service ELT teacher, the participants were in charge of selecting the lessons which would be recorded, further boosting their sense of autonomy in the data collection process of the current doctoral study

Weeks 1-7 (Video-stimulated interviews, critical incident reports, lesson observations)

The central part of the data collection process spanned over seven full weeks, which constitutes a full teaching quarter at the participants' institution. Multiple data collection points scattered over time guaranteed that long-term effects of systematic reflective practice on the participants' identity development and their affective spheres were addressed with an understanding that these processes unfold over an extended period of time rather than being shaped in a singular occurrence (Aslan et al., 2022). Extant research on reflective practice provides evidence to support the fact that this length and frequency of data collection is sufficient for an in-depth exploration of educators' experiences with reflection (Ahmed, 2020; Altalhab et al., 2021; Cowan, 2020; Kurt & Yildirim, 2021; Yoshihara et al., 2020).

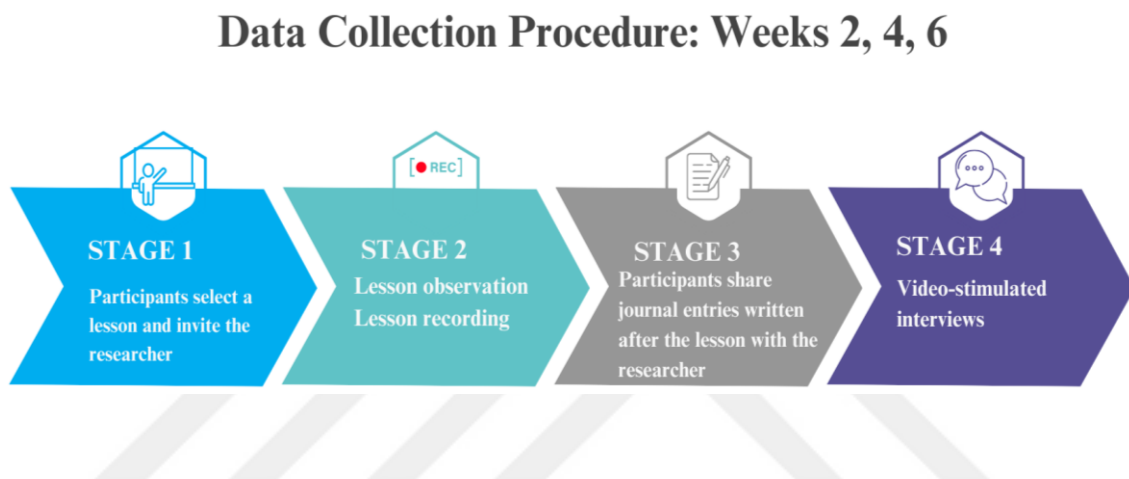
The participants were asked to record their reflections in a form of written, audio-recorded or video-recorded reflective journals in the first, third and fifth week of the data collection process. The decision to offer the participants autonomy in the choice of the format of their reflection was dictated by the findings of extant research into factors conducive to reflection in the context of English language teaching (Birello & Font, 2020; Kalaja et al., 2011; Marshall et al., 2021; Marshall et al., 2022; Pendrey, 2022; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2012). For example, a comprehensive review of 813 research articles conducted by Marshall et al., (2021) found that providing teachers with a variety of modes for reflective practice significantly increases its effectiveness. At the end of each of the specified weeks, the researcher conducted separate video-stimulated interviews with each participant during which the participants' reflective journals were discussed and the video recordings were displayed.

In order to minimize the disturbance caused by the recording of the participants' lessons, this data collection tool was replaced and enriched by critical incident

interviews in the second and fourth week of the data collection process. This allowed the participants and their students to take a break from the video-recording process which can be stress-inducing for all parties involved (Bowers et al., 2017). In addition, the incorporation of a different data collection tool provided valuable insights into the participants' identity development and their emotions (Farrell, 2017; Lengeling & Mora Pablo, 2016).

Figure 3.4

Data collection procedure in weeks 2, 4, 6



The process of data collection was reiterated seven times, at the end of each teaching week. Unlike one-time interviews, recursive participant interviews grant researchers an ability to observe and notice subtle changes in their participants' experiences over time and unlock patterns of behaviour which remain inaccessible during singular data collection points (Xu, 2018). What is more, conducting multiple interviews with each participant allowed the researcher to reflect on the potential of various questions to elicit answers from the participants, assess their effectiveness and, if necessary, modify the questions which could be used in subsequent interviews in order to encourage the teachers to provide detailed answers and reduce the risk of basing the analysis on shallow and superficial data (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

End of week 7: Final semi-structured interviews

The data collection process was completed by the second round of semi-structured interviews during which the participants were asked to look back on the teaching quarter they had completed and evaluate their experience of keeping reflective journals, reflecting on critical incidents and reviewing their lessons in the form of video

recordings. In order to foster continuous reflective practice engagement, the participants were also encouraged to maintain their engagement with reflective practice even after the data collection process comes to an end (Kurosh et al., 2020; Marshall et al., 2021). The tools and techniques which the teachers utilized as participants of the current study, will hopefully prove to have long-lasting effects on their approach to and application of reflective language teaching in their teaching careers.

Post semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were also implemented at the end of data collection in order to expand on the participants' answers and probe deeper into their experiences of engagement in reflective practice. The need for such post-interviews was necessitated by the participants' replies to critical incident report prompts, which often lacked in depth and length. Whilst the participants' answers included in the reports and the nature of these responses are important telltale signs of their ability and willingness to engage in reflective practice, the researcher believed that some of the themes emerging from the critical incident reports, such as classroom management or trust between students and their instructor, could benefit from an additional round of semi-structured interviews conducted after the initial round of data collection came to an end. The post-interviews were conducted individually with each participant. Prior to the interviews, critical incident reports completed by the teachers were sent back to the participants in order to refresh their memory of the incidents and allow them to expand on their replies during the interviews. Each interview took approximately 20 minutes, and the participants had an opportunity to provide more information about the incidents described in the reports, report on any other incidents that took place in the course of the study, and share general impressions on their engagement with reflective practice during the study.

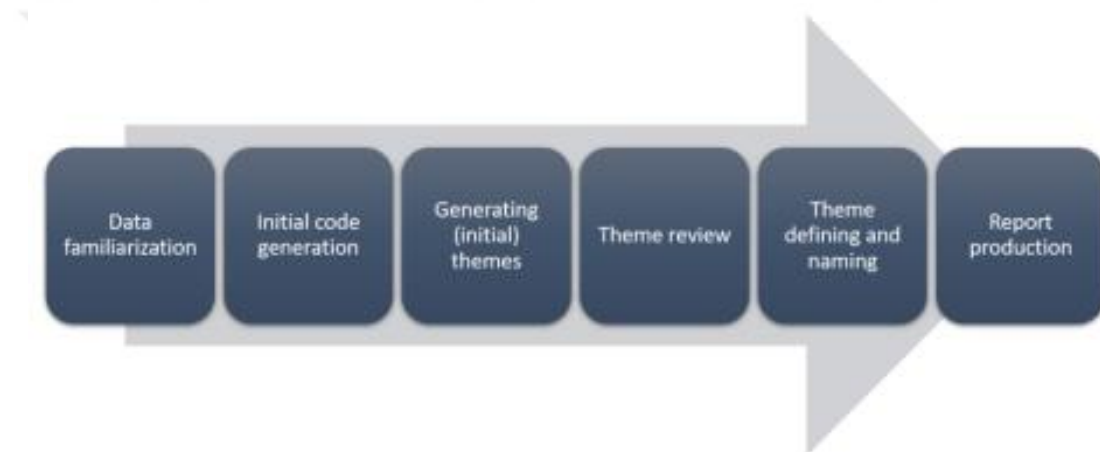
3.7. Data Analysis

Data collected through semi-structured interviews, lesson observations and video-stimulated interviews which followed them, critical incident reports as well as reflective journals were analyzed in accordance with the reflexive thematic analysis approach to data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2022). Reflexive thematic analysis is closely aligned with "the values of a qualitative paradigm, centering researcher subjectivity, organic and recursive coding processes, and the importance of deep reflection on, and engagement with data" (Braun & Clarke,

2019, p.593). As such, the current doctoral thesis can be conceptualized as a deep, reflective journey for the participants and the researcher alike. After all, reaffirming Braun and Clarke's (2022) observation, "data analysis is always underpinned by theoretical assumptions, and these assumptions need to be acknowledged and reflected on" (p.9). In line with Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-step outline of the reflexive thematic analysis process, the analysis of data in the present doctoral dissertation included the following stages: familiarization with data, coding, generation of tentative themes, reviewing themes, refining and defining themes, and finally report production.

Figure 3.5

Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019)



Themes in reflexive thematic analysis are conceptualized as “stories about particular patterns of shared meaning across the dataset” and they are actively pursued and interpreted by the researcher rather than passively emerging from collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p.592). As a result, “the researcher becomes the instrument for analysis” (Nowell et al., 2017, p.2). The process of generating themes was conducted over two levels: a review of created codes and a review of generated themes against the collected data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Parallel to this stage, particularly persuasive and meaningful data extracts which can encapsulate the essence of the themes were noted down and referred to in the process of reporting on the findings (Trainor & Bundon, 2021). It should be noted, however, that the aforementioned steps in reflexive thematic analysis are merely guidelines rather than prescriptive, rigid rules, which allows the process of data analysis to retain its fluid and recursive nature (Braun & Clarke, 2019). All in all, “reflexive thematic analysis is not about working through a series of steps, rather it is about the researcher’s reflective and thoughtful engagement with the data and

the analytic process” (Trainor & Bundon, 2021, p.706). Apart from being closely aligned with the current researcher’s ontological and epistemological views, reflexive thematic analysis was also selected as the preferred method of data collection due to its high suitability and utility for exploring under-researched areas and generating detailed renderings of the participants’ subjective realities (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Clarke & Braun, 2017; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Furthermore, the application of reflexive thematic analysis is said to yield particularly desirable results when applied to “thicker individual data items (such as in-depth interviews) which often contain rich, complex, nuanced and detailed data” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.34).

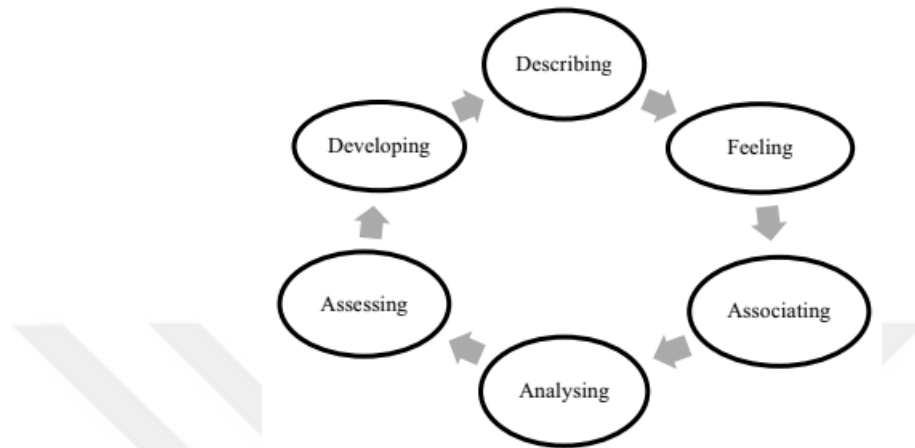
In order to immerse herself in the collected data, the researcher reread the transcripts multiple times and continuously revisited her lesson observation notes. Repetitive reading and rereading of data allowed the researcher to deepen her familiarity with the participants’ experiences (Neale, 2016). The video recordings of the participants’ lessons were also rewatched numerous times. Rewatching the videos was a crucial step in the data analysis process since “rewatching the video footage brings the experiences more to life than reading the transcript” (Murphy & O’Mahony, 2023).

Video recordings alongside interview transcripts, observation notes, critical incident reports and reflective journals were analyzed with an end goal of constructing a list of descriptive codes. The codes were later grouped together into bigger clusters until a list of major themes was compiled (Creswell, 2012). This process was highly iterative with previously derived themes being contrasted against newly emergent patterns of meaning. During the analysis of the participants’ reflective journals and critical incident reports, the researcher utilized the six-stage framework of reflective practice designed by Yee et al. (2022). The framework enabled the researcher to systematize her analysis of the teachers’ reflective accounts of their experiences and qualitatively assess the progression of the participants’ reflective practice. Yee et al. (2022) distinguished between describing (descriptive accounts of experiences), feeling (incorporation of the affective dimension into the reflective practice), associating (forging connections between teaching experiences and practitioners’ beliefs, values, adopted teaching theories and prior teaching experience), analyzing (a critical reflection on the underlying causes and potential consequences of practitioners’ actions within a broader social, cultural and political context of teaching), assessing (evaluating one’s teaching practice

by incorporating alternative views and perspectives) and developing (formulating novel ideas and incorporating them into future actions).

Figure 3.6

Six-stage framework of reflective practice (Yee et al., 2022, p.555)



3.8. Researcher Reflexivity

Researcher positionality and researcher subjectivity are both concepts of crucial importance in qualitative research, owing to its creative, reflexive and non-objective nature and its predominant goal of exploring and interpreting the stories of the participants rather than uncovering absolute truths seemingly buried in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2021). Braun and Clarke (2021) defined researcher reflexivity as “the process and practice of a researcher critically reflecting on how their disciplinary, theoretical and personal assumptions and their design choices shape and delimit the knowledge they produce” (p. 134). As Braun and Clarke (2019) argued, “the researcher’s role in knowledge production is at the heart of the reflexive approach to thematic analysis” (p.594). It is crucial to underscore that codes and themes in qualitative research are not discovered or unearthed by a careful and objective examination of data, but are products of interpretation on the part of the researcher (Braun et al., 2017). Thus, researcher objectivity is neither feasible nor desired and the themes are not uncovered, but created in the process of reflective data immersion. As such, researchers’ theoretical assumptions, their educational and professional backgrounds, their personal beliefs and values are all intersected with the collected data with an ultimate goal to explore the participants’ experiences and tell their stories. As a

result, researcher subjectivity and continuous reflection on these and other aspects of researchers' selves are of paramount importance in qualitative research analyzed by means of reflexive thematic analysis, as is the case of the present study (Dean et al., 2018; Hill & Dao, 2020; Mitchell et al., 2018; Trainor & Bundon, 2021). Consequently, it has become standard practice among researchers working within the qualitative paradigm to offer the potential readers an insight into their social identities, their connection to the subject of the research and the relationship and attitudes they harbor with the participants (Hill & Dao, 2020). However, going beyond a mere, descriptive sharing of a researcher's background at the onset of the data collection process, researcher reflexivity is a continuous process in which researchers are constantly engaged in deep reflection on how they are affected by their participants' life stories as well as how the way they experience the events they witness is informed by their own histories, stretching way over the initial stages of a research study and continuing until the publication stage or even beyond it (Trainor & Bundon, 2021). As the sole researcher in the current study, I engaged in two types of reflexivity, namely introspection reflexivity (understood as an effort to deepen my self-understanding and reflect on the connections between who I am and what I have experienced in relation to my interpretation of the participants' accounts) and intersubjective reflexivity, which aided me in exploring the relationship I have with my participants and how it can potentially evolve as the study unfolds (Finlay, 2002). To this end, I kept a reflective researcher journal which I used to record my reactions to the data I collected, including my emotional responses to the participants' written accounts of their experiences and the video recordings of their lessons as well as my reflections which were induced before, during and after the interviews. Reflective journals have a potential to "force the researcher to think about how they are impacting the research and provide transparency to their inner thoughts" (Trainor & Bundon, 2021, p.709). It also provides "a space to reflect on and interrogate expectations, assumptions, and research practices, and how these, alongside design choices, shape the research" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.133). What is more, I utilized my reflections when preparing for subsequent points of data collection, allowing the reflections on the questions I asked or chose not to ask during one interview to inform the content and style of the following data collection point. Guided by Braun and Clarke's (2021) guidelines for reflexive qualitative research, my reflections on the data I collected during the interview were deepened by recording my

reflections on questions dedicated to qualitative researchers who adopt a reflexive approach to data collection and analysis.

Table 3.4

Questions for reflexive qualitative researchers (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 72)

How does the person make sense of what they are discussing?
Why might they be making sense of things in this way (and not in another way)?
In what different ways do they make sense of the topic?
How would I feel if I was in that situation? (Is this different from or similar to how the person feels, and why might that be?)
What assumptions do they make in describing the world?
What kind of world is “revealed” through their account?
Why might I be reacting to the data in this way?
What ideas does my interpretation rely on?
What different ways could I make sense of the data?

3.9. Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the current study was ensured by the triangulation of data collection methods, member checking and peer debriefing. Cresswell (2018) defined triangulation as “the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection” (p. 259). Application of multiple data sources in the examination of reflective practice increases the reliability and comprehensiveness of research (Dehghani et al., 2023). In addition, gathering reflective data in a written (reflective journals, critical incident reports) as well as a spoken form (semi-structured and video stimulated interviews) grants a balanced and exhaustive description of the teachers’ reflective experience (Hunter, 2021; Mann & Walsh, 2017). In particular, a combination of self-reported and observational data ensures a more comprehensive and reliable rendering of the participants’ experiences during their engagement in reflective practice (Barcelos & Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2018; Dexter & Wall, 2021; Foltyn, 2022; Xu, 2018). Additionally, the utilization of identical interview questions during semi-structured interviews for all participants established sound grounds for comparisons drawn between cases (Bryman, 2012; Schnitzler, 2020). Furthermore, in order to provide the highest quality and reliability of data collection, an interview protocol was adhered to during all interviews, following the guidelines listed by Creswell (2014). To

this end, the interview protocol subsumed data about location and time of each interview and a combination of introductory, core and closure sections.

Member checking involves presenting the collected data back to the participants in order to check the accuracy of the data (Cresswell, 2018). What is more, “member checking is an extremely valuable tool and speaks to the characteristic of qualitative research: the participant is the expert” (McKim, 2023, p. 46). In line with this procedure, recordings of the interviews were carefully transcribed and shared with each participant to provide them with an opportunity to add or clarify information they have provided. However, member checking in the current research study was not treated as a decisive indicator of the reliability of the collected data. In recognition of the fact that some aspects of the analysis might contain a critical perspective of the researcher which might differ from the participants’ perspective, member checking was applied as a valuable source of participant feedback, rather than a reliability enhancer (Braun & Clarke, 2021). According to King and Brooks (2017), participants’ responses to the presented data can be “an additional source of information which enriches the analysis but is itself subject to critical reflection as much as the original data” (p. 223). Consequently, member checking was not perceived in the present study as a tool to minimize researcher subjectivity as subjectivity is at the heart of any qualitative exploration (Smith & McGannon, 2018). In order to maximize the amount of feedback collected in the process of member checking, the participants were granted access not only to the transcripts of their individual interviews, but also to the findings section of the current study. According to McKim (2023), sharing findings with the participants facilitates a more effective, dialogical interaction between the participants and the researcher, since “the participants can see the integration of their story or experience with other participants’ stories” (p.46). Following McKim’s (2023) revised approach to member checking in qualitative research, after each participant had a chance to familiarize themselves with the findings, the researcher conducted brief interviews with each of the teachers in order to collect their general thoughts about the findings and gauge their thoughts about how well their experiences were captured in the study. After receiving all data collected in the course of the study including video recordings and interview transcripts, the participants of the study were also presented with the findings from the analysis of the data collected by the researcher on their reflective journeys. İpek and Sena read the analysis of their experiences with smiles on their faces,

reminiscing on the transformations they managed to introduce to their teaching practice. While Sena felt particularly proud of her transformed relationship with her students and the trust she learned to put in them in the face of her own mistakes, İpek expressed satisfaction with the fact that her Actor I-position was subdued thanks to her reflective engagement. Although Buse's backpack has not undergone a significant change, she was, nevertheless, pleased to have solidified her beliefs about herself and her practice. She stated that the image she had of her classroom practice has been corroborated by what she saw on video recordings of her lessons, which further boosted her confidence in her beliefs and routines.

In the process of peer-debriefing, the data collected from the participants' reflective journals and interview transcripts were concurrently analyzed by the researcher and an expert in the field of qualitative research and thematic analysis with a wealth of experience in the field of ELT. Approximately 25% of all collected data were sent to the debriefer encompassing a combination of chunks of data which proved challenging for the researcher to code as well as excerpts which lent themselves to a more straightforward analysis. Such a composite of data is believed to substantially increase the reliability and effectiveness of the peer-debriefing process (Barber & Walczak, 2009). After both the researcher and the debriefer concluded the data analysis process, the researcher carefully compared the codes and themes until a high degree of "the stability of responses" was achieved (Creswell, 2013, p.253).

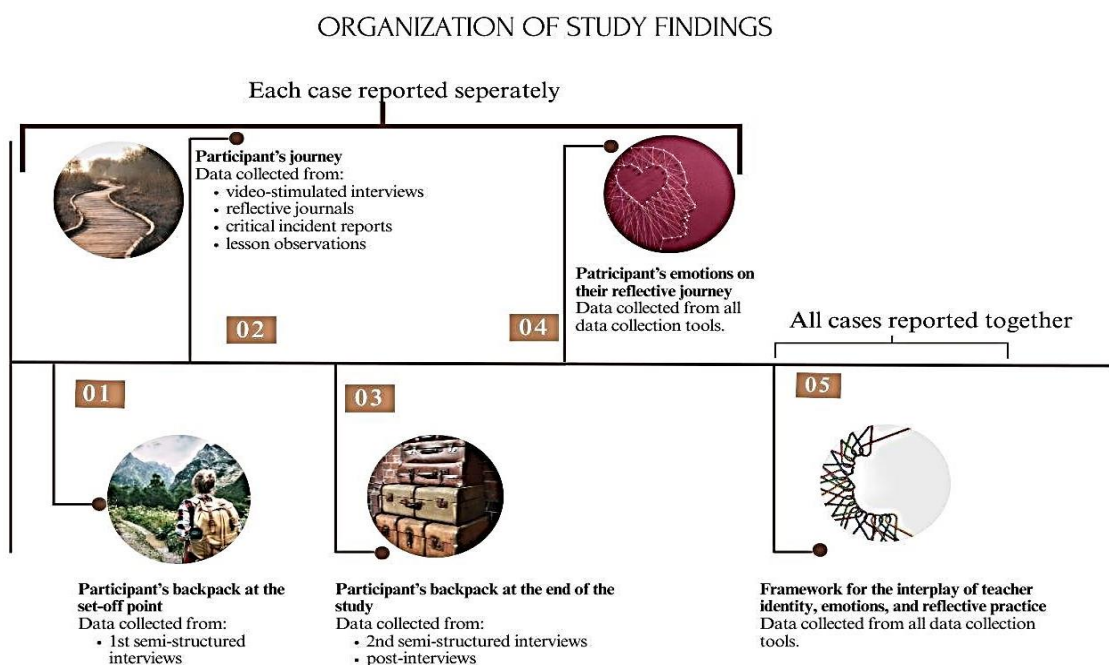
4. FINDINGS

4.1. Organisation and Presentation of the Findings

The current chapter offers an insight into how data collected in the present doctoral thesis were presented. The chapter has five distinct sections each focusing on a different aspect of the data. First, the self-reported I-positions central to each participant's language teacher identity were illustrated and thoroughly analyzed with the help of a metaphor of a backpack, a representation of the emotional baggage İpek, Sena, and Buse brought with them on their reflective journeys. Secondly, the path of each participant is reported on, marking any evolutions in their I-positions. Thirdly, with the participants' reflective journeys in the course of the study coming to a point of completion, their current backpacks were juxtaposed with the I-positions they self-reported at the beginning of their reflective paths. In the subsequent section, the focus was placed on the emotions experienced by the participants throughout their reflective journeys. After presenting these sections for each participant separately, the final section offers an insight into how language teacher identity and teacher emotions are connected during reflective engagement, offering a framework for the interplay of identity and emotions in reflective practice. The layout of the findings section was illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Organisation of study findings



The organisation and presentation of the data collected in the current doctoral study was heavily inspired by the theoretical framework adopted by the researcher, in particular the conceptualization of identity formation and identity development as a continuous journey through space and time (Bakhtin, 1986). According to the proponents of the dialogical theory of self, individuals embark on a journey towards self-awareness and self-exploration. However, such a journey will prove to be unsuccessful if an adequate amount of reflection and empathy is not displayed by the traveller. The power of reflective practice lies in its potential to slow down the pace of the journey and allow the traveller to look around the landscape they are in, notice individual elements and individuals around them, become more attentive and more sensitive to their environment, and, consequently, achieve a meta-position (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) argued that through reflection, teachers can assume a meta-position which grants them an observer's perspective, allowing them to distance themselves from the event and shed light on the underlying connections between different I-positions, their personal history as well as social and cultural contexts. The conceptualization of identity development and reflective practice as a journey was fully embraced in the presentation of collected data in the present study. Each participant's engagement in reflective practice over the eight-week duration of the study, the discoveries they made along the way, the elements and voices they noticed or heard, the self-awareness they gained or failed to gain in the process, were all visualised as a literal path towards self-discovery. New insights they gained were symbolized by objects or individuals they pass and notice along their paths. However, any obstacles they faced on the road, such as external factors limiting their ability to decrease the pace of their journey and reflect or tensions between existing and newly-formed I-positions, were also marked as obstacles on their paths. Regardless of the direction of their path and the pace of their walk, it is essential to understand that none of the participants embarked on their journey without a metaphorical baggage formed by their prior experience, already existing internalised and externalized I-positions, and their beliefs about themselves as ELT practitioners, ELT teaching practice and methodologies, as well as their understanding of who their students are. This emotional baggage was presented as a backpack filled with objects, each symbolizing an important I-position which emerged in the course of the first semi-structured interviews. The backpacks visualized the participants' self-reported views

and beliefs about themselves, their practice, and their students and can be interpreted as set-off points for their journeys. The metaphor of backpacks was revisited when reporting on potential developments and evolutions in İpek's, Buse's and Sena's language teacher identities after the study came to an end. Any changes in the content of their backpacks, including new objects that they collected on their path and objects that were left behind on the road, come to light when analyzing the current state of their metaphorical baggage. Each participant's journey was detailed separately and in chronological order, moving from the first week of data collection to the final interviews.

The artefacts from the participants' backpacks and their corresponding I-positions can be seen in the table below.

Table 4.1

Artefacts and their corresponding I-positions

Artefact	I-position
a book, a compass	• Experienced Teacher I-position
a balloon	• Fun Teacher I-position
a rubber band	• Adaptable Teacher I-position
a notepad	• Well-organised Teacher I-position
a mask	• Actor I-position
a mirror	• Human I-position
a computer chip	• Technophile I-position
a figurine of a lion	• Brave Teacher I-position
glasses	• Traditional Teacher I-position
a diary	• Private Teacher I-position
a friendship bracelet	• Student-friendly Teacher I-position

In recognition of the importance of emotions in reflective practice engagement, a separate section of the findings was devoted to the presentation of emotions that emerged during each participant's journey. Dialogical perspective recognizes emotions as vital factors on an individual's path to self-discovery (Vitanova, 2010). Emotions are also crucial triggers, allowing individuals to notice more on their paths and, consequently, initialize the process of reflective engagement (Bakhtin, 1986; White, 2018). Thus, a separate section was allocated to examining the emotions that emerged during each participant's reflective engagement.

The final section of the presentation of data collected in the present doctoral dissertation, was allocated to drawing comparisons between all three participants' journeys and creating a detailed framework of the interplay between three building blocks of the present research: language teacher identity, teacher emotions, and the engagement in reflective practice.

4.2. The Case of İpek

4.2.1. İpek's backpack at the start of her reflective journey

The photo generated below symbolizes İpek's self-reported I-positions at the start of the data collection for the present study. Four objects in her backpack symbolize each I-position being central to İpek's language teacher identity. The rubber band symbolizes her Adaptable Teacher I-position. The well-worn book is a manifestation of her Experienced Teacher I-position. Finally, the band-aids symbolize her Empathetic Teacher I-position whereas her Well-Organized Teacher I-position is illustrated with a checklist.

Figure 4.2

İpek's backpack at the beginning of her journey



İpek's Adaptable Teacher I-position

İpek embarked on her reflective journey with four objects, each symbolizing a different I-position she assumed at the onset of the data collection process. The rubber band is a symbol of her adaptability and an ability to alter her behaviour and even beliefs or attitudes depending on the situation and the teaching environment. Even when

describing her teaching style, she emphasized the fluid and adaptive nature of her professional identity.

“My teaching style, what can I say, actually it is sometimes traditional, sometimes very communicative, sometimes teacher-based, sometimes student-oriented. I have a very complicated teaching philosophy. It depends on the activity, class, and how they approach to the activities. Some classes are too silent, they don’t want to do group work or talk to their partners. They want to be alone. If the majority is like that I try to do more teacher-oriented activities and they study individually better. But in a class that is really talkative, they like each other and socialize very easily, we do group work a lot. It is important to understand the environment and their character in the beginning.” (İpek’s first semi-structured interview)

İpek emphasized the fact that she pays close attention to her students in order to make a decision about which teaching style she should adopt with a given class. However, her Adaptable Teacher I-position has also had a significant impact on her whole attitude to teaching. She reflected on a major change that happened in her after starting work at the current university, which was precipitated by a different student profile. She described students in her former institution as “traditional students” who “wanted to read and write, listen and write”. Accommodating to their preferences, İpek described herself as “a bit traditional, grammar-translation method teacher”. After commencing work at her current institution, she quickly noticed that the students’ profile is strikingly different with a stronger preference for fun and communicative classroom activities. Interestingly, although her adaptability allowed her to make a significant change in her practice, moving from a traditional teacher to a more student-oriented and caring educator, this switch was not made completely voluntarily. In her interview, İpek spoke of the pressure she felt from students who compared her lessons with other teachers’ classes, making it sound as if she did not have much of a choice but to conform to her colleagues’ teaching styles. She admitted to comparing herself to other teachers working at the university and feeling envious of the praise they received from their students.

“...maybe it’s about the other teachers, because some teachers really use communicative and technological methods and if you don’t use them students ask you “hocam, bla bla teacher does this but you don’t” (laughter). That’s another teacher, I compare myself with them. ... For example a class I shared with X teacher, I felt the pressure there. X teacher plays games with us, X teacher uses this application, X hocam, X hocam. It’s a kind of jealousy.” (İpek’s first semi-structured interview)

Her adaptability was also evident in the way she modified teaching materials to suit her students' needs and preferences. Even though her adaptability was constrained by the lesson pacing which specifies which exercises from the coursebook need to be covered during each lesson period, İpek exercised her adaptability by shortening or lengthening the amount of time spent on each task, depending on how engaged her students found it.

The impact of İpek's teaching experience on her language teacher identity

The second item in İpek's travel inventory was a well-worn book which is meant to symbolize her teaching experience. During the interview, İpek underscored the length of her teaching tenure and recognized its value in helping her make day-to-day decisions in the classroom.

"I can understand their faces after 18 years. Whether they are happy, interested or not. For example, in the book there are some activities they didn't show any interest in so I just tried to keep them short. But if they really want to say something, they are excited, I try to give more time." (İpek's first semi-structured interview)

Consequently, a harmonious relationship between her Adaptable Teacher I-position and her Experienced Teacher I-position could already be brought to light. Her teaching experience and the knowledge she has accumulated of her students' body language and behaviour, allowed her to make more informed decisions about her teaching practice, and modify how she presented the teaching material and how much time she devotes to each task.

Despite many years spent in the teaching profession, İpek did not display full confidence in her own teaching style, as evident from the feeling of envy she felt towards some of her colleagues who enjoyed huge popularity among their students. For the sake of the context, it should be added that the quarterly teaching system implemented at İpek's educational institution entailed that students had an opportunity to have classes with several teachers over the course of their educations at the preparatory school. Naturally, an exposure to different ELT practitioners and their varying teaching styles triggered continuous discussions among students about which instructor they preferred. These comparisons, although not usually discussed openly in front of the instructors, reached the teachers and either boosted their confidence and self-esteem or eroded it. Despite the competitive spirit fuelled by constant rankings made by students, İpek did not refrain from turning to her colleagues for help, counting

on their outside-of-the-box thinking to serve creative fixes to challenges she experienced: “Sometimes when I communicate with my colleagues, I ask them: this activity, how do you do it in the classroom? They give different ideas, some people are very creative.” Notably, when discussing the expectations İpek held regarding her participation in the current study, she revealed that, just like from her colleagues, she also hoped for receiving advice from the researcher. Consequently, it can be said that, despite the fact that İpek’s teaching experience exceeded the tenure of most of her colleagues and the researcher, she automatically assumed an open position of a student, welcoming any advice she could get on refining her teaching practice.

“Maybe, you are the researcher, you can give me some ideas about my teaching methodology, who I am as a teacher. Am I a good person? Or not. Maybe you can make comments on the things I did. Maybe I can learn something different, another technique I didn’t know.” (İpek’s first semi-structured interview)

İpek’s Empathetic Teacher I-position and emotional control

İpek’s Empathetic Teacher I-position is symbolized by a packet of band-aids she took with herself on her reflective journey. A great example of her ability to empathize with her students and use this skill to influence their behaviour was her interaction with a disruptive and disrespectful student. An incident she recounted involved a student throwing worksheets she had just handed him on the floor to show how bored and disinterested he felt in the lesson. Preventing a sudden outburst of anger, İpek calmly waited until the end of the lesson to confront the student. She explained the impact his behaviour had on herself and his classmates, and asked him to imagine himself in her position by saying: “When you behave like this you really spoil my class and affect the other students. Please, don’t do this. One day you can be a teacher and be in this position. Please”. This technique proved to be successful and contributed to a positive change in the student’s attitude and behaviour, simultaneously strengthening İpek’s belief in the power of empathy and the importance of emotional control.

İpek’s Well-organised Teacher I-position

The final object in İpek’s backpack was a checklist which symbolized her Well-Organised Teacher I-position. She confessed that she spends a lot of time preparing for her classes. Apart from reading through guidelines and teaching tips listed in the teacher book, she also regularly checked the equipment and the classroom, making sure that the

smartboard turns on properly, and the online presentation tools for the coursebook can be used. These checks gave her a sense of security and allowed her to minimize the risk of experiencing technical problems during the lessons.

“To feel secure I always go to class before the lessons. I just check the apps, smartboard. I check the environment. This is really important for me in this school. Another one, a teacher's book. I think it's prepared very well. I always read the clues, tips for teachers and there are really creative activities for starters. I like them. I read the teacher's book to prepare.” (İpek's first semi-structured interview)

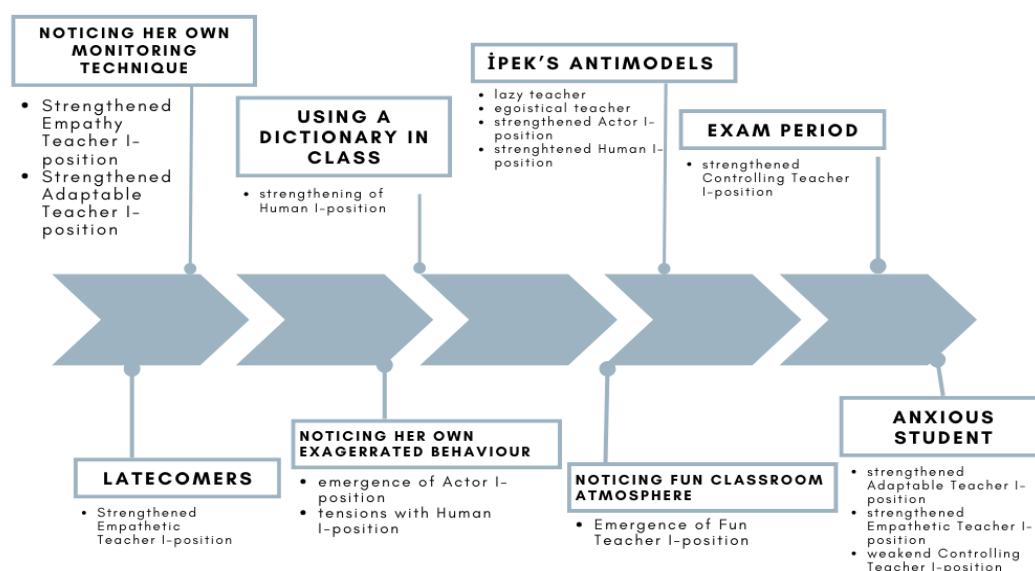
Drawing similarities to İpek's openness to feedback evident from her conversations with her colleagues as well as her attitude to participating in the current study, she also used the teacher's book of the coursebook as a source of advice and inspiration.

4.2.2. İpek's reflective journey (weeks 2-3)

The figure below illustrates İpek's reflective journey in the second and third weeks of data collection. This section of her path was marked by major developments in İpek's language teacher identity with a strengthening of her Empathetic Teacher and Human I-positions. At the same time, as a result of tensions between aforementioned I-positions and Actor as well as Controlling Teacher I-positions, the latter aspects of her language teacher identity were considerably subdued.

Figure 4.3

Roadmap of İpek's journey (weeks 2-3)



The guiding role of İpek's teaching experience on her reflective journey

The first part of İpek's journey spanned through week 2 and week 3 of the data collection process and it was an eventful part of her path with major evolutions in her teacher identity credited to her ability to slow down and notice elements and individuals around her. First and foremost, the role her teaching experience played on this passage of her journey needs to be noted. İpek's vast teaching experience was illustrated on her roadmap as a road sign, directing her on her path. Firstly, her teaching experience made her feel more secure on the path. She recalled how stressed and anxious she was when her lesson was recorded during a CELTA course, back when she was an inexperienced ELT practitioner. However, when noting down her thoughts after the first video-stimulated interview in her reflective journal, she took notice of the fact that her response to video observations in the study was entirely different. She attributed this feeling of safety and security to her teaching experience: "I remember my old CELTA days. We were being observed like this. In those days, I wasn't feeling safe and comfortable but this time, after years, I felt safer" (İpek, reflective journal, week 2).

Apart from offering her a sense of comfort and safety, her teaching experience has also manifested itself in beliefs she held about A2 students and different teaching routines she implemented in the recorded lesson. For instance, during her video-stimulated interview, she listed a number of ingrained beliefs about elementary level students which she has formed over the years. She believed that, despite their low proficiency levels, A2 students can be summarized as good and active. She also held a belief that grammar at this level needs to be taught through detailed grammar presentation conducted by the teacher: "In this level grammar is something we really need to teach directly. We need to be clear and direct" (İpek's first video-stimulated interview). During the same interview, she also commented on her monitoring routine which involved closely monitoring the students during grammar and writing tasks, but not interfering during speaking activities done in pairs. She believed that tasks focused on grammar and writing skills needed to be tightly managed by the teacher whose task was to circle between the desks, pay attention to errors and set a strict time limit for the tasks.

"In the speaking activity I didn't want to disturb them because they are between themselves. In a writing activity, I want to see their writing, spelling, grammar. Are they filling in the blanks, doing the exercise? "For the speaking I could hear what was going on.

They were speaking, I heard. From outside it's easier to understand speaking exercises better. For writing and grammar exercises I want to see with my eyes ...If I correct them while they are speaking it can be demotivating for them. Interruption all the time, checking. I just feel myself rude at that time, like people are talking personally and you are disturbing them all the time.” (İpek’s first video-stimulated interview)

Questioning teaching routines through empathy

Even though her teaching experience helped her navigate on her path, it did not block her for slowing down, looking around, and noticing things that might not align with the beliefs and routines she formed over the years. An interesting example of this was her realisation that vigilant monitoring of her students during grammar exercises might have a detrimental effect on their concentration. İpek’s incredibly active monitoring routine was a staple part of her teaching style. As observed by the researcher, İpek did not sit down for longer than a minute and she was constantly pacing between her students’ desks, checking their books and notebooks. She usually remained silent when monitoring students, unless she was asked a direct question, but stood very close to the students when they were working, often positioning herself behind their backs and leaning over them to see what they were writing. This practice was further consolidated by an antimodel of a “lazy Turkish teacher” which İpek tried to distance herself from.

“In the Turkish education system, if the teacher sits all the time it means he is lazy. He is not a good teacher, he is not interested enough. He is there just to earn money and go home. Not to give anything to students. In the Turkish education system, there is a belief like this. I think I am here not to earn money (laughter).” (İpek’s first video-stimulated interview)

Reflecting on the recording of her lesson, İpek found her well-established routine of vigilant monitoring to be disruptive for the students. Even though this strategy has been continuously implemented in her classes and formed a part of her Experienced Teacher I-position, İpek was ready to question it and modify it. The driving force behind this realisation was her ability to empathize with her students. She was able to put herself in her students’ position and imagine how her monitoring routine could affect their well-being and performance during the class. Consequently, her behaviour in the classroom was not only influenced by her teaching experience, but was also shaped by the Empathetic Teacher I-position, which frequently manifested itself on this part of her reflective journey.

“I couldn't notice it before. I run so much, exercise in the class. Okay, a very active person as a teacher in the class, always inside of everything, every exercise, I don't leave them alone. I am always, how can I say, a kind of checker. On their head. That's maybe a bit weird thing for them. If I were a student under these circumstances, I would say, just leave me alone for a while, give me time, something like that. ... I don't know, you know. Maybe I should stop myself for a while. It's like a monster, above their heads. Like a horror film. Sometimes.” (İpek's first video-stimulated interview)

İpek's Empathetic Teacher I-position

The strength of İpek's Empathetic Teacher I-position can also be illustrated by a reflection on her teacher talking time during the video-stimulated interview and a close bond she formed with a working student in one of her classes. In line with her belief that A2 students need to be taught in a direct and clear way, she often repeated her instructions multiple times and also reiterated the students' answers to grammar exercises from the coursebook. However, watching a recording of her lesson made her realise that this practice can often be counter-productive, eroding students' self-confidence. She also used empathy to put herself in her students' position and confessed that she would find constant repetitions to be irritating.

“When I think of myself, if someone repeats the same sentence all the time, it can make me angry. ...I repeat the same thing again again, like correct the mistakes, because some of them are mistakes. It's nonsense. It's not necessary to say it. I was not aware I do it. If I would, I wouldn't do it. ...Yes, it's like I am correcting something, but no, I am just repeating. Maybe they think they mispronounced it. Also, if he gives an incorrect answer, what will I say at that time?” (İpek's first video-stimulated interview)

In her reflective journal, İpek paid special attention to one of her students, a mother-of-two who was also an actively working nurse. It was observed by the researcher that the student came to class over fifteen minutes late, which is against school rules and should be marked in the attendance list as an absence. İpek's reaction to the late coming student was entirely different. She welcomed the student with a smile and immediately approached her desk to show her which activity the class was doing. Having the ability to show empathy and appreciation towards the student, İpek confessed during her first video-stimulated interview that she decided to bend the rules of the institution and allow this student to come late to classes without any consequences. Further conversation on the topic revealed that her leniency towards latecomers was not only extended to this particular student on the account of her busy professional life, but to all of İpek's

students. Again, İpek's Empathetic Teacher I-position was the foundation for the bending of administrative rules.

"It's never possible to stop them or leave them outside the class. I don't want to break their motivation by saying, you can't enter, you are late. I don't like these kinds of things. They are human beings. Maybe they are in the toilet, how do I know? I don't say anything bad. I just ask the reason. If they are 20 minutes late, okay, I ask where have you been. Why are you late? These kinds of questions. But I never, how can I say, discriminate against them for being late. I just feel that sympathy when I think of my student years. I could be the student at that time. Maybe I had a special need." (İpek's first video-stimulated interview)

The self-discovery of İpek's Fun Teacher I-position

In the course of the first video-stimulated interview, İpek made an important discovery that allowed her to unlock a new I-position of a Fun Teacher. Reminiscing on her "traditional teacher" behaviour in the previous workplace and the pressure her students exerted on her to adopt a fun and playful teaching style of some of her colleagues, İpek did not see herself as a fun teacher. Taking this into account, she was genuinely and pleasantly surprised when she noticed her students' body language and an overall joyful and comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. The fun atmosphere was also evident from the researcher's observation notes in which multiple jokes and outbursts of laughter in the classroom were noted down. Whenever İpek's students laughed in the recording of the observed class, İpek reacted to each of such instances with a smile on her face and almost a sense of disbelief with how entertained her students actually were during the lesson. In such moments, she would even try to attract the researcher's attention to the fun atmosphere by pausing the recording and exclaiming: "Look, we are laughing! Can you see that? They are laughing".

The same relaxed and fun classroom atmosphere was also reported by İpek in her first critical incident report in which, despite some difficulties resulting from having a mixed-ability group of students, she praised herself on her ability to establish and maintain a friendly, communication-oriented classroom atmosphere: "They seem more interested and active. They really like the materials and the book. The class is fun." (İpek's first critical incident report)

Emphasizing the human aspect of teaching

İpek's reflections were riddled with strong remarks about the human aspect of the teaching profession. She felt that teachers should not be put on a pedestal as all-knowing professionals who do not display emotions in class. This attitude was also evident in the video-recorded lesson. As observed by the researcher, there were instances where İpek was asked a question about a vocabulary item by a student, but she was not able to find the correct word on the spot. Instead of giving an approximate answer or dismissing the question, she took the time to check the word in a dictionary in front of the whole class. Consequently, İpek revealed the imperfect nature of her knowledge and expertise to her students, which strengthened her Human I-position.

"I said let's check the Tureng dictionary together because I don't know. I don't have any problems with this situation. I don't know the meaning, I never saw it before. I said, let's check the dictionary. I am a human being, I might not know everything in a language. Even in Turkish there are words we don't know. I always say it to students. I never feel embarrassed." (İpek's first video-stimulated interview)

Apart from the previously mentioned "lazy Turkish teacher" antimodel which fueled her monitoring technique, another antimodel came to the surface when İpek reflected on her ability to reveal gaps in her knowledge in front of the class. The egotistical Turkish teacher manifested an attitude to teaching that İpek was not a proponent of, emphasizing the authority of teachers as unquestionable sources of all knowledge related to English.

"Instead of giving them false information or telling them incorrect things, it's always very good to check the real sources. We are human beings, we can be mistaken or forget it, not remember it. It's possible. Some teachers are not like this. It's kibir, ego. In Turkish we say kibir for that. They don't want to accept that they are mistaken. They think they will lose their effect on students. It's ego." (İpek's first video-stimulated interview)

She also emphasized the fact that her active behaviour and expressive body language in class is a reflection of her behaviour outside of the workplace, tracing it back as far as to her childhood years.

"I am very active, you know.... I am always walking, moving. Checking them....Actually, I am a moving person, in my personal life also. I like moving. I am a bit excited, active person. I don't know. It's my personality, from my childhood. My mum tells me my child stories and they are not normal stories, not normal childhood stories. For example, when I was 5 years old, they tried to take my photos and I never stopped somewhere and they had

to run after me. Or I climbed the trees that a normal child can not climb.” (İpek’s first video-stimulated interview)

Tensions between the Human and Actor I-positions

Having emphasized the human and natural aspect of her teaching practice and teacher identity, İpek was utterly shocked to observe how “exaggerated” and “theatrical” her behaviour in class was. She questioned the excessive expressiveness of her emotions during the class, such as an outburst of happiness when her students understood her instructions, summarizing it by saying that she felt like a “theatre player”. The theatre metaphor was also reiterated at the end of her first video-stimulated interview.

“But my physical reactions are a bit problematic, in my opinion. No need. While watching the video, in many places I asked myself why are you doing this. In general, I feel good to watch myself. It’s like watching a theater player or someone else.” (İpek’s first video-stimulated interview)

The tension between the human and emotional aspect of teaching and an exaggerated Actor I-position resulted in a lot of confusion and almost a disassociation that İpek experienced when watching herself teach: “This is a strange feeling, what can I say. I feel like this is someone else, not me”. Despite the initial shock, she quickly made a firm decision about the path she would like to follow and made a promise to herself to limit the expressive behaviour and exaggerated physical activity she displayed in the observed lesson, thus trying to distance herself from the Actor I-position and cherish her more genuine, Human I-position.

The emergence of the Controlling Teacher I-position in the exam period

Arriving at her first roadblock, İpek reflected on the impact of assessment on her students and herself. The period of assessment was particularly draining for her students, who felt anxious and stressed. In turn, İpek became more controlling during her lessons, which was also observed in the recorded lesson. In line with her belief that A2 grammar needs to be taught explicitly, she frequently repeated the rules when working on Present Simple question structure. Grammar knowledge is also vital for students in order to pass examinations conducted at the institution, with high-stakes summative assessment of grammar and vocabulary accounting for a significant percentage of the final grade. What is more, the Controlling I-position which crept up during this period was exacerbating the exaggerated behaviour and activeness of the

Actor I-position. For example, İpek described how closely and vigilantly she monitored her students when they work on grammar tasks necessary for the upcoming exams, going as far as checking if the students were hiding mobile devices inside their coursebooks.

“I need to see if they are doing the exercise or playing with their smartphones. Sometimes they put their phones in the middle of the book and pretend they are doing the exercise....I check students all the time. Are they doing it? Have they understood how to do it? I always try to control them.” (İpek’s first video-stimulated interview)

However, during this stressful period, İpek was still able to reflect on the controlling aspect of her teacher identity thanks to a strong Empathetic Teacher I-position. For instance, when a student confided in her that she feels too anxious to take part in a speaking activity, İpek consoled her and decided to change the nature of the task to increase the student’s comfort and confidence, leaning towards her Adaptive Teacher I-position. Secondly, when watching herself on video, she managed to put herself in her students’ position and made a decision to monitor less ostentatiously and give her students more autonomy in the time allocated for each task.

“I think you can do it in 2 minutes”. It’s very, a bit authoritative. I decide everything...Maybe I can wait and watch them. It’s better. Sometimes just give them a chance to decide something. You can’t control everything.” (İpek’s first video-stimulated interview)

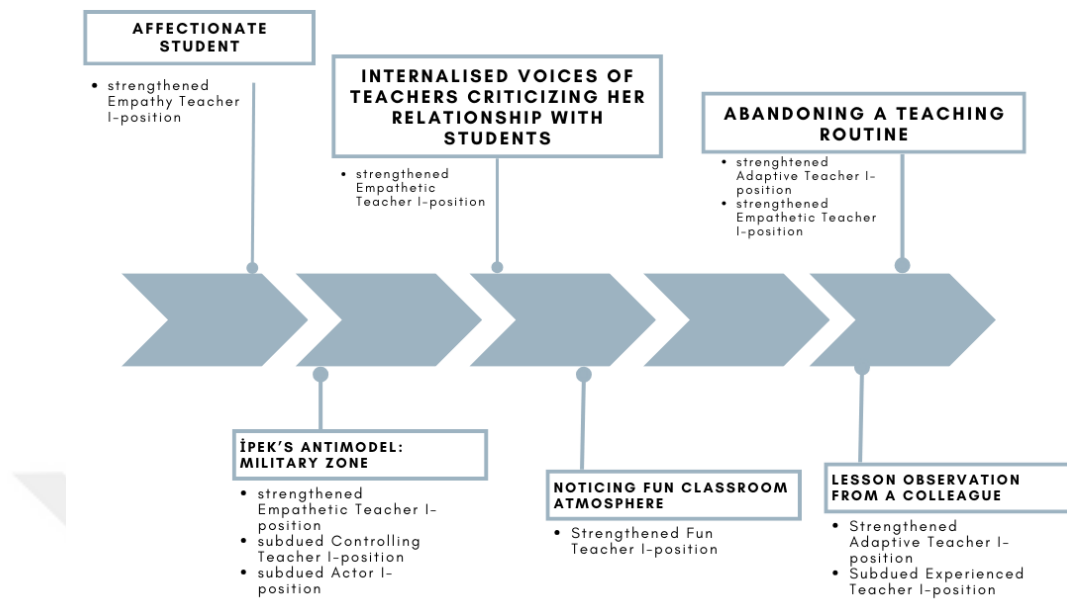
As a result of her growing Empathetic Teacher I-position, İpek was able to navigate through the roadblock with a caring, adaptive, and empathetic attitude towards her students and her classroom practice.

4.2.3. Midpoint of İpek’s reflective journey (week 4)

The midpoint of İpek’s reflective path is illustrated in the figure below. This section of her journey was particularly abundant in references to İpek’s antimodels and external I-positions such as her colleagues, with their powerful impact reported on other I-positions forming İpek’s language teacher identity.

Figure 4.4

Midpoint of İpek's reflective journey



The importance of empathy in student-teacher relationships

The fourth week of İpek's journey exhibited a further strengthening of her Empathetic Teacher, Fun Teacher and Adaptive Teacher I-positions combined with a significant weakening of the Controlling Teacher and Actor I-positions. Her empathetic and caring side was bolstered by a warm interaction with one of her students. As narrated in her reflective journal, a female student approached her after the class and unexpectedly hugged her, making her feel loved, appreciated and valued, like a mother.

"One day we were about to go for lunch. I was with a student, just next to each other and all of a sudden, I don't know why, she hugged me. I don't know why. I also hugged her. Yeah. I didn't say anything, I just smiled. I felt emotional. Sometimes I feel like a mum." (İpek's reflective journal, week 4)

However, during her second video-stimulated interview, the internalised voices of some of her colleagues threatened to diminish the central position of her Empathetic Teacher I-position. She acknowledged that some teachers strongly believe in a need for distance between students and their teachers, arguing that if a teacher becomes too closely and emotionally attached to their students, they run a risk of losing their authority and respect. Nevertheless, the empathetic aspect of İpek's teacher identity remained unscattered by such comments, and through her spontaneous reflections during the interview, she even openly stated that empathy should be at the heart of student-teacher

relationships. She also used her own experiences as a student studying far from home to justify the motherly instinct she felt towards her class.

“Some people make a comment about this. Like, there must be a level between the students and a teacher. But this is not about this. We are all human beings. This is a sign of like, love. It is just an emotion, feeling. I don’t think I am having, we say in Turkish *laçka*. ... It means you become friends with somebody too much. Unnecessarily much. There is no level between you. Some people think it’s something like that. I don’t feel like that. We are teachers, sometimes we feel like we are their mum or older sister. They come from different cities, for the first time they are apart from their families. I know this feeling very well because when I was a university student my hometown was 16 hours far away from my school. I really felt this feeling, like a sorrow, at that time. Now I understand them very well. I just try to feel empathy. It’s a rule. It must be a rule in relationships between teacher and students. As a teacher you should think if I were a student, what would I do”. (İpek’s second video-stimulated interview)

Reflection-in-action and the adaptation of course materials

İpek’s Adaptive Teacher I-position was evident from an interesting instance of an impromptu reflection-in-action as a response to an unsuccessful pronunciation exercise. In the task which instructed students to repeat sentences from a recording, the pauses between the sentences proved to be much too short for the class to be able to repeat them before the next sentence was given. After a minute, İpek noticed the fault in the exercise and the resulting confusion among her students, and decided to cut the exercise short. In harmony with her Human I-position, she also made sure to voice her feelings on the quality of the task and openly criticized the coursebook developers for making such a mistake.

“It is also kind of natural. Actually, students don’t care about it, if there is a mistake or if there is an activity like this. They don’t care and you don’t hide your feelings at that time. Because even if you are a teacher, you are a human being at the same time.” (İpek’s second video-stimulated interview)

In contrast to the abovementioned I-positions, the Controlling Teacher and Actor I-positions were considerably subdued at this stage of İpek’s journey. This change was noticed by İpek during the interview as well as the researcher during the lesson observation. İpek remained seated for longer periods of time, giving her students time to work on the tasks and only approaching them when she was called. This stood in stark contrast to the first lesson observation during which İpek paced quickly between the

desks, leaned above her students' heads to control what they were writing and only sat down once to take the attendance. İpek compared the atmosphere in the first observed class to a military zone, with her in the role of a general barking orders at students and controlling their every move.

"I am not walking too much. It's about watching myself. The last time when I watched myself I really became, how can I say, disturbed. Yeah, disturbed about myself. ... It was nonsense to walk that much among students while they are studying on something. Maybe they can also feel stressed. I don't know. This time I was more careful....Also, I don't want to interfere all the time. It can be demotivating for them. For example, think that 3 people are talking and you are listening and telling them, don't do this bla bla. It's like a, how can I say, interruption and, like a military zone, you know. This is the word. Military zone. Don't do this, don't do this." (İpek's second video-stimulated interview)

Fluctuations in İpek's Controlling Teacher I-position and the weakening of Actor I-position

Be that as it may, the controlling side of İpek was still active during grammar-focused sections of the lesson and she even acknowledged that grammar lessons are her absolute favourite owing to the fact that the students' performance and their learning outcomes can be easily controlled and readily checked. As such, according to İpek, grammar activities stand in contrast to speaking or listening tasks which take time to yield noticeable results. Her belief that A2 grammar needs to be taught in a teacher-focused way with ample amounts of repetition as a way to achieve clarity was still active and could be observed by the researcher in the amount of time allocated to giving instructions for grammar exercises in comparison with communicative tasks. Even though the grammar tasks in the coursebook had straightforward instructions written above each exercise (e.g. completing the gaps or correcting mistakes), İpek took time to carefully go through the instructions and repeat them two or in some cases even three times. At the same time, instructions for a communicative task with a more complex aim of ranking features of an ideal neighbourhood in order of importance, were given once and very fast, resulting in some pairs of students talking about their own neighbourhoods instead.

The Actor I-position was also consciously subdued in this week of data collection, and it was something İpek felt very proud of and congratulated herself on during the interview. She made a point of pointing it out to the researcher several times during the

interview. She also attributed this change in her practice directly to the engagement in reflective practice stimulated by a video recording of her previous lessons.

“Look, I am interfering but not that much. Not like the last time. It was a very good experience for me. I haven’t had such an experience in my life for years. Somebody comes to my class, monitors and takes a video. Then they make me watch. This is a very useful thing for me.” (İpek’s second video-stimulated interview)

It is important to note that, in İpek’s mind, the I-positions of the Controlling Teacher and the Actor were closely intertwined. The need to control her students, constantly check on them and be in charge of every aspect of their performance in class resulted in excessive movement which she found to be exaggerated. Nevertheless, the decrease of physical activity she implemented in the classroom had profound effects on her well-being, making her feel literally and metaphorically more secure.

“In this lesson I feel like a normal teacher. I sit more. Not like a hectic person. I feel more relaxed and secure. I can say. Secure. I don’t know why. I feel secure. ...In the other class I also felt it but this time it is better. More rooted.” (İpek’s second video-stimulated interview)

Questioning ELT dogmas through Adaptive Teacher I-position

Finally, an interesting tension between her vast teaching experience and the Adaptive Teacher I-position was evident in the way İpek grappled with her use of a well-established and ingrained teaching routine. İpek narrated that as a student-teacher and later throughout her career, she has always been taught to push students to give longer answers by asking them to give reasons for their ideas. This technique was observed by the researcher in both of the recorded classes, but was even more ubiquitous in the second observed lesson. Watching herself asking for reasons and evaluating students’ reactions to her prompt, İpek chose to question a routine she has been cultivating for years and ultimately abandon it all together. Her ability to adapt to her teaching environment allowed her to make a change in a routine she has never questioned or contemplated on before. Her Empathetic Teacher I-position was also at play here as she considered how uncomfortable she would feel if somebody insisted on hearing reasons for every idea she had. The role of examinations in the widespread cultivation of this teaching routine was also observed by İpek as she reflected on the connection between speaking exams conducted in the institution and teachers’ classroom practice. For the sake of the context, it should be noted that the speaking exam in İpek’s institution

requires students to validate every opinion they have with reasons in a very structured manner. Each idea given as a response to the exam prompt needs to be substantiated with at least one reason and one example. If a student answers a question but fails to justify it with a valid reason and an illustrative example, they are punished with a decreased speaking exam score.

“This “why” question is like a tradition. Somebody says something and you always need to ask “why”. There should be a reason all the time. Why do we ask this question all the time? I sometimes feel ridiculous to ask why, why, why. It’s a tradition coming from speaking exams. In our speaking exam questions there is always a why. Also, it’s not about their generation, maybe it’s our mistake. Is there a reason, in our native language, is there a reason that, is it compulsory to have a reason for everything in our life. Sometimes I really don’t have a reason in my mind. I like something but I don’t know why. It is just a feeling. Yes, it’s not very good to ask why for everything. There is no why, I like it. This is my life.” (İpek’s second video-stimulated interview)

As İpek’s Adaptive Teacher I-position grew in strength in the process of reflective engagement, it also manifested itself in an ever-growing open attitude to feedback displayed by İpek. Similarly to the onset of her journey, İpek emphasized the fact that being an experienced teacher was not synonymous with knowing everything there is to know about the teaching profession. She underscored that being a teacher requires openness to feedback from others and is a continuous process of developing oneself. At the same time, she accentuated that this open attitude should extend to positive and negative feedback alike. This attitude provided evidence for the flexible and adaptive nature of İpek’s Experienced Teacher I-position. Rather than staying in the rigid frames of her beliefs and routines, İpek was adamant about the need to stay receptive and venture out of a well-beaten track designated by prior experience. This attitude manifested itself in the way İpek approached a lesson observation from her colleague, conducted as part of a mandatory continuous professional development activity at her school. She made sure to take notes of her colleague’s feedback and approached the experience with an open-mind and a hunger for learning.

“This week I was observed by a coordinator. She wrote me very positive comments. It also made me very happy. She was really very kind. She came to my class. It was also a good experience. She made some notes, she wrote something and I read it. I got something from it also. It is a kind of lifelong process. Every day you learn new things. Every day, you experience new people, things, and students. Maybe new techniques. This is a part of our job and it must be like this. We are teachers and we should be open to everything.

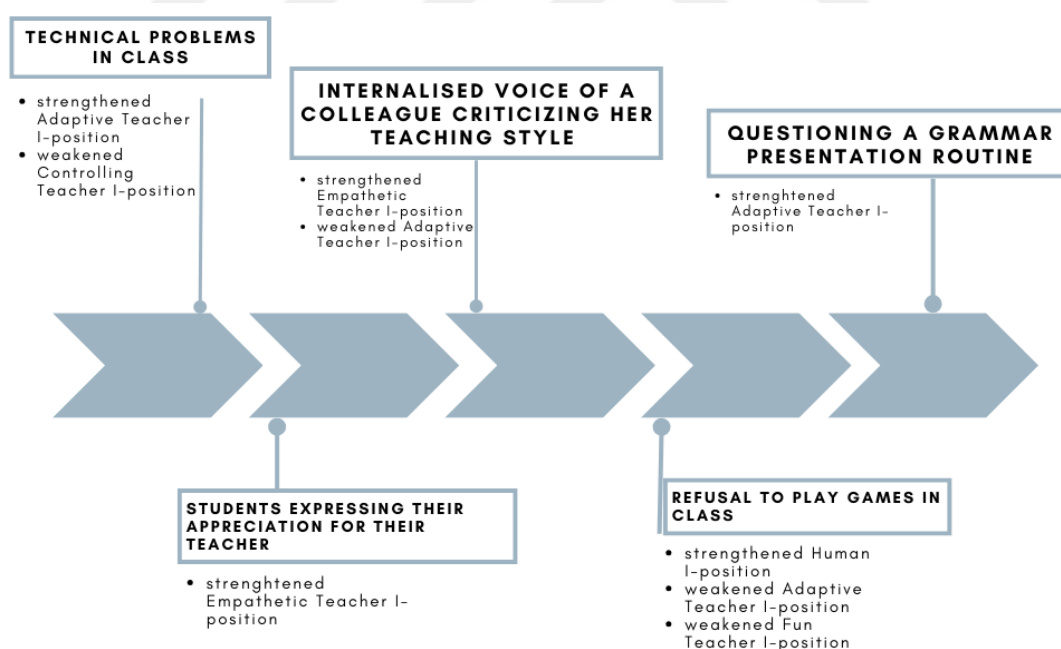
Criticism, ideas, sometimes bad, sometimes good.” (İpek’s second video-stimulated interview)

4.2.4. Final stretch of İpek’s journey (weeks 5-6)

At this point of her journey, İpek had already experienced significant changes in her teacher identity and her actual teaching practice. For instance, she realized that her classes are actually fun and enjoyable for her students, forming a new Fun Teacher I-position. Furthermore, she had a strong negative reaction to the amount of physical movement she did in the classroom and the extent of control she exerted over her students, which resulted in a dramatic decrease of both of these behaviours in her classroom practice and a weakening of her Actor and Controlling Teacher I-position, as observed by the researcher during the second lesson observation. Having made such important self-discoveries earlier on her path, the final stretch of İpek’s reflective journey was the smoothest one yet, with no major roadblocks on her way.

Figure 4.5

The last stretch of İpek’s reflective journey



İpek’s adaptive response to a technical problem

The first notable stop on her way was reported in the second critical incident report. As the students were slowly approaching the end of the teaching quarter and their stress levels increased at the thought of final exams looming ahead, İpek prepared a listening

activity to help her students prepare for the listening exam. The flash drive she brought did not work, leaving her with extra minutes in her lesson she needed to fill on the spot. Her reaction to the incident, as narrated in the report, proved the superiority of her Adaptive Teacher I-position over the Controlling Teacher one. Coming back to the first interview, İpek talked a lot about how she double-checks all her equipment and the classroom itself in order to feel secure and confident. However, even in an instance when she was not well-prepared and could not control her circumstances, she did not panic but modified the activity and carried on with her lesson plan. This incident showed how truly adaptive she has become: “I found another exercise for grammar and reading revision material. It wasn’t a big deal” (İpek’s second critical incident report).

İpek’s empathetic reaction to the end of the teaching quarter

The end-of-quarter exams proved to be stressful not only for her students, but also for İpek herself. However, in her reflective journal she focused more not on the stress of preparing for the examinations, but on the saddening prospect of leaving her students. In line with the metaphor of a mum she used in the previous weeks, İpek felt emotional about her lessons with her group coming to an end, almost as if she was forced to abandon them: “This quarter will end soon and it can be sad to feel that we will be apart with my students” (İpek’s reflective journal, week 5). A similar sentiment was also present in the following week’s reflective journal entry in which she acknowledged that she is ready to sacrifice her own well-being in order to care for her students and gain their admiration.

“This week, I was in a rush to keep up with the pacing, exam envelopes and some other duties like copying. However, as my students really care what I am doing for them, I don’t feel the tiredness. I feel precious when my students admire me.” (İpek’s reflective journal, week 6)

Consequently, İpek’s Empathetic Teacher I-position allowed her to, firstly, read her students’ emotions and subsequently feed from their positivity and affectionate attitude in order to fuel her teaching practice during the busy and challenging exam period.

Facing criticism from colleagues

The internalised voices of İpek’s colleagues kept coming back in her reflections throughout the weeks. At the onset of her journey she mentioned that she felt jealousy towards her colleagues who were adored by their students for introducing fun classroom

activities. At the midpoint of her journey, the voices of colleagues crept up again, this time criticizing her for forging excessively close bonds with her students. At the last stretch of her reflective path, İpek narrated the opinions of her colleagues, especially a former colleague from her previous workplace, bashing her for helping her students too much. However, her strong empathetic skills, combined with her motherly instincts towards the students proved to be stronger than the adverse comments and both her attitude and teaching practice remained unchanged in this aspect.

“Before they started I gave them some examples. Some people criticize this. They say you help too much. Just let them do it themselves. Don’t make the full sentences, bla bla. But still, maybe for A2 level we should make it easier for them. Also, I didn’t write it. I just talked about it. Just made them remember their background information about this topic. I don’t think it’s a problem, something unnecessary or something that doesn’t work. I remember a colleague of mine at a private university. In my class, she said, hocam, you help them too much. I said they need it.” (İpek’s third video-stimulated interview)

At the first glance, İpek’s response to this criticism could seem misaligned with her previous statements about necessary openness to feedback that she emphasized so much in her earlier reflections. After all, if she claimed to be so open-minded and willing to learn from others, why would she not accept her former colleague’s feedback but instantly reject it without a deeper thought. The answer seems to lie in the connection between her Empathetic Teacher I-position and her helpful and caring attitude to her students. İpek has frequently portrayed herself as her students’ mother or an older sister, accentuating her supportive role in the student-teacher dynamic. Limiting the support she offered to her students would stand in contrast to this position and threaten her Empathetic Teacher I-position. Therefore, it is clear that İpek’s adaptability and openness to feedback is constrained by the strength of her Empathetic Teacher I-position. Consequently, she is willing to adapt her teaching style if it benefits the students’ emotional well-being, but refuses to do so if a change can threaten the supportive and motherly student-teacher bond she cherishes. This observation is illustrative of the fact that İpek’s Adaptive Teacher I-position is not her dominant I-position and the Empathetic Teacher I-position overruled it.

Questioning a teaching routine: Explicit grammar presentation

Whereas İpek’s caring and warm attitude towards her students was maintained throughout her reflective journey, a core belief she held strongly at the onset of her path

was questioned by her during the last video-stimulated interview. This incident can also serve as an example of the role of İpek's teaching experience as a beacon guiding her on her path, but not restricting her view and allowing her to notice things that differ from her ingrained beliefs and routinized behaviours. At the beginning of her journey, İpek was very firm about the need to teach grammar explicitly to low proficiency level students. This approach was also observed by the researcher in the first and second lesson she watched. On the other hand, the last video-stimulated interview brought about a realisation that grammar can also be taught in a more communicative and implicit way, with a benefit to the students. İpek was not able to fully abandon her belief and practice, but started to question the rationale behind it and its imperative nature.

"Grammar explanation, very traditional way. It is also more teacher-centred and it has to be like that. Well, I can't say it has to be. It is my opinion, maybe I am wrong. In this video I see a more communicative teacher but I am still a traditional teacher. I am in the middle of something." (İpek's third video-stimulated interview)

Although İpek did not make any definitive plans about modifying her grammar presentation style, the sole fact of questioning the justification of this belief is a prove of the tumultuous relationship between her Experienced Teacher I-position and the Adaptive Teacher I-position. It can be speculated that the reason behind the difference in which İpek questioned her grammar presentation routine and the previously discussed routine of asking "why" to students, lies in its connection to the Empathetic Teacher I-position. In İpek's case, if a change in a well-established teaching routine was driven by a sense of empathy towards the student, it was more likely to be addressed and altered. In the example of pushing students to provide reasons for their opinions, İpek was able to approach this established practice from an empathetic perspective, reflecting on how annoying and irritating it would feel if somebody kept asking her "why" after every question. As a result, she questioned the necessity and effectiveness of this routine and quickly made a firm decision to avoid repeating it in the future. On the other hand, her reflections on grammar presentation techniques, devoid of any empathetic reaction, were much more tentative in nature and did not result in an actionable plan or a firm decision.

Revealing İpek's dominant I-positions

Another tension was also evident in a clash between the Fun Teacher and Human I-positions. Even though İpek realised that her classes are fun and enjoyable for her students, she put a firm limit on the type of fun activities she was willing to implement in her lessons. Gamified tasks were not aligned with her own preferences and personality, and she was not about to compromise her character to please her students, even though she was aware of how much they would appreciate it. This thought process is evident of the strength of her Human I-position and the limits of her Adaptive Teacher and Fun Teacher I-positions as she was only willing to adapt to her students' requests and wishes if they were also in harmony with her genuine interests and personality. Her Human persona was based on genuineness and naturality, blurring the line between who she is and how she behaves in and out of the classroom, making it impossible for her to fully conform to the pressure from her students and become a "gamer" in class.

"It's not my character. I can't play games in the class environment much. I tried but I just lost the discipline. So I didn't like it and I stopped it because I can't stand that noise there" (İpek's third video-stimulated interview).

Nevertheless, her Fun Teacher I-position was on full display at the last stretch of her reflective journal, evident from the fun atmosphere and jokes she cracked with her students during the observed lesson. As with the tensions between Adaptive Teacher I-position and the Empathetic Teacher I-position, the clash between İpek's Fun Teacher and Human I-positions is illustrative of a hierarchical relationship between different I-positions she assumed. Her reflections and their manifestations in the classroom point to the fact that in İpek's case, her Empathetic Teacher I-position and Human I-position are on top of the pyramid and have a potential to overrule and constraint the impact of other I-positions. They are also in a harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship as they share a lot of commonalities. For instance, İpek's Empathetic Teacher I-position emphasizes the role of emotions in student-teacher relationships. At the same time, her Human I-position drives her to reveal the imperfect and emotional aspect of her teacher identity, such as admitting to not knowing an English word or displaying her irritation when an ill-constructed pronunciation task confuses her students.

4.2.5. İpek's backpack at the end of the journey

The photos below symbolize the powerful evolutions İpek managed to experience on her reflective path, with a side-by-side comparison of her backpack at the onset and the finale of her reflective engagement. The strengthening of her Empathetic Teacher I-position was illustrated by a higher number of band-aids. Correspondingly, more rubber visible in the second photo symbolize the growing power of her adaptability. The emergence of a red balloon marks the discovery of her Fun Teacher I-position whereas the cracked mask is a representation of her subdued Actor I-position. Finally, the role of İpek's Experienced Teacher I-position was conceptualized as a compass instead of a book, marking the fact that İpek's experience guided her on her reflective path but did not cloud her judgement or block the receipt of new information and experiences which could contradict her ingrained beliefs and routines about teaching.

Figure 4.6

Side-to-side comparison of İpek's backpack at the beginning (left) and the end of the study (right)



The central role of empathy in İpek's language teacher identity

İpek's backpack has undergone significant changes, with new objects coming into her inventory, some objects being transformed, and some of them being damaged. First of all, the band-aids, symbolizing her Empathetic Teacher I-position, are still in her backpack. However, their amount has increased in comparison with the onset of her reflective journey, symbolizing the fact that this aspect of her identity has grown in strength and prominence. Empathy has been a crucial factor in almost every aspect of İpek's teaching practice, ranging from more general themes such as the motherly

instinct and care she developed for her groups to specific aspects of her classroom practice, e.g. the treatment of a late student who had a difficult working situation. In the last video-stimulated interview, she even openly stated that empathy is an indispensable rule that every teacher should follow. This sentiment continued during the last interview and the post-interview. What is more, when reflecting on the path she walked in the course of the study, İpek not only emphasized the importance of empathy among teachers, but also the power of empathy directed from students to their teacher. The experience of reflecting on her practice and being recorded, taught her that just as she cares for her students' well being, they also did their best to support her during lesson observations.

“And, you know, it was a different experience for me and my students. Being monitored. They like it. They were like, a kind of inspector came to class. They were more careful and they really wanted to participate. They really wanted to help me. They were thinking that you were monitoring me because of an inspection. You are evaluating me like highschool. There is a procedure in Türkiye. They thought you were an inspector and they wanted to help me. And that feeling made me happy because they like me and they wanted to help me.” (İpek's second semi-structured interview)

Developing the theme of empathy even further, İpek suggested that it should also be a staple element in interactions between school administration and the teaching staff. She underscored the importance of talking about one's feelings, being aware of the experienced emotions and accentuated the unbreakable connection between students' wellbeing and teachers' wellbeing, comparing it to two halves of an apple. She also took an issue with the fact that empathy is always expected from teachers, but it should never be a unidirectional transaction. What is more, negative emotions that are not addressed can easily accumulate and explode over time, exacerbating already existing problems. As stated earlier, her Empathetic Teacher I-position was also closely intertwined with the Human aspect of her identity as she drew parallels between a human, emotional teacher and exercising empathy.

“The system is based on students, students' feeling, needs, blabla. Student-friendly environment. But when we say teacher-friendly, teacher-based, it is misunderstood. Ah, they don't care about students, they are too traditional. It is not like that. I think the system should be based on teachers and students. If the teacher is happy, the students are happy as well. They don't differ from each other. It's like two halves of an apple. These kinds of things are really important in an educational system. Admin staff should ask the teachers

how they are feeling so they can understand if there is a problem. Are teachers happy or not? If the teacher is not happy, it will grow up and one day it will blow. When people ask me about my emotions, I am happy. Because I understand that they care. It's something human. We all have feelings.” (İpek's post-interview)

The guiding role of İpek's Experienced Teacher I-position

Another noteworthy change in İpek's backpack is the replacement of a well-worn book with a compass. Both of these objects illustrate teaching experience comprised of classroom routines and beliefs about students and ELT methodology. However, throughout her journey, İpek learned to question her established outlooks and classroom behaviours. The most illustrative example of that was her questioning of the deeply ingrained practice of asking “why” questions to students to push them to provide reasons for their ideas and opinions. She also grappled with her belief in explicit grammar teaching at lower levels of proficiency, not completely abandoning this belief, but acknowledging that it is not the sole alternative in all cases. Consequently, rather than a book with information written in permanent ink on its pages, her teaching experience became a guiding tool for her, providing a sense of security without obstructing her view and allowing her to change the direction of her path when deemed necessary. The reconceptualization of her teaching experience, alongside her strong Empathetic Teacher I-position, had also been a driving force behind the strengthening of her Adaptive Teacher I-position. Not being constrained by the dogmas of established ELT methodologies and beliefs rooted in her prior experience, İpek could manifest the potential of her adaptability. She was able to make on-the-spot decisions and adjustments to her classroom practice (e.g. modifying a task after sudden technical problems), experiment with more implicit and interactive techniques for grammar presentation, and bend the rules for latecomers driven by empathy towards a busy student. She also emphasized the fluidity and adaptability of her teaching practice during her final interview.

“I always perceive myself like a (pause) teacher in the middle of traditions and modernity (laughter). In the middle of it. I am neither traditional, nor modern (laughter). I am somewhere like that and I, I now feel the same thing again after watching myself three times. I am now again in the middle of something. In some videos I feel more communicative but in some videos I feel traditional. Or in some parts of the lesson I feel traditional, in some parts of the lesson I feel modern.” (İpek's second semi-structured interview)

The superiority of İpek's Human I-position

Nevertheless, her Adaptive Teacher I-position was not limitless and, together with the Fun Teacher I-position, it was overruled by a new I-position coming into play, her Human I-position. İpek was willing to make drastic changes to her classroom routines and her beliefs about herself and her students on a condition that they did not clash with her genuine and authentic human side, the way she thought and behaved in her private life. Her refusal to play games with her students can serve as a vivid example of the limitations of her Adaptable Teacher I-position. She was fully aware of the fact that her students wanted her to implement more fun and competitive elements into the lessons as it had been clearly and openly requested by them. Nevertheless, such a change in her classroom practice would not align well with her own personality. She stated that she did not enjoy playing games in her free time and found them to be too loud and disruptive when done with students. In her post-interview, she remained adamant about maintaining a fun, yet game-free environment in her lessons and criticized the use of games during lessons even more, alluding to the fact that they create a disturbance for neighbouring classrooms.

“So I try to be not too much communicative, not too much physical activity, not too much shouting or talking loudly in the class. It is important to provide that balance. Sometimes I hear it, noise comes from another class or in a class maybe they are doing a different activity. Some of the students are outside, some of the students are inside and there is a voice coming from the corridors. So, it can disturb the other classes. Somebody can complain to the administration.” (İpek's post-interview)

Decline of İpek's Controlling Teacher I-position

Comparing İpek's backpack before and after her reflective journey, it is clear to see that her to-do list, once crispy and clean, is now dirty and crumbled. That change illustrates the weakening of her Controlling Teacher and Well-prepared Teacher I-positions. What is interesting in the case of the Controlling Teacher I-position is the speed and the sudden nature of the transformation that took place in İpek. As early as in the first video-stimulated interview, she noticed her controlling behaviour, pacing between desks, looming over students' heads when they were silently doing the exercises, repeating all answers they gave. She even went as far as to compare herself to a monster, making her students feel uncomfortable and awkward during the lessons. The

pace of her transformation was truly astounding, with a drastic decrease in controlling behaviour in subsequent weeks.

Although the decrease in the amount of movement and monitoring was a swift and permanent change from the onset of her journey, İpek has also gradually loosened her grip on other aspects of classroom discipline. The two most prominent examples can be the realisation that imposing strict time limits on classroom tasks can diminish students' autonomy and confidence, as well as her grappling with once unquestionable belief that A2 grammar needs to be taught explicitly by experimenting with more student-centred grammar presentation techniques.

Removing the actor's mask

The next two objects that found their way into İpek's backpack can be discussed together, as they have been in a state of competition and tension throughout her reflective journey, with one I-position ultimately eradicating the other. The broken theatre mask manifests İpek's Actor I-position, noticed by her during the first video-stimulated interview. İpek was shocked by what she referred to as over-the-top, theatrical reactions she made during her lessons and the overall amount of movement she exhibited in the classroom. This realization came as a shock to her because of her strong belief in the authenticity of her behaviour and the vast similarities in her behaviour in and out of the classroom. The Actor I-position was not compatible with her Human I-position which led to them clashing during her first video-stimulated interview. The Human I-position, represented in her backpack as a mirror, grew stronger with every step of her journey and manifested itself in her belief that teachers, as human beings, are allowed to make mistakes, are allowed not to know things, and are allowed to express negative emotions and criticize the materials they use, even in front of the students. In a way, the mask of perfection, control, or as İpek referred to it, the ego of a teacher, were removed to shed light on a raw, and vulnerable position of a teacher. This prompted İpek to suggest that, just as students are being cared for by the administration, the teachers should also receive adequate amounts of care and attention and their feelings should be listened to and reflected upon: "When people ask me about my emotions, I am happy. Because I understand that they care. It's something human. We all have feelings." (İpek's post-interview).

Embracing the Fun Teacher I-position and its limitations

The final object that İpek collected on her journey is a red balloon, symbolizing her Fun Teacher I-position. At the onset of her journey, İpek reflected on how she had already made a big leap from the traditional, grammar-translation style teaching practice to a more student-centred, communicative way of teaching. Be that as it may, she still did not consider herself to be a fun teacher, and held on to her traditional roots claiming that her teaching style has elements of both philosophies of teaching, being simultaneously teacher-centred and student-centred, depending on circumstances. However, as she watched herself teach and paid attention to her students' facial expressions and behaviour, she noticed how much fun they were having in her class. This was also observed by the researcher who laughed along with the students as she joked about fun professions during a class on jobs, or used an example of a traditional Turkish dish, lahmacun, to illustrate recent food trends mentioned in a reading text. Nevertheless, although İpek noticed that her lessons are fun, she refused to fully abandon her previously cherished traditional style of teaching and become a “gamer”. She saw these two teaching styles as being located at two ends of the spectrum, and she found herself to be somewhere in the middle.

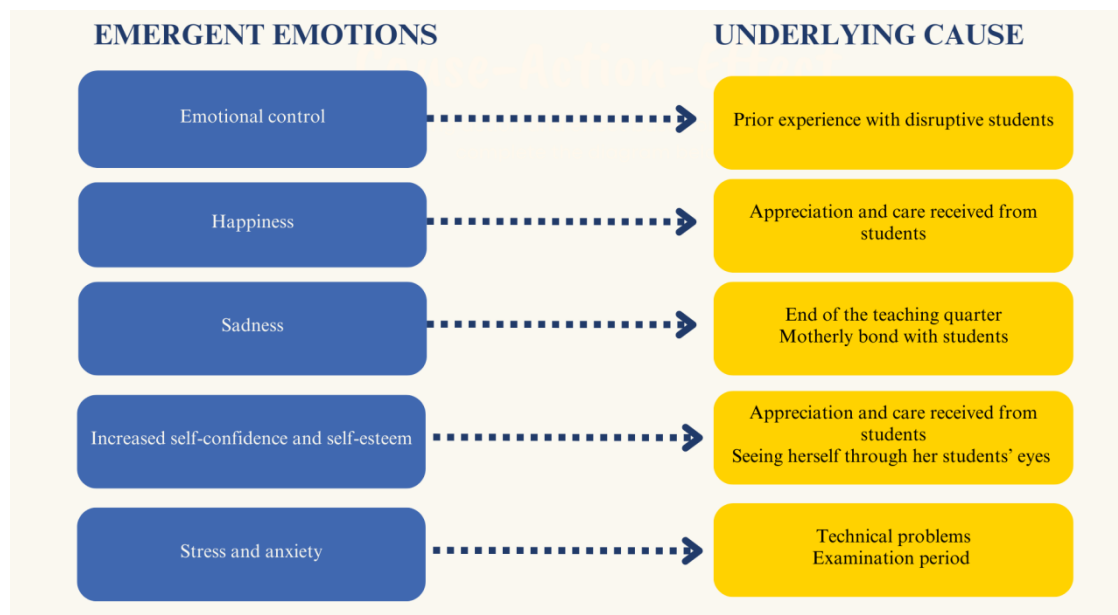
“I see a more communicative teacher but I am still a traditional teacher. I am in the middle of something. A traditional teacher is the center. She is inside everything. In charge of everything. She is like a polite manager. The other extreme is like a gamer.” (İpek's third video-stimulated interview)

4.2.6. İpek's emotions on her reflective journey

İpek's emotions emerging during her reflective practice engagement can be seen in the figure below. Next to each emotion reported and observed in the course of the study, its underlying cause was listed in order to gain a better insight into not only what emotions emerged on İpek's path but also why they surfaced.

Figure 4.7

A breakdown of İpek's emotions during her reflective engagement and their underlying causes



Impulsivity vs. emotional control

Even at the onset of her journey, İpek was well-aware of the wide-array of emotions she experiences on a daily basis in her teaching practice and beyond it. She described herself as an impulsive and emotional person, bursting into anger only to regain calmness after a short time. She was also aware of her ability to control her emotions, a skill she honed throughout her teaching years through encounters with disrespectful or unruly students.

“My emotions change very easily. Maybe I am a Black Sea person (laughter). I become angry very easily but after 5 minutes I forget everything, everything becomes normal. I try to stop myself, make myself relaxed if I have such a situation to make me angry.” (İpek’s first semi-structured interview)

The reciprocal relationship between İpek's emotions and her students' emotions

Her emotions were also closely linked to her students, a fact that she was also mindful of from the very beginning of her journey. She felt happy and proud when she saw that her students approached the lessons with care. The more effort they put into their work, the more responsible İpek felt for them and the more she cared about not only their performance but also their well-being. Examples discussed earlier in this chapter, including a working student who came to class between nursing shifts (first semi-structured interview), up until the final data collection point when İpek talked with pride

about how her students cared about her and tried to help her during lesson observations (post-interview), prove that the tendency to link her happiness with her students' happiness is a permanent feature governing İpek's emotions. Looking at her references to her own happiness made throughout the course of the study, the connection between her students' feeling and behaviour in class and her own emotions is crystal clear.

"They seem more interested and active. They really like the materials and the book. I feel happy when they are active." (İpek's first critical incident report)

"A lot of them are not compulsory but still worried about passing or not. This makes me happy that they care." (İpek's reflective journal, week 4)

"As I am a responsible teacher, they ask everything to me. We talk about different things like the system, automation system, attendance system, school work. Maybe they feel closer, I also feel closer." (İpek's second video-stimulated interview)

It is clear from the above reflections that İpek expected a reciprocal emotional relationship with her students. Luckily, her students fully reciprocated her feelings and awarded them with their own expressions of care and admiration for İpek. This relationship continued up until the end of the study. The more İpek cared about her students, both emotionally in the form of support she offered them and educationally, in the form of extra activities she planned for them, the more care and warmth she received in response. Her students' positive emotions carried her through the teaching quarter with high levels of motivation, despite the challenging periods of exam preparation.

Another emotion which was reciprocated by İpek's students was respect. She held a strong belief that a healthy student-teacher relationship is not possible without mutual respect. Fortunately, she did not report on any incidents of disrespect throughout her reflective journey and received nothing but love and appreciation from the students in her classes.

"There was a friendly environment. The students were never stressed or under pressure. They were all happy. It can be seen from their faces that they are happy. Nobody is sleeping or sighing. They don't find my lessons boring. It is important and it makes me happy. Another thing is that they listen to me. I am happy when I am listened. They give me importance and respect. I like that respect. Respect is really important in a classroom, for a teacher. I think the most important thing is respect. When they don't show you respect, you don't feel good in this class. You don't want to teach, give them anything, no motivation. When they are cheeky." (İpek's second video-stimulated interview)

However, the connection between her own emotions and her students' emotions was not only limited to happiness. İpek responded to her students' anxiety and stress with empathy and a proactive attitude. For instance, she narrated a conversation with a particularly shy student who approached her after one of the lessons.

“In one of my classes a student didn't want to talk to me directly in a speaking practice. When I asked her why, she told me she had anxiety. I felt like I should do different things to make her feel more relaxed.” (İpek's reflective journal, week 2)

The bond with her students was so strong, that the thought of their lessons coming to an end filled İpek with sadness: “This quarter will end soon and it can be sad to feel that we will be apart with my students” (İpek's reflective journal, week 5).

Assessment and technical problems as stress-inducing factors

Stress and anxiety were also among emotions experienced by İpek on her reflective path. The instances when she felt stressed were, however, limited and were all precipitated by external factors. For example, İpek mentioned feeling stressed in her second critical incident report as she wrote about experiencing unexpected technical issues with her flash drive. Another external circumstance that brought about a feeling of stress and anxiety in İpek was the exam period. Combined with her heightened sense of responsibility for her students, exam preparation made her feel tired and was described as a hectic and tiresome period in her practice. However, illustrating the reciprocal connection between her students' emotions and her own feelings, the fact that her students cared about her and appreciated her efforts, considerably decreased the amount of stress and fatigue she experienced: “My students really care what I am doing for them. I don't feel the tiredness. I feel precious when my students admire me” (İpek's reflective journal, week 6).

The nourishing effect of students' emotions on İpek's self-esteem and self-confidence

Despite considerable teaching experience, İpek still dealt with a sense of insecurity and even jealousy as she compared herself to her colleagues. In her eyes, these colleagues were more adept than her at using technology and fun activities in their lessons. The feeling of not being as good as others was further exacerbated by her own students comparing her with their former instructors, to the advantage of the other teachers. However, when reflecting on her classes through reports, interviews and journaling, İpek realised that her students are happy with her way of teaching, care about her and

appreciate her. Whether through spontaneous hugs during breaks, burst of laughter during lessons, or being active and attentive during recorded lessons in order not to get their teacher into trouble, İpek's students showed their love and care for their teacher, boosting her self-confidence and increasing her self-esteem. This transformation was also visible in the way İpek approached the concept of lesson observations. What once made her feel scared and even ashamed, was now a source of excitement and a safe haven to express her feelings, thoughts and emotions. This can be seen in the way İpek described a video-recorded lesson observation made prior to the start of the study, during a CELTA course, compared with the way she reflected on lesson observations conducted during the study.

"Yeah, it made me feel like there was another person teaching, not me. I don't know why. I felt like a stranger. A stranger is watching the class at that time, not me. My voice was really different. Not like my. It was both a positive and negative experience. I felt a bit ashamed. Yes, yes. I am a social person, I don't care about these things like somebody watching or recording me but at that time I felt ashamed. I don't know the reason." (İpek's first semi-structured interview)

"I really felt good during the observation. My students liked and participated in every activity. They were careful and active. They asked different and unusual questions, sometimes. I remembered my old CELTA days. We were being observed like this. In those days I wasn't feeling safe and comfortable, but this time, after years, I felt safer. ...As a result it was an exciting experience for me." (İpek's reflective journal, week 2)

This transformation can, naturally, be partially attributed to the years of experience İpek gained between her CELTA observations and the lessons observed for the present study. However, it was clear from her remarks about envy she felt towards some of her colleagues, that teaching experience alone is not a sole factor in a teacher's level of confidence and self-esteem. What gave İpek a sense of security during her most recent recorded lesson observations, was the amount of love and care she noticed directed at her from her students, changing lesson observations from a shameful practice to an exciting and joyful experience.

All in all, İpek's emotional state at the beginning of her reflective journey was characterized by self-doubt, jealousy towards her colleagues and impulsivity curbed by her well-trained emotional control ability. Coming to the end of her path, İpek not only made discoveries instrumental for self-exploration and increased self-awareness, but she also came out of it with more confidence in her teaching practice, and a stronger than

ever belief in the importance of empathy for student-teacher relationships. Noticing how her students expressed their love, care, and admiration for her, helped İpek see herself through her students' eyes. She no longer pictured herself as a controlling monster or a teacher-centred teacher whose lessons are not as fun as other teachers' classes. On the contrary, her students' warm feelings fueled her own happiness and self-worth. The more they appreciated her, the more she was able to appreciate herself. Consequently, her self-esteem grew, filling her with positive emotions of happiness and pride, not only with her students, but also with herself.

“I actually changed. I feel happier. Happier yes. And I feel myself more useful because sometimes I felt myself useless. In some situations. But now I don't feel that negative feeling. That's important. Yes, yes. And this, I am really happy that I accepted your invitation (laughter). Otherwise I wouldn't understand, I wouldn't notice all of these things in myself.” (İpek's second semi-structured interview)

4.3. The Case of Buse

4.3.1. Buse's backpack at the beginning of her reflective journey

Buse's backpack at the onset of her journey has six distinct objects which represent her self-reported I-positions. The red balloon is the symbol of her Fun Teacher I-positions. The thick, well-worn book illustrates Buse's Experienced Teacher I-position whilst the rubber bands are a manifestation of her Adaptable Teacher I-position. Her love of technology was illustrated by computer chips. Finally a figurine of a lion marks her Courageous Teacher I-position.

Figure 4.8

Buse's backpack at the onset of her reflective journey.



Buse's Fun Teacher I-position

Buse embarked on her reflective journey with items that symbolize her beliefs about who she is as a teacher. Similarly to İpek, Buse also has a red balloon, a manifestation of her Fun Teacher I-position in her inventory. However, unlike İpek, she did not collect it on her journey, but held a strong belief in her ability to make her lessons fun and enjoyable for her students even before she set off on her reflective path. During her first semi-structured interview, Buse underscored that her lessons are a source of fun for her students and herself alike. She praised herself on cracking jokes during her lessons and using her body language to create a friendly and joyful atmosphere in the classroom. Her belief in the fun aspect of her teaching was also validated by the feedback she received from her students. Apart from her students' having fun in her lessons, Buse emphasized the fact that she also drew a lot of fun from being in the classroom. Consequently, as self-reported by Buse, the fun and joyful atmosphere spread to everyone in the classroom, the students as well as their teacher.

“This is what my students told me today, hocam you are really fun to listen to you. I don't know how but maybe I make some jokes or maybe my expressions, facial expressions or my body language is fun or the way I use intonation when I'm teaching. Anyways, in short, they like to listen to me and this is why but also I think that I am having fun when I teach. It's not related to the job, but it is the way I present the topic. I really think that it shouldn't be boring as long as the topic is not teaching charts or something like that.” (Buse's first semi-structured interview)

Buse's Adaptable Teacher I-position: Adapting materials and teaching style

A rubber band in Buse's backpack illustrates her Adaptable Teacher I-position, which manifested itself in the way she adapts course materials to fit her students' needs. This I-position was also strengthened by her Fun Teacher I-position as she often adapted materials with an aim to make them more fun and enjoyable for her students. She did not refrain from criticizing the coursebook as repetitive and mechanical, and often modified the activities presented in it by shortening them or adding her own materials to them.

"The book is really mechanical so you just memorize everything related to the book. Even some questions they repeat, true false, multiple choice, true false, multiple choice. I bring different activities with the same reading text or listening just to make a difference. Make it fun. For the first 2-3 weeks I never touch anything but later I feel bored so I try to find some joy in kahoot or QR codes, I try to get help with online tools." (Buse's first semi-structured interview)

It should be noted that Buse's ability to adapt went beyond course material adaptation, and also allowed her to make a drastic change in her teaching style, from a traditional lecturer, to a more communicative, student-focused practitioner. When asked for the rationale behind such a big shift in teaching philosophy, Buse gave two reasons. The primary reason was the change in student profile she noticed after joining the current institution she works at. Her new students were much more motivated to learn English and they also expected more effort from their instructors to help them achieve their goals. The more interested and demanding the students got, the more creativity, fun, and effort Buse had to put into her teaching practice. As a result, she graduated from a detached practitioner whose primary focus was on the teaching material, to a teacher who notices and cares about the learners.

"I have never thought about them before I just accepted teaching as a duty and followed the book. So I didn't do something extra and I just left the classroom. Now I don't think like that. I really believe that if the students like the teacher and the lessons even the worse students will take part in the lesson. Maybe the interest in students has changed or maybe the situation that we realized they need to know English very well because they need to know another additional language. Maybe that's why students really feel interested in the lesson. You sense their interest so you also give importance to the lesson. Yes, because of the need. Actually they demand this." (Buse's first semi-structured interview)

At this point, an interesting similarity can be drawn between İpek's and Buse's cases. Both participants reported undergoing a dramatic transformation in their teaching styles prior to their participation in the present doctoral study. In both cases the metamorphosis happened in the same direction, from a more traditional, teacher-centred teaching style to a bigger focus on students. Curiously, in both cases these transformations were not a natural progression in the evolution of Buse's and İpek's teacher identities, but rather a change triggered and necessitated by the demands of the students.

The relationship between Buse's Adaptable Teacher I-position and her Empathetic Teacher I-position

However, whilst İpek's transformation was also induced by jealousy she felt towards more popular teachers at her institution, the second reason why Buse decided to make a change in her teaching style was closely connected to the next item in her backpack: a band-aid which symbolizes her Empathetic Teacher I-position. Buse used empathy to put herself in her students' shoes and gauge what to teach and how to teach it. Considering her students' emotions and needs was a stepping stone for the transformation of her teaching style, and remained a skill she took advantage of when making day-to-day decisions about her lessons such as adding extra tasks or grouping her students during pairwork or groupwork in a way that does not disadvantage the weaker students.

"Every day before I go to the classroom, I think like a student. If I were a student would I like this and then I make necessary changes. The reading text or in some questions so I skip some parts and add my own questions sometimes. I put myself in students' shoes or else they will be really bored." (Buse's first semi-structured interview)

"Some students have a good background from their highschool and some really don't have that. Seeing these students struggle is really something difficult for the teacher because when I prepare something extra I try to divide these students into groups. I try to give them easier questions but they don't realize it, but I make these preparations beforehand so I always keep it in mind that this student is not good so let's not put them in this group." (Buse's first semi-structured interview)

Consequently, Buse's Adaptable Teacher I-position was implemented on the basis of her Empathetic Teacher I-position. In other words, Buse employed empathy to understand the needs of her students and to predict how they would feel in certain

scenarios such as group work activities, and adapted the tasks with an aim to facilitate all students' well-being, catering particularly to the disadvantaged and weaker students in her group.

The pressure to keep up with latest technological developments in education

The computer chip visible in front of Buse's backpack is an illustration of her Technophile I-position. It is also closely connected to her Adaptable Teacher I-position, as her love for technology was not something inherent, but rather a demand resulting from her students' profile. When describing her students, Buse took notice of the fact that they are addicted to technology and they no longer find pleasure in doing classroom activities which are not technology-inclusive. For example, using a QR code instead of a printed text could help them feel more motivated and focused on a reading task. In order to stay up-to-date with her students' interests and preferences, Buse had no other choice but to embrace technology in her classroom. Otherwise, she would run a risk of being labelled as an "old-professor", a relic of the past who was not able to develop together with the passing time.

"So I have realized that I need to get help from AI because students are using it in the classroom. When they ask me questions about it or tell me about some programs and I tell them, oh I have never read it or seen it, I feel like an old professor in the classroom. I don't want to be like them so I have tried to learn some programs related to AI technology."

(Buse's first semi-structured interview)

Buse's ingrained beliefs about Turkish university students

A well-worn book which Buse packed with her on her journey is a symbol of her rich teaching experience. The way her experience manifested itself on the onset of her reflective path, was in a detailed student profile she built in her head over the years. Teaching for many years gave her an insight into who a typical EFL student in Türkiye is, what they want and don't want to do during lessons, what they think and even how they feel. It is important to note that these beliefs were universal in nature and were held for all students, not being limited to a specific group Buse was teaching at the time. The picture of a modern student Buse painted was a technology addict, with an ever diminishing attention span. In addition, she regarded her students as teenagers who do not respond well to discipline or criticism. As a result, they should be shown more leniency during lessons. She also emphasized that the students are exclusively

motivated by exams and are only able to fully concentrate on tasks that are directly related to the upcoming exams or assessments.

“I have realized that when you warn them they are still teenagers, they never listen to you. So I just let them go.” (Buse’s first semi-structured interview)

“I prepared practice for them and it really looked like questions we ask in the exam so they really listened with their rabbit ears.” (Buse’s first semi-structured interview)

Seeking feedback from colleagues and students

Buse also emphasized in her initial interview that she is not afraid to ask for feedback. She mentioned the fact that she often consults her colleagues to exchange ideas about a specific task or topic in the coursebook. Busy teaching schedules made such conversations much shorter than she would prefer. She also reported that any feedback she received from her colleagues during scheduled peer lesson observations has always been nothing but positive.

Interestingly, even though Buse described typical students as teenagers still in their developing years, she trusted their expertise enough to ask them for feedback on her lessons. Even though she admitted that very few students are vocal about their opinions on her lessons, she learned to take the lack of response from the majority of her students as positive feedback, believing that students who are genuinely dissatisfied with the way she conducts the lessons would be willing to share their criticism with her.

“That’s why I want my students to give me comments. I tell them to give me their comments, hocam, can you teach this reading or listening like that. Very rarely, 1-2 students come and share their ideas but most of the time the students say no hocam, it is good, the lessons are good, we don’t need anything so I trust them. I think if they really need something they would say. I really trust them.” (Buse’s first semi-structured interview)

At the same time, Buse recognized that seeking feedback from students and colleagues requires courage, hence a figurine of a lion packed in her backpack. She also emphasized the fact that her participation in the current study is also a marker of her bravery and a willingness to seek opportunities to develop herself. Unlike a “guru” who claims to possess all the knowledge, Buse recognized that her intention as a participant of the study is to identify areas of improvement which her colleagues and students were not able to notice. She was also hopeful that seeing herself on video might give her an opportunity to look at her own practice adopting a students’ perspective.

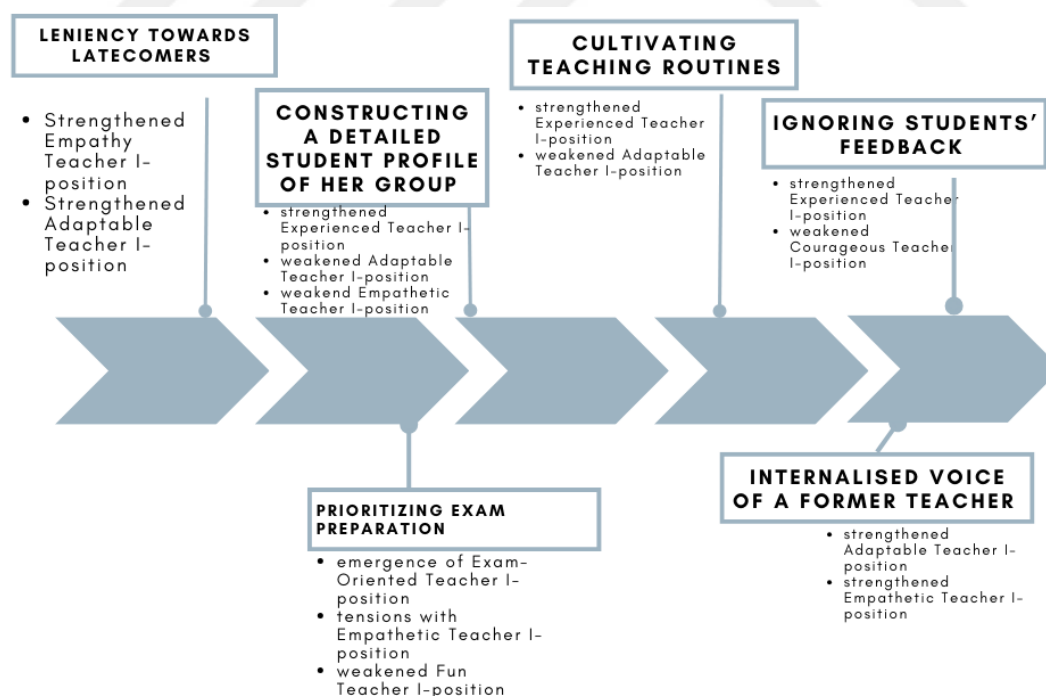
“Some teachers came to listen to my lessons but they have never given me feedback or when they have given it, they have always given me positive feedback. I have never seen something negative. I really don’t know what is missing in my teaching. I am not a guru, I don’t say I’m a professor of everything so in this reflective practice I am hoping to see some, maybe not negative comments but comments to be developed. Areas for improvement. We all need it but nobody has the courage to say it.” (Buse’s first semi-structured interview)

4.3.2. The beginning of Buse’s journey

The beginning of Buse’s reflective engagement was absent in any major developments to her language teacher identity. On the contrary, her Experienced Teacher I-position thrived with a heavy use of well-established routines and ingrained beliefs that were not questioned or tested, but further consolidated. New I-positions were also uncovered, such as the Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position, marking the vast importance Buse attached to assessment and examinations in her classroom practice. The beginning of Buse’s reflective journey can be seen in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9

The roadmap of Buse’s reflective journey (weeks 2-3)



The impact of Buse's beliefs about students on classroom management

As evident from the previous section, Buse stepped on her reflective path with well-formed beliefs about who her students were and what they needed. Her behaviour in the first two weeks of the data collection process fully reflected her convictions. The first noteworthy encounter on her path was a group of students who regularly came late to the classroom. Instead of disciplining them or exercising the school rules about latecomers, Buse chose to talk to them to understand the problem. When she learned that the students continued to arrive to lessons late because of long queues in the canteen, her Empathetic Teacher I-position allowed her to put herself in their shoes. In the end, guided by empathy and the belief that teenage students cannot be successfully disciplined, she chose to finish her lessons a few minutes earlier so that her students can be in the canteen first, before the other teachers let their students go out for a break.

However, Buse's leniency towards her students went beyond issues related to discipline, such as coming to class on time. She also exercised the same high tolerance for students' performance and behaviour in class. For instance, in her reflective journal Buse confessed that she does not force students to answer her questions during the lessons. She saw this approach as a prerequisite for establishing a friendly atmosphere in the classroom.

"I could create a good classroom atmosphere with my students by just asking their opinion about the exercises and allowing them not to force themselves for giving the correct answer when we do exercises, which I believe contributed a lot to my lesson teaching. I felt happier and content this way." (Buse's reflective journal, week 2)

Adapting to the modern students' profile

Regarding students' behaviour in class, during the first video-recorded lesson observation, the researcher noticed that many students in the class were not looking at Buse when she was explaining a speaking task which involved each student responding to a different scenario displayed on the board. The explanation took over 15 minutes during which the only person speaking was Buse. While she was going over the scenarios and reading them aloud, some students were looking out of the window, some were looking at their phones, and a few students put their heads on their desks, completely detaching themselves from the lesson. Buse did not pay attention to her students' behaviour during the first video-stimulated interview, but when asked to

comment on it by the researcher, she replied with full-confidence that students have different listening styles, and she was positive that they paid attention to her, even if their body language might not suggest so. Buse saw her treatment of such students as a manifestation of her Adaptable Teacher I-position, allowing her to modify her classroom practice according to a change in student profile. She emphasized the fact that eye-contact is no longer a reliable indication of paying attention and is not necessary, or even possible, in modern classrooms due to the students' short attention spans and a strong preference for multitasking.

“Some students are looking at their watches or phones, but this is normal because their attention span is lower than ours. But still in my heart I know that they are listening to me (laughter). For example, do you see the boy next to the girl with black scarf? He is like this, he seems like he is not looking at me or listening. But this is his way of listening. That is how I also discovered them. I know that even when a student looks out of the window, they are listening to me. Not everyone has the eye contact when they concentrate. This is specific for the new generation. ...When we were students our teachers were really angry because when we looked at something else it really meant that we were not listening. But this generation is good at multitasking, so this is not the reality anymore.” (Buse's first video-stimulated interview)

The remarks about knowing what students think or feel were ubiquitous in Buse's reflections about her first lesson observation. This was also evident of how strong her Experienced Teacher I-position was and how it governed every aspect of her classroom practice. It should be noted that the lesson was filmed only two weeks into the teaching quarter, giving Buse a very limited time to get to know her students. Despite that, she was able to offer a full psychological profile of her class. For instance, she mentioned that they were very competitive and ambitious and, as a result, preferred individual speaking tasks rather than pairwork or groupwork. She also claimed that they liked when she gave long and detailed introductions for every activity they were about to do. It is important to note that the students' body language during such introductions could not be unanimously deemed as positive or attentive. As mentioned before, many students did not look at their teacher or the board. The class was also completely quiet, with no students asking additional questions or verbally reacting to Buse's words. It was evident from Buse's recollection of the events being watched, that she used her experience as a key to crack or “discover” her students at a very short amount of time. Once they were discovered, she was able to fully understand what they think, feel, or

even what they were going to say before they actually say it: “I just know the situation. I just know what he or she is going to say somehow. How different can it be? They just think like this.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview). When she noticed that many of her students skipped the speaking class and left the school early, she also had a ready explanation for this behaviour.

“There are two different reasons. Firstly, they are in love and the weather is good so they want to hang out with their boyfriends and girlfriends. And the second one is they really think that I will ask the same questions in the book, so I just change the questions so when they come back they ask what we did to their friends.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview).

Her confidence in her ability to understand the ins and outs of her classes, also manifested itself in the specific aspects of her teaching practice, such as error correction. Recasting was the only error correction technique observed in the lesson. Even though this technique can not be fully reliable, as it does not always guarantee that a student has noticed and understood their mistake, Buse had complete confidence that her upper-intermediate students were able to benefit from it to the fullest.

“With B2 level yes, but with A2 level I just go next to them and say, this is wrong, this is the correct version. I teach it, they need it. But B2 they understand. They get that, oh, this sentence was wrong that is why the teacher repeated. They are good, this is the second week. I know what they are capable of and not.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

It should also be noted that Buse had full confidence in the profile of students she built in her head. The issue remained of the extent to which this profile was actually grounded in evidence and her observations of the group as opposed to beliefs she had already formed based on her prior experiences. Nevertheless, the level of certainty and conviction in Buse’s reflections was a direct product of her Experienced Teacher I-position, building on her long teaching experience to construct a detailed profile of university students in Türkiye.

Buse’s Experienced Teacher I-position as a source of her teaching routines

Apart from ingrained beliefs about her students, Buse’s Experienced Teacher I-position has also manifested itself in several teaching routines that she claimed to always implement in her classes. The routines she mentioned just in the first video-stimulated interview included long and detailed introductions being given before each activity shedding light on teaching objectives, giving lots of alternative structures for new

vocabulary items, sitting in a specific position throughout the class, modelling every activity alone before students do it or showing a video as a model, setting a time limit for all activities, a strong preference for individual speaking rather than pair or group-based communicative tasks, having a specific time allocated in every lesson for asking surprise individual questions to students, and finally using recasts only for higher proficiency level students and direct error correction for beginners. These routines were not questioned in any way or reflected upon during the first video-stimulated interview. What is more, even when probed for possible alternatives during the interview, Buse remained adamant that her routines are the only effective way of planning and conducting the lessons. Some of the routines, such as a series of surprise questions asked to every student in the class one by one, were so ingrained in her teaching practice that she had even gave them a name.

“I warned my students beforehand, I am going to ask you questions immediately. Some surprise questions about what your friend said or I will just make up a question myself. I do it or else they just say that, okay, I talked. Now the teacher won’t look at me and I don’t have to listen. This is why I keep choosing students. What do you think? Do you think that this will be good? That is why I added this sudden question asking part. Do you agree with your partner? Or else they won’t listen. I call this structure Pikachu.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

Another example of a routine that could have been questioned by Buse after seeing herself through her students’ eyes in the lesson recording was her sitting position. Buse remained seated throughout the whole lesson. The desks were set up in a U shape, around the walls of the classroom and Buse situated herself in the middle, under the smartboard. However, rather than facing all students, she sat with her side facing the board. This meant that the whole row of students was behind her back. She drew attention to her position during the interview, but, instead of reflecting on it, showed full confidence in the fact that the students sitting behind her are adequately taken care of, assuming that she knew what they thought and how they felt throughout the class.

“Can we stop here? I tried to make eye contact with every student, especially with the girl with black scarf and the boys there. Because if you see the position of the desk, I turn my back to them. That is why I keep turning my head. I do it on purpose. I try to look at their faces. I look at them first. I made eye contact with them first. I ask the question to this part first so that they won’t feel alone. They will think, we have answered, the teacher was in

contact with us, now the turn is with the other students.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

Interestingly, if any of her routines did not bring the expected results, Buse displayed a strong propensity for calling the class or specific students “strange”, at the same time dismissing any deeper reflection on the success of the routines. If a group or a student reacted to her routine in a different way, the fault was always with the student, not the routine itself.

At this point of her path, a clash between her Adaptable Teacher I-position and the Experienced Teacher I-position was on full display. In line with her first interview, Buse did modify the activities in the book. For instance, she chose to add extra scenarios on top of the ones listed in the coursebook to discuss the topic of fear with her students. However, her adaptability was constricted and only applied to course materials. She did not display any willingness to adapt her teaching routines, even if the students’ body language would suggest a decreased motivation and engagement in the tasks. Buse framed her teaching routines as classroom rules, and presented them to her class in their first lesson together, expecting the students to accept them and go along with her style of teaching.

“They know my style. When I repeat it, there is a mistake here so yes, the teacher corrected me. They already know it. And I told them, the very first hour I told them my rules, I am not going to say, oh you made a mistake here, but I will repeat the sentences so you can understand that you made a mistake. The first hour I told everything to them so they know what I am doing there.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

Buse’s Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position and its tensions with Fun Teacher I-position

Another tension in her I-position was revealed between her self-proclaimed Fun Teacher I-position, and a new I-position which emerged during the first part of her reflective journey, an Exam-Oriented Teacher. At the onset of her journey, Buse claimed that she conducts her classes in a way that makes them fun for her and her students. The first part of this claim was definitely observed by the researcher. Buse smiled and laughed a lot during the class and it was clear that she genuinely enjoyed being in the class and interacting with her students. However, her students’ body language and the overall quietness of the class might have been an indicator that her students did not enjoy the lesson as much as she did. Buse also mentioned exams several time throughout the interview, revealing that preparing her students for exams is

her utmost priority. She also described fun activities as enjoyable but wasteful and unnecessary, claiming that the only objective of fun activities is to have fun and they cannot serve a purpose of preparing students for exams.

“Unfortunately, we are exam-based. This is not, I don’t know, an individual class or they just don’t learn English for fun. They learn English for their future careers and they need to get good points so I should also consider it. Or else, I would just find something really fun. We would laugh a lot. They would talk. We would play games. How will it help in the exam? I would also want to do more fun activities but because of the exam reality and pacing I can’t do it. Because they take time and I really want to focus on very important things. With fun activities, sometimes it is not important, it is just fun.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

The same sentiment continued in the third week of her reflective journey, when she admitted that the need to prepare students for their upcoming exams was so great, that she could not spare even a minute on more fun and relaxed activities like a simple chat with the students. She even compared herself to a mother bird, feeding knowledge to her students.

“I kind of feel like a mother bird as they really need every bit of knowledge from me so I can’t even spend one minute with chatting with them because the time is tight and all I can do is just teach and go.” (Buse’s reflective journal, week 3).

It is noteworthy to acknowledge the difference between İpek’s and Buse’s use of the mother metaphor. In İpek’s case, portraying herself as a mother was an indicator of a close bond between her and her students. This motherly bond was built on empathy and a genuine care for her students’ well-being and emotional state. Buse’s metaphor of a mother is focused more on the aspect of teaching and passing knowledge, than care for students’ emotions and empathy. Her bond is not as emotional as İpek’s bond and it is unidirectional. Like a mother bird feeding her children to make them feel stronger, Buse feeds knowledge to her students to prepare them for their exams and assignments. Consequently, her use of the mother metaphor is rooted more in her Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position, rather than the Empathetic Teacher I-position.

Interestingly, students’ anxiety for exams is also something that Buse consciously took advantage of in her lessons. Whenever she wanted to draw her students’ attention, she used exams as a motivator, highlighting how each tasks could help them during the

assessment period. This strategy was so well-established in her teaching routine, that she even referred to it as her “golden sentence”.

“Today I said my golden sentence to my students which was: “I have prepared a good material for you so that you will be ready for the exam.” This really makes them give all their attention to the lesson and I really like it when my students are eager to listen all ears.”
(Buse’s reflective journal, week 3)

Questioning the true nature of Buse’s Courageous Teacher I-position

Buse’s courageous I-position was also active at this point of her reflective journey. Although not observed by the researcher, Buse mentioned that she asked her students for feedback on her classes. For instance, she inquired if her students preferred individual speaking activities or debates. As their preference was for individual speaking activities, Buse modified communication activities from the coursebook which were designed to be communicative and interactive, into short presentations given separately by each student. In addition, no interaction between students was observed by the researcher and the only communication that took place in the observed lesson was between Buse and individual students during the so-called Pikachu portion of the class. However, Buse’s first critical incident report revealed cracks in the facade of the Courageous Teacher I-position. Buse narrated how a few students from her A2 class informed her that they were already familiar with the topic of “can”. This surprised Buse as she was already about to start presenting the topic. She decided to consult the whole class and a few more students said that they did not need her to go over the topic and were ready to move on to practice exercises. The rest of the class remained silent. Buse’s reaction stood in contrast to the openness to feedback she claimed to possess, and was also not in line with her Adaptable Teacher I-position. She chose to ignore the students and went on with her usual practice of a teacher-centred, lecture-style presentation of grammar. Furthermore, in her account of the incident, she accused the students of being selfish for not thinking about the rest of the class, even though not even one student told her openly that they needed to listen to her presenting the topic. What is more, she accused them of trying to hijack the lesson by assuming control of what was being taught and how, portraying this exchange as a classroom management issue. She also reiterated the fact that the students were still underdeveloped teenagers and their opinions cannot be fully trusted.

“I have realized that there are 2 or 3 students who want to control over the other students and my classes as they wish. Having enough experience, I didn’t warn them but I just told them that they might be good at grammar but the others in the classroom really needed to learn the topic and went on with my teaching. I really felt surprised as I was not expecting this and by acting very calmly and by not questioning the students, I felt really wise about the incident. ...These students are really good at grammar and they are a little bit selfish. As they know the grammar well, they just didn’t want to listen to the same things again but wanted to do something else instead. This is actually related to what they teach as classroom management in university and also about physiological development as they are still under 25, which means they are still teenagers.” (Buse’s first critical incident report)

Consequently, her openness to receiving feedback from her students proved to be dependable on the nature of this feedback. If she asked for feedback herself and the opinions she received were in line with her own teaching style, she was willing to make minor changes to her practice, as in the case of individual speaking activities for B2 students. However, if the feedback was spontaneous and was not aligned with her routine, she dismissed it and even accused the students of having bad intentions.

The tension between Buse’s Empathetic Teacher and Experienced Teacher I-positions

Finally, the Empathetic Teacher I-position was still present and active, yet substantially undermined by the Experienced Teacher I-position. Buse did not display any willingness to reflect deeper on her students’ behaviour during the class. Any attempts by the researcher at focusing her attention on how they might have been feeling, were quickly dismissed by her Experienced Teacher I-position, which gave her confidence that she knew what the students thought and felt. As mentioned before, if a group’s or a student’s reaction was not in line with her ingrained beliefs, she would put the blame on external circumstances such as the weather, or, if unable to provide an external factor, call the group strange and go on with enforcing her teaching style and teaching routines on them. Nevertheless, Buse displayed a capability of taking advantage of her own experiences as a student as a driving force behind some of her routines. For example, when her students answered questions about the prepared scenarios, she listened incredibly attentively, frequently nodding, maintaining eye contact, and smiling at the students. She was able to reminisce on her own feelings when her former teacher did not even look at her when she was speaking.

“If my teacher listened to me like that I would be very happy because all the concentration is on me. Because I remember when I was a student, I would talk and the teacher would

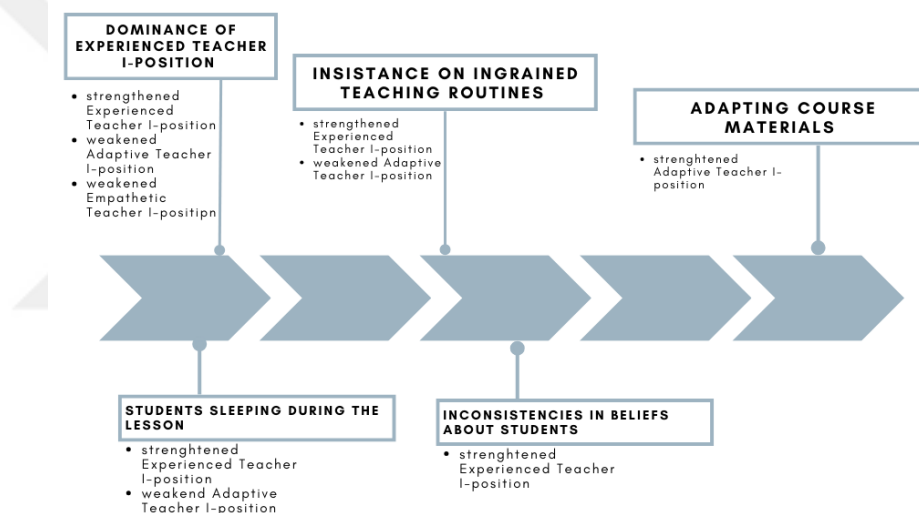
look at his or her notes or look at the book. And I wouldn't be sure if they listen to me or pretend to do it.” (Buse's first video-stimulated interview)

4.3.3. Midpoint of Buse's reflective journey

At the midpoint of her reflective journey, Buse was on a steady course towards consolidating her preexisting beliefs about students and repetitive teacher routines. Simultaneously, the remaining I-positions in Buse's repertoire such as the Adaptable Teacher I-position or the Empathetic Teacher I-position were subdued and overshadowed by the dominance of her Experienced Teacher I-position. The figure below illustrates this part of Buse's journey.

Figure 4.10

Roadmap of Buse's reflective journey (week 4)



The prevalent nature of Buse's teaching routines and the dominance of her Experienced Teacher I-position

So far, Buse was not able to engage in any deeper reflection on her teaching performance. Her Experienced Teacher I-position was so strong, that it completely prohibited her from noticing any incidents or student behaviours which could motivate her to question her well-worn routines. Her beliefs and routines seemed to be set in stone, and this attitude continued throughout the middle part of her journey. The prevalent nature of the routines and beliefs was also exhibited through the language she used to reflect on her second recorded lesson, with a heavy use of “have to”, “should”, “need to” and “always”, suggesting that there are no alternatives to the way she conducted her lessons.

“I always start with lesson objectives. I like to make an introduction and after the lesson you are going to learn this. I always say this so they can prepare for it. It is kind of a habit. Actually, this is what you should do but this is now my habit.” (Buse’s second video-stimulated interview)

“With A levels, unfortunately, most of the time, no matter what you try, for some groups you need to be T-centred. Or else they just don’t catch it or understand.” (Buse’s second video-stimulated interview)

In line with the heavy use of teaching routines in the first observed lesson, Buse’s second video-recorded class was also abundant with well-established teacher behaviours. As with the Pikachu routine, they also had their specific names with “watching part” denoting the grammar presentation part when the teacher explains the topic explicitly and the students are supposed to watch in silence, and “showtime”, when Buse asked individual questions to each student to check their understanding.

The question remained about how automatic the use of these routines actually was and how much they were rooted in Buse’s knowledge of her group of students. The difficulty that Buse faced when asked by the researcher to consider alternative courses of action combined with the undeniable conviction she held for her well-established routines could point to the fact that they were an integral part of Buse’s teaching style, regardless of the profile of her students. In other words, she would have possibly conducted her lessons in the same manner with a different group of students. It remains highly questionable if Buse would be able to forego her teaching routines if her students told her they did not enjoy them or found them ineffective. What is more, Buse’s quick rejection of her students’ feedback narrated in her critical incident report and the fact that she presents her routines to the class in the very first lesson, before she can accurately gauge her students’ preferences and needs, would strongly suggest that Buse’s Adaptable Teacher is constrained by her dominant Experienced Teacher I-position. Consequently, Buse can only modify her teaching routines if the change does not violate her well-established teaching style.

Inconsistencies in Buse’s beliefs about students

Similarly to the first observed class, the second video-recorded lesson, which was done with a different group of students, was also incredibly quiet and detached. Some students were sleeping on their desks, many were on their phones. The class was so quiet that the students did not even chat with themselves in Turkish, and all that could

be heard was Buse's voice, first explaining the use of "can" and its pronunciation, then reading aloud a long text she prepared and displayed on the board. When asked why she chose to read the text aloud on her own, it turned out that it was also one of her routines for A2 students. Interestingly, in order to justify this routine, Buse's beliefs about students seemed to regress from the first week of data collection. Students who she previously described as teenagers with still developing brains, were now compared to babies who first learn how to read.

"Here, I read it myself because they make pronunciation mistakes. They are like babies, they read very slowly and I have just one grammar for grammar. The other hour was supposed to be speaking. That is why I read it myself. They do it very slowly, you can't imagine. This class really reads everything slowly. In the previous hour it took 25 minutes to read the same text. I don't know why. They found it difficult to read." (Buse's second video-stimulated interview).

Remarkably, her description of her students underwent a dramatic change just a few minutes into the interview when she commented on the fact that some of her students were sleeping in class. This time, the students were not babies, or even teenagers, but mature adults who are responsible for their own actions, justifying the fact that she left them unattended and let them sleep throughout the lesson.

"One or two students always sleep in class. I think that they are mature, they are over 18. If they really want to listen to the lesson, if they don't, they just sleep. It is better than making noise". (Buse's second video-stimulated interview)

She also justified her decision to keep the desks in the classroom in an exam-style setup, with desks situated in rows with the same reason. This classroom setup is not ideal for pairwork or group activities, but Buse refused to change it on the basis of her students' maturity.

"Most of them are 18 so you know. They are not 10, you can't force them to sit together. It was like this from the beginning. No-one wants to make a change. It is the students' decision. Because they are not kids, I can't force them however I want." (Buse's second video-stimulated interview)

Consequently, Buse was consistent in her beliefs about not forcing students to take active participation in her lessons, but her description of the students seemed much more fluid and constantly changed in order to justify her teaching routines. The inconsistencies in her description of students could point to the strong position of her

Adaptable Teacher I-position at the expense of the Experienced Teacher I-position. Ultimately, if Buse was able to modify her ingrained convictions about Turkish university students based on the observations of her group, it could serve as evidence that her Experienced Teacher I-position can be modified. Buse's changing description of her students was not a product of a genuine observation but an attempt at a justification of her teaching routines, further strengthening the central position her teaching experience played in her language teacher identity.

Experienced Teacher I-position constraining reflection on student behaviour

When probed about the quietness of her students and the staggeringly low amounts of student talking time in the lesson, Buse also had a ready justification for it which she took for granted and deemed the only reason for her students' disengaged behaviour. Reminiscing of the previous weeks, she blamed external factors, namely the students' cultural background and the fear Turkish students have against making mistakes as a main culprit of students' inactivity, calling it a "Turkish mindset".

"When I check their notebooks, they know the answer but they don't want to say. It is something related to the Turkish mindset. They don't want to make mistakes. Because when you make mistakes, you get lower points. This is how they were raised in the classroom. I keep telling them, you can make mistakes, it's okay. But no. They don't want to make mistakes." (Buse's second video-stimulated interview).

When asked to delve more into the possible reasons why her students were so quiet, Buse came up with another reason. In harmony with her dominant Experienced Teacher I-position which allowed her to gain insight into students' thought processes, she claimed that students were on their phones or sleeping on their desks because they knew the topic already. However, even if this assumption was true, she still went on with her usual routine of explicit grammar presentation, taking over the majority of lesson time, proving that the implementation of her routines is completely immune to feedback she receives from her students. Buse's experience and the strong assumption that she knows best what her students want, think, need, and feel, made her resistant not only to nonverbal feedback in the form of students' body language during the lessons, but also to any attempts on the part of the researcher to engage her in meaningful reflection. For instance, despite having two different classes at very different levels of proficiency (A2 and B2), the dynamics of her classes were almost identical. Students in both classes were very quiet and did not interact with each other at all. The only interaction they had

was answering individual questions asked by Buse. Buse herself described both of these classes in similar terms, pointing to the fact that they disliked group work, were not bonded well, and usually kept quiet. Despite the stark similarities which could spark a deeper reflection on the underlying reasons for the students' behaviour and push Buse to question the impact of her teaching style on the learners, Buse brushed the similarities between both groups off as a mere coincidence. Consequently, she was not able to notice the role she and her teaching style played in the students' attitude and performance during the lessons, in turn preventing her from introducing any improvements or changes to her usual classroom practice.

Limitations of Buse's Adaptable Teacher I-position

Nevertheless, her Adaptable Teacher I-position was also active but only in the context of adapting classroom materials. Buse was not fully satisfied with the explanation for the use of "can" presented in the coursebook, so she prepared her own examples, including a text with plenty of examples of the target structure. She also presented all the grammatical information with the use of model sentences, and then proceeded to repeat the information again by presenting them in a table. When asked for the reason for such a repetition, Buse was confident that it was a necessary practice since most of her students were future engineers and engineers "understand everything better in a picture form" (Buse's second video-stimulated interview). Similarly to the beginning of Buse's reflective journey, what remained not adaptable or negotiable was her teaching style. Correspondingly to the first video-stimulated interview recorded with a B2 level class, she also explained her teaching style, including the teaching routines, to the students in the first lesson and left them no choice but to conform.

"This is my teaching style. I told them from the first hour. I am going to pick some students, I just want you to tell me the answers. I don't want one person to give answers, but you can make mistakes. I tell them. You are free to answer or you are free not to answer if you are not sure. I make my agreement before." (Buse's second video-stimulated interview)

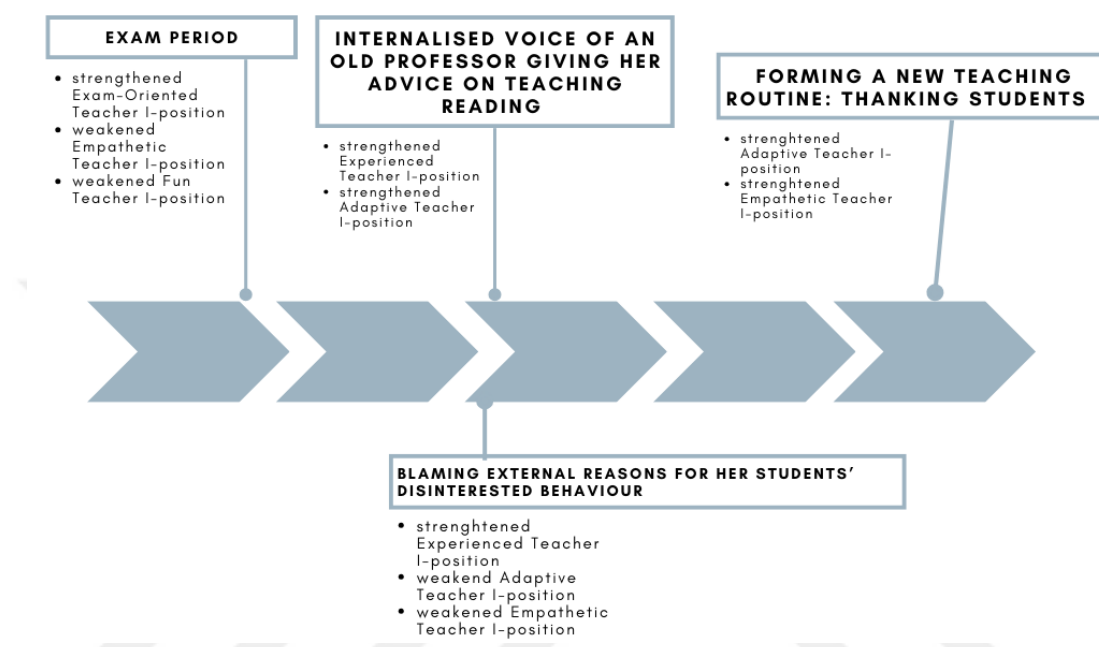
4.3.4. The last stretch of Buse's reflective journey

The last stretch of Buse's journey coincided with the assessment period in her school which further strengthened the prominence of exams in Buse's teaching practice. What is more, Buse's Experienced Teacher I-position, together with all the beliefs and assumptions it generates, remained unquestioned with any experiences which might

threaten it being instantly rejected or interpreted in a way which could allow Buse to continue with her usual classroom practice. The last stretch of Buse's journey can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 4.11

Roadmap of Buse's reflective journey (weeks 5-6)



The growing focus on exam preparation during the exam period

The last stretch of Buse's reflective journey coincided with the exam period at her institution, which further strengthened her Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position. She wrote in her reflective journal that she spent extra time planning for each lesson and meticulously studied the lesson pacing in order to prepare her students for the upcoming examinations: "I need to be particularly clear and patient. so I spent extra time planning to make sure the lesson will teach them strategies for the exam". (Buse's reflective journal, week 6). Intriguingly, it seemed that Buse might be more focused and concerned about the exams than her own students. This was evident at the beginning of the third lesson observed by the researcher as she talked about her students' writing assignment scores but received little to no reaction and the students remained totally quiet. Buse herself was surprised about their behaviour but did not engage in much thought about it and decided that her students simply did not feel like talking about exams on that particular day.

“I always have follow-up questions and I was like, how are you, how was the exam. Because sometimes we gossip about the exams but nobody wanted to answer. I don’t know. Maybe they didn’t want to talk about it. Normally, the previous days, hocam, what was this question in the reading, do you know the teacher who prepared. But they didn’t say anything.” (Buse’s third video-stimulated interview)

Not discouraged by the apparent lack of interest her students showed in the exams. Buse’s third video-observed lesson was dominated by presenting an exam strategy for tackling a true or false reading comprehension question. Instead of giving an example or doing one of the questions together with her students, Buse proceeded to address all six questions in the task, underlying sentences in the text where the answer could be found. This activity took well over fifteen minutes and the students remained quiet. Ultimately, it can be fair to say that Buse presented the strategy herself and then proceeded to do the activity alone, with barely any input from the students. When asked about it during the interview, she informed the researcher that: “I go through the strategy again and again because I want to make sure they can use it”. (Buse’s third video-stimulated interview).

The clash between Buse’s Experienced Teacher I-position and Adaptable Teacher I-position

Her Experienced Teacher I-position and the routines that it was formed on were also evident at this part of her journey. This time, the clash between this I-position and her self-proclaimed Adaptable Teacher I-position was even more evident when Buse described her routine of reading texts aloud by herself, even at higher levels of proficiency. Despite clear feedback from students who complained about this practice, Buse chose not to listen to their opinions and claimed that they are simply over-confident and she knows best what is necessary for them.

“I always do it. Even B2 class students, they say, hocam, we can read it why do you repeat it. It is a habit. Actually this is a teaching style. You know B2 levels, they sometimes trust themselves too much.” (Buse’s third video-stimulated interview)

At this point the limitations of Buse’s Adaptable Teacher I-position and the cracked facade of her Courageous Teacher I-positions are crystal clear. Buse’s reaction to any feedback which had not already been aligned with her teaching style seemed to be predictable and it involved rejecting the students’ opinion and accusing them of putting too much trust in their own abilities. In the end, Buse’s Experienced Teacher I-position and the way of teaching it dictated took precedence over any feedback on her practice,

both verbal and nonverbal. Furthermore, the dominant position of Buse's Experienced Teacher prevented her from engaging in any reflection on the feedback she was receiving in the course of the study. Ultimately, having a strong conviction that Buse knew best what was needed for her students deemed genuine reflection on her performance a futile and unnecessary activity. After all, no reflection or development was needed if Buse was already convinced that her actions were the only effective way of addressing an issue.

Adapting teaching routine based on teacher's feedback

This stretch of Buse's reflective journey brought to light a rationale behind another routine she implemented in her classes, asking students to read a text aloud. Interestingly, this routine was not rooted in the experience Buse has gained over the years or even her knowledge about this particular group of students and their potential struggles with English pronunciation. The reason why Buse always asked her students to read aloud was a piece of advice she received from her old professor as a student teacher. The professor warned her that Turkish students have bad pronunciation and the only way to check it was to make them read aloud in class. Buse instantly adopted this routine in her teaching practice and has been implementing it ever since, regardless of her students' preferences.

“One of my teachers taught this when I was a student teacher. Make your students read it aloud or else you will never realize if they have Tarzan English or not. He was very right.”
(Buse's third video-stimulated interview)

This incident proved that Buse was able to introduce changes to her teaching practice. However, in contrast to previously reported examples of Buse rejecting students' opinion, the feedback prompting her to change her reading teaching routine was provided by somebody she put trust in, her old university teacher.

Dealing with inactive students in the classroom

Buse's students continued to remain quiet throughout the majority of lesson time. When Buse asked questions to the whole class she was met with total silence. Similarly, when she asked for volunteers to read the text aloud, nobody raised their hands. Buse stopped the recording and began a thought-process that could have guided her towards a genuine reflection on herself and the possible connection between her teaching style and her students' behaviour. She quickly dismissed any accountability and pointed to the time

of the lesson as the reason behind students' apathetic behaviour. Consequently, even though she was able to notice something in her lesson that surprised her, she quickly identified an external factor as an underlying reason. Naturally, if the students' behaviour was a result of circumstances beyond teacher's control, it automatically freed Buse from a responsibility to look into her own teaching practice as a potential culprit.

"The thing that surprised me here, normally this class has lots of volunteers. But maybe because it was the first hour, no, not maybe. But today there was something different and I couldn't find many volunteers. I don't know the reason for it. I didn't see all of the hands up. Maybe, okay, I have one explanation. Maybe they are tired of it, aah, it is the sixth week, I just don't want to raise my hand, anyone can say something so everyone thinks like that, another friend can say. So maybe this is why." (Buse's third video-stimulated interview)

Empathy as a trigger for Buse's Adaptable Teacher I-position

Nevertheless, during the interview Buse revealed that she was capable of making adjustments to her practice when motivated by her Empathetic Teacher and Adaptable Teacher I-positions. Apart from attentively listening to her students, Buse developed a habit of thanking each student after they speak in order to reward them for their effort and show her appreciation. This new routine has been added to her repertoire quite recently when a student from a different group felt hurt because she forgot to thank him after he finished speaking. This incident is evident of the fact that new behaviours which can later become habits or routines, can be added to Buse's teaching practice. It can be speculated that the reason why she chose to listen to this particular student was that she empathized with the feeling of not being appreciated, something that she experienced herself as evident from her account of a disinterested teacher who did not appreciate her or even look at her when she was speaking in class during her own student years as recounted during her second video-stimulated interview.

"I really force myself to say thank you. Not in this class, but in the other classes, one of the students said, hocam, you didn't say thank you to me. I smiled because I really like the attitude. They like to be appraised, so this is normal. They just like to, if the teacher says thank you to one student, she could say the same thing to me. This is a good expectation. If they say such things it means they are interested in the lesson. I try to do it but maybe I forget. It hasn't become a habit." (Buse's third video-stimulated interview)

4.3.5. Buse's backpack at the end of her journey

Although Buse did not make any major self-discoveries on her reflective journey, the stark differences between her backpacks is representative of significant discrepancies between her self-reported image and her actual teaching practice. Although the band-aids (Empathetic Teacher I-position) and the lion figurines (Courageous Teacher I-position) can still be seen in the second backpack, their true nature and limitations were revealed in Buse's reflective engagement. The red balloon decreased in size, marking the less significant role Fun Teacher I-position actually exerted on Buse's language teacher identity. The computer chips were replaced by professor's glasses as a symbol of a strong preference for traditional, lecture-style classroom practice and a limited use of technology. The rubber bands, a symbol of Adaptable Teacher I-position, are also much thinner and weaker, illustrating the subdued potential of Buse's Adaptable Teacher I-position. The dominance of Buse's Experienced Teacher I-position was symbolized by more books in her backpack, representative of the fact that her beliefs and routines were set in ink, never to be questioned or modified. Finally, exam papers emerged in Buse's second backpack, illustrating the strong position of her Exam-Oriented I-position and the importance she attached to preparing her students for upcoming. The side-by-side comparison of Buse's language teacher identity at the onset and the end of her reflective engagement can be seen in Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12

Side-by-side comparison of Buse's backpack at the beginning (on the left) and at the end (on the right) of her reflective journey.



Constraints on Buse's reflective journey

Buse's reflective journey culminated without any major discoveries made and with no apparent changes made to her teaching practice. This was also evident in the last semi-structured interview conducted with Buse as well as her post-interview. Buse was fully satisfied with her performance in class and she confessed that she was able to observe exactly what she hoped for. In other words, the image she had in her mind about how she conducts her lesson was identical to what she saw in the videos. Her reflective journals and critical incident reports were also abundant with self-confirmations and self-reassurances that her way of teaching is the only effective manner of conducting lessons. At the end, she did not allow herself to be surprised by any aspects of her teaching practice or narrated any emotions that could open her up to receiving input which would not already be aligned with her beliefs and the existing teaching style. Despite voicing an intention to search for areas for improvement made at the onset of her reflective journey, she actually stepped on her path with a different intention, namely to compare her vision of herself and her classes with the observed reality.

"I thought that I will test myself now. I will see myself and this will be a different kind of experience for me. I will see how I behave when somebody is in class. Do I do something

different or not? I didn't do anything different (laughter). I was natural. So it wasn't a very different experience for me in total.

No, nothing surprised me. I was just expecting myself to see in that position or situation or with those body gestures and it happened. So I didn't expect something different but saw something different. No, I can't say such a thing. It all happened as I imagined it to be.”
(Buse's second semi-structured interview)

Her beliefs about students also remained unwavering despite the path that she had crossed. She still regarded them as teenagers, not fully-developed adults, in need of explicit content presentations, sometimes overconfident in their own abilities and skills. This belief practically placed Buse in the center of the classroom as the only source of knowledge and information. At the same time, it put the students in a passive position of recipients of knowledge directed at them by their teacher.

“They are teenagers, they are like kids. Sometimes they do things and they don't know why (laughter). They are still developing. So you need to be patient, you need to show them how to do things.” (Buse's post-interview)

The dominant nature of Buse's Experienced Teacher I-position

Looking at Buse's reflections post her journey it is clear that, in her mind, the vision of herself she narrated at the beginning of the study was identical to the one she cherished at the end of her path. It should be noted, however, that her actions and comments made during the journey pointed to stark contrasts between her self-reported language teacher identity and its manifestation in her classrooms. Taking this into account, the content of her post-journey backpack reported below is not a product of Buse's self-reflection, as in the case of İpek, but a result of the analysis of all the data collected throughout her journey by the researcher. Rummaging through the backpack, it can be clearly seen that Buse has collected even more well-worn books, symbolizing her teacher experience. Her teaching experience remained to be illustrated by books, as its nature has not undergone a change. Buse's experience was still regarded by her as set-in-stone rules, ink printed on paper, which can not be easily erased or modified. Only one addition to the book of her experience was made during her journey, namely the simple act of thanking each student after they finish speaking. This change can in no way be regarded as dramatic or transformative, yet it leaves hope that some potential for adjustments in Buse's beliefs and teaching practice are viable. Still, despite plenty of evidence in the form of most students' detached and apathetic behaviour during her lessons, Buse was

adamant that her well-worn book of teaching experience is the only correct source of knowledge, and any student behaviours which would contradict that were quickly justified with external factors such as the time of the class, nice weather outside, or even students' busy romantic lives which lead them to skip her classes and hang out with their better halves. As a result, her Experienced Teacher I-position maintained its dominance, governing Buse's actions and beliefs, as well as her limited engagement in actual reflection on herself and her performance.

Dismantling Buse's Technophile I-position

The computer chip, a symbol of her Technophile I-position, has been replaced by old professor's glasses, borrowing from the antimodel of an old professor that Buse was trying to avoid in her practice. The only use of technology observed and reported by Buse throughout the period of data collection, was her use of the smartboard to display PowerPoint slides. No other educational applications or websites were ever taken advantage of during her lessons. What is more, despite the undeniable effort she put into creating the slides, they were all used in a traditional, teacher-centred way, with Buse standing in front of the smartboard and reading the content of the slides to her students. Despite the fact that Buse remained approachable and cheerful in her classes, often motivating students to interact with her, the dynamics of her classes resembled those observable at lecture halls, with the professor transmitting knowledge in an uninterrupted, monologue-like manner, and students passively listening. As mentioned before, due to Buse's strong belief that both of her classes dislike group work or pair activities, all the students worked alone and only spoke when asked a direct question by the teacher.

The limited use of empathy on Buse's reflective journey

Buse's Empathetic Teacher I-position manifested itself on her reflective path, yet it was also constrained by the dominance of her teacher experience. Buse exhibited an ability to put herself in her students' position, which is a vital step in any empathetic behaviour. However, instead of opening herself up to her students' perspective and acknowledging that their point of view might differ from hers, she limited her empathetic skills to reflecting on how she would feel in a given scenario. As a result, the final outcome of her empathetic reflection was a heightened awareness of how she feels or would feel, without a deeper consideration of her students' feelings. In some cases, as

with the student who complained about not being thanked, Buse's hypothetical feelings in that scenario were identical to the student's emotions. Ruminating over her own experience as a student-teacher, Buse understood that she would like to feel appreciated if she was in her student's position, and made an effort to acknowledge every student's contribution. However, looking at other incidents on her path where empathy could have been deployed in order to understand the students' perspective, Buse refused to do so and was even annoyed with her students for sharing their thoughts. For example, when her students asked her to skip a lengthy grammar presentation part during one of the lessons, Buse got irritated and accused them of attempting to control her class. No effort was made to understand their position and no concern was given to how they might have felt when their request was almost instantly denied. The case of students complaining about having to read a text aloud is also a marker of her persistence to do things her way, without a regard for her students' perspective. The underlying cause of this behaviour seemed to be her Experienced Teacher I-position, instantly overruling any opinions or points of view that may contradict Buse's established beliefs about teaching and her classroom routines.

Constraints on Buse's Adaptable Teacher I-position and Courageous Teacher I-position

Buse's inability to make changes to her practice, even with clear feedback from the students, is also a telltale sign of her weakened Adaptable Teacher I-position. Buse displayed a high skill-level in modifying the course materials, revising the tasks given in the coursebook or creating her own tasks and materials to present or practice a target grammatical structure or language skill. The question remains about to what extent such modifications were made on the basis of feedback from her students or by an analysis of her students' preferences and needs, and how much they were actually motivated by adapting the coursebook to Buse's own teaching style.

Another I-position which turned out to be much more subdued than Buse self-reported was her Courageous Teacher I-position. Throughout her journey, Buse reported several instances of asking her students for feedback. Every time she did it, she claimed to have received only positive feedback and encouragement, which further consolidated her on the path directed and controlled by her teaching experience. However, as described above, instances when feedback was not positive and students voiced their opinions on aspects of her lessons that they did not find enjoyable, effective or even necessary,

Buse's response was to ignore it and go on with her usual way of conducting her lessons.

The impact of Buse's Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position on her Fun Teacher I-position

Analyzing the content of Buse's backpack, it can also be discerned that the size of the balloon in her inventory, an illustration of her Fun Teacher I-position, was considerably smaller after her journey. It was clearly observable that Buse greatly enjoyed being in the classroom and interacting with her students. She was always cheerful and positive in class, smiling at students and listening to them with a genuine interest painted all over her face. However, the same could not be said about the majority of her students, whose body language suggested that they were far from engaged in the lesson. Consequently, even though Buse visibly had fun during the lessons, the same could not be said for her students with a complete certainty.

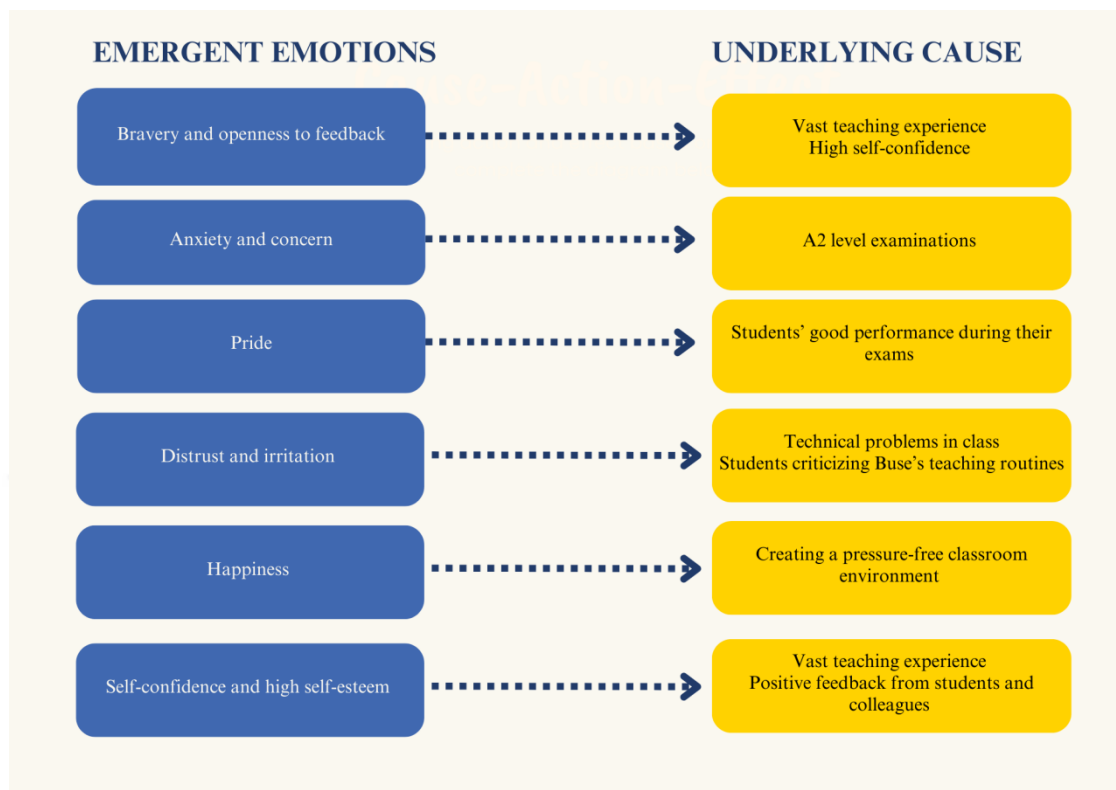
The subdued nature of Buse's Fun Teacher I-position was in direct correlation to the gradual strengthening of her Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position. Even though she did not mention any exams in her first semi-structured interview, it soon became clear that preparing her students for upcoming exams was on top of her lists of priorities, leaving having fun further down on the list. Furthermore, with the exam period looming ahead, fun activities became a waste of valuable lesson time which could otherwise be allocated to teaching exam strategies and making sure that her students were ready for the assessment.

4.3.6. Buse's emotions on her reflective journey

Buse experienced a wide variety of emotions on her reflective journey, ranging from pride and satisfaction with her students' exam performance and a boost of self-confidence as a result of positive feedback from students and colleagues, to anger and annoyance with students who threatened her well-established classroom routines. The emotions which emerged during Buse's reflective engagement and their underlying causes were compiled in Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13

Buse's emotions emerging on her reflective journey



Approaching the reflective journey with bravery and excitement

Buse embarked on her reflective journey with a sense of bravery and confidence. She was excited for the prospect of reflecting on her own teaching practice and acknowledged that she possessed enough courage and confidence to actively seek feedback from others, including her colleagues and her students. Participation in the study presented her with an opportunity to see herself through her students' eyes. The bravery she felt allowed her to approach this prospect with excitement, rather than fear or anxiety. She was also curious about potential areas for improvement she might be able to notice in her practice over the course of the current study.

"Some teachers came to listen to my lessons but they have never given me feedback or when they have given it, they have always given me positive feedback. I have never seen something negative. I really don't know what is missing in my teaching." (Buse's first semi-structured interview)

Buse's excitement was also connected with the fact that she perceives the participation in the project, particularly sharing her reflective journal with the researcher, to be a source of great fun. She was looking forward to transferring her emotions and feelings

onto paper and sending them to the researcher, already coming up with creative ideas on how to make this correspondence even more joyful and fun.

“This is something really new. I feel excited about this study because this will be the first time writing about my practice and feelings. I feel like I’m going to write a love letter to you, all my secrets, feelings, deep thoughts will be shared. Even I can start to make it fun, start my journal, like my Dear X, today.... It will be romantic (laughter). I will start with this.” (Buse’s first semi-structured interview)

The feeling of having fun on her reflective journey continued until the very end. Buse was glad to go through the experience of reflective engagement. However, rather than a deep and transformative experience which could expose her vulnerability and shed light on aspects of her identity and practice she was previously not aware of, her reflective journey remained a fun and light experience for Buse from the first step she took on her path, till the last one: “Fine, it was fun. I wasn’t stressed or anything. As I said, I was happy to have you as my guest (laughter).” (Buse’s post-interview)

Anxiety and concern over A2 students

Even though Buse felt no anxiety about opening her classroom to video scrutiny and sharing her thoughts and emotions with the researcher, she revealed that she felt anxious about her students, in particular the A2-level students. The concern she felt for students at a lower proficiency level was triggered by the fact that they were at the very beginning of their language learning journey and had to progress quickly in order to graduate to the next level. It can be added here that the system implemented at Buse’s institution requires students to cover four proficiency levels, one per each of the four teaching quarters. This means that students who start their education at a higher level in the first teaching quarter, have a chance to finish the preparatory school even if they fail and need to repeat one or even two levels. However, the same comfort is not given to the students who start from the bottom level, as any failure means that they will not be able to reach the B2 level by the end of the academic year, forcing them to take part in external, high-stakes exams in order to move on to their departments. Thus, the pressure on A2 students and their teacher is much greater, which can explain the different levels of concern Buse exhibited for higher level and lower level learners.

“I really feel better with higher levels because they accomplish a lot. With A levels I feel more concerned because I say that this student really has to pass this A level and they really need to accomplish lots of things, will they be able to do it or not. I feel concerned about

them. That's why with higher levels I start to feel confident but with A levels, I also think concerned like them." (Buse's first semi-structured interview)

"Because they are A levels, I am careful with everything." (Buse's second video-stimulated interview)

"I really feel like I need to be very careful with A levels in order not to catch anything as these students don't know much. I checked their pacing carefully to prepare my lesson plan beforehand not to miss anything." (Buse's reflective journal, week 4)

Anxiety and pride in the exam period

Her anxiety and concern only escalated before each examination period, correlating with the increased anxiety of her students. Buse was able to respond to this pressure in two different ways, one practical, one emotional. Regarding the practical reaction, Buse became even more concerned about the lesson time, trying to squeeze every minute of it for exam preparation. On the other hand, she also attended to her students' emotional needs by reassuring them in their abilities and attempting to bring comfort to their nerves.

"I realized that for the first time my students asked questions about exams as the time is approaching and I kind of saw them a little bit anxious about the exams. I really tried to assure them as much as I could and gave them feedback about their questions. ... This was a very busy day as I had to cover lots of things and all I could do was to replan my programme very carefully so that I could spend even one minute effectively. I realized that my students also recognized this situation and they tried to give all their attention to me." (Buse's reflective journal, week 3)

After all the hard work Buse put in preparing her students for their exams, she was beaming with pride when they performed well during one of their assignments, which was a debate for B2 students. She could see the fruits of hers and the co-teacher's labour and was satisfied with how well the students followed their guidelines and instructions.

"Today, my B2 level students had their speaking assignment and it took 3 hours. I was pleased that they really showed a good performance. They did what I and my colleague expected them to do." (Buse's reflective journal, week 6)

A growing distrust towards school administration and students

At the start of her reflective journey, Buse encountered unexpected technical problems that filled her with irritation and distrust towards the technical equipment at her school as well as the administrative team who was supposed to check all the learning facilities

before the start of the academic year. To her shock, when she commenced her lessons she quickly realized that the equipment did not work well, and the application used to display the coursebook on the board had not been installed properly. As a result, her lesson plan was disrupted by the fact that she had to direct her attention to the technical issues and a portion of the valuable lesson time was wasted.

“I have learned not to trust anyone before I start teaching and enter the classroom. From the beginning of the first week, I have just assumed that everything with the board and the facilities in the classes have been checked but when I stepped in the classroom, I realized that the online application version had not been downloaded on the board, the passwords for internet connection had not been checked and more importantly the board needed updates. So, I had to make the students wait and do everything before I started teaching, which interrupted my teaching.” (Buse’s reflective journal, week 2)

Interestingly, apart from a feeling of distrust towards the school administration and the technical equipment, a distrust towards students has also emerged during Buse’s reflective engagement. Even though Buse trusted students’ opinions enough to frequently ask them for feedback on some aspects of her classroom routine, such as the desk setup or the type of communicative activities they preferred, her trust was seriously compromised when a group of students asked her to make a change in her teaching routine by skipping the grammar presentation portion and advance directly to grammar exercises. As with the abovementioned technical problems, Buse responded to this request with irritation and was frustrated by the fact that her students tried to exert control over her lesson plan. The distrust towards the students continued until the last week of the data collection process and was evident from a heavy use of a strategy Buse employed to check if her students could answer a reading comprehension question correctly by asking her students to underline the part of the text where they could see the answer. This strategy is very common in language classrooms, but Buse’s rationale behind using it was not grounded in encouraging students to think critically and support their answers with evidence, but rather a need to check if the students were lying to her.

“I like to do it with all classes. When I don’t want to see the answer in the reading texts, they can just lie. Hocam, this is a, it is in the second paragraph. Of course, but where is the sentence? Where did you see it. This is how I check them. ...Because they just show that, hocam, I am a good participant, but actually maybe they haven’t read something. There are such students.” (Buse’s third video-stimulated interview)

Buse's irritation with the state of the classrooms continued throughout her journey. Apart from the technical equipment, she was also dissatisfied with the size of a whiteboard in one of her classrooms. As her teaching style involved intensive board work with example sentences and questions written on the board for all students to see, the size of the board meant that she had to constantly clear it to make room for new information.

Comfortable classroom atmosphere as a source of happiness

Despite the technical problems and far from ideal classroom setups, Buse started her reflective journey with a feeling of happiness and pride in her abilities to establish a friendly atmosphere in her class. She attributed this success to her long-lasting belief that students should not be forced to actively participate in lessons. What it meant in practice, according to Buse, was that students felt comfortable not to answer her questions if they did not know the answer or they simply did not feel like participating in the lesson. She also believed consulting the students about their opinions made them feel appreciated and happier. This comfortable and stress-free environment has also contributed to her own happiness.

“I have also experienced some positive things. I could create a good classroom atmosphere with my students by just asking their opinion about the exercises and allowing them not to force themselves for giving the correct answer when we do exercises, which I believe contributed a lot to my lesson teaching. I felt happier and content this way.” (Buse's reflective journal, week 2)

The pitfalls of self-confidence in Buse's reflective practice engagement

From the very beginning to the end of her reflective journey, Buse displayed immense confidence in her teaching experience and the teaching style she has honed over the years. At no point did she feel even a grain of self-doubt which would allow her to question the effectiveness of the techniques she used. All her actions were purposeful, confident, and grounded in many years of classroom practice. Every part of her lesson was carefully planned and she spent considerable time planning for her lessons and modifying coursebook tasks and classroom materials. Having used the current coursebook for years, meant that she had it almost memorized and could easily predict how each task would be performed by her students.

“I just know the style of the book. That is why I, I also check pacing weekly. This part won’t work, this part will work. I do everything in my mind so when I sit in front of the PC I know what to do. It is not a surprise for me. Oh, this speaking activity is really boring, what should I do. I know that this is boring.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

Buse was not only familiar with the coursebook, but she also claimed to have an insider’s knowledge into her students’ thoughts, feelings and preferences. She claimed she “discovered” her students during the first week of the classes, as if they were codes that needed to be cracked. Once she knew who they were, she felt fully confident in her abilities to cater to their needs. Naturally, it could be argued that the “discovery” process she performed with her students was not based on an actual analysis of her new classes by attentively observing their verbal and nonverbal language and listening to their feedback. Rather than that, with a firm belief in who Turkish university students are and a ready profile in her mind, Buse’s discovery process would always yield the same results, confirming the vision of a typical university student in Türkiye she had conjured a long time ago. Nevertheless, regardless of the genuinity of the students’ needs analysis conducted by Buse, the belief that she knew best what her students want, feel, and think was a source of confidence and conviction in her actions. This, in turn, filled her with confidence and minimized any anxiety or stress she might feel before her lessons. Even the language she used to reflect on her teaching practice was radiating with confidence, making every sentence she uttered and every line in her journal self-assured.

“Because if you see the position of the desk, I turn my back to them. That is why I keep turning my head. I do it on purpose.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

“I just realized that some students are looking at their watches or phones, but this is normal because their attention span is lower than us. But still in my heart that they are listening to me (laughter).” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

“Also this is the second week and I have discovered them and I know that they can understand me.” (Buse’s first video-stimulated interview)

“With A levels, unfortunately, most of the time, no matter what you try, for some groups you need to be teacher-centred. Or else they just don’t catch it or understand.” (Buse’s second video-stimulated interview)

However, the high level of unwavering confidence prevented Buse from ever considering alternative courses of action. For example, when asked about anything she could have done differently in response to the incident narrated in her critical incident

report, Buse filled this section of the report with a short and resounding “no”, displaying full confidence in the actions she performed. Similarly, when her students remained quiet or gave very short answers to her Pikachu routine during the last video-recorded lesson, Buse did not find it necessary to even consider alternative strategies of encouraging her students to speak: “I am just thinking, with a different class, would I do it differently? No.” (Buse’s third video-stimulated interview).

Buse’s confidence in herself has also prevented her from fully tapping into her emotions. Despite many probes or even direct questions from the researcher, her accounts of her emotions were often lacking in depth or detail. To illustrate this with an example, some students in Buse’s class were sleeping during the lessons. It can be predicted that the sight of sleeping students would certainly trigger some kind of an emotional response from the teacher. Whether it would sadness and disappointment that the teacher’s efforts are ignored and remain unappreciated, anger at the level of disrespect displayed by such students, or even concern and empathy, thinking about the difficult sleep conditions in dormitories and the long commute many students need to make to get to the university, it can be fair to say that some level of emotional reaction would be activated. However, in the case of Buse, her reaction was not emotional at all, as her confidence and experience told her why the students behaved in a certain way.

“It doesn’t make me feel anything. I am just good with it. When they don’t answer I know what can be the explanation. ...Here, there are two options. They already know it or they don’t want to be a part of the class. They probably know it.” (Buse’s second video-stimulated interview)

Buse wrapped up her reflective journey with an even stronger sense of self-confidence. She saw the kind of teacher she wanted to see, and there were no areas for improvement she saw. Coming back to the metaphor of a guru she employed as an antimodel for her teacher identity at the onset of her reflective path, it can be seen that the confidence in the teaching style she has practised over the years has actually bore more resemblance to an all-knowing guru than an adaptable and mindful teacher who is always on the lookout for experiences that might enhance their classroom practice. Therefore, it can be speculated that self-confidence can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it brings about important benefits such as decreased anxiety and higher self-esteem. On the other hand, as illustrated by Buse’s case, high levels of self-confidence can cause teachers to be more detached from the feedback they receive from their students, and decrease their

vulnerability to experiencing emotions which might diminish their confidence and trigger a change in their identity and practice.

4.4. The Case of Sena

4.4.1. Sena's backpack at the onset of her reflective journey

Sena's backpack at the onset of her reflective journey represented the image she held of herself as an ELT practitioner. The red balloon symbolizes her Fun Teacher I-position, the checklist is a symbol of her Controlling Teacher I-position, whereas the friendship bracelet is a manifestation of her Student-Friendly Teacher I-position and the importance she attached to being regarded as her students' friend. Sena's Empathetic Teacher I-position is illustrated by band-aids whilst a locked diary with a key represents her Private Teacher I-position.

Figure 4.14

Sena's backpack at the beginning of her reflective journey



The detrimental impact of Sena's Controlling Teacher I-position

Sena began her reflective journey already revealing a tension between some aspects of her teacher identity, and her awareness of the strain it put on herself and her wellbeing was evident in the first semi-structured interview. The part of her identity that caused this pressure was her Controlling Teacher I-position, illustrated by a checklist and a pencil. However, in contrast to İpek's Controlling Teacher I-position and Buse's Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position which manifested itself in an increased vigilance over students during the assessment period, Sena's control was not related to students, but to

herself. She confessed that she had high tolerance for mistakes made by students which she saw as a natural and necessary part of the learning process. In contrast to this, her tolerance for her own mistakes was very little and it was a persistently demotivating factor in her teaching practice. Displaying perfectionist tendencies when it came to her own performance, Sena enjoyed spending considerable amounts of time on planning her lessons in order to minimize any unexpected issues or mistakes she might make during the lesson.

“When somebody else makes mistakes it’s completely fine for me, it’s natural, I also motivate them, mistakes are normal, life is full of mistakes. But when I make a mistake it’s a huge problem for me. I can’t have, I can’t give myself positive feedback, motivate myself.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

Hence, an interesting dichotomy in her view of mistakes can be seen. Mistakes made by students or other people were completely natural and acceptable, whereas her own mistakes were undesirable and unacceptable. As mentioned before, Sena was perfectly aware that her intolerance for her own mistakes was one of her weaknesses. What is more, it was not limited to her profession, but rather spread over other aspects of her private life, such as learning how to drive. She also made a conscious effort to combat this controlling and perfectionist aspect of her identity by reading self-help books, but the intolerance for any errors on her part persisted.

“I’m reading a psychology book. People make mistakes, nobody is perfect. Still it doesn’t work, it’s not going into my mind. I’m reading on it. Even with driving, when I make a mistake I hate it. I focus on mistakes.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

Sena’s Private Teacher I-position and its correlation with her Controlling Teacher I-position

The second item in her backpack, a diary locked with a key, symbolizes the Private Teacher I-position. Similarly to the controlling aspect of her personality, Sena’s Private Teacher I-positions exerted impact on her life inside and outside of the classroom. When it comes to her teaching practice, the dislike for sharing meant that Sena would be very hesitant to discuss any issues, problems or even successes she has experienced with her colleagues in fear of making them uncomfortable or even irritated. In Sena’s mind, confiding in her colleagues was seen as complaining and might confuse the other person. She also alluded to the fact that the culture of sharing and collaboration was not strong in her current institution.

“I don’t like sharing. Maybe I should but I feel very hesitant. Because maybe they will feel, I don’t know. I like to keep things to myself. Actually, maybe I shouldn’t. It might be because everyone is not sharing that much. Maybe they would get me wrong. Why is she talking about her practices, exercises? Maybe they will get me wrong. Or maybe if I ask them about how they’re covering their lessons, maybe they will misunderstand me. Maybe they’ll get me wrong.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

It can be speculated that the controlling aspect of Sena’s identity further exacerbated her unwillingness to share her experiences with the other teachers. After all, asking a colleague for advice, would necessitate admitting that she might have made a mistake and not everything in her lesson went according to the plan. Another similarity between her Controlling Teacher I-position and the Private Teacher I-position was the fact that she was aware of their detrimental effect on her well-being. Sena fully acknowledged that sharing the highs and lows of teaching practice with others could yield positive results and help her refine her performance. She also expected that many teachers might be going through the same or similar difficulties as her. However, her need to keep her thoughts and experiences private, meant that she was not willing to engage in heart-to-heart conversations with other teachers at her school.

“Sometimes I have issues and I think, I personalize them, I think it’s only me having issues. But if somebody else is having the same issues I think, okay, maybe I shouldn’t personalize it, maybe it’s something general. And sometimes they give very good solutions.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

As a result, rather than collaboratively attempting at finding solutions to any problems she experienced in her lessons, she preferred to tackle her problems in isolation by referring to teaching blogs and websites dedicated to ELT practitioners. This practice allowed her to address any aspects of her teaching she was dissatisfied with and avoid revealing her potential shortcomings to her peers.

The strong reluctance to open up to others was also persistent in Sena’s private life. She was not an active user of social media and rarely shared any photos or posts about herself. At the same time, she was aware of the fact that her teaching practice, in contrast to her private life, is not a personal sphere of her life and could benefit from being opened up to her colleagues. Still, her Private Teacher I-position made such an endeavour incredibly burdensome: “Normally I don’t like taking photos, sharing them

on social media, it's something personal. But my lessons shouldn't be personal, but I'm not used to it." (Sena's first semi-structured interview)

Building and maintaining a student-friendly image

The colorful friendship bracelet visible in the corner of the table symbolizes Sena's Student-Friendly Teacher I-position. Apart from a focus on students' performance, the aspect of the teacher-student relationship which Sena seemed to prioritize even more was a good rapport and communication with her students. More importantly, she wished for this communication to be bidirectional, emphasizing the fact that she wanted to hold meaningful conversations with her students, listen to them, and be engaged in a dialogue instead of a teacher talking time heavy monologue. She also underscored that the communication she had with her students did not need to be limited to the objectives of the lesson. Rather than that, her intention was to establish a student-friendly environment in which students could feel comfortable enough to talk to her and build genuine bonds.

"Communication is very important. Not just communication about subject matter but communication in general. I love communicating with students. And I want this thing to happen in return. I don't want to communicate all the time. I like when they communicate with me. Sometimes they don't even say good morning (laughter). Or bye. They just grab their bags and leave. The second thing I like about students is asking questions. Sometimes they ask very good questions. And sometimes they ask me questions about details, so I like when they ask me questions." (Sena's first semi-structured interview)

Interestingly, the focus on students and friendly demeanor that Sena cherished so much in her teaching practice did not come to her naturally. She reflected on her early years as a teacher when she worked as a guest lecturer in a Linguistics Department. After a few initial weeks of classes, she noticed that the number of students opting for her course was considerably lower in comparison with other lecturers. She reported that at the beginning of her teaching career, her biggest priority was achieving the objectives she planned for every session. She also noted that she used to dress all black, a style she traced back to one of her university teachers. This teacher, a woman always dressed in black, with a serious look on her face and a sarcastic attitude, became an initial model Sena built her own teaching persona on. However, saddened by the dwindling student numbers in her class, she understood that this persona might be the likely cause of her unpopularity among university students. She decided to make a drastic change, started

wearing bright colours, made sure to smile and approach her students with a friendly attitude. Gradually, she gained more popularity among students who were genuinely surprised at how friendly she actually was.

“In time I understood they got me wrong. They thought I was too disciplined, too strict, I give low grades. Which was the case, to be honest. And then I changed myself, I couldn’t change my appearance that much but I changed myself and started giving more importance to communication. And then in time students told me “Hocam, you look very strict, but actually you’re not”. You are so nice and kind, your grading is so fair, we like you. When they get a lesson from me they began references and their friends came to my lessons. The ones who didn’t know me wouldn’t take my sections. They thought I was strict and super-disciplined.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

This change bore resemblance to the one experienced by İpek and Buse. Similarly to the other participants of the study, Sena also started her teaching career implementing a more teacher-centred and formal approach to classroom practice. One significant difference between these three cases, is the extent to which they were willing to change. İpek modified her teaching style but stayed somewhere between her old teacher persona and her new teaching style. Buse became more student-oriented but lesson objectives and exam preparations remained her priorities. Sena’s makeover was more extreme. Maintaining a friendly and soft image among her students became her top priority and it even encroached on her ability to give reliable grades to her students. Motivated by fear of going back to the anti-model of her former teacher and a deep concern over maintaining her friendly image, Sena developed an inclination towards avoiding giving lower grades in assessment: “I gave low grades but I changed that. Now, I’m not like that. Now whenever I need to give a low grade I double-think, maybe I shouldn’t do it.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview).

Sena’s Empathetic Teacher I-position

Sena’s Empathetic Teacher I-position was present in her reflections on herself made at the onset of her journey, but it seemed not to be as prominent as in the initial interviews with İpek and Buse. Sena mentioned that, using her empathy skills, she was able to read the expressions on her students’ faces and read their non-verbal clues. She employed this ability to gauge the success of the activities she planned. As a result, her empathy allowed her to understand her students without having to ask them for feedback directly.

“I know if something doesn’t work from students’ body language. They get bored, boredom. They’re not being respectful, of course they don’t criticize. They know they have to take lessons, and that absenteeism is important. From their body language, facial expressions I understand it. Maybe I needed some kind of change. I observe them.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

Having fun in class as a factor strengthening friendly student-teacher relationship

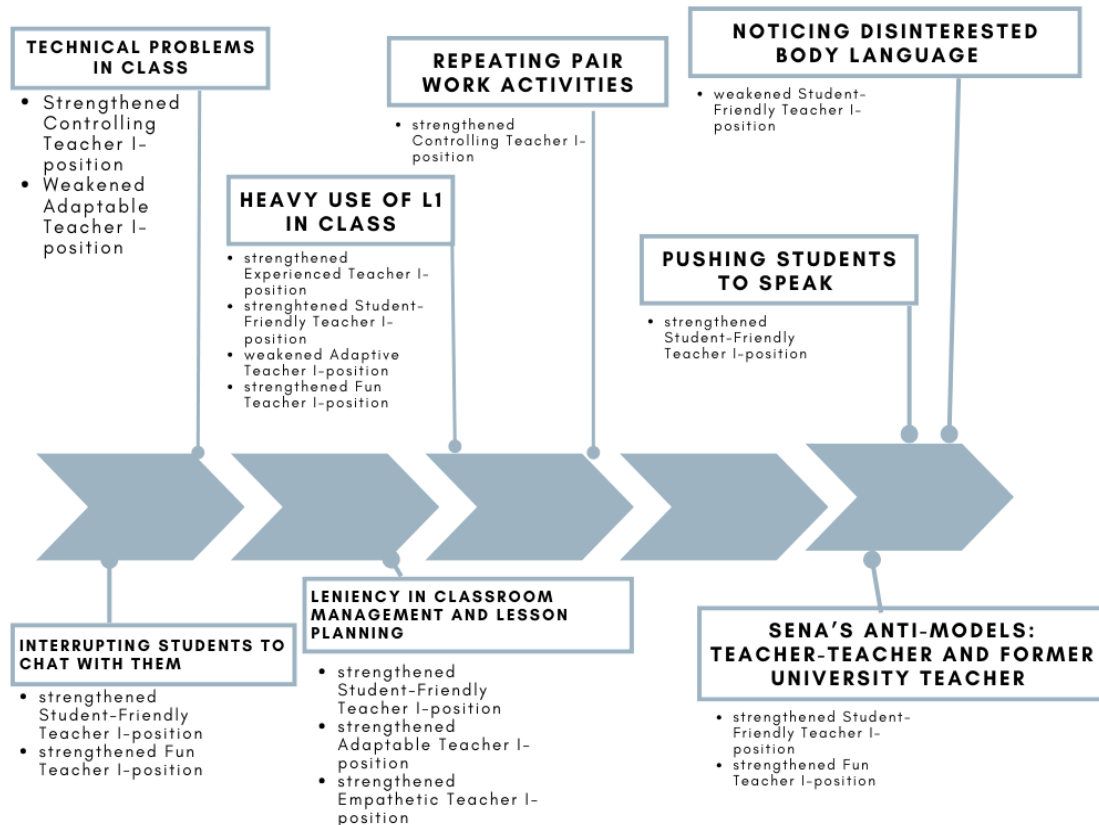
Finally, a red balloon, as in the case of the other two participants of the study, symbolizes the Fun Teacher I-position. This position was also tightly connected with Sena’s Student-Friendly Teacher I-position. As she cared about her relationship with students, she naturally strived to establish a friendly atmosphere in her classroom and fun activities allowed her to do it. She confessed that the moments when her students laughed in class were the highlights of her day. She was not afraid to implement pair and group activities which could be regarded by others as “silly” or childish. One of such activities was drawing an imaginary boyfriend or girlfriend in class. When she was describing all the funny masterpieces created by her students during the interview, her whole face lit up and the importance she attached to having fun with her students in class was clearly visible.

4.4.2. The beginning of Sena’s reflective journey

At the onset of her reflective path, Sena was already able to question some of her well-established routines such as the use of L1 in class. She also experienced serious technical problems which put her adaptability and perfectionism to a test. At this point of her reflective journey, Sena also became aware of the impact her body language and facial expressions had on her student-friendly image. The onset of Sena’s reflective path was summarized in the figure below.

Figure 4.15

Roadmap of Sena's reflective journey (weeks 2-3)



Constraining power of Sena's Controlling Teacher I-position

At the beginning of her reflective journey, Sena encountered a technical problem that almost completely derailed the whole lesson observed by the researcher. In tune with her Controlling Teacher I-position, Sena had meticulously planned every aspect of her lesson. Even a simple warm-up involving asking students about how their mood was, was transformed into a well-prepared voting activity using an online application. However, nothing went according to the plan as the smartboard could not be turned on. When Sena was successfully able to open the board, another obstacle appeared as the board could not connect to the Internet, meaning that Sena could not access the application she planned to use. After about 15 minutes, the IT specialist arrived to fix the problem. Ironically, even though the application initially worked, soon the screen froze and Sena was not able to continue with the activity. As a result, the simple act of asking “How are you?” to students took almost 30 minutes, leaving Sena very little time to go on with the lesson pacing. At this point, it could be speculated that her insistence

on sticking to her original lesson plan resulting from her Controlling Teacher I-position, limited her adaptability and the ability to think-on-the-spot. The activity could have been done without the use of the application, it could also have been skipped altogether, but Sena was not able to experiment with any other alternatives to the one she had thought about before the lesson.

Sena's Controlling Teacher I-position came to the forefront again during a follow-up task after a mingle activity. During the activity, students were handed slips of paper with questions they asked to each other. When the activity was completed, Sena displayed all the questions on the board and proceed to ask them to students. As a result, the follow-up questions were an exact copy of the original mingle activity with the only difference being that students answered to their teacher instead of their classmates. When asked about the rationale behind repeating the activity, Sena explained that she wanted to know exactly what her students said during the mingle activity in order to check their answers. She felt the need to control and check their performance and could not simply move on to another task before acquiring this knowledge.

“Pairs are more effective but I want to listen to them. They were talking to each other but I don't know what they said. I'm curious about it. They should be able to produce but they don't produce much. That's why I mingle them, observe them. But I can't observe completely. That's why I ask the same questions again to see what's happening.” (Sena's first video-stimulated interview)

Sena's reflections on the use of L1 in her classroom

Even though Sena did not direct any attention to her teaching experience during the initial interview, similarly to Buse, her Experienced Teacher I-position manifested itself in the use of several teaching routines, for example including a warm-up activity on every first and last lesson of each week. Drawing more similarities with the case of Buse, Sena also had strong beliefs about A2 students, which she had developed over her teaching tenure. Sena was convinced that an L2-only classroom policy was not feasible for pre-intermediate students. She saw translation as the only effective tool to make sure that the content of the lesson as well as instructions for all tasks and activities are comprehended by students. A routine she cultivated on the basis of this belief, was a heavy use of L1 in class. As observed by the researcher, every instruction she gave was either given in English and then instantly translated into Turkish, or even given in Turkish only, completely depriving the students of an opportunity to comprehend the

task in the target language. The manner in which she reflected on this routine, with the heavy use of “have to”, suggested that she was aware of the negative impact such practice could have on her students’ performance, yet felt forced to do it and could not see any feasible alternatives.

“I have to do it, but just for 2 weeks, maybe 3 more days, and then I’ll have to stop because they will understand what we’re doing. ...I translated into Turkish, I know that. What is the point if I’m translating into Turkish, but I have to do it sometimes, not always.” (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

Apart from the Experienced Teacher I-position, another position which formed a rationale for this routine was her Empathetic Teacher I-position. As mentioned before, Sena used empathy to attempt at understanding her students’ emotions and needs. She pointed out that the group of students she was teaching consisted of shy, and introverted students. Observing them, she noticed that they felt great discomfort and embarrassment when they were not able to follow the lesson. Translating into Turkish became a tool she used to bring comfort to such students. Without hurting their confidence or negatively affecting their self-esteem when they would not be able to understand her in English, Sena switched into Turkish in order to guarantee complete comprehension and, in turn, show care about her students well-being.

“These girls. They become reddish when they make mistakes. That’s why I translate. I know I shouldn’t. They get red, they feel embarrassed, they hesitate. I shouldn’t translate because this is their only opportunity to speak English and get exposed to English. That’s why. I’m doing speaking but I am also speaking Turkish but I don’t want them to speak Turkish. I should balance it but for now it has to be like that. They will get used to it, they’ll become B1.” (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

Stuck between the use of translation dictated by her belief in students’ limited comprehension skills combined with a care for their emotional state, and an awareness that the heavy use of L1 can rob students of valuable exposure to the target language, Sena mitigated this dichotomy by placing a time limit on the use of Turkish in her classroom. However, this time limit did not remain consistent and it was constantly postponed. For example, after initially stating that she only uses translation for the first couple of weeks with A2 students, just a few minutes later she inadvertently admitted that she employs the same technique with higher levels of proficiency as well. Again,

the rigid nature of this routine and the incapability of adopting alternative solutions to the issue are both evident in the use of “have to” in her reflections.

“I have to speak Turkish. Even at higher levels. They have noun clauses, relative clauses etc. Their level is high and their Turkish is good, they try to translate those perfect Turkish sentences into English. They don't get their mistakes so we translate together. To make sense of the language.” (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

When reflecting on her teaching practice during the first video-stimulated interview, Sena’s attention was drawn to her students’ behaviour when she delivered instructions for a mingling, speaking task. The instructions for the task were first given in English and then quickly translated into Turkish. Sena took notice of the fact that the students were not paying attention to her when she was giving instructions in the target language and only lifted their heads and started looking at her when she switched into Turkish. She started to suspect that her use of L1 effectively conditioned her students not to pay attention to English, but wait for the imminent Turkish translation to come. In a way, guided by good intentions of decreasing the students’ stress caused by comprehension problems, Sena’s routine made the students too comfortable and overly reliant on their L1: “Maybe they can actually understand me. I think they understand me but they keep quiet. Whatever, let her explain in Turkish. Aha, this is what they want from me.” (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

After the constant back and forth and a simultaneous praise of the advantages of using L1, and an acute awareness of its educational shortcomings, Sena concluded her reflections on the issue with a resolution to decrease the amount of Turkish spoken in the lesson. Yet again, no definite time for the implementation of this new arrangement was given.

“I will decrease this Turkish in speaking. This is a problem. There shouldn’t be any Turkish in speaking. I will continue the way it is now for a while, a bit more. It will take some time, though.” (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

The use of Google Translate in Sena’s classroom

It should be noted that the use of L1 was not limited to spoken communication taking place in Sena’s classroom. She also encouraged her students to use Google Translate in speaking activities. The students were instructed not to ask Sena about any vocabulary items they might be unfamiliar with, but rather use their mobile phones, write the word

or even a sentence in Turkish and copy whatever the application showed. Here, an interesting discord between Sena's encouragement for this practice and her previous statements about wanting her students to ask her questions can be seen. Even though she valued communication and wished for students to engage with her, she actively dissuaded them from approaching her with questions related to vocabulary. It can be speculated that this apparent opposition can be explained by the nature of communication which Sena expected from her students. The interactions she would like to have with her students were meaningful, genuine, and friendly conversations, fostering the friendly relationship they were able to build. On the other hand, asking for a meaning of a word was much more technical, emphasizing the professional student-teacher relationship, rather than their friendly relationship.

“Otherwise, they would ask me. Hocam, how do we say this? It's too much of a burden, I don't want to do it. We have an application for this...If I prohibit Google Translate, they will not be able to write sentences, they will stop participating, they will ask me questions. It will be the same thing. If I say a word, they might misunderstand.” (Sena's first video-stimulated interview).

Curiously, similarly to the use of L1 in spoken communication in class, Sena was also aware that discouraging her students from using Google Translate, or at least prohibiting its use for translating whole sentences would force students to rely on their linguistic abilities and could actually accelerate their progress. Still, just as in the case of using L1 to communicate with students, Sena could not conjure any alternative courses of actions and perceived her routine as the only valid solution: “Of course the one who's making their own sentences is making more progress than the one using Google Translate, but I still encourage them. This is something they need to learn.” (Sena's first video-stimulated interview).

Inconsistencies between Sena's beliefs and her teaching practice

Another belief about A2 students which revealed itself during the first video-stimulated interview, was a conviction that students should not be forced to give longer answers, as their linguistic abilities are simply too low to allow them to reply in full sentences with a considerable amount of detail and information: “You can't force them to make long sentences at A2 level. I can't force them, “tell me more?”, “anything else?”” (Sena's first video-stimulated interview). This belief seemed to be a lighter version of Buse's conviction that students should not be forced to answer their teacher's questions. As a

result, some of Buse's students simply ignored her questions and remained silent even when she directed her questions to them. The responses from Sena's students were not that extreme, but it was observed by the researcher that almost all students replied to her questions with very short, incomplete sentences, sometimes with just one word.

Although Sena claimed that A2 students should not be pushed for answers, this belief was in complete opposition to her behaviour observed by the researcher. Sena frequently pushed students for answers, asked follow-up questions, gave her own examples, and made every attempt to prolong the communication with the students. In practice, it meant that the students were bombarded with additional questions coming one after another, giving them little time to think about what they would like to say. In consequence, the amount of teacher talking time far exceeded the length of student's active participation in the lesson. Ultimately, after watching such interactions several times on the recording, Sena came to the conclusion that her routine for encouraging students to speak was actually ineffective.

"When I want to push them, I explain more and give more details. You speak more because you want them to speak more. It doesn't work, ya. I get bored, nobody is answering so I'm speaking." (Sena's first video-stimulated interview).

Linguistic constraints on Sena's Fun Teacher I-position

Although the students in Sena's class kept quiet for most of the lesson time, she still managed to exercise her Fun Teacher I-position and made them laugh by telling funny comments or short anecdotes from her life. It should be noted, however, that the vast majority of such light-hearted moments was delivered in Turkish, rather than English. This was not a coincidence but rather an intentional and planned course of action. When reflecting on the amusing exchanges she shared with her students during the observed lesson, Sena revealed that her Fun Teacher I-position could only manifest itself in Turkish language. She intentionally did not make any funny comments in English because she was fully convinced that they would go unnoticed by the students: "With B1+ if you speak English or make a joke, they respond and laugh. But if you make a joke with A2 in English, they might not understand it. With some of them." (Sena's first video-stimulated interview).

Prioritizing friendly student-teacher relationship over lesson objectives

Sena was not fully satisfied with her students' profile. As mentioned before, her priority as a teacher laid in establishing meaningful, bidirectional communication. What it meant in practice was that instead of being in the centre of the lesson by constantly asking questions to her students, she wished for an opportunity to converse with them, encourage them to take active participation in the lesson and ask her questions. However, although the atmosphere in class seemed to be friendly, most students remained quiet throughout the class. The students instantly assumed the role of recipients, listening to Sena and only speaking up when they were directly asked. However, even when being asked, their answers were usually very short, which necessitated more follow-up questions from Sena. Consequently, the teacher talking time considerably exceeded the amount of time when students' voices could be heard. Still, Sena's Student-Friendly Teacher person, pushed her to approach the students, interact with them, and encourage them to communicate with her. Interestingly, when watching her attempts at making contact with the learners, Sena made an important discovery. She realised that her need for building a friendly relationship with her students can sometimes stand in the way of their work. The incident which sparked this reflection took place when students were engaged in a speaking activity in pairs. With the whole class engaged in the activity, Sena approached a table with a group of girls and started chatting with them. This behaviour could be validated if Sena's aim was to correct their mistakes or offer them feedback on the task they were doing. However, this was clearly not Sena's purpose as she stopped the girls from continuing with the activity and asked them questions in Turkish such as "How are you?", "How are you doing?". The goal behind these questions was to establish a friendly bond with the students, as if Sena was striking a conversation and catching up with some friends of hers.

"But there's one thing. While they were speaking in English I interrupted them and made Turkish jokes with the girls in the back. We were speaking Turkish. Maybe I shouldn't do that because they are doing pair work. I arranged the groups and pairs and told them to answer three questions and chat with each other. They were chatting and I interrupted them, made silly jokes in Turkish." (Sena's first video-stimulated interview)

Even though Sena was aware that she was actually impeding these students' linguistic progress, she simply could not stop herself. The need to chat with the students and

remind them of how approachable and friendly she was proved to be simply to great of a temptation to resist.

Exercising empathy in classroom management and lesson planning

Her friendly bond with students, combined with the empathetic and understanding attitude towards the learners, was also evident in the way Sena treated a female students who came to class late. Although the official administrative rule states that students who are more than fifteen minutes late to class should be marked absent, no such regulations were enforced when a student came to the classroom in the middle of the lesson. When asked about this incident during the video-stimulated interview, Sena expressed her sympathy for the student who was a mother-of-two and, as a result, was frequently late in the mornings. This situation bore clear resemblance to the working nurse student who was also treated leniently by İpek when she could not be in class on time as well as Buse's lenient treatment of latecomers in her class. İpek, Sena, and Buse used empathy to put herself in their respective students' positions and decided to show them support and understanding rather than enforce school rules.

Another manner in which Sena's Empathetic Teacher I-position came to the forefront was her use of empathy to make minor modifications in her lesson plan. In her reflective journal, Sena narrated the issues she experienced with writing classes which proved to be too long and tiresome for her students. Empathizing with them, Sena decided to divide the time allocated for writing and feedback on writing practice into smaller segments, allowing her students to take much needed rest and regain concentration. An even bigger alteration to her original lesson plan was made later during the week, when a portion of a lesson was scheduled for feedback on students' writing assignments. Sena began to give feedback collectively but quickly noticed, judging from her students' confused and anxious expressions, that their stress levels were very high. After some of them asked her to give feedback individually and in more detail, Sena agreed to this request and took time from the next class in order to fulfill her students' needs and make them feel more at ease. This incident proved that, despite her Controlling Teacher I-position often limiting her adaptability, she was able to modify her classroom practice and her lesson plans if it contributed to the students' wellbeing and further fostered her student-friendly teacher image.

“I immediately prioritized the feedback sessions and gave detailed feedback to the low level students and reminded them to do extra grammar exercises in the student pack for self-study.” (Sena’s first critical incident report)

Sena’s body language as a threat to her friendly image

Another discovery made by Sena was related to her body language and facial expressions during the lesson. This realization was of great significance to her, as it could threaten her friendly image she has worked so hard on fostering in her lessons. During the lesson Sena frequently sighed and walked around the classroom with a disinterested expression on her face. When directly interacting with students her whole demeanor changed. She smiled, looked and listened attentively to her students and seemed to be genuinely interested in what the students had to say. However, as soon as the interaction was over, the smile was gone and it was replaced by a tired and inattentive expression. Sena immediately made a decision to address this behaviour with an aim to eradicate it in order not to create a misleading image of herself, similarly to the experiences at the beginning of her teaching career. Not wanting to repeat the same mistakes, she vowed to pay more attention to non-verbal cues she sent to her students.

I’m making some sounds. Like (sighing). I should stop. It seems like I don’t have energy or I’m fed up with this job. I also do this at the office. (sighing). I was a little bit aware of it, but I still didn’t stop. It’s continuing. I should address it, definitely. If students don’t know me, they will say oh she’s bored or tired. But actually I’m not. I should stop that. (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

Revealing Sena’s dominant I-position

The use of Turkish discussed earlier in this section was also revealed to be a vital building block of her Student-Friendly Teacher I-position. Sena admitted that using Turkish made her look more friendly and approachable in students’ eyes, an image she prioritized over all other aspects of teaching. She talked about an antimodel of hers which she called “teacher-teacher”. According to Sena, a “teacher-teacher” is a practitioner who prioritizes learning objectives over his or her relationship with the students and their emotional well-being. A “teacher-teacher” has strict rules in class, and does not allow any use of L1 in the classroom, without any regard for shy students who might be intimidated by this practice. As a result, a “teacher-teacher” pushes students to achieve their goals, but he does it at the cost of ruining a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Sena’s priorities as a teacher were divergent from her anti-model. She

cared more about being her students' friend than being their teacher. As a result, the bond with her students was more valuable to her than anything else, and she was willing to sacrifice the educational aspect of her practice in favour of nourishing the teacher-student relationship.

"I don't want to jump to English. If there is an introvert student and you say "how are you", she won't answer. But if you say, *canım, ne yapıyorsunuz*, they start speaking. It's a psychological barrier if you speak English all the time. I need to speak Turkish. I can't be teacher-teacher all the time. I'm also human. I want to speak Turkish sometimes and chat with them. If I spoke English only, I wouldn't have this bond." (Sena's first video-stimulated interview)

Sena's determination to uphold the friendly image among her students was also fueled by frequent mentions of another anti-model of hers, a former, strict university teacher. It seemed that every time she would even consider switching to an L2-only policy, the image of her strict teacher and her experiences of being misunderstood and misjudged by her former students would reveal themselves in front of her eyes and prevent her from making a change. Intensified by her recent reflections on her disinterested and strict facial expressions she noticed in the first recorded lesson, Sena clutched to Turkish as an only instrument of projecting an image of a friendly teacher she desired her students to see. A vital aspect of her relationship with students was the trust they could put in her. However, according to Sena, this trust was not possible to build if students felt uncomfortable and stressed because they struggled with L2 comprehension.

"Yes, building trust. Teacher understands me, I can easily speak and make errors. She helps me. Because trust is also important. If I speak English, if I am teacher-teacher, they will say she's very strict and distant. Maybe her marking is low. I don't want to make such an impression on them. I really look strict, I think so. My face is like this. I make jokes but there's nothing I can do with my face. I look strict. Turkish helps me." (Sena's first video-stimulated interview)

At the end of the first part of her reflective journey, Sena gained awareness of what her priorities were as a teacher. Whereas she claimed that communication takes precedence in her teaching priority at the onset of her reflective journey, she was able to notice that her true priority was the friendly relationship with her students and she was willing to impede her students' progress by using Turkish if it let her achieve this goal.

"Also, I shouldn't speak Turkish in speaking but I really want to have fun with them. I don't know if I can do it. I give them a task and then I come to them and say "*kız, ne*

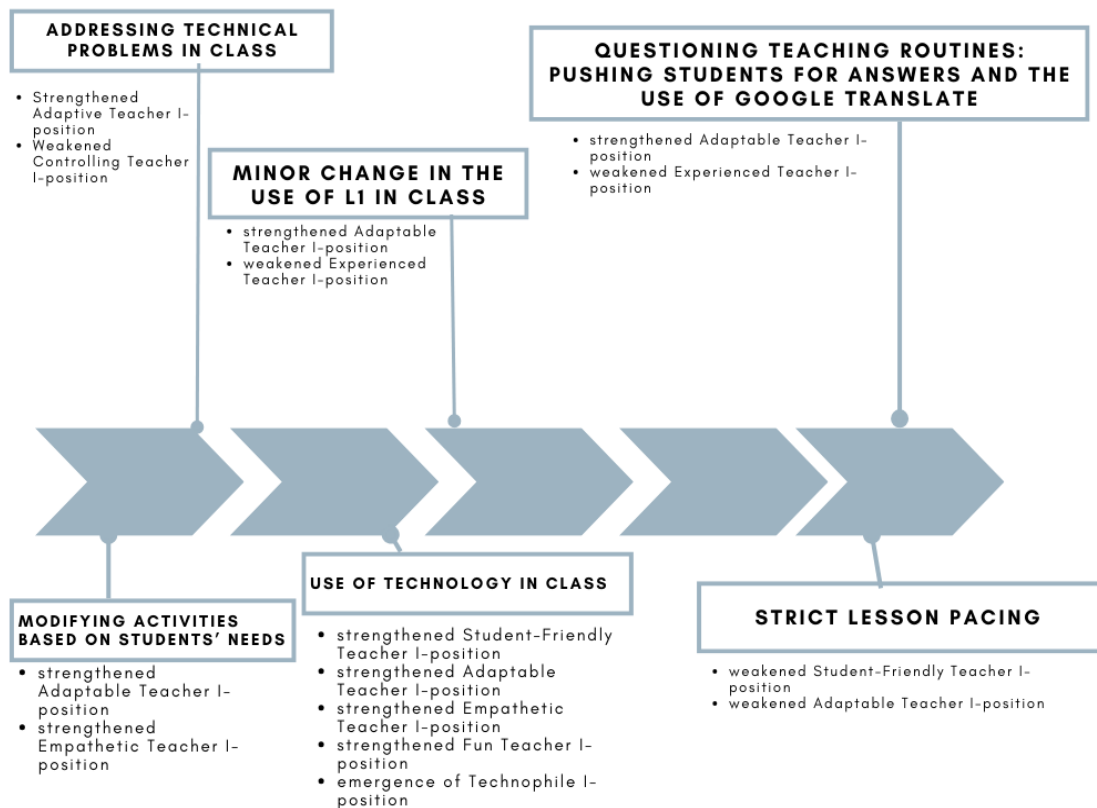
yapıyorsun falan”. I shouldn’t do it but I love those girls. The relationship is my priority.”
(Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

4.4.3. The midpoint of Sena’s reflective journey

Halfway through her reflective journey Sena continued to question her classroom routines and even managed to introduce some changes, albeit minor, to her teaching practice. Her Adaptable Teacher I-position was strengthened through her reactions to technical problems and teaching content modifications. Her frequent use of technology in class marked the emergence of the Technophile I-position. The developments in Sena’s language teacher identity at the midpoint of her journey can be seen in Figure 4.16.

Figure 4.16

Roadmap of Sena’s reflective journey, week 4



Addressing the heavy use of L1 in Sena’s classroom

The second promise Sena made to herself regarding her use of L1 in class, also failed to materialize at the midpoint of her reflective journey. Even though Sena initially gave herself a time limit of maximum three weeks as a breaking point after which L1 will be used to a much lesser extent, in the fourth week of her classes the use of L1 for giving

instructions was still widespread. Even tasks which should not prove to be difficult to comprehend, like an activity asking students to send emojis reflecting their current mood to an online application, were given in English and then translated and repeated in Turkish. Struggling with making peace between the use of L1 in class, which she felt was still absolutely necessary, and her responsibility for the linguistic development of her students, Sena continued to stretch the time limit for her L1-based routines and attempted to justify the futility of switching to an L2-only policy.

“When you speak English they just don’t react. When you speak Turkish with them, they will give you a reaction. They will say something or say they have no comments. Even when you tell them good news. Look, I checked your assignments, you will be very happy with the results. Zero reaction. But in Turkish, they would say oh, hocam, kaç aldım, en düşük kaçtı? They would definitely make comments. Because as I told you before, after 2,5 weeks, I will continue with English. I am trying to make them get used to this.” (Sena’s second video-stimulated interview)

Even though no major decrease in the amount of Turkish used by Sena was observed by the researcher, Sena noticed a slight change in the way she used students’ L1 in her classroom. She reflected on the fact that, unlike in the previous weeks of her reflective journey, Turkish was used by her mainly to explain task instructions to individual students, rather than the whole class. Again, it should be noted that this observation was not validated by the actual recorded lesson with Sena using Turkish when explaining the instructions to the whole-class and individual students alike. Sena also reiterated her observation that her students might have become conditioned to wait for task instructions given in Turkish and do not even bother to make an effort to understand them in English. Nevertheless, she concluded her reflections with another call-for-action and a desire to decrease the amount of L1 in her classroom.

“I think I use less Turkish. That’s what I realized. Even though, if I am speaking Turkish, I am not speaking to the whole class. Maybe just a few students. This is what I can see. ...To be honest, there are some times that I really need to, I really try hard and they just don’t get it. It is not about English, we get exhausted. Sometimes I really speak Turkish, I am aware of that. This is their only opportunity to speak and I need to increase student talking time, even if it is just reading sentences. It is happening, actually. There is a little progress but because it is grammar and we lost a lot of time, I think it is not that much evident. But I think there is a very small change about L1. I am doing my best about giving my instructions in English I am pushing myself. I should continue with this because I think

they get it. But their attitude, some of them pretend as if they don't get it, but they get it.”
(Sena's second video-stimulated interview)

However, despite this vow, just a few minutes into the interview Sena attempted to justify the need for using Turkish in her classes again. This time, she did not point to the fact that the use of Turkish allowed her to build a stronger bond with her students, but focused on the students' cultural background instead, insisting that Turkish students are not used to hearing many foreign languages and, in consequence, need to be immersed in the target language at a slower and more gentle pace: “We are a monolingual country, we have one language. We are not used to foreign languages.” (Sena's second video-stimulated interview)

Questioning ingrained beliefs: Pushing students for longer answers

The use of L1 was not the only routine that came under scrutiny at this point of Sena's reflective journey. Part of her Experienced Teacher I-position was also her beliefs about A2 students, including a belief that students at this proficiency level should not be pushed by the teacher to give longer answers. Interestingly, this belief seemed to be actively questioned by Sena as, in the span of a few minutes, she kept going back and forth between abandoning this belief and adopting it again. In the end she settled on a subtle change to her existing belief. Instead of “forcing” students to speak, Sena framed this practice as “insisting” on students to give more information. With her dominant Student-Friendly Teacher I-position in full force during these reflections, she decided that forcing or insisting on students to talk about their emotions, their lives and experiences was essential for the cultivation of the student-teacher bond. As a result, her rationale behind asking follow-up questions to her students was not to aid them in their linguistic development, but to maintain a friendly image of a teacher who genuinely cared about them and is their friend.

“It is pushing students and sometimes it doesn't work because you are pushing the conversation and forcing them. What can I do, yaa. Maybe I should find some other alternatives. ...I should force them. I like forcing them. ...I don't like, like. When they don't reply, when they don't feel like talking, at least, not forcing, I would like to go on. Let's say insist. I like insisting on something. I am really curious, how are they feeling, what are they doing. It is not just for the sake of speaking English. I am really curious.”
(Sena's second video-stimulated interview)

However, despite Sena's efforts to make her students speak and enter into a longer conversation with her, most students answered in very short sentences or even with just one-word. This pushed Sena into a spiral of asking several follow-up questions one after another, bombarding her students with information and increasing the amount of teacher talking time.

Questioning ingrained beliefs: The use of Google Translate

Another routine that was a principal part of her Experienced Teacher I-position was the use of Google Translate. This time, students worked in small groups to write example sentences with "can" and "can't". Sena encouraged them to use Google Translate to make the sentences, however, in contrast to the first video-stimulated interview, she slowly started to question this technique and reflected on the fact that it was challenging to adequately assess students' abilities if their sentences were made through the use of the application: "They produced their own sentences but I wasn't sure about that. Maybe they copied from Google, maybe they got it from the book." (Sena's second video-stimulated interview).

Adaptive response to technical problems

Technical problems seemed to be a staple part of Sena's classroom practice. In the second observed class technical problems with the smartboard meant that Sena could not do an activity she planned for her students. Even though about 10 minutes of the class were spent trying to fix the problem, Sena was able to get back on the track much faster than in the similar incident which took place at the beginning of her reflective journey. Even though the smartboard still did not work properly, Sena was able to modify the task and ask questions to her students orally instead of insisting on using the Power Point presentation she had prepared. This small change was a direct reflection of the weakened Controlling Teacher I-position and a budding Adaptable Teacher I-position. Although making on-the-spot modifications in the lesson plan still did not come to Sena with total ease, she demonstrated a higher propensity for adaptability. In the end, Sena asked a few warm-up questions to her students and moved the speaking activity that she intended to open her lesson with to the second class, taking care of the technical issue during the break.

Whatever I tried worked before, but things happen and there isn't much I can do about it. It went well, but of course not the way I planned. So, yeah. Pretty much, just I had another

speaking activity that I wanted to do in this class but I couldn't do it so I postponed this activity to the second lesson. (Sena's second video-stimulated interview)

The relationship between Sena's Empathetic Teacher, Fun Teacher and Technophile I-positions

As far as Sena's Empathetic Teacher I-position is concerned, it worked in unison with her budding Adaptable Teacher I-position, particularly in the planning stage of her lessons. For instance, after observing her students for several weeks and trying to gauge what kind of activities they felt comfortable with, Sena decided to modify a speaking activity which would be performed in front of the whole class, into a technology-assisted activity which could allow students to take participate in the task without facing the fear of speaking English in front of their classmates. Consequently, instead of asking students about their weekend and how they felt, she asked them to send their answers accompanied by an emoji to an online application. The students responded well to the task and soon lots of emojis were visible on the smartboard. This incident proved the importance that Sena attached to her students' emotional well-being and her genuine interest in learning about their lives. At the same time, although the use of technology was not mentioned by Sena when she described her own teaching practice during the first semi-structured interview, it was evident from the two video-recorded lessons that Sena can use technology effectively, and was able to implement it as a tool to decrease their students' speaking anxiety and boost their engagement in her lessons.

"I really wanted to learn how they are feeling. I really wanted to check with them because I know I will be able to stick to the pacing anyway. The point is that not everyone is talking. Just 2-3 students reply and the others feel hesitant because they don't want to talk in front of the class. But when it's technology, they definitely answer. I counted the answer, when I see 18-19 answers I know they replied." (Sena's second video-stimulated interview)

Apart from relieving students' anxiety, another rationale for the use of technology in Sena's lessons was to create a fun and enjoyable atmosphere, in line with her Fun Teacher I-position. For example, from a strictly educational perspective, asking students to post emojis instead of sentences could be seen as an ineffective task and a waste of precious lesson time. After all, sending an emoji to an application does not require any linguistic input from the students. When asked about the rationale behind this activity, Sena revealed that its sole purpose was to have fun with her students. This attitude stood in stark contrast to Buse's self-reported, yet not manifested Fun Teacher I-position.

Whereas for Buse, fun activities were gratuitous and a mere distraction from her purpose of preparing students for exams, Sena saw fun activities, even those which required no use of the target language, as a welcomed part of her classroom routine: “I wanted to use emojis because they use it in texting and it has some emotions. Yeah, just for fun. No reason actually. We just have a laugh. No reason.” (Sena’s second video-stimulated interview)

The constraining role of the lesson pacing

Even though Sena was able to manifest her Adaptable Teacher I-position by modifying the activities with the use of technology to cater for their shy students, the extent of her adaptability was constrained by the lesson pacing. For example, Sena confessed that she wanted to spend more time on a speaking exercise with her students in order to give each student a chance to respond to her questions. She had to cut this activity short in order to fulfill all the lesson objectives and cover all coursebook pages listed in the lesson pacing. The need to rush had serious consequences for her classroom practice. Apart from finishing the task before every student had a chance to speak, she also had to rush through the grammar presentation portion of the class, reading all the rules herself in order to save time. As a result, the dynamic of the lesson became even more teacher-centred and students were just passively listening to the teacher’s explanations. Sena noticed this change herself, but felt like she had no other alternative course of action due to the time constraints of the lesson pacing.

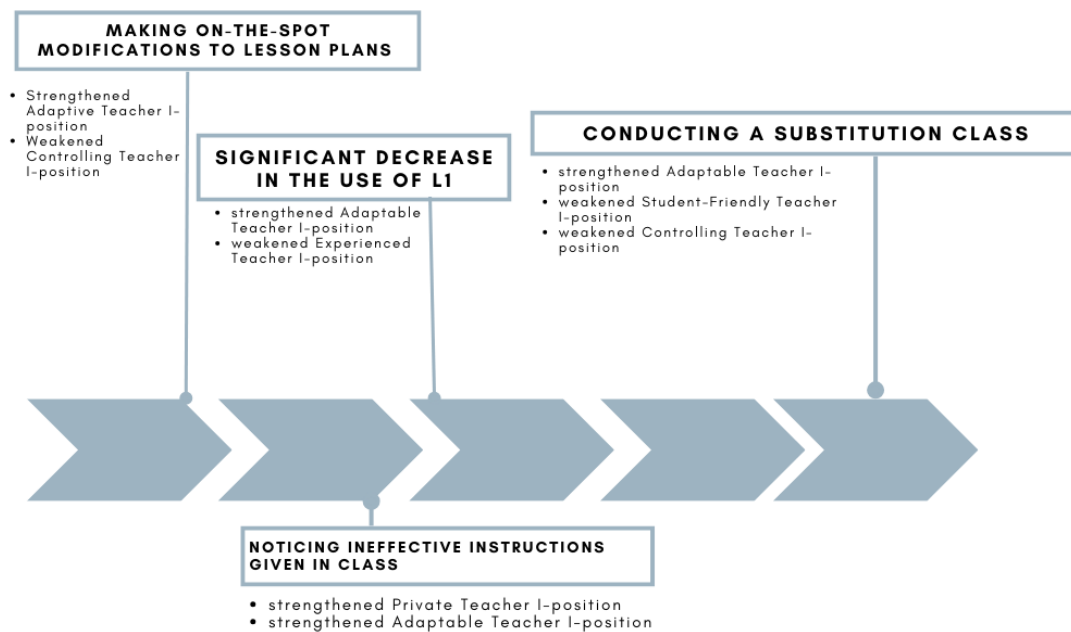
“I have one comment. There is too much teacher talking time. And they could have read the sentences. Why am I reading? But the point is I am getting late. I wasted time, I wanted to be quick. That is why I read the sentences very quickly just to check grammar. Otherwise, most time should have been given to student talking time, it is just me, me, me. But my whole concern is to catch the pacing right now.” (Sena’s second video-stimulated interview)

4.4.4. The last stretch of Sena’s reflective journey

The last stretch of Sena’s journey offered a fascinating glimpse at how her teaching practice changes when her Student-Friendly Teacher I-position is not dominant, as in the case of teaching a substitution class. At the same time, the evolutions in Sena’s language teacher identity continued with a further strengthening of her Adaptable Teacher I-position and a gradual release of perfectionist and self-controlling tendencies dictated by the Controlling Teacher I-position.

Figure 4.17

Roadmap of Sena's journey (weeks 5-6)



Sena's growing ability to adapt her lessons to unexpected situations

Towards the end of her reflective journey, Sena was able to hone her Adaptable Teacher I-position, at the expense of the rigid and strict Controlling Teacher I-position. For example, in her reflective journey she narrated that the number of students in one of her lessons was very low. Instead of going on with the programme and the lesson plan she had prepared for the lesson, Sena was able to think on-the-spot and modify the content of the lesson.

“Since the number of students was very low today (there were only 9 students), I didn't know how to cover the pacing. I focused on reading and vocabulary and postponed grammar to the next week. In the last lesson, I did revision exercises for the exam.” (Sena's reflective journal, week 5)

Another example of her adaptability was illustrated in her second critical incident report in which she described a lesson targeted at the presentation of Past Simple. After checking the exercises together with her students, Sena quickly understood that many of them were not able to fully grasp the topic, as many of their answers were incorrect. Again, ignoring her previously drafted lesson plan, Sena modified the content of her lesson in order to spend more time on practice exercises. She also decided to send extra worksheets to her students to give them an opportunity to practice Past Simple at home.

“I focused and introduced the past tense (affirmative, negative, questions, regular and irregular verbs) in one lesson. While some students seem to grasp the topic, others had slight confusions. Not all students are at A2 level, some of them can be considered slightly lower than A2. I allocated more time for past tense and exercises. Later, elicited questions during the lessons. I could have assigned homework too. I will give extra tasks and exercises to the low level students.” (Sena’s second critical incident report)

Teaching as a substitute teacher and its impact on Sena’s use of L1 and her Adaptive Teacher I-position

The last lesson observed by the researcher differed greatly from the first two recorded classes. It should also be noted that the last class was a substitution class and Sena had never met the students before as she was simply covering for a colleague. She also did not receive any information about the group from their teacher about the class profile, their likes and dislikes, their usual performance in class etc. Her sole focus during the class was to cover the pages listed for that lesson hour in the pacing. That attitude stood in sharp contrast with the priorities she had for her own group of students with a heavy importance attached to student-teacher friendly relationship. Surprisingly, Sena did not consider not knowing anything about her new group of students to be a problem. Her Controlling Teacher I-position which normally urged her to carefully plan and prepare for her classes, was totally subdued.

“I just wanted to cover the lesson. I just wanted to catch the pacing. So that is why, because my expectations were low, I didn’t feel like, I didn’t have any negative feelings. All I wanted to do was just to teach them target grammar which was already taught by their teacher. Just to practise, repeat. Just to know the students, know their names. My expectations were low. ...Yeah, yeah. I didn’t have like very high expectations. I wasn’t that much planned, I didn’t have any extra activities. I just wanted to cover the lessons and catch the pacing. That was my concern so their teacher can continue how she likes.” (Sena’s third video-stimulated interview)

The fact that Sena knew that she would only see the students for a very limited time had a profound effect on her usually dominating Student-Friendly Teacher I-position. Even though she still approached the students with a warm and friendly demeanor, listened to them and even laughed with them, the use of Turkish was considerably lower compared to the previously observed lessons. It can be hypothesized that, since Sena saw Turkish as a tool allowing her to build a bond with the students, Turkish was not that necessary to her in the third observed lesson as she did not place that much care on building a

relationship with the students she would only see once. She gave most of her instructions in English and, apart from a few comments or quick vocabulary translations, all other parts of the lesson were also presented in the target language.

Apart from a change in the use of L1 in class, the fact that Sena had no information about the students contributed to her Adaptable Teacher I-position as she decided to make a modification in her teaching practice as a result of not knowing the class well. In her own class, Sena frequently implemented pair and group activities, ranging from mingling activities to information gap tasks. However, due to the fact that she had little to no information about her new group, she made a decision to modify her teaching style and stick to individual tasks. She justified this decision with a belief that effective group activities are only possible if the students have a close, and friendly relationship with one another.

“Of course I had something in my mind. Tasks such as mini presentations, such as, you know, giving a recipe. I also had a video. I was planning to play the video. But the thing is, the problem is the arrangement. They can’t work. I don’t know if they are friends. Who works with who, who feels happy with who. That is also very important in group work. They should be good friends, they should be relaxed. They should have very good interaction and communication. Some of them are not friends with others. I have no idea. There can be other chances to mingle them, to get them to speak more, to become more communicative. Seems like it is about the arrangement. But I had that plan in my mind. I had a video. Just because they are sitting together, doesn’t make them friends. The important thing in a group is that they should be good friends. And this is not my class. This is not my concern. I am just covering for two hours.” (Sena’s third video-stimulated interview)

Noticing ineffective instructions in class

When observing herself on the recording, Sena noticed that her instructions were sometimes rushed. She was able to see the reaction students gave to her explanation of the task, and, seeing a puzzled look on some of their faces, promised herself that she would develop herself in this area. Interestingly, with her Private Teacher I-position at play, she instantly thought about developing her instruction-giving skills on her own, by reading relevant professional literature, rather than ask her colleagues for advice.

“I am planning to read something about giving instructions. What can be some other, what can be some alternatives of giving instructions. Which ones are the best? Which ones fit our levels? I am planning to do that because otherwise they will just expect me to translate

transformative change took place in the weakening of Sena's Controlling Teacher I-position combined with a gradual development of the Adaptable Teacher I-position, symbolized by a much emptier checklist (weakened Controlling Teacher I-position) and an elastic band (Adaptable Teacher I-position). Reflecting on all the technical problems she had encountered and all the instances when things simply did not go as planned in her classroom practice, Sena gained an insight into the fact that not everything is within her control. On the contrary, technical and educational challenges will keep happening, regardless of how much time she spends on meticulous planning. Even though Sena still valued lesson planning as an essential aspect of her teaching practice, she was now ready to acknowledge that issues and challenges will continue to come her way.

"Maybe I should be more aware about technical issues. They might happen all the time since we are using smart boards and we use online materials, the internet, different websites and apps. Maybe I should have more awareness about that. Because normally I was expecting that it was going to work all the time but that might not be the case all the time. So maybe I should be more sensitive about technical issues and check beforehand." (Sena's second semi-structured interview)

Making room for mistakes in classroom practice

Another far-reaching implication of her reflective journey was a transformation in Sena's attitudes to making mistakes. At the onset of her reflective journey, Sena confessed that she had no tolerance for making mistakes. While she was incredibly supportive of students making errors, she did not extend the same luxury to herself, bashing herself for every mistake she made during her classroom practice. However, observing herself making mistakes on video, combined with her reflections in the journal and the critical incident reports, led Sena to notice that her faults did not have a catastrophic effect on her students. On the contrary, even when her instructions were not clear or when she struggled with operating the classroom equipment, her students were able to show understanding and an ability to perform the tasks anyway. In the end, Sena learned to put more trust into her students' capabilities and realized that they were able to benefit from her lessons even if not everything was perfect. As a result, her Controlling Teacher I-position was significantly subdued, opening more space for her Adaptable Teacher I-position to shine and for her Empathetic Teacher I-position to grant the same empathy and understanding she reserved for her students to herself.

“Most surprising thing was that even though I make mistakes and sometimes I was not clear, students still coped with that. They still focused on the lessons. They still continued doing whatever they were doing at that time. So that surprised me. They kind of actually helped me. Sometimes when I had issues, they kept going on. Somehow they coped with it, somehow they understood the exercises, somehow they learned from each other. This surprised me. I thought that everything was in my control, I am teaching them, I am in the centre. But sometimes vice versa can be the case. Like, if I make mistakes, they just understand it and they continue. Actually, they are autonomous, independent.” (Sena’s second semi-structured interview)

Decreasing the amount of L1 spoken in class

During her reflective journey, Sena gained awareness of the questionable effectiveness of some of her well-established teaching routines which were a part of her Experienced Teacher I-position. The most prominent example of such routines was her heavy use of Turkish in class, justified by two of her ingrained beliefs. First of all, Sena accredited the necessity to use Turkish to the fact that students’ proficiency level was too low to allow them to follow the lessons delivered solely in English. Secondly, her Empathetic Teacher and Student-Friendly Teacher I-positions led her to believe that building a strong rapport with students was only possible in Turkish. She feared that an English-only classroom policy would expose the shy students to too much stress and pose a threat to her friendly image, making her look more strict and hostile, just like her former university teacher. Throughout her journey, her use of Turkish gradually dropped and it achieved its lowest point ever in the last week of her journey. This instance proved that Sena was successfully able to confront her routines and beliefs about teaching based on the evidence she gathered on her reflective journey, question them, and finally implement sustainable changes to her practice.

“Now they are more confident. We have better communication and interaction. So, they just understand me in English. And since some of my lessons are similar, they understood what I was doing. So now I don’t have that kind of concern. I changed. It is about time and also about watching lessons. It brought some kind of awareness. Normally, I wouldn’t, how should I, pay attention to such kinds of concerns but because of those lesson observations, now I can see the difference. I can make a kind of comparison.” (Sena’s second semi-structured interview)

During her post-interview, after moving on to a higher-level class, she proudly reported that her use of Turkish has not regained its initial levels. What is more, her use of

Turkish was now much more calculated and intentional, serving as a tool to help only those students who struggled with following the class.

“I used Turkish a lot. But it was A2. But still, I was using it a lot. Now in B1 I try to use it less. I give instructions in English, and then go to weaker students and explain it in Turkish. But only if I see they need it. From their faces. Or I know that they are weaker students. I have the student from Kazakhstan again. I know she needs extra help, I know her from the previous quarter.” (Sena’s post-interview)

Developing Sena’s Technophile I-position

Sena’s Technophile I-position is manifested by a computer chip which she brought with her from her reflective journey. The presence of this I-position is also connected with her Fun Teacher I-position which remained active from the very beginning of her reflective path. Sena used technology as a way to engage her students in the class with a particular focus on shy and introverted students for whom technology served as a comfort blanket and allowed them to participate in lessons on their own terms. At the final point of her journey, Sena planned to nourish this part of her identity even more by doing more research on educational applications and websites she could implement in her lessons.

“I think I want to also do something about using more technology, maybe I should bring more variety in my lessons. They are actually fine, our book is fine. We do listening and grammar. Actually there is variety. But maybe I can get out of the book a little bit. What can I add? What can I do? What kind of different tools can I use? This is something I want to do, when it comes to practicality.” (Sena’s second semi-structured interview)

Maintaining a strong Private Teacher I-position

Apart from the Fun Teacher and Empathetic Teacher I-positions, one position that remained unchanged throughout Sena’s journey was her Private Teacher I-position, symbolized by a diary with a key. Whenever Sena came across a challenge on her reflective journey and noticed an aspect of her teaching practice she wished to develop, her first and only thought was to immerse herself in solitary professional development activities such as reading teaching blogs or academic literature. She had not even contemplated sharing her problems with her colleagues or asking them for advice. She was ready to work on her skills and address her shortcomings as a teacher, but without any collaboration or help from her colleagues.

The connection between Sena's dominant Student-Friendly Teacher I-position and other aspects of her language teacher identity

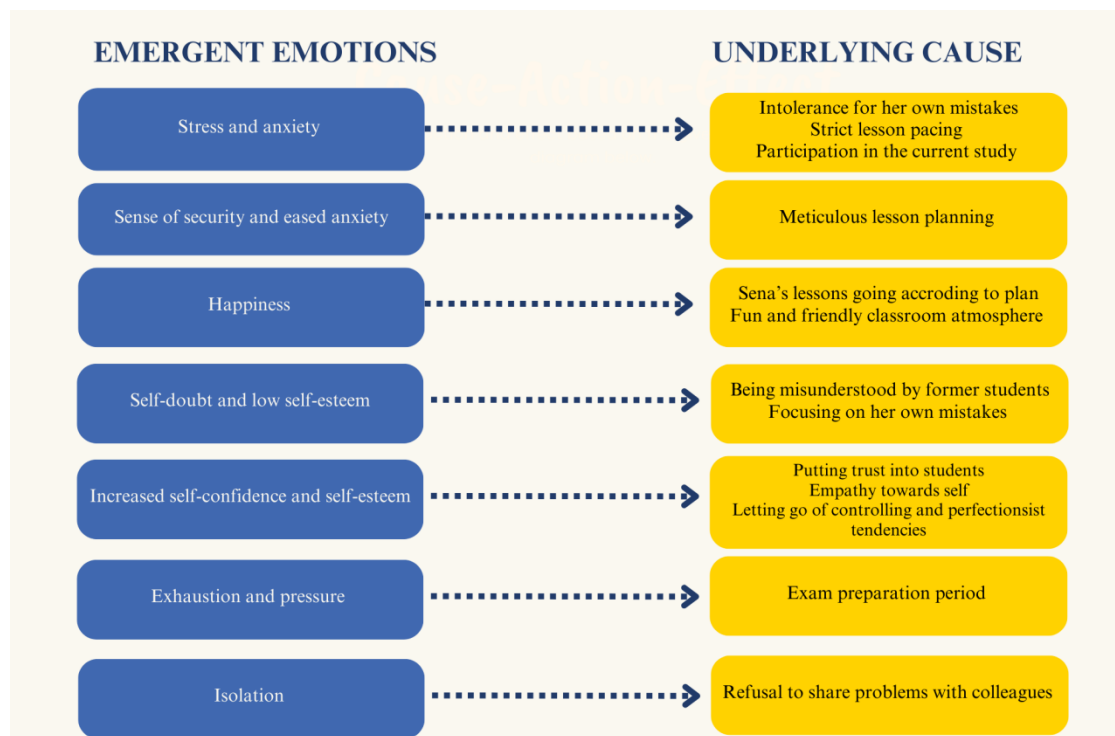
The amount of friendship bracelets which Sena collected on her reflective path is a clear indicator of how crucial building and maintaining a friendly image in front of her students was for her. Her journey proved that this aspect of her identity was by far the most dominant one, and all other I-positions were used to feed into it. For example, her Fun Teacher I-position allowed her to plan and conduct fun activities whose only purpose was to bring joy to the class, and strengthen the friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Taking advantage of her Technophile I-position, Sena used technology in her class as a tool to engage students in her lessons and sustain communication with them, even if they would be too anxious to communicate with her in front of the whole class. Finally, her teaching routines forming the Experienced Teacher I-position, such as the use of Turkish, were implemented with a purpose of building a friendly bond with her students, making Sena look less threatening and more approachable and friendly. Her use of empathy to observe and understand her students was also beneficial to building and sustaining a close student-teacher bond.

4.4.6. Sena's emotions emerging on her reflective journey

Sena's reflective journey was marked by her struggles with self-esteem and self-confidence, crippled by her need to control every aspect of her classroom practice and no tolerance for her own mistakes. Gradually, these emotions were replaced by a renewed sense of confidence and a significant increase in trust and appreciation for her students, accompanied by a decreased sense of isolation and anxiety. The emotions which emerged on Sena's reflective path and their underlying causes were presented in Figure 4.19.

Figure 4.19

Emotions emerging on Sena's reflective journey



Fear of making mistakes

The emotions which dominated the beginning of Sena's reflective journey were stress and anxiety triggered by the need to be in control of every aspect of her lessons and the intolerance for her own mistakes. As a result, Sena felt stressed and anxious when her classroom practice did not go as planned. She also felt incredibly demotivated whenever she made a mistake, bashing herself for every little error or shortcoming.

"But actually I'm fine with student mistakes. If students make mistakes I don't care. I don't have any issues with that. I like dealing with mistakes but when I make mistakes I feel weird. I think I can make mistakes but I don't like it. I also feel like, oh, I was not able to teach anything, oh this exercise didn't work, oh they didn't like that, oh students felt demotivated, why didn't I select a different type of exercises? Maybe pair work or group work, there should be a mixture. So that's my weakness." (Sena's first semi-structured interview)

Sena's fear of making mistakes was also a reason why she initially felt apprehensive about having her lesson videotaped and observed by the researcher. For a private person who even avoided talking about her struggles with her colleagues, opening her teaching practice to the level of scrutiny requested by the participation in the current research

study filled Sena with fear. The leap she had to make from keeping the challenges she faced private to having a camera tracking her every move and sharing her emotions and thoughts in the reflective journal and the critical incident reports required a lot of bravery on her part and necessitated addressing her fear of making mistakes head on.

“When I make a mistake it’s a huge problem for me. I can’t have, I can’t give myself positive feedback, motivate myself. And this time somebody is going to observe me and also check my mistakes if any, there will be, of course. I’m afraid of making mistakes. ...And now we’re going to reflect on them.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

Lesson planning as a source of security

Lesson planning, an aspect of teaching she utterly enjoyed, became an added form of security for her, easing her anxiety. By carefully planning what materials to use and even what questions to ask in her lessons, Sena felt that she could eliminate any challenges and potential divergences from her lesson plan before they even happened.

“I think I love planning. Whenever a plan doesn’t work, like an exercise or the instructions are not clear enough or students didn’t understand grammar input, I don’t like this. I love planning and I like to eliminate issues in lessons. I don’t like issues and problems. I give a lot of time for planning, 40 minutes or an hour. I like thinking about it.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

On the flipside, when her lessons went according to the plan, Sena was filled with happiness and pride and her motivation levels considerably increased. She used the elements of her lesson that worked well and implemented them in her future lesson planning sessions.

“Yeah, then I feel motivated and very happy. I store whatever I use. I think, wow, that was workable. I liked that and the students liked it. Next time I’m going to use it or adapt it for a different level. Definitely.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

Growing self-confidence resulting from empathy towards self and trust in students

The inability to give herself positive feedback was evident throughout Sena’s reflective journey. For example, even when she noticed something about her practice that she was proud of during the video-stimulated interview, such as a successful task which made her students engaged or an instance when her instructions were clearly understood, she avoided praising herself, and repeatedly used the word “fine” to describe her successes. Even those weak praises were often retracted and instantly replaced by self-doubt. This stood in opposition to Buse’s attitude who frequently praised herself and her teaching

abilities, holding unshakable faith in her classroom routines and not letting any negative evidence in the form of students' body language or comments waver her confidence.

"All in all it was fine. I don't know. I'm not sure. It was fine." (Sena's first video-stimulated interview)

"But when I was observing them the answers were very short anyway so I thought it's fine. Because I ask them the same questions again, I thought it was just fine." (Sena's first video-stimulated interview)

"The lesson was fine, it was okay." (Sena's third video-stimulated interview)

It can be speculated that the restraint she exercised against praising herself in more positive words, could be a sign of a lower self-esteem she grappled with throughout her career. Early challenges she faced in her practice such as the fact that her popularity with university students during her first work assignment was considerably lower than in her colleagues' lectures, combined with a tendency to focus on the mistakes and ruminate over them were surely detrimental factors in building her self-esteem as an ELT practitioner.

However, the more Sena let go of the urge to be in control and anticipate every mistake and error she could make, the more her self-confidence grew and her anxiety decreased. This change was visible at the mid-point of her reflective journey when Sena felt much less anxiety about a technical problem she experienced in her class. Her anxiety was gradually replaced by an understanding that not all challenges can be proactively avoided or eradicated. Sena's stress further decreased as she acknowledged that technical problems were a normal part of the teaching profession and they will continue to happen whether she decides to stress over them or not.

"Yeah, in the beginning I got a bit anxious but then for about 1-2 minutes maybe I was a bit anxious. But then I thought it's normal, ya. What can we do? These kinds of things happen many times. This is something out of control. Anything might happen. Especially on Monday mornings, something happens at the weekend and we don't check things. It normally happens on Monday mornings. I was a bit anxious for 1 or 2 minutes but later on I said "aman, what can I do? It's just out of my control". (Sena's second video-stimulated interview)

At the end of her journey, Sena stepped off her reflective path feeling more confident than ever before. Her newly acquired empathy for herself and the acceptance that, just like her students, she also has a right to make mistakes, boosted her confidence and

decreased her anxiety. Another factor that contributed to this transformation was also the sense of trust in the students that Sena felt at the end of her journey. Instead of perceiving them as helpless individuals who would get lost the moment the lesson diverts from its plan, Sena understood that they were more independent and self-reliant than she could have ever predicted. Consequently, even when her instructions were confusing, the students could still perform the task well and fill the gaps in her explanations on their own.

“Yeah, I know that even though sometimes if I am not clear about something, students will still continue. They can do it. Really. I noticed that. They might understand what I want them to do. Even if it’s not all there”. (Sena’s last semi-structured interview)

Her growing confidence had also exerted impact on her attitude towards lesson observations and opening her practice to others. What initially evoked fear in her heart, became a normal, and even welcomed professional development practice. In the end, thanks to the path she crossed on her reflective journey, Sena transformed from a teacher who could not even consult about her struggles with other teachers in fear of being misunderstood into a practitioner who embraced the potential of reflection and opened her practice up to others.

“I was a bit hesitant about lesson observations. I don’t like taking selfies and watching myself, but now I think it is beneficial, yaa. It is not a big deal. We can observe ourselves. So my belief, my perception towards watching myself has changed. At first I was a bit, like, hesitant, but now I am not. It is quite normal, like lesson observations, self-reflection is a part of teaching.” (Sena’s second semi-structured interview)

“As I said, at the beginning it was stressful, but later I got used to it. It was fun. I saw many things”. (Sena’s post-interview)

Boosting self-esteem by looking at one’s practice through students’ eyes

A major change has also transpired in Sena’s self-esteem. What started as a weak praise with a frequent use of the adjective “fine” to describe the highs of her classroom practice, was gradually transformed into a confident and resounding praise and appreciation of her own efforts as teacher. Seeing how her students behaved during her classes and looking at her own practice through their eyes, gave Sena an insight into her practice and shed light on her success in engaging her students and creating a friendly classroom environment. Sena’s self-esteem grew with every positive thing she noticed

during her video-stimulated interviews and culminated with a teacher who was able to relish in her achievements rather than wallow in her mistakes.

“I had that weird feeling, like I am teaching something, but I don't know what they are doing. Sometimes they are participating, sometimes they are not. But after watching my own observations, I realized that, actually, I should be proud of myself. They learned, they still learned. They still participated. I was not clear about that because there are 21 students in the class. Lots of things are happening. But with these lesson observations, I realize that they are learning and when you give them minor feedback, they are trying to address it and understand it....So I think I feel more confident. Because before I didn't know what was happening. It was vague. But with lesson observations, I see that at least they learned something, even a small thing, a small detail. They are actually learning something.”
(Sena's second semi-structured interview)

The prove that the increase in Sena's self-confidence was not a short-lived change but rather a sustainable transformation lays in the fact that it still prevailed weeks from the completion of the data collection part of the study, during Sena's post-interview. Sena felt more relaxed as the weight of perfection and control was lifted off her shoulders and replaced with a more understanding and confident teacher identity. The trust she learned to put in her students was also maintained and knowing that her students will be alright even when her lessons are not perfect, eased her anxiety and brought her comfort.

“I learned to trust my students. Things don't always go as planned. That's okay. I don't need to get stressed about it. It happens. Like the technical problems. It's okay when things like that happen. I am more patient now, and more confident, I would say. I know my students will be okay, even if I am not perfect. Nobody's perfect (laughter). I used to be very strict on myself. I am more relaxed now.” (Sena's post-interview)

Anxiety-inducing and exhausting exam preparation period

However, the stress that Sena experienced was not only caused by her perfectionist tendencies related to lesson planning, but also to the pressure of preparing students for exams. In addition, the strict guidelines included in the lesson pacing, specifying exactly which tasks were to be covered in every lesson hour, made Sena feel tense and pressured to prioritize the pacing over anything else. After all, if she skipped an exercise in a book which could later prove to be necessary during the exams or assignments, she would fail her students and might even cause them to fail.

“Sometimes I feel tense because I have to follow the pacing and I have responsibilities. If I do something wrong, they won’t be able to answer certain questions on the exam. I feel a little tense about it.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

“Today was a bit intense because I was supposed to cover two units.” (Sena’s reflective journal, week 3)

For example, during the period when her students were preparing for the upcoming writing assignment, Sena felt particularly stressed and tired due to the pressure of giving all her students detailed, individual feedback. This process can be truly exhausting and mundane, as going through approximately 25 papers takes considerable amount of time and effort. Sena felt physically drained but also psychologically stressed out of fear of running out of lesson time, and leaving some students without a chance to hear her feedback, which could automatically decrease their chances of receiving a higher grade on the actual assignment.

“Students felt stressed and I became exhausted because of giving feedback. It was a really hard time for me and them as well. I found this incident critical as the feedback sessions were going to determine their first assessment grade and motivation.” (Sena’s first critical incident report)

Apart from physical tiredness, students’ heightened anxiety before the exam period was also reflected in Sena’s own anxiety levels. Even though she did her best to attend to her students’ needs and ease their stress, she could not help but also be affected by the anxious atmosphere in the classroom.

“I don’t become tense, but the students’ anxiety somehow affects me. I can understand them, I can empathize. Nothing happens to me, to be honest. I do my best for them. I become a little bit tired on those days because they keep asking questions or sometimes they don’t feel like doing anything because they lose motivation.” (Sena’s post-interview)

Drawing happiness from a fun and friendly classroom environment

Despite the pressure caused by the responsibility Sena felt for adequately preparing her students for their examination, she was able to experience joy and happiness during light-hearted moments of laughter in her lessons. Forgetting about exams and the lesson pacing for a moment, Sena enjoyed the activities which made her and her students laugh out loud and she cherished and remembered those moments for a long time to come.

“Sometimes I’m really happy because they make me laugh. Sometimes I find some silly activities and we just do it and we laugh together. For example, today I felt really happy.

They made so many funny pictures, we laughed so hard. We were laughing so much. I like when they make you laugh.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

However, even though Sena thrived on having an active and friendly relationship with her students, she felt disappointed with the profile of her class. Seeking communication, friendly banter, and a reciprocal relationship with her group of students, Sena was faced with a class of quiet and shy individuals who preferred to sit and listen to her passively than engage in a conversation with her.

“They are also introverts. That’s why they don’t like, when they have a question they don’t ask. They just remain silent.” (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

“They are not very extroverted. They say, I don’t know, I’m not sure. Shy and hesitant. Some classrooms are like this.” (Sena’s first video-stimulated interview)

“They are so isolated from each other. Some of them are like introverts, hesitant, low level.” (Sena’s third video-stimulated interview)

Isolation and the fear of being misunderstood

Another feeling Sena often experienced was a sense of isolation from her colleagues. Interestingly, she was aware of the fact that sharing her challenges with her peers could significantly minimize her stress by showing her that she was not alone with her everyday professional struggles. Knowing that her colleagues faced the same challenges as her could make her feel less alone and allow her to reap the benefits of having a supportive professional community. However, the fear of being misunderstood by her colleagues paralyzed Sena and prevented her from discussing her struggles with other teachers at the university.

“Because sometimes I have issues and I think, I personalize them, I think it’s only me having issues. But if somebody else is having the same issues I think, okay, maybe I shouldn’t personalize it, maybe it’s something general.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

The feeling of being misunderstood proved to be a continuous theme on Sena’s reflective journey. She feared being misunderstood by her colleagues so she chose not to ask them for advice and share her problems with them. She also felt misunderstood by her former university students who thought she was strict, cold, and distant. As a result, she transformed almost every aspect of her teaching and even her own appearance with an aim of projecting a more friendly image which she identified herself with. Bright clothes, friendly smile, and assigning higher grades to students were all

manifestations of her struggle to be seen and understood by her students for who she really was inside.

“They thought I was too disciplined, too strict, I give low grades. And then I changed myself, I couldn’t change my appearance that much but I changed myself and started giving more importance to communication. ... They thought I was strict and super-disciplined, I give low grades but I changed that. Now, I’m not like that. Now whenever I need to give a low grade I double-think, maybe I shouldn’t do it. I used to wear black clothes a lot and I also changed that. Now I wear orange, but I used to wear black clothes all the time. Whenever someone paid me a compliment, they’d say “Oh, black suits you”. I used to wear black a lot.” (Sena’s first semi-structured interview)

4.5. How are Language Teacher Identity and Teacher Emotions Connected in the Reflective Practice Engagement

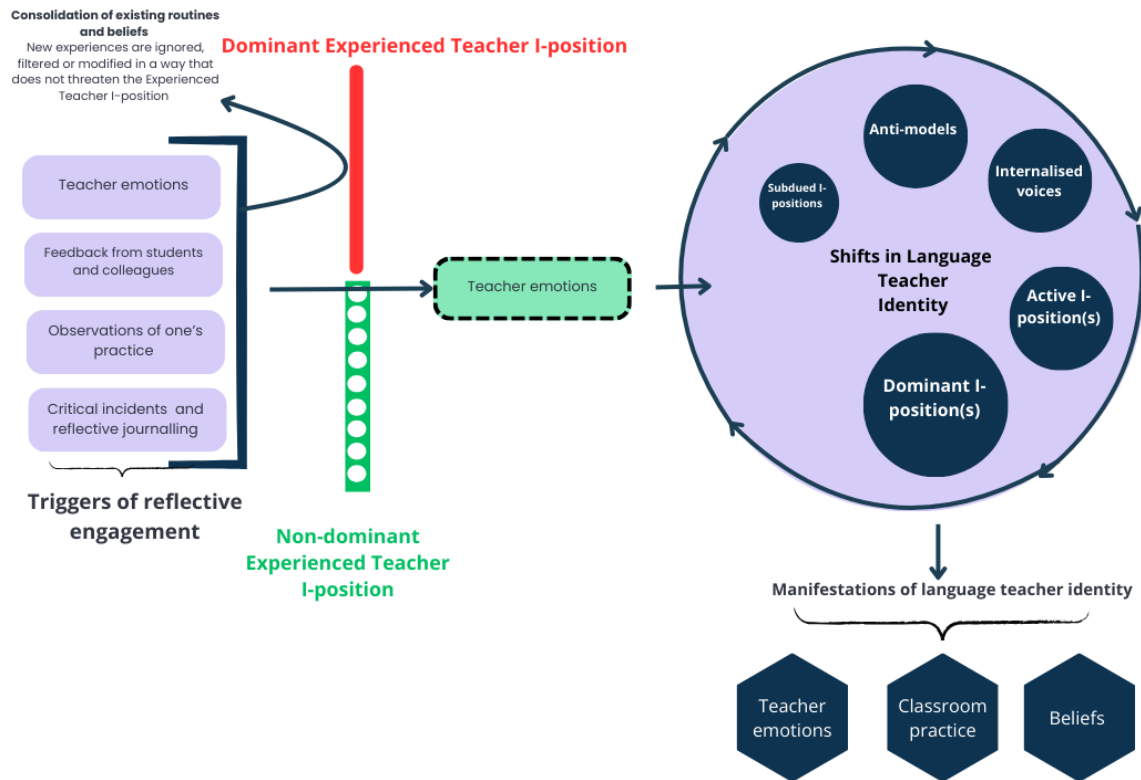
The analysis of the language teacher development and emergent emotions on the study participants’ reflective journeys granted an insight into how the concepts of identity and emotions are interconnected in reflective practice. The interplay of language teacher identity and teacher emotions during reflective engagement is illustrated in Figure 4.20. Reflective engagement can be triggered by a number of factors including emotions emerging during classroom practice, feedback received from learners and peers, the process of observing one’s teaching practice on video, as well as engaging in journaling or an analysis of critical incidents. New experiences are first filtered through teachers’ prior experience with the Experienced Teacher I-position playing a crucial role at this stage. Teachers whose Experienced Teacher I-position is not dominant, are able to accept new experiences and knowledge, even if it stands in contrast to their already existing beliefs and routines. In other words, their beliefs and routines are still able to be remolded based on new experiences, allowing them to reconfigure what they already know and do. However, for teachers with a dominant Experienced Teacher I-position, their prior teaching experience is set in stone and remains unchanged. New experiences and information are received but only if they strengthen pre-existing beliefs and routines. If an experience stands in contrast to such teachers’ existing knowledge, for instance by producing unexpected or undesired results, a defense mechanism is activated, prompting teachers to dismiss such experiences. They can be ignored or rationalized in a way that does not threaten teachers’ ingrained beliefs, for example by putting the blame on external circumstances rather than accepting accountability.

However, if teachers are willing to readjust and reconfigure their existing knowledge, beliefs and teaching practice, teacher emotions, particularly negative emotions, can serve as a catalyst, making the process of reflective language teacher identity shifts quicker and more sustainable. As a result, reflective engagement prompts a change in language teachers' identities, by causing a reconfiguration in the kaleidoscope of their I-positions. The existing I-positions can be strengthened or subdued in the course of reflective engagement. New I-positions might be created and dominant I-position(s), antimodels and internalised voices can be revealed, increasing the teachers' self-awareness. At the same time, all these aspects of language teacher identity affect each other in a process of constant negotiations between I-positions.

The shifts in language teacher identity manifest themselves in a change in teachers' beliefs and classroom practice. In other words, after the reflective engagement, teachers' beliefs about themselves, their students, their colleagues, their mentors and ELT methodologies can be questioned and reformulated, having lasting effects on their classroom practice. What is more, the process of reflective language teacher identity development causes teachers to experience a wide array of emotions, ranging from frustration and discomfort caused by identity tensions to higher self-confidence and lower anxiety when a new level of self-awareness and harmony between I-positions is achieved.

Figure 4.20

The framework of the connection between teacher emotions and teacher identity in reflective practice engagement.



Triggering reflection on teaching practice

The current doctoral thesis uncovered intricate relationships between teacher emotions and teacher identity in the process of reflective practice engagement. Several sources and triggers of reflection on language teachers' professional practice were identified. First of all, experiencing teacher emotions can be a trigger of reflection, particularly if these emotions are powerful in nature. For example, in the case of İpek, the happiness she experienced when observing the joyful and enjoyable atmosphere in her classroom prompted her to reflect on the fun aspect of her teacher identity. Previously not aware of the reactions her students had to her classroom practice, İpek experienced happiness and joy when observing her students laugh out loud on the video recording. This emotion prompted her to reflect on the level of enjoyment her students felt in her lessons and triggered the emergence of a new I-position of a Fun Teacher.

Apart from teacher emotions, the evolutions in teacher identity are also precipitated by feedback from students and other teachers. Buse's case can serve as an illustration of the connection between teacher identity development and receiving feedback from other

stakeholders in an educational institution. Buse repeatedly collected feedback on her practice from her students by asking them direct questions about their opinions of her teaching style and allowing them to exercise decision power over minor aspects of the classroom practice, such as the desk setup in the classroom. As far as Buse's colleagues are concerned, she received detailed feedback from them as part of peer lesson observations implemented as a component of continuous professional development programme at her university. As reported by Buse, the feedback she received was overwhelmingly positive which further consolidated her belief and confidence in her teaching style and strengthened her Experienced Teacher I-position. Self-observations of one's professional practice conducted during video-stimulated interviews proved to be a fertile ground for reflective practice with major developments in teachers' identities taking place in the process. For instance, Sena uncovered a major obstacle and a threat to her Student-Friendly Teacher I-position during one of her video-stimulated interviews. When watching herself on video and adopting a students' point of view in the classroom, Sena discovered that her facial expressions and body language were not aligned with the friendly image she strived to project. In contrast, her expressions made her look disinterested and less approachable. Finally, reflections on critical incidents in teachers' practice and the accompanying reflective journaling were proven to trigger reflection on one's identity and professional practice. For instance, İpek's affective reflections on her caring and loving relationship with students combined with her reflections on critical incidents in her practice such as a spontaneous hug from an affectionate student filled her with joy, happiness and a sense of appreciation which became a foundation for her Empathetic Teacher I-position.

Dominant Experienced Teacher I-position as an obstacle for reflective engagement

Whatever the initial trigger for the reflection was, the role of Experienced Teacher I-position was shown to be a decisive factor in the transmission of the reflective thoughts towards language teachers' identity. In other words, teaching experience served as a filter through which new information and emotions experienced in reflective practice were sent. The Experienced Teacher I-position encompassed not only the teachers' prior experiences, but also their well-established classroom routines and ingrained beliefs about their students and ELT methodology. However, the case of Buse proved that the process of teacher identity development through reflective practice is blocked when the

Experienced Teacher I-position is the dominant position in teacher's identity. Teachers who rely solely on their experience as the only guide of their classroom practice were proven to be much less susceptible to noticing new elements in the process of reflective practice. Their beliefs and routines have become so consolidated and permanent, that no feedback or information which could question them was accepted. In Buse's case, feedback from students that bolstered her well-established teaching style was welcomed and cherished. However, nonverbal and verbal feedback which contradicted her beliefs and revealed cracks in the effectiveness of her teaching style was instantly dismissed and explained by external factors. For example, in both of Buse's classes the students displayed inattentive behaviour such as not establishing eye contact with their teacher or ostentatiously sleeping on their desks in front of Buse. Instead of making a connection between her students' behaviour and the teacher-centred nature of her lessons which minimized the active participation of the students, Buse came up with a list of external factors which prompted the students to behave in such a way including the sunny weather outside and the time of the class. In other instances, she traced this behaviour to student-related issues such as their short attention span and the ability to multitask allowing them to look at their phones and attentively listen to her at the same time. Whatever the reason for their disinterested behaviour was, she was never able to connect it to her own practice and question the impact of her teaching style and teaching routines on her students actions. This is because allowing herself to reflect on her routines and beliefs could threaten her dominant Experienced Teacher I-position. As a result, teachers who place their experience as the foundation of their identity go through their reflective journeys with no major discoveries and evolutions in their identities. On the contrary, as the only feedback filtered through their Experienced Teacher I-position is the one that reinforces the validity of their beliefs and routines, their teaching style and teacher identity becomes even more cemented. The final outcome is a language teaching practitioner with a high self-esteem and ample amounts of self-confidence, but very low adaptability and receptivity to feedback which is not further reinforcing her well-established teaching style. What is more, it was proven in the course of the present study that the receptiveness to emotions in teachers with dominant Experienced Teacher I-position is also significantly inhibited with prioritizing knowing over feeling. Buse's lack of emotional reaction to sleeping students can serve as an illustration of this process. Buse's confidence in her beliefs and practice allowed her to approach the

students' behaviour from an all-knowing, rational perspective. Consequently, Buse did not seem to have any emotional response to her students' behaviour in class, because she fully believed she knew with utmost certainty why her students were sleeping in class. Furthermore, since none of the reasons she gave was connected to her teaching practice, she did not experience any negative feelings when watching her students lie on their desks.

Non-dominant Experienced Teacher I-position as a facilitator for successful reflective practice

The cases of İpek and Sena, both equally experienced to Buse, showed that vast teaching experience is not always a blockade for new information collected through reflective engagement, triggering lasting development in language teacher identity. Even though İpek and Sena were both experienced ELT practitioners, their Experienced Teacher I-position was not dominant. On the contrary, despite their years of experience they struggled with lower self-esteem. In İpek's case the source of her inhibited self-esteem was the jealousy she felt towards her colleagues who were adored and praised by their students for their enjoyable and fun teaching styles. Sena's self-esteem was eroded by her perfectionist tendencies and an emphasis on ruminating over mistakes rather than focusing on her successes. It can be argued that not having full confidence in one's teaching practice was the key to their openness to reflection during their reflective journeys and the reason behind Buse's uneventful reflective path. After all, in Buse's case, having utmost confidence that her teaching practice was impeccable as it was honed through years and years of classroom practice meant that any deeper reflection on it was simply unnecessary. Following Buse's train of thought, there was no point in opening herself up for reflection on her routines if she knew that they are the only effective way of conducting the lessons. Likewise, there was no necessity to question her well-established beliefs about students if she already believed that they were undeniable. On the other hand, Sena's and İpek's attitude to their teaching practice was starkly different. For example, despite years spent in the classroom, İpek still believed that she had lots to learn and should continuously develop herself and her practice. Ultimately, İpek's and Sena's openness to reflection driven by a desire to continuously develop themselves and learn from their students allowed them to transform their practice and discover new elements in their language teacher identities. At the same

time, Buse's practice and identity remained exactly the same, robbing her of any opportunity for self-development.

Teacher emotions as a catalyst for language teacher identity development in reflective engagement

Apart from being a trigger for reflective practice, teacher emotions were also found to be a potential catalyst for the pace at which the developments in language teachers' identity take place as well as the longevity of such transformations. It was observed that reflections on one's practice which trigger strong emotions in the participants where materializing faster and in a more sustainable manner. For instance, İpek's reflections on her body language and her intensive monitoring technique caused her to experience powerful emotions. She felt disturbed by the way she behaved in the classroom and went as far as to compare herself to monster, scaring students by standing too close to them and leaning over their heads to check what they were doing. From the first moment she saw herself on the video, to the last minute of the first video-stimulated interview, İpek was focused on her unsettling monitoring routine and referred to it frequently throughout the interview. The upsetting emotions she experienced made this discovery more memorable and put addressing this behaviour as her top priority. As a result, a drastic decrease in her monitoring routine was observed almost immediately and the developments she made in this respect lasted until the very end of the data collection process and beyond it.

Components of language teacher identity shifts

Data collected in the course of the current study was also instrumental in gaining a deeper understanding of the components of language teacher identity. It was revealed that the dominant I-position is the most important factor governing the participants' language teacher identities. Student-Friendly Teacher was the dominant position in Sena's teacher identity. As a result, all other I-positions that comprised her identity had to have a harmonious relationship with the dominant I-position or even strengthen it. For example, the purpose of Sena's Fun Teacher I-position was to implement fun activities in the classroom in order to create a relaxed atmosphere and reinforce the image of a friendly teacher Sena wished to project. Similarly, her Technophile I-position allowed her to use technology in class with an aim to create a stress-free and friendly environment for shy and introverted students who did not feel comfortable

speaking in front of other students, but still wanted to take active participation in the lesson. Sena's Empathetic Teacher I-position manifested itself in caring about students' well-being over the lesson objectives in order to prove to her students how approachable and caring of an educator Sena really was.

Another important building block of language teacher identity were the internalised voices of others. These voices were cherished if they were aligned with already active I-positions and the dominant I-positions, but could be dismissed when threatening the dominant I-position. For instance, the internalised voice of İpek's mother, telling her that she has always been a very active and emotional child, fueled her Human and Empathetic Teacher I-positions. The internalised voices of Buse's colleagues who praised her teaching practice after observing her classes were also cultivated as they further assured her that her teaching style is undeniably effective, consolidating the power of her Experienced Teacher I-position. On the other hand, voices of İpek's colleagues who criticized her for forging excessively close bonds with her students were subdued as they stood in contrast to her Empathetic Teacher I-position dominating her language teacher identity.

Surprisingly, the current study showed that the teachers' identity is not only formed on the basis of who they want to be, but also on the basis of who they do not want to be, namely their antimodels. It was revealed that every participant in the study had one or more antimodels which were connected with their dominant I-position or one of the active I-positions. An antimodel which revealed itself on İpek's reflective journey was the egotistical Turkish teacher who claimed to know everything there is to know about English and would never admit to making a mistake. This teacher was also distant from students, not caring about their well-being and not revealing their own emotions. This stood in contrast to İpek's dominant Empathetic Teacher I-position and an equally strong Human I-position. As a result, in her practice she strived to go as far from her antimodel as possible, establishing very close, motherly relationship with her students and openly admitting to not being a source of all knowledge about the English language. Sena's antimodel was her former university teacher, a strict educator dressed in black with a stern look at her face. This teacher was reserved, cold, and distant and could not be regarded as students' friend. Having this in mind, Sena's efforts in her classroom were to project a friendly image of a supportive teacher who cares more about how the

students are feeling than how many points they receive on their examinations. Similarly to İpek, Sena's antimodel served her as a playbook of how not to behave in the classroom and was the complete opposite of her dominant Student-Friendly Teacher I-position. In the case of Buse, no antimodels had a strict connection to her Experienced Teacher I-position, but still exerted an impact on one of her stronger I-positions, the Empathetic Teacher I-position. The inattentive and disinterested professor who refused to look at Buse when she was his student served as her antimodel and pushed her to show full attentiveness and genuine interest in her students, listening to every word they spoke with an appreciative smile and an encouraging nod.

Last but not least, the I-positions which became subdued in the process of reflective practice exerted less of an impact on the teachers' identity and teaching practice, but remained part of their identities. For instance, Sena's Controlling Teacher I-position was substantially weakened during her reflective journey as she accepted the fact that teachers are allowed to make mistakes and the impact of such errors on students was much lesser than anticipated. The same I-position was subdued on İpek's reflective path as she modified her classroom practice to give more autonomy to her students. Interestingly, the mere fact that an I-position has become subdued does not entail that it can not regain an active status. For example, the Controlling Teacher I-position gained strength and power withing the participants' language teacher identities during the exam period as the anxiety and concern over their students' performance pushed them to become more vigilant and careful, double-checking their students' understanding and showing a stronger preference for a teacher-centred, explicit style of content presentation.

Manifestations of language teacher identity development during reflective practice engagement: teacher emotions, transformed beliefs and modified classroom practice

As language teacher's identity underwent transformations in the process of reflective engagement, these developments manifested itself in three different outcomes. First of all, developments in the teachers' identities evoked emotional responses from them. As an illustration, the weakening of Sena's Controlling Teacher I-position significantly decreased her anxiety and stress. Not worrying about a disastrous impact of one's mistakes on students and accepting the fact that unexpected issues in classroom practice such as technical malfunctions can never be fully eradicated, made Sena feel much more

relaxed and increased her trust towards herself and her students. İpek's Empathetic Teacher I-position allowed her to derive joy from everyday student-teacher interactions. Whenever her students showed their care and appreciation for her efforts, her empathy grew stronger and urged her to direct the same levels of love and care towards her students. Buse's dominant Experienced Teacher I-position was a primary source of her self-confidence and low levels of anxiety. Having performed her classroom routines so many times that she even decided to name some of them filled her with confidence that her way of teaching is the right way of conducting lessons. Even when her activities were met with low student engagement, Buse's strong Experienced Teacher I-position protected her self-confidence and did not allow any new experiences to threaten it. Finally, as the data collection process of the current study correlated with the exam period at the participants' university, the emphasis on exam preparation exerted influence on the teachers' emotions. The Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position manifested itself in a range of emotions. Taking the reflective journey of Buse as an illustration, the exam period was a source of confidence and happiness. As she attached great importance to assessment herself, Buse enjoyed the fact that her students listened to her attentively whenever she mentioned that a certain topic will be useful for their upcoming examinations. She also felt immensely proud when her students performed well during their assignments as it further corroborated her belief in the rightfulness of her teaching methods. On the other hand, Sena, whose dominant Student-Friendly Teacher I-position was in conflict with the Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position, experienced stress and anxiety, trying to maintain her friendly and fun image whilst coping with her students' exam anxiety.

Secondly, the evolution of language teacher identity caused by reflective engagement was also revealed to have an impact on teachers' classroom practice. This was exemplified numerous times throughout the study, with the participants modifying their behaviour in class in response to the discoveries they made on their reflective paths. For example, İpek abandoned her classroom routine for vigilant monitoring as well as pushing her students for rationalizing their opinions. After noticing an alarming amount of repetition she made and its impact on her teacher talking time, İpek modified her classroom practice by changing the way she gave instructions. For example, instead of repeating instructions from the coursebook, she opted for modeling the task with one or two students. Sena decreased the amount of Turkish spoken in class and promised

herself not to interrupt her students by striking a conversation with them in Turkish when they are working on a task. She also realized how unwelcoming her facial expressions made her look in front of her students and vowed to pay more attention to how she carries herself in the classroom. The way Sena delivers feedback on writing practice to her students has also changed in the course of the study, with more personal yet time-consuming one-to-one feedback sessions replacing group feedback.

Finally, the participants' beliefs about students and ELT methodology were questioned as the result of their engagement in reflective practice. For instance, İpek grappled with the validity of explicit grammar presentation as a necessity for A2 students. Although she has always cherished a belief that A2 students are capable of successfully engaging and communicating in English during lessons, she still held on to a conviction that grammar at this level has to be taught explicitly. However, observing her students during video-based lesson observations and reflecting on their engagement during grammar-presentation segment of her lessons, her confidence in this ingrained belief waned and she questioned it and explored more student-oriented grammar elicitation techniques with her low-level students.

Sena challenged a belief she held about the helplessness of A2 students, gradually realizing that her students were more capable and self-reliant than she thought and ultimately learning to put more trust in the learners. At the onset of her journey, she held strongly to a belief that a lesson at A2 level cannot be delivered completely in English. She rationalized this belief by stating that an L2-only policy could cause immense levels of stress among learners. As this would directly violate the friendly and approachable image of herself she wished to cultivate in her lessons, Sena used Turkish in all aspects of her classroom practice, from warm-ups to delivering task instructions. On her reflective journey, Sena began to question this belief as she noticed that her students are actually much more capable than she gave them credit for. Furthermore, she was willing to observe how her insistence on using L1 negatively affected her students' progress and lesson engagement. By the same token, her belief in the necessity of using Google Translate in class was questioned as she reflected on the fact that encouraging students to use it can actually thwart their progress.

To sum up, the connection between emotions and language teacher identity in the process of reflective engagement was revealed to be an intricate one, with teacher

emotions present at every stage of reflective practice. First of all, experiencing strong emotions during teaching practice can be a trigger for the reflective process, motivating language teachers to notice an incident and reflect on it. Secondly, teacher emotions were shown to be a catalyst for reflective practice as the study proved that having an intense emotional reaction during the reflective engagement can guarantee faster and more long-lasting transformations in teacher identity. Finally, the evolutions in language teacher identity made in the process of reflective engagement spark the release of new emotions in response to the weakening, strengthening and emergence of different I-positions.



5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Evolutions in Language Teacher Identity during Reflective Engagement

Becoming more student-oriented ELT practitioners

Language teacher identity is closely and inextricably linked to a number of factors governing teachers' professional practice and wellbeing, from the values they adopt in their classrooms, the types of bonds they form with their students, the level of confidence they have in their skills as well as the level of satisfaction they derive from their profession (Hong et al., 2024; Maclean & White, 2007). The power of reflection in the process of identity development lies in its potential to reconstruct existing knowledge based on new experiences with an aim to facilitate a deeper insight into one's identity (Engelbertink et al., 2021). Ultimately, through reflective engagement language teachers can achieve a robust identity defined as "a strong, stable identity that reflects alignment between their perceptions of who they are and who they ought to be" (Hong et al, 2024, p.171). However, it is important to note that identity stability is not a permanent occurrence as identity is in a state of constant flux, ever changing as new experiences, beliefs, emotions, and assumptions are added to teachers' mental repertoires (Dimitrieska, 2024; Karim et al., 2024; Nelson, 2008; Ölçü Dinçer, 2021). Consequently, Sena's and İpek's journeys were marked by major shifts and evolutions in their teacher identities. A common feature between these two participants was a strengthening of their student-oriented I-positions. Sena has always attached prominence to establishing a friendly and stress-free atmosphere in her lessons, striving to be seen by her students as approachable and friendly. The image of her strict and distant former university professor she kept in mind as her antimodel combined with the unsettling discoveries she made during her reflective journey about her body language and facial expressions fueled her efforts to maintain a friendly image. As a result, her Student-Friendly teacher I-position gained unquestionable dominance and the Controlling Teacher I-position was significantly weakened. The strengthening of a student-friendly identity accompanied by a weakened desire to control the classroom environment has also been corroborated by other studies on reflective practice of language teachers. For example, one of the female teachers in Arvaja's (2024) study followed a similar path, graduating from a controlling, grammar-focused educator to a teacher who values interactions with students over their performance. Likewise, Chinese

ELT practitioners who had a chance to engage in reflective practice made sustainable changes to their teacher identities, becoming more student-oriented, and striving to create a happy and relaxed learning environment for their students (Yao & Bristol Slater, 2024). What is more, bearing stark similarities to both Sena and İpek, the antimodel of a strict teacher seemed to be a beacon for many ELT professionals embarking on identity-transforming reflective paths (Arvaja, 2024; Ballantyne, 2024; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; İlin, 2020; Kang, 2024; Mumford & Dikilitaş, 2020; Uştuk & Yazan, 2024; Yuan & Liu, 2024). Sena's antimodel of her former university professor and İpek's dreaded image of teachers acting as army generals, harshly disciplining their students and demanding total obedience both emphasized an authoritarian, teacher-centred style of teaching. The same antimodel was referred to as authoritarian teaching in the reflective paths of EAP teachers (Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023), insensitive teaching (Arvaja, 2024), traditional, grammar-oriented teaching (Butün Ikwuegbu & Harris, 2024), academic teaching (Yuan & Liu, 2024), serious teaching (Ballantyne, 2024), mechanical teaching (Uştuk & Yazan, 2024), lecturing (İlin, 2020) or fear teaching (Mumford & Dikilitaş, 2020). It is also important to emphasize how often these antimodels were formed during the participants' preservice years with their own professors and lecturers serving as a painful memory of how not to behave towards their own students (Aliakbari & Adibpour, 2018; Arvaja, 2024; Butün Ikwuegbu & Harris, 2024; Dimitrieska, 2024; Groenewald & Arnold, 2024; Karim et al., 2024; Uştuk & Yazan, 2024). The potential of reflecting on teachers' university years was also corroborated by the present study with Sena's university professor and Buse's inattentive lecturer as examples.

Strengthening of empathy towards students and self

However, whilst the evolution and strengthening of a student-oriented identity was driven by a desire to be seen as friendly and approachable in Sena's case, İpek's journey in the same direction was motivated by the strengthening of her Empathetic Teacher I-position. All participants of the current study displayed empathy towards their students, although to different extents. Nevertheless, one shared characteristic of their reflective paths was an increase in lenience towards learners. Sena, İpek and Buse showed empathy and understanding towards latecoming students. In addition, Buse empathized

with shy and introverted students by allowing them to remain silent when she asks them a direct question.

Exploring the rationale behind the participants' increase in empathy, two major sources were uncovered. First of all, the strengthening of the participants' empathy can be introspective in nature, triggered by their own experiences. For example, being ignored by her professor during preservice education, prompted Buse to listen attentively to her own students. By the same token, experiencing loneliness and sadness caused by living far from home, pushed İpek to adopt a loving and understanding attitude towards her students, serving as a motherly figure for learners who left their families to study at the university. An increase in empathy as a result of reflecting on one's own experiences has also been corroborated in extant literature (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Chye et al., 2021; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Engelbertink et al., 2021; Ilmi et al., 2023; Marathe & Sen, 2021; Schussler, 2020; Tan, 2020; Valtierra & Siegel, 2020). For example, an educator participating in a study by Dikilitaş and Mumford (2023) reflected on his own fear of his professor who threatened students committing plagiarism and chose to adopt a role of a guide rather than a policeman when confronted with the same issue during his own teaching practice. Similarly, drawing on his own experiences of an authoritative lecturer talking at his students rather than talking with them, Chye and her fellow researchers (2021) narrated how their participant increased his empathy towards students and adopted a less formal and threatening teaching style.

Secondly, in contrast to the introspection-driven increase in empathy, the participants of the study were also able to increase their empathy as a result of positive interactions with their students. In other words, the more students cared about their teachers' well-being and appreciated their efforts, the more understanding and empathetic their teachers became. İpek's reflective journey can serve as an illustration of this phenomenon as her empathy grew most at moments of appreciation from her students, for example when they tried to protect her from the researcher's criticism during lesson observations by increasing their lesson engagement. Hughes (2013) noticed the same mechanism in her own educational journey as a lecturer at a Scottish university. Emphasizing the dialectical nature of student-teacher interactions, she observed an increase in empathy towards learners if they treated her with respect and care. Even a small sign of care such as a smile to greet a teacher coming into the classroom can have

substantial impact on the level of empathy in the student-teacher relationship, as noticed by Slade and her colleagues (2019). The increase in empathy and a more understanding attitude towards learners is also evident in extant literature. For example, Emelia, an ELT practitioner working with children, learned to empathize with unruly pupils by trying to understand the motives behind their misbehaviour rather than punishing them (Baxter et al., 2021). Preservice Turkish teachers who reflected during their practicum increased their tolerance towards classroom problems and developed more patience in the course of their reflective engagement (Köksal & Genç, 2019). Similarly, an ELT professional in Kazakhstan narrated how she managed to approach two fighting students with patience and an observant stance, trying to get to the bottom of their argument (Seitova, 2019). Even though the participants of the present study did not need to face such extreme behavioural problems in the course of the current research, Buse was faced with a classroom management problem when her students asked her to skip grammar presentation and move to practice activities. However, instead of showing empathy, maintaining patience, and trying to understand her students' perspective, Buse reacted with anger and dismissed her students' pleas. Marathe and Sen (2021) offered a potential explanation for this behaviour in their research into empathetic reflection. They differentiated between reflection with empathy (RWE) and reflection without empathy (RWOE). Sena and İpek engaged in reflection with empathy, displaying both cognitive empathy (adopting their students' perspective) and affective empathy (understanding feeling of others). Although Buse was able to empathize with her students when it comes to being late for class, she was not able to adopt the same empathetic stance in this case. In RWOE, "only the reflector's emotions attached to the event are given importance and only the reflector's perspective of the problem is considered" (Marathe & Sen, 2021, p.569). As a result, instead of trying to understand her students' motives, Buse looked at the problem from her own perspective (the students are trying to control my class) and rejected their suggestion.

However, changes in teacher identity observed in the current study were not limited to an increase in empathy towards students. Sena and İpek have also become more compassionate towards themselves, marked by a weakened Private Teacher I-position (Sena) and the strengthening of the Human I-position (İpek). At the onset of her reflective journey, Sena was paralyzed by the fear of sharing her professional challenges with her colleagues. She also displayed no tolerance for her own mistakes, experiencing

severe stress whenever a portion of her lesson did not go according to her meticulous lesson plan. Unlike Sena, İpek started her reflective journey with a belief that teachers are human beings who should be allowed to make mistakes. As she progressed on her reflective path, this belief was further reinforced by all the interactions she had with her students. Dismissing her Actor I-position, she made stronger connections between who she is and how she behaves inside and outside the walls of her classroom. Researching extant literature it is evident that a similar pattern of teacher identity development, namely combating an initial sense of fear and isolation by moving towards a more open and less private attitude to the teaching profession, is prevailing in teachers' reflective journeys. Balıkçı and Seferoğlu (2023) explored the experiences of Turkish language teachers and found that, similarly to Sena and İpek, they initially felt apprehensive about the idea of having their lessons video recorded. However, bearing similarities to the participants of the current study, they quickly tackled their fears and realized that they do not need to feel alone when they make a mistake. Similarly, Australian teachers followed the same pattern as their fear of reflective practice decreased giving way for a renewed sense of professional community and collaboration (Daff et al., 2024). Interestingly, the decrease in the Private I-position and the strengthening of the Human I-positions in the current study could be easily observed despite the fact that the participants did not collaborate with each other during their reflective engagement. The driving force behind the aforementioned evolutions in their language teacher identities was not their relationship with other teachers, but the relationship with their students. Watching how their students benefited from their instructions and reflecting on the ups and downs of their teaching practice through journals and critical incident reports increased their trust and appreciation for the learners. They learned that their students will support them even if they make mistakes and this made them feel less alone. Therefore, it was revealed that although collaborative reflection practice has well-established benefits for the decreased sense of isolation among language teachers (Baxter et al., 2021; Cowan, 2020; de Leon Pineda et al., 2022; Derinalp, 2022; Paul, 2024; Wexler, 2023; Yee et al., 2022; Yüksel & Başaran, 2020), the same benefits can also be achieved without resorting to group reflection. This is a promising discovery as collaborative reflection can sometimes be inhibited or even eradicated by unsupportive school communities (Arefian, 2023; Baxter et al., 2022; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Cirocki & Farrelly, 2016; Foltyn,

2022; Gebremariam & Sisay, 2024; Liu et al., 2024), colleagues whose underlying motive is to criticize their peers instead of offering constructive feedback (Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Farrell, 2022; Groenewald & Arnold, 2024; Wang et al., 2024), and power imbalances between the participants of collaborative reflection sessions (Esfandiari & Arefian, 2024).

Increasing teachers' adaptability

Another important identity evolution reported in the present doctoral thesis was an increase in the participants' adaptability. Illustrating this phenomenon with Sena's case, her response to a technical problem at the onset of her reflective journey could not be characterized as adaptable. She insisted on carrying on with a planned activity and only gave up after over 20 minutes of struggling to get the smartboard to work properly. However, later in her reflective journey, she responded to a similar technical issue with more calmness and adaptability, quickly modifying the activity and doing it without the smartboard. An increase in adaptability as a result of reflective engagement has been corroborated in many studies (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Arefian et al., 2024; Aslan et al., 2022; Derakhshan & Nazari, 2024; Er et al., 2022; Esfandiari & Arefian, 2024; Farrell, 2022b; Ilmi et al., 2023; Jones & Charteris, 2017; Karim et al., 2024; Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023; Kordia, 2022; Kurt & Yildirim, 2021; Le Thanh et al., 2023; Namaziandost et al., 2022; Nobutoshi, 2023; Orakcı, 2021; Özçakır Sümen, 2023; Pandey, 2024; Reichenberg, 2022; Shafi, 2025; Uştuk & Yazan, 2024; Valtierra & Siegel, 2020). For example, Greek ELT teachers in Kordia's (2022) study reflected on the pressure they put on their students when presenting them with native-produced language samples and adapted their classroom activities to incorporate more EFL-based resources. Turkish teachers in a study implementing video-based reflection developed their adaptability by diversifying classroom instruction and activities by honoring their students' different learning preferences (Er et al., 2022). Finally, merging empathy and adaptability, EFL practitioners at a Vietnamese language center reflected on the experience of students coming from divorced households and adapted the activities connected with family vocabulary to respect his learners' different family backgrounds (Le Thanh et al., 2023).

5.2. Negotiations between I-positions

The fact that the concept of identity is not uniform but rather consisting of a multitude of I-positions is also the underlying reason for conflicts and negotiations between them (Xing et al., 2024). Sena and İpek experienced a number of tensions between their I-positions. For example, İpek's Fun Teacher I-position and her Human I-position would often clash. As her Human I-position was in a position of dominance, the negotiations between these I-positions would regularly result in a subduing of the Fun Teacher I-position. For example, even though İpek wanted her students to enjoy her classes and has even been directly asked to incorporate more games into her lessons, she refused to do so on the basis of the fact that she had a deep personal dislike for any noisy and unstructured classroom activities. On the other hand, Sena struggled to find balance between her Student-Friendly Teacher I-position and the Exam-Oriented Teacher I-position. Even though she felt the pressure of preparing her students for upcoming examinations, she found it very hard to prioritize lesson objectives over a stress-free and friendly classroom environment. For instance, even though she was fully aware that using L1 in class is sure to impede her students' linguistic progress, she was not able to switch to an L2-only policy out of fear that her students will think she is too strict. The extant literature is abundant with examples of identity negotiations in the teaching profession (Aguilar-Pérez & Arnó-Macià, 2024; Ahmed & Leider, 2024; Ballantyne, 2024; Derakhshan & Nazari, 2024; Dimitrieska, 2024; Vitanova, 2024; Walshe & Driver, 2019; Wang et al., 2023; Xing et al., 2024; Yang & Bautista, 2008; Yao & Slater, 2024; Zou, 2025). Derakhshan and Nazari (2024) narrated the experience of a teacher struggling between his competing I-positions of a teacher and a researcher. Struggling with insufficient time, their participant found it hard to devote enough time for teaching with the pressure of publishing and conducting research, ultimately choosing to prioritize teaching. EMI teachers were also forced to add their newly-formed EMI teacher I-position to the already existing polyphony of different I-positions, finding it particularly hard to strike a balance between teaching technical skills and using ESP vocabulary which was unfamiliar to most of their students (Aguilar-Pérez & Arnó-Macià, 2024). Taking a more personal perspective, tensions between I-positions can also occur between teachers' private and professional selves. For instance, a Chinese ELT practitioner and a mother-of-two experienced immense amount of pressure when juggling between her family and professional duties (Xing et al., 2024).

Another example from the Chinese context proves that the conflicts between I-positions do not always develop organically, but can also be abruptly forced by external factors, such as a change in a school curriculum (Wang et al., 2024). For instance, a female teacher participating in their study was forced to switch from teaching General English to ESP in a matter of weeks, forcing her to subdue her Empathetic Teacher I-position by disregarding the amount of stress and confusion it caused her learners. Interestingly, although the participants of the current study were not faced with any dramatic curriculum reforms in the course of this research project, they, nevertheless, experienced pressure to bend their identities to external factors. In the case of Sena, İpek, and Buse, the most dramatic changes in their identities took place as a direct result of pressure from their students. Sena's university classes were skipped by students, leaving her with no choice but to prioritize friendly atmosphere over students' progress. İpek's students complained to her and compared her with other teachers at school, pressuring her to incorporate more fun elements in her lessons. Finally, although Buse enjoyed teaching in a more traditional way, mimicking the type of content presentation she experienced with her university lecturers, she had to develop her knowledge of technology in order to feel competent in front of her digitally-native students. The theme of language teacher identity development and conflict as a result of pressure from students has also been corroborated in extant literature (Ballantyne, 2024; Groenewald & Arnold, 2024; Kang, 2024; Ölçü Dinçer, 2021; Vitanova, 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2025). For example, sensitive students can force strict teachers to adopt a more empathetic persona in the classroom (Wu et al., 2025), disinterested students who quickly get bored may pressure educators to constantly experiment with new teaching trends (Karim et al., 2024; Wang & Yuan, 2024), and students who undermine their teacher's competence can force them to adopt a more strict and authoritarian teaching style (Vitanova, 2024).

It is important to note that, although tensions between I-positions (whether occurring with or without direct external pressure) can cause immense amounts of stress to teachers, they are also a vital source of identity development, pushing the educators out of their comfort zones and towards a reconstructed view of who they are as language teaching practitioners (Arvaja, 2024; Grossen & Muller Mirza, 2020; Hong et al., 2024; Karim et al., 2024; Stenberg & Maaranen, 2021; Zou, 2025). Conflicts and tensions between I-positions are fundamental vehicles of change, creating so called boundary

experiences in which the tensions between I-positions are so great that they force an individuals to recalibrate their I-positions (Hermans, 2014). As a result, certain I-positions can be strengthened, weakened or new I-positions can be formed (Arvaja, 2024; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). To illustrate this with a few examples from the present study, Sena's Controlling Teacher I-position was subdued as her Private Teacher I-position got gradually weaker. Feeling more compassion for herself and allowing herself to make mistakes meant that she could let go of a desire to control every aspect of her own and her students' performance. İpek's Actor I-position battled with her Human I-position as she struggled between the idea of teaching as a performance and a need to act naturally inside and outside of the classroom. In the end she considerably toned down any classroom behaviour she deemed as exaggerated such as pacing around the classroom or vigilantly monitoring her students, prioritizing her Human I-position.

5.3. Rise of Self-awareness and Openness

However, even if conflicts between I-positions appear, they might not be successful at precipitating identity development if a certain amount of self-awareness and openness is not present in individuals (Ballantyne, 2024; Dimitireska, 2024; Lau, 2024). Due to its power to increase teachers' self-awareness, reflective practice has been referred to in extant literature as a mirror (Derinalp, 2022), a self-exploration (Uştuk & Yazan, 2024), enlightenment (Harahap & Fithriani, 2024), or even peeling layers of an onion (Li & Shen, 2024). Adopting the last metaphor, both İpek and Sena were able to peel individual layers of their identities, uncover the driving forces between their actions such as their prominent antimodels and internalised voices of others and discover the core of their language teacher identities by realising what their dominant I-positions are. In the process, they also became aware of many ingrained assumptions and bias they held towards their students and teaching in general. For instance, İpek realized that explicit, teacher-centred grammar presentation might not be the only go-to strategy for low-level students whereas Sena made a stark realization that her heavy use of L1 in class is actually dictated less by students' capabilities and more by her own need to build a strong relationship with the learners. In fact, the correlation between reflective practice engagement and increased self-awareness has been well-documented in previous research on the topic (Aslan et al., 2022; Ayoobiyan & Rashidi, 2021; Baxter

et al., 2021; de Leon Pineda et al., 2022; Denami & Adinda, 2023; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Gadsby, 2022; Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023; Kelly, 2022; Leijen et al., 2020; Muchnik-Rozanov & Tsybulsky, 2019; Palacios et al., 2022; Schussler, 2020; Wexler, 2023). Kış and Yükselir (2021) reviewed reflective practices of pre-service teachers in Türkiye and reported on an increased self-awareness of who the teachers are and who they strived to become as their teaching careers progressed. Teachers who participated in Pham's and his colleagues' research study focusing on reflection-on-action (2023), reported an increased awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as language educators. Reflective practice was also proven to be vital in times of change, allowing teachers to increase their self-awareness of a new teaching context when switching to online education (Mumford & Dikilitaş, 2020). Incorporating video-based reflection was shown to be particularly effective in raising teachers' awareness of their body language and facial expressions (Tuncer & Özkan, 2021). This finding has also been corroborated by the results of the current study, with Sena and İpek making discoveries about their body language, such as disruptive monitoring techniques (İpek) or disinterested facial expressions and frequent sighing (Sena).

However, in order to reap the benefits of reflective practice and increase their self-awareness, teachers need to remain open and receptive to new experiences and information (Brownhill, 2023; Dewey, 1933; Marshall et al., 2021). In the context of reflective practice, openness can be defined as "active open-mindedness considering the importance of questioning favoured intuitions and openness to experience associated with the capacity to enlarge and examine experiences" (Marshall et al., 2021, p. 869). Questioning beliefs and routines became a staple part of Sena's and İpek's reflective journeys. For example, İpek was able to question deep-rooted assumptions about classroom dynamics and strategies, including an ingrained need to have her students justify and rationalize all their opinions. Similarly, Sena's views on her students' abilities and agency underwent a massive change as she gradually transformed from a teacher who underestimates her students' potential and strongly believed in explicit and closely monitored language presentation and practice strategies, into a practitioner who trusts her students and allows herself to accept imperfections in her lesson delivery having full faith that the learners will be able to cope with them. A transformation in teachers' beliefs about their students seem to be a common feature of many successful reflective practice engagements, particularly in the increase of trust towards the learners

(İlin, 2020; Pandey, 2024; Slade et al., 2019; Tan, 2020; Yao & Slater, 2024). For instance, teachers involved in guided critical reflection on the teacher-student relationship, questioned the assumption that teachers need to manage their students, transforming their identities from students' managers to the supporters of their growth (Baxter et al., 2021). Similarly, in an autoethnographical exploration of his role as a teacher and educator, Hughes (2013) was able to question the power dynamics of his own relationship with students and reward them with more trust and a more autonomous stance.

However, building on extant literature and combining it with the reported stories of Sena, İpek and Buse, the current study exhibited a more complex need for openness in the context of reflective practice engagement. Apart from an openness to questioning ingrained beliefs and routines (Marshall et al., 2021), it was revealed that teachers also need to be open to a number of different concepts including an openness to continuous learning, openness to receiving and accepting feedback from students, openness to seeking feedback from peers, openness to change and adaptability, and openness to empathy. Sena and İpek's openness to these concepts grew throughout their reflective journeys. They both shared a strong desire to continuously develop themselves despite many years spent in the teaching profession. In fact, reflective practice is defined as "an ongoing process that involves reflection to continuously construct (and shift) our understanding and social realities as we interact with others and talk about experience" (Barrett et al., 2020, p.10). Similarly to Sena and İpek, experienced teachers working in the higher education in Scotland also stressed the fact that reflective practice should be a regular practice for all educators, despite of their tenure and teaching experience (Bray & Fotheringham, 2022). The same calls came from pre-service teachers involved in video-based collaborative reflection, proving that the benefits of reflective practice should be accessible to teachers at all stages of their professional careers (Ahmed, 2020; de Leon Pineda et al., 2022; Derinalp, 2022; Muchnik-Rozanov & Tsybulsky, 2019). The openness for continuous learning was also persistent in various avenues of reflection, whether it was conducted through Twitter (Corrales & Erwin, 2020), audio recordings (Wexler, 2023), reflective questionnaires (Kurosh et al., 2020), creating reflective narratives (Nelson, 2008) or blogging (Kurt & Yildirim, 2021). The need for continuous reflection was so great that some participants continued reflecting even after

the end of the studies they participated in, as in the case of a Qatari teacher who added reflective journaling to his daily routine (Ahmed, 2020).

Sadly, although not exhibited by Sena and İpek, the belief in continuous reflection can wane with time, as in the case of experienced language educators who believed they have nothing left to learn or reflect on in a phenomenological study following the participants of an Educational Leadership programme (Imran et al., 2022).

Regarding gathering feedback, all participants of the current study were eager to collect feedback from students, frequently asking them for their opinions and suggestions. Buse and İpek were also avid recipients of peer feedback, valuing their colleagues' opinions during peer lesson observations with Sena being more apprehensive towards this practice as a result of her Private Teacher I-position. However, it should be emphasized that whereas feedback can be a great trigger for reflective practice and identity development, it needs to be received with openness. For example, Buse received direct feedback from her students asking her to modify her grammar presentation method but she chose to ignore it, not trusting that her students had good intentions. The lack of openness towards feedback has also been reported in extant literature (Balıkçı & Seferoğlu, 2022; Ballantyne, 2024; Clarà et al., 2019; Foltyn, 2022; Palacios et al., 2021; Schussler, 2020; Wahyuni, 2023; Yüksel & Başaran, 2020). For example, teachers in Wahyuni's study (2023) asked their students for feedback but failed to incorporate their suggestions justifying their decision by a belief that students are not competent enough to teach them anything. Indirect feedback from students in a form of disinterested body language and facial expressions can also be ignored by teachers who are accustomed to following their teaching routines (Yüksel & Başaran, 2020). Feedback from peers can also be rejected as in the case of pre-service teachers who distrusted their colleagues' comments and found them to be overly positive and not critical enough (Balıkçı & Seferoğlu, 2022).

5.4. Teacher Emotions in the Reflective Practice Engagement

Inextricable connections between students' emotions and teachers' emotions

Teaching can never be limited to a technical profession and its emotional aspect is vital for teachers' well-being, enjoyment, and satisfaction (Farrell, 2022a). As Arefian (2023) underlined, "teachers cannot be seen as robots who follow a strict approach, method, and procedure but as a person with emotional matters and loads that must be considered

in the act of teaching” (p. 60). Sena and İpek experienced a kaleidoscope of emotions on their reflective journey, from initial stress and fear of having their classroom practice observed, through frustration when they struggled to change some aspects of their in-class behaviour, to happiness achieved by building a strong relationship with their students. In fact, the reciprocal relationship between Sena’s and İpek’s emotions and their students’ emotions was evident from the very start of their journeys. They experienced stress and fatigue during assessment periods together with their students and felt elated and joyful when their students enjoyed their lessons and appreciated the efforts they put into planning and conducting their classes. The bidirectionality of emotions experienced in the classroom was also reported by Valtierra and Siegel (2020) who experimented with self-coding as a reflective practice tool. They found that, similarly to İpek who emphasized the importance of respect in student-teacher relationships, having students who treat their teachers with due respect makes the educators feel more appreciated and valued. In fact, receiving a simple “thank you” message from a student can have long-lasting effects on teachers’ happiness and self-efficacy (Foltyn, 2022), as well as a simple act of smiling (Slade et al., 2019). The fact that students perform well during exams can also fill teachers with happiness, marking similarities between the experiences of Sena, İpek and Buse and other reported cases such as teachers rejoicing in their students’ speaking progress (Derakhshan & Nazari, 2024).

Increasing teachers’ self-confidence

Apart from happiness resulting from student-teacher bonds, the participants of the current study were also able to decrease their stress and anxiety. Despite initial fears connected with having their classroom practice scrutinized by the researcher, their fears were quickly replaced by growing self-confidence. Every positive reaction they noticed from her students, every activity which went as planned, every correct answer given by a student added to their self-confidence and increased their appreciation for their own efforts. This, combined with the changes in their I-positions such as the emphasis on the anti-perfectionist Human I-position or a decrease in isolated and self-criticizing Private Teacher I-position resulted in Sena and İpek stepping off their reflective paths more confident than ever. Similarly to Sena and İpek, the teachers involved in online, peer-led reflection noticed that their confidence grew as they noticed the strengths in their

teaching and became more thoughtful and autonomous in their actions (Palacios et al., 2022). In fact, teachers can benefit from this renewed sense of confidence even when faced with challenges in their practice, as in the case of serious technical problems experienced by Sena or the daunting task of giving detailed feedback on writing practice in İpek's case (Baxter et al., 2021). Interestingly, the confidence of reflective teachers grew even as they became more critical towards their routines and teaching practice, proving that genuine confidence comes from a deeper awareness of one's strengths as well as weaknesses (Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023). This apparent paradox could be observed in Sena's and İpek's journeys. They both learned to let go of perfectionist tendencies, openly admitting to their students that they are not all-knowing and they can make mistakes as everyone. As a result, by removing themselves from the pedestal of a perfect teacher who is always in total control of their classes, their confidence grew. The same phenomenon was reported in the case of a teacher responsible for teaching writing to his students (Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023). The more he realised how complex of a task teaching writing is, the more confident he became to experiment with new strategies and techniques, rather than sticking to well-established methods. By the same token, Iranian teachers engaged in reflective practice grew in confidence not only by reflecting on their successes, but mainly by contemplating on the difficulties of the teaching profession in the EFL context (Kurosh et al., 2020). In fact, Dexter and Wall (2021) investigated the connection between confidence and reflective practice and reported that reflecting on what teachers do not know can be a powerful tool in reshaping their attitude to their apparent weaknesses and decrease their burnout.

The pitfalls of over-confidence in reflective engagement

As positive as the correlation between self-confidence and reflective practice is, too much confidence can actually be an inhibitor for successful reflective engagement (Medic, 2022). In his exploration of reflective practice for professional development, Medic (2022) underscored that “the objective is to achieve a harmony between confidence and inquisitive distrust by researching patterns and the impacts of actual experiences, intentions, and behaviours” (p. 3). Teachers who are overly-confident in their expertise are less likely to question their teaching routines and much more likely to blame external factors for any problems, as it the case reported by Segal (2024) where a teacher was so confident in her methods that she blamed the fact that her lesson was

observed for the disinterested behaviour of her students. Too much confidence can lead teachers to assume that they already know everything they need to know which frees them from the duty of questioning and continuously testing their strategies and techniques (Jemadi et al., 2023). For overly-confident teachers the natural course of action is to seek reasons for any challenges outside of themselves, including classroom facilities and students themselves (Shafi, 2025). In order for reflective practice to be successful in transforming teachers' identities and raising their self-awareness, they need to allow themselves to be surprised (Hughes, 2013; Istihari, 2023; Jones & Charteris, 2017; Marshall et al., 2021) and to admit that they do not know everything (Suryani, 2024). According to the dialogical theory of self, uncertainty is what puts the wheels of identity development into motion, fueling the movement of existing I-positions or the formation of new I-positions (Ballantyne, 2024; Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Consequently, teachers who are excessively confident in their expertise and abilities fail to experience any uncertainty in their practice and are thus deprived of the possibility for further identity development. The case of Buse is a perfect illustration of this phenomenon. Although she expressed that she is not a guru of English methodology, she proceeded to act like one throughout her journey, dismissing direct and indirect feedback from students, blaming external circumstances for students' behaviour, and attempting to justify her students' passive performance with their low attention spans. What remained unquestioned during her journey were her beliefs, routines, and assumptions about students.

Developing a sense of responsibility and care towards students

Another emotion that became more prominent through identity development in reflective practice engagement was the sense of responsibility and care for students. Although experienced throughout the participants' journey, it intensified before the assessment period, when Sena, İpek and Buse felt more directly responsible for their students' performance. The feeling of care and responsibility for their students motivated them to sacrifice their own well-being for the sake of the learners, putting extra effort into exam preparation and individual feedback sessions even though it cost them a lot of extra time and energy. Extant studies on reflective practice provide more evidence for the connection between increased care and responsibility for students and reflective engagement (Alam et al., 2024; Arefian, 2023; Greenberger & Or, 2022;

Groenewald & Arnold, 2024; Hughes, 2013; Marshall et al., 2021; Tuncer & Özkan, 2018; Uştuk & Yazan, 2024; Vitanova, 2024; Yao & Slater, 2024). For example Uştuk and Yazan (2024) narrated the experience of a teacher who developed deep love for her students and saw her own classroom as a safe space, sheltering her young students from the stress of everyday life. Just like İpek and Buse who revealed that they feel like their students' mothers, female teachers in Vitanova's (2024) study confessed to having motherly feelings towards their students, even though their learners were adults. Just like a parent would do, teachers in a study by Groenewald and Arnold (2024) which focused on uncovering the correlation between reflective practice and teacher agency, desired to have a lasting impact on their students, not limiting themselves to boosting their students' linguistic skills but transforming them into responsible, democratic citizens. Finally, the participants of a study among ELT professionals in Bangladesh went as far as to claim that love for students and for the teaching profession is a prerequisite for being a good teacher (Alam et al., 2024).

Emotions blocking a successful reflective practice engagement

Apart from a variety of emotions emerging throughout the reflective engagement of the current study participants, the complex role emotions played on their journeys was also revealed. First of all, in line with extant studies on reflective practice in the educational context, it was observed that certain negative emotions such as fear or anger can block reflection (Azizah Ni'ma et al., 2020; Schussler, 2020). Sena's fear of sharing her professional challenges with others challenged her at the onset of her reflective journey, making it more difficult for her to notice positive elements in her practice and urging her to scrutinize every mistake she made. In turn, her fear of making mistakes made her less prone to reflection-in-action and paralyzed her reflection when technical problems occurred. Buse reacted with anger when her students suggested she made a change in her lesson plan. Although she managed to control her anger and did not experience an outburst of outrage, the emotion clouded her reflective skills and contributed to her decision to ignore her students. Schussler's (2020) exploration of the concept of mindfulness and its connection to reflection practice offers an explanation for the course of action taken by Buse during the above mentioned interaction with her students. According to her findings, teachers who are not able to reflect and adopt a mindful outlook on their teaching practice, have a higher proclivity for dismissing complex

student-teacher interactions as classroom management problems. Buse's attitude to feedback from her students corroborated this correlation. Instead of adopting her students' perspective or reflecting on what might have prompted them to make the suggestion in the first place, Buse was quick to categorize this interaction as a troublesome student trying to assume control of the lesson. In a study conducted among language teachers in Iran, Arefian (2023) reported similar instances with one of his participants stating that experiencing strong emotions inhibits her reflective engagement, making her "partially blind and out of control" (p.65). High levels of anxiety were also reported to have a direct effect on increased impulsivity which can block reflective engagement of language educators (Esfandiari & Arefian, 2024; Incheh & Tasnimi, 2022). Anxiety was also reported by Sena and İpek at the beginning of their reflective journeys. For instance, the anxiety Sena felt around making mistakes initially prevented her from seeing failure as an opportunity to reflect, learn, and develop. Consumed by shame and fear, she engaged in a negative self-rumination and paralyzed her own development. As her level of anxiety waned in the course of the study, her ability to reflect on any undesirable or unplanned classroom events and interactions grew. Incheh and Tasnini (2022) explored the experiences of teacher with high anxiety levels, referred to in their study as teachers with higher Neuroticism levels, and found that, just like Sena, they run a risk of becoming self-absorbed in their own emotional turmoil, dwelling on their experiences rather than reflecting on them.

However, negative emotions such as fear or anxiety can also occur outside of the walls of the classroom, and can often impede reflective engagement during interactions between study participants and researchers, especially in the case of studies incorporating video-enhanced reflective practice (Aslan et al., 2022; Ayoobiyan & Rashidi, 2021; Balıkçı & Seferoğlu, 2023; Er et al., 2022; Johannessen, 2024; Segal, 2024). Although the participants of the current study were overall excited about the possibility of seeing themselves on camera, Sena and İpek revealed that they also felt anxious about the prospect of revealing every minute of their classroom practice to the researcher's scrutiny. Fortunately, this fear significantly subsided as the study progressed. Similar results were obtained by Balıkçı and Seferoğlu (2023) in their exploration of preservice teachers' reflective engagement, further proving that similar discomfort can be reported in teachers across different levels of experience. As Sena and İpek grew accustomed to and became more and more excited about watching their

lesson recordings with the researcher, so did the novice teachers whose initial anxiety was replaced by gratitude and appreciation.

Emotions as triggers and catalysts of reflective practice

However, emotions can not only block reflection but they can also trigger it, proving that the correlation between emotions and reflective practice is not as straightforward as might seem at a first glance (Anand et al., 2020; Botelho, 2021; Hong et al., 2024; Marshall et al., 2021; Zou, 2025). Interestingly, the extant literature points to the fact that negative emotions seem to be more powerful triggers for reflective practice (Arvaja, 2024; Botelho, 2021; Hong et al., 2024; Marshall et al., 2021). For example, Marshall and his colleagues (2021) conducted a detailed review of extant literature with an aim to enumerate triggers for reflective engagement. They found that confusion, puzzlement, doubt, disappointment and hesitation are among the most powerful starting points of teachers' reflective engagement. Arvaja's (2024) study of a teacher reflecting on her past as a bullied student, extended the list of negative emotions triggering reflection by adding fear and a sense of humiliation as powerful activator of reflective engagement. What is more, in her self-reflexive account Zou (2025) narrated how the anxiety and insecurity she experienced during emergency online teaching forced her to reflect on different ways of building a community with her learners without physical proximity. Hong's (Hong et al., 2024) attempt at reconceptualization of teacher identity development produced similar results, emphasizing that a sense of discomfort or a negative experience during classroom practice have a significant role in triggering reflection among teaching professionals. This observation has also been corroborated by the findings of the current study. For instance, İpek's reflections on her well-established speaking routine were sparked by her disappointment with students' engagement in this portion of her lesson. In other words, the more she tried to encourage her students to rationalize their opinions by asking them why they think in a certain way, the shorter answers she received in return. The disappointment and confusion she experienced when watching herself during these interactions prompted her to question the validity of this technique and explore different ways of encouraging her students to speak more in class. The role of negative emotions as triggers of reflective practice engagement was also validated by the lack of progress made by Buse. After all, Buse did not experience any discomfort or negative emotions throughout the study as she quickly rationalized

any unfavourable events or interactions she experienced, normalized them or blamed them on external circumstances. As a result, she did not feel frustrated or disappointed when her students remained silent or spent most of the lesson sleeping on their desks as, in her mind, this was an absolutely normal and expected occurrence when working with teenagers. It can be speculated that allowing herself to be puzzled by her students' behaviour could have provided a transition into a reflective engagement, but the instant rationalization of every student behaviour robbed her of this opportunity.

However, not only can negative emotions trigger the process of reflection, but they can also result in the emergence of new I-positions as in the case of teachers who experienced bullying in their student years becoming teachers with a strong Empathetic Teacher I-position emerging as a result of their past experiences (Arvaja, 2024). Correlating these findings with the stories of İpek and Sena, both participants experienced negative emotions which motivated them to reflect on their behaviour and assumptions and make changes in the classroom practice. For instance, İpek was horrified by her monitoring technique, comparing herself to a monster who scares and disrupts her hard-working students. Furthermore, Sena reacted with disappointment and frustration when she noticed how her disinterested body language threatens her Student-Friendly Teacher I-position. Consequently, both teachers experienced major shifts in their identities, subduing the Actor and Controlling Teacher I-positions (İpek) and cementing the centrality of the Student-Friendly Teacher I-position (Sena). In fact, compared to other identity evolutions they experienced throughout the study, these two changes took place at a fastest pace or, in İpek's case, almost instantly. This remarkable pace of change can be accounted for by the fact that strong emotions can serve as a catalyst for identity development (Marshall et al., 2021; Yee et al., 2022; Zou, 2025). For example, Yee and his colleagues (2022) tracked the reflective engagement of preservice teachers by applying a six-stage framework of reflective practice. They found that most notable developments in their participants' budding teacher identities were made in the "feeling" stage of their reflective practice, proving that reflective engagement enriched by a deeper contemplation of teacher emotions can yield more benefits.

Reflective practice and emotional control

The relationship between reflective practice and negative emotions such as fear or anger is bidirectional. Apart from the fact that negative emotions impact reflective practice making it more challenging for teachers, reflective practice can also exert influence on these emotions, helping teachers keep them under control and regulate them (Esfandiari & Arefian, 2024; Farrell, 2022b). This claim was also supported by the findings of the current study. For instance, when İpek was faced with a serious behavioural problem in her classroom, she managed to display emotional control by engaging in empathetic reflection with the unruly student. By the same token, participants of Arefian's study (2023) stated that reflective practice assisted them with emotional control in scenarios which would usually make them experience extreme anger, such as students lying about doing their homework. Similar positive correlation between emotional control and reflective practice were also reported by teachers faced with emotional meltdowns of young students (Baxter et al., 2021), emotional resilience of Iranian EFL teachers towards curriculum changes (Namaziandost et al., 2022) and a direct impact of emotional control achieved through reflective practice on Iranian ELT practitioners' job satisfaction (Namaziandost et al., 2024).

5.5. The Role of Teaching Experience during Reflective Practice Engagement

The extant research on language teacher identity and teacher emotions during the reflective practice engagement is plagued by an imbalance in the study participants' profile with the vast majority of research conducted with the preservice or novice teachers cohort (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Aslan et al., 2022; Brandenburg & Jones, 2017; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Dexter & Wall, 2021; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Farrell, 2018; Gadsby, 2022; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023). On top of that, even the occasional research studies which include experienced ELT professionals as participants are tainted by a striking inconclusiveness and contradictory nature of their findings. Whereas some research studies point to the superiority of veteran ELT teachers in their reflective endeavours listing teaching experience as one of the decisive factors in the success of reflective engagement (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022; Arefian et al., 2024; Dehghani et al., 2023; Derakhshan & Nazari, 2024; Lefebvre et al., 2022; Rezapour & Fazilatfar, 2023; Tay et al., 2023), other studies conclude that professional experience has no impact on reflective practice (Alipour & Akbarpour, 2022; Aqadogh & Trimasse,

2024; Asmare et al., 2025; Le Thanh et al., 2023; Orakçı, 2021; Tay et al., 2023; Ünver & Yurdakul, 2020). At the same time, some researchers who delved into the interplay between reflective practice and teaching experience arrived at a conclusion that long years spent in the teaching profession can actually have a detrimental effect on the quality and frequency of reflective practice and contribute to a negative attitude towards reflection (Aqadoh & Trimasse, 2024; Aslan et al., 2022; Asmare et al., 2025; Dehghani et al., 2023; Gadsby, 2022; Imran et al., 2022; Lau, 2024; Valtierra & Siegel, 2020).

As far as the supremacy of experienced teachers in the realm of reflective practice, Dehghani et al. (2023) compared reflective practices of novice and veteran ELT practitioners in Iran and found that the experienced cohort received better scores in critical reflection than their novice colleagues. Earlier research conducted in the same national context also suggested that teaching experience has a positive effect on teachers' reflective practice engagement with veteran teachers scoring higher on the English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory (Abdar & Shafaei, 2022). This findings was later corroborated in a longitudinal study conducted at a Chinese university (Ballantyne, 2024), a study conducted among Singaporean teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience (Tay et al., 2023), a large cohort of Iranian ELT teachers (Rezapour & Fazilafter, 2023). At the same time, Dastgoshadeh and Jalilzadeh (2022) aimed to gain a deeper insight into the beneficial role of teaching experience in reflective practice and were able to trace it back to the fact that veteran ELT practitioners have a richer pedagogical repertoire which allows them to reflect with more success and depth. Apart from the quality of reflection being affected by the tenure of teachers, a research study conducted with an American highschool teacher proved that reflection conducted by experienced teachers is more advantageous as it is directed at students rather than the teachers themselves (Hayden et al., 2013). Furthermore, experienced teachers were found to be less stressed about the prospect of reflecting on their practice which allowed them engage in this practice without any intimidation (Aslan et al., 2022; Derakhshan & Nazari, 2024). Significantly, the length of teaching experience was reported to have a propitious impact on teachers' attitude to reflective practice even at novel contexts such as emergency online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, proving that experience can help teachers maintain high self-efficacy and a positive attitude to reflection regardless of the familiarity with the learning environment (Hidson, 2024).

Despite the aforementioned claims in the supremacy of experienced teachers' reflective engagement, numerous studies conducted with participants bearing similar or identical characteristics yielded contradictory results. For instance, Aslan and her colleagues (2022) tracked the reflective engagement of teachers at different points of their careers and discovered that the most experienced participants were also the least likely to make any changes in their practice as a result of reflection. This was posed as a direct correlation with the amount of routinized behaviours veteran teachers have developed with time, harming their ability to adopt a reflective stance towards their classroom practice (Aqadoh & Trimasse, 2024). Not only were experienced teachers reported to be more obstinate during their reflective engagement, but even if they were willing to engage in reflection, they displayed a high propensity to search for quick-fixes and instant solutions to classroom problems rather than immerse themselves in the process (Hayden et al., 2013).

Against the backdrop of contradictory extant research, the question of the impact of teaching practice on ELT practitioners' teacher identity development and teacher emotions during reflective engagement remains open. After all, how can research studies conducted with almost identical groups of participants bear such conflicting conclusions. The present doctoral study offered a fresh perspective on this issue by diving deeper into the enigma of teaching experience in reflective identity development utilizing the dialogical theory of self as its lens. The adoption of this theoretical framework allowed the researcher to abandon simplistic and inconclusive correlations between years of teaching experience and reflective engagement, and provide a deeper understanding of the subject by differentiating between teachers with a dominant Experienced Teacher I-position and those with a non-dominant Experienced Teacher I-position. This distinction allowed for a reconciliation of contradictory findings from previous studies in this subject area. Despite having virtually the same length of experience and quite similar educational and professional backgrounds, Buse, Sena and İpek showcased strikingly different reflective paths. Whereas Sena and İpek made major discoveries, deepened their self-awareness and made long-lasting modifications in their teaching practices, Buse remained unchanged. However, rather than dismissing this finding as inconclusive or non-representative of the impact of teaching experience on identity development during reflective practice, the hierarchy of I-positions was proven to be one of the most decisive factors in the success of any reflective engagement.

Sena's and İpek's journeys bore resemblance to other positive cases narrated in extant literature (Anand et al., 2020; Ballantyne, 2024; Baxter et al., 2021; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2023; Engelbertink et al., 2021; Ravanal Moreno et al., 2021; Umutlu & Kim, 2020). Their reflective practice proved to be transformative, allowing them to “promote change and critically question and assess the integrity of their deeply held assumptions about how to relate to the world around them” (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009, p.9). They managed to question and transform their views and assumptions on a number of factors including student profile, grammar teaching methods, monitoring techniques, strategies for boosting students' critical thinking, student autonomy, and the use of L1. At the same time, under exactly the same conditions and having exactly the same student profile to work with, Buse failed to develop her teacher identity in any way as a product of her reflective engagement. Her dominant Experienced Teacher I-position dictated how she filtered and perceived all her experiences, often distorting them to protect her underlying and unquestionable faith in her own teaching expertise. Despite the overwhelmingly positive account of reflective practice engagement in extant literature, some narrated cases bear striking resemblance to Buse. Kayapinar and Alkhalidi (2023) discovered that some teachers treat positive feedback as an excuse to stop questioning their teaching performance. This was also the case with Buse who gladly accepted any positive feedback she received from her peers and students, which further consolidated her routines and dissuaded her from adopting a growth mindset (Tay et al., 2023; Xing et al., 2024). In fact, failure to question one's practice during reflective practice can often lead to stagnation and self-affirmation (Altalhab et al., 2021). It can also lead to a dangerous practice of jumping to assumptions instead of unpacking and questioning them (Gudeta, 2022). This tendency has also been corroborated by the present study with Buse offering instant justifications for any unwanted student behaviour and claiming to know what the students want, think, and feel. Istihari (2023) uncovered a similar case with a teacher who instantly attributed the fact that his students did not submit their homework assignments to the fact that he was a substitute teacher. By jumping to conclusions, he deprived himself of a chance to investigate the reasons behind his students' behaviour and instantly presented a reason he has no control over. Another example of such behaviour was narrated by Segal (2024) whose participant automatically correlated her students' poor classroom performance with their lack of emotional development, rejecting any other potential cause of the problem. As Larrivee

(2008) observed, “at the pre-reflective or non-reflective level, developing teachers react to students and classroom situations automatically, without conscious consideration of alternative responses. They operate with knee-jerk responses, attributing ownership of problems to students or others, perceiving themselves as victims of circumstances” (p. 342).

Apart from a proclivity to favour assumptions over reflective explorations of problems, the current study revealed that teachers with a dominant Experienced Teacher I-position were also far less likely to consider alternatives to their own beliefs and routines. For example, Buse was so confident in her own teaching strategies and beliefs about students that she did not consider any alternative solutions or techniques. To quote a few examples, in Buse’s eyes the only successful way of practising students’ pronunciation was to make them read aloud and the only effective way of teaching grammar was to explain it in detail with students listening passively. After all, if a teacher has full confidence in the superiority of their well-established routines and beliefs, considering alternatives can seem futile and redundant. Marshall and his colleagues (2021) provided a rationale for this phenomenon by observing that reflective practice can not be successful among teachers with a dualistic view of reality. Teachers who believe that there is a singular truth or a singular correct course of action in any situation are more likely to replicate their behaviour rather than engage in enquiry-based exploration of their experiences (Piggott, 2012; Stodter & Cushion, 2017) and they are more inclined to favour technical relationality over a reflexive attitude (Ferrada et al., 2015; Nocetti et al., 2020). Examples from the field also corroborate these claims proving that this phenomenon is connected more with teachers’ conceptualization of their expertise rather than the actual years of teaching experience. For instance, preservice teachers in a study conducted in Türkiye failed to consider any alternatives for ESP vocabulary teaching, even though the students’ performance was far from satisfactory (Ikwuegbu & Harris, 2024). Similar limited exploration of alternative solutions was also reported by preservice teachers in the context of teaching writing (Ni’ma et al., 2020) and in the preservice teachers’ insistence on finding the “right” method of teaching English (Mumford & Dikilitaş, 2020). The observation of this simplistic epistemological view across teachers on two extremes of the spectrum, including teachers still in the practicum and veteran teachers with multiple years of teaching experience such as Buse further corroborates the findings of the current study,

proving that the correlation between teaching experience and identity development through reflective practice can not be conceptualized just as years spent in the classroom.



6. CONCLUSION

Reflective practice has been soundly established in theoretical literature as well as empirical studies as a panacea for a wide array of struggles faced by ELT professionals (Farrell, 2022; Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023; Pendrey, 2022; Thompson, 2022). Among listed benefits, an enhanced decision-making ability, heightened self-awareness, as well as improved emotional control and resilience have all been observed in studies conducted across the globe (Arefian, 2023; Baxter et al., 2021; Corrales & Erwin, 2020; Dehghani et al., 2023; Derinalp, 2022; Donohoe, 2023; Eschenbacher, 2020; Gadsby, 2022; Kayapinar & Alkhaldi, 2023; Lefebvre et al., 2022; Marshall et al., 2022; Wexler, 2023; Yee et al., 2022). The current doctoral study has confirmed and corroborated the high claims about the power and potential of reflective practice. Two participants of the study were able to reap the benefits of reflective engagement. Sena and İpek gained valuable self-awareness of who they are as teachers. In the course of the study, the constellations of their I-positions underwent significant changes with the participants discovering aspects of their identities which were previously hidden from their view. For instance, İpek came to a realisation that her lessons are fun and enjoyable whereas before embarking on her reflective journey she thought about herself as a serious teacher who maintains a productive yet strict atmosphere in the classroom. Apart from identity shifts, the current study concluded that reflective practice can have a progressive effect on teacher emotions. Among the uncovered connections between emotions and reflections, increased self-confidence, lessened anxiety and deepened empathy came to the forefront. Following the claims of the utmost importance of empathy in teacher-student relationships, empathy proved to be instrumental in the participants' reflective journeys (Arefian, 2023). It could be derived from the findings of the study that as teachers progress on their reflective journeys, they gradually become more empathetic towards their students which eventually leads to a more student-centred stance. It can also be concluded that increased empathy gained in the course of reflective engagement is not limited to the student-teacher relations, but is also directed inwards, aiding ELT practitioners in showing compassion to themselves and absolving them from anxiety-inducing perfectionist tendencies.

However, lack of progress made by one of the participants resulted in important and cautionary claims about the role of teaching experience in reflective practice, or rather

its dominance over the multitude of teachers' I-positions. It was determined that ELT practitioners who are not willing to question their ingrained beliefs or rethink their teaching routines remain unchanged in the process of reflective practice. Thus, it can be concluded that apart from external barriers to reflection such as time constraints or lack of support from school administrators, internal factors can be equally if not more impeding (Aliakbari & Adibpour, 2018; Greenberger, 2020; King et al., 2014). Excessive trust in one's teaching experience can result in a stronger sense of self-confidence and self-worth, but can also deter teachers from reflecting on their teacher identity and classroom practices, encouraging them to rely on tested routines and solidifying their beliefs.

Another conclusion which can be formed against the backdrop of the current doctoral research, is that teaching experience is not a decisive predictor of the depth and success of reflective practice. In other words, teachers who have spent multiple years in the teaching profession are not automatically less or more likely to engage in truly transformative and critical reflection. Reflective practice is a multi-layered, complex process which requires teachers to remain open-minded and curious, displaying a willingness to let go of deep-seated beliefs they might have about themselves, their students and their teaching philosophies (Rahimi & Modarresi, 2023).

The findings of the present study painted a picture of a difficult journey of transformation, major identity shifts as well as resistance to change. Rather than gradual, linear progress made over time, the changes which took place in the participants appeared irregularly, with most striking shifts being brought about during video-stimulated interviews. At the same time, when the teachers were left to their own devices and had to engage in truly independent and solitary reflection (ie. reflective journaling and critical incident reports) such breakthroughs were much more scarce. Taking this into account, it can be concluded that ELT practitioners, regardless of their teaching experience, can largely benefit from a more guided approach to reflective practice, merging collaboration and visual stimuli to trigger the mechanisms of reflection (Doyle et al., 2024; Gebremariam & Sisay, 2024; Johannessen, 2024; Philp-Clark & Grieshaber, 2024).

6.1. Summary of the Study

The aim of the present study was to explore the connection between language teacher identity development and teacher emotions in the course of reflective engagement. To this end, three experienced teachers were selected as study participants and observed as they embarked on their reflective journeys. Multiple data collection tools were implemented over the 8 weeks of their reflective engagement, including semi-structured interviews, video-based reflective interviews, reflective diaries, and critical incident reports. The findings showed three distinct paths with each participant facing different challenges and identity-turbulences on the road. Most dynamic evolutions in the participants' teacher identities were observed in the strengthening of their empathetic and student-oriented I-positions. The teachers in the current study approached their students with empathy and prioritized a friendly classroom atmosphere. At the same time, their need to exert control over their students decreased as they learned to place more trust in their students. They also learned to empathize with themselves, letting go of the need to maintain a facade of all-knowing authoritative figures. As a result of the study, the teachers experienced joy and a sense of appreciation derived from the care and gratitude displayed by their students. Ultimately, they stepped off their reflective paths with more happiness and self-confidence. Nevertheless, the path of one participant of the study, Buse, proved to take a starkly different direction. Buse's case proved that teaching experience can block reflective engagement if it remains dominant and unquestioned. As a result, Buse's language teacher identity remained unchanged and she also did not engage in any deeper reflection on her emotions. The findings of the study exhibited that in order for reflective engagement to yield desired results, teachers need to remain open to constantly reshaping and questioning their expertise, testing their assumptions, and investigating ingrained beliefs and well-established routines.

6.2. Limitations of the Study

The current study incorporated a combination of self-reported data collection tools (semi-structured interviews, critical incident reports, reflective diaries) and observation-based data collection techniques (video-recordings and lesson observations) in order to maximize the objectivity of the participants' accounts. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the complex web of I-positioning can never be fully explored and much of this process can remain hidden to the researchers and even study participants

themselves (Vähäsantanen & Arvaja, 2022). Even though the aim of the current doctoral study was never to illustrate the complete and absolute experience of its participants, the fact that the video-recorded lesson observations were limited to three lessons for each teacher in the study meant that some complexities and intricacies of their I-positioning could not be observed or accounted for (Arvaja, 2024). What is more, due to the abovementioned complexity of teacher identity, the current study could have benefited from a longer data collection process, honoring the fact that identity development is a slow and continuous process rather than a simple progression (Engelbertink et al., 2021; Hong et al., 2024). Revisiting the study participants after an extended period of time in order to determine if the developments in their identities, teaching practices and beliefs proved to be sustainable could also offer invaluable insights into the continuous and lifelong nature of reflective practice (de Leon Pineda et al., 2022; Palacios et al., 2022; Wexler, 2023).

Finally, even though the study participants received thorough training encompassing both theoretical and practical aspects of reflective practice, guiding them through various conceptualizations and models of reflection as well as providing functional guidelines for their reflective journals and critical incident reports, the researcher is not a professional educator in the area of reflective practice. Extant literature warns that misconceptualized reflective engagement can quickly turn into self-criticism or self-confirmation, preventing teachers from reaping the benefits of reflective practice (Brownhill, 2022; Cirocki & Farrelly, 2016; Kurt & Yildirim, 2021; Marshall et al., 2021; Önal, 2019; Schwind & Manankil-Rankin, 2020; Yoshihara et al., 2020). As a result, even though the participants of the current study received ample amounts of information and resources related to reflective engagement and were in constant contact with the researcher throughout the study, limitations related to the reflective practice training they received prior to the data collection stage of this research project need to be acknowledged.

6.3. Implications for Teacher Development and Teacher Education

Investing in teachers' emotional well-being

The findings of this study provide solid evidence for the fact that reflective practice is instrumental for the development of language teacher identity and teacher emotions at all stages of teachers' professional careers with veteran teachers being able to

reconstruct even deeply ingrained beliefs and assumptions during reflective engagement (Farrell, 2020; Foltyn, 2022; Gebremariam & Sisay, 2024; Hidson, 2024; Karim et al., 2024; Kurt & Yildirim, 2021; Lau, 2024; Muchnik-Rozanov & Tsybulsky, 2019; Pandey, 2024; Rauteda, 2024; Schussler, 2020; Tuncer & Özkan, 2018; Uştuk & Yazan, 2024; Wetzel et al., 2015). The reflective paths of the participants of the present study illustrated how reflecting on teaching practice positively impacted the teachers' identity development and teacher emotions, transforming them into more empathetic, student-oriented, more self-confident and joyful ELT practitioners. The benefits of reflective practice can not be undervalued, but the involvement of school administration remains crucial in the process (Ahmed, 2020; Engelbertink et al., 2021; Kharlay et al., 2022). As suggested by one of the participants of the current study, school administration should be as invested in teachers' emotions and well-being as they care for students' happiness and reflection on teacher emotions should become a stable element in the relationship between school managers and teachers. Otherwise, even if teachers are successfully able to reflect on their emotions they will still feel underappreciated and undervalued, feeling that their well-being is secondary to that of their students (Baxter et al., 2021; Kramer, 2018; Yao, 2024). However, in order to ensure that teachers' emotional well-being receives proper attention and care, school administrators should invest more time and effort in professional development sessions centred around teacher emotions. As observed by Moon (2005), "emotion is part of what we know as feelings are associated with knowledge, so working with uncertainty...may require deep recognition of the relationships of personal emotional influences on knowledge" (p. 57). In other words, expecting teachers to become reflective practitioners has to be preceded by boosting their awareness of how they feel and how their emotions affect their classroom practice. To this end, emotional literacy training can be regularly conducted with teaching staff in order to raise their awareness of teacher emotions and their impact on reflection. The current study displayed how emotions can become a helpful trigger for reflective practice and can even speed up the process of identity transformation. On the other hand, it was also revealed that emotions can cloud teachers' judgement, blocking them from reframing their experiences into valuable exercises in self-awareness. Taking this into account, it has to be reiterated that reflective practice devoid of reflections on the emotional aspects of teaching will not yield desirable results, neither for teachers, nor for the school administration (Greenberger, 2020; Marathe & Sen, 2021).

Establishing a safe environment for reflection

It is also vital to foster a culture of sharing in schools in order to ensure a safe space for teachers to collaborate and reflect on their daily challenges with their colleagues (Marshall et al., 2021). The story of Sena who failed to ashamed to share her challenges with other teachers or İpek who faced criticism from her colleagues threatening the very core of her language teacher identity as well as cases of other teachers whose reflective practice was inhibited by a weak community spirit in their institutions can serve as a testament to the importance of a reflection-friendly school culture (Arefian, 2023; Baxter et al. 2021; Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Er et al., 2022; Foltyn, 2022; Gebremariam & Sisay, 2024; Liu et al., 2024). An example of a non-threatening scheme aimed at fostering collaboration and reflective practise can be coupling each teacher with a critical friend or a reflective buddy (Baxter et al., 2021; Dehghani et al., 2023; Moon, 2004). Although measuring the effectiveness of reflective practice tools was not the primary aim of the current doctoral research, important implications can still be drawn from the collected data as to which reflective tool opened the participants more to deeper and critical reflection. Sena, İpek and Bursa engaged in deeper levels of reflection during video-stimulated interview, with the researcher acting as a partner they could share their thoughts with. Even though the researcher assumed a much more passive and observant role, the sheer presence of a fellow-teacher who listened to them attentively without judgement pushed the participants to fully engross themselves in their reflective journeys. In consequence, guided, collaborative reflective practice can be encouraged among teaching staff, particularly among teachers with limited experience in reflective practice.

Making room for adaptability

What is more, the results of the present study underlined the importance of granting autonomy to teachers, allowing them to exercise adaptability thought reflective practice. After all, even if teachers are able to engage in reflective practice, are willing to question well-worn courses of actions and experiment with new techniques and strategies, they might not be able to put these reflective changes into action if the lesson pacings or the course curriculum are so dense that no leeway is permitted (Asmare et al., 2025; Cirocki & Farrelly, 2016; Gudeta, 2022; Farrell, 2022a; Kharlay et al., 2022; Schussler, 2020). As evident in the stories of Sena, İpek and Buse, this problem

becomes even more exasperating during the exam period. Anxious about impending examinations and with a constant worry about their students' grades, the participants of the current study were forced to temporarily suspend their Adaptable Teacher I-positions and focus on switching to repetitive, controlled practice tasks. What is more, they felt compelled to continue with exam-oriented tasks even if it caused them and their students stress and fatigue. Consequently, even though lesson pacing and assessment can be seen as an indispensable part of the educational system, efforts should be made by curriculum development teams to guide teachers through the material and lesson objectives, without undermining their autonomy and the ability to engage in reflection not only after their classes, but also during their lessons.

Encouraging reflective practice among experienced ELT practitioners

Furthermore, the reflective paths of the teachers involved in the current study exhibited that teachers cannot be expected to automatically acquire a reflective stance, even if they are experienced ELT practitioners with multiple years of experience in the teaching profession. In fact, it was revealed that they also struggle with fear of making mistakes, stress during lesson observations, and a sense of isolation. Being an experienced teachers does not entail being a reflective teacher and reflection needs to be taught and cultivated starting from the teaching practicum (Gadsby, 2022; Marshall et al., 2021; Yee et al., 2022). Reflections of the study participants corroborated by extant research conducted in Türkiye, paint an unfavourable picture of a teacher education system which does not prioritize reflective practice as a vital tool in forming new cohorts of ELT practitioners (Bütün Ikwuegbu & Harris, 2024; Dost, 2021; İlin, 2020; Menzi Çetin et al., 2019; Ölçü Dinçer, 2021; Öztürk & Aydın, 2019). Teachers are expected to mimic the strategies they learned from their lecturers without questioning their mentors' techniques and reflective practice is not incentivized (Bütün Ikwuegbu & Harris, 2024). The pressure to prepare students for high-stakes exams directs teachers' attention to fulfilling lesson objectives and covering language content without a luxury of having enough time or autonomy for reflective engagement (İlin, 2020). As a result, although reflective practice needs to be taught and encouraged at every level of ELT professionals' careers, sustainable changes in the conceptualization and implementation of reflective practice during teacher education are vital for forming future teachers' reflective practice engagement.

Reflective practice as a staple element in teacher education

Finally, even though the participants of the current study were all highly experienced ELT practitioners with more than ten years of classroom experience, the present doctoral thesis also shed light on the dire need for reflective practice in teacher education and teacher academies. Sena, Buse and İpek frequently recounted their preservice education and reflected on its impact on their current practices. Unfortunately, neither of the participants had been encouraged to adopt a reflective stance during their formative years and their teacher education did not involve any reflective components. To the contrary, they were expected to copy the classroom practices and beliefs of their lecturers without any criticism or deeper contemplation. However, as Palacios and his colleagues (2021) observed, without reflection teachers are stuck in a cycle of reiterating well-known routines without an opportunity to build on their existing knowledge by reconfiguring it based on new teaching contexts. Apart from helping preservice teachers develop their knowledge, incorporating reflective practice into preservice programmes can also have highly valuable implications for their well-being, building novice teachers' resilience (Ayoobiyan & Rashidi, 2021), self-efficacy (Kurt & Yildirim, 2021), autonomy (Marshall et al., 2021) and a sense of empowerment (Kurosh et al., 2020). Taking all these benefits into account, reflective practice should become a staple element of any teacher education programme. Whether through individual reflective journals or collaborative reflection-oriented discussions with fellow student-teachers, preservice teachers need to be guided and coached through the process of reflective engagement with an aim of educating reflective practitioners rather than passive learners (Denami & Adinda, 2023; Karim et al., 2022; Önal, 2019; Tay et al., 2023). However, regardless of what mode of reflective practice is implemented, reflective engagement should be conducted in a safe space, free from judgement and evaluation, ensuring that preservice teachers' reflections are a genuine attempt at developing their budding language teacher identities, gaining awareness of their emotions and questioning well-established beliefs and routines rather than writing what they think they professors want to hear (Altalhab et al., 2021; Estaji & Fatalaki, 2023).

6.4. Implications for Further Research

Dialogical theory of self as a valuable tool for future research into reflective practice, teacher identity and teacher emotions

Dialogical theory of self proved to be an effective lens in uncovering complex movements and developments in teachers' identities, capturing the multitude of internal and external I-positions and the array of emotions emerging in the process of reflective engagement (Arvaja, 2024; Vähäsantanen & Arvaja, 2022; Xing et al., 2024). In the course of the present study, it proved instrumental in uncovering the reasons behind starking discrepancies between its participants' reflective journeys with one of them proving to be unsuccessful. More research delving into the impact of teaching experience on reflective engagement, teacher emotions and teacher identity could be conducted by adopting the same theoretical framework in order to corroborate the findings of current research.

In addition, adopting the dialogical theory of self as the theoretical framework for the present study offered a fresh perspective on the perplexing inconclusivity of extant research into the relationship between teaching experience and reflective practice. Expanding on this finding, future research could aim to further corroborate or disprove it by comparing reflective journeys of preservice or novice ELT teachers and their more experienced counterparts within the same theoretical framework.

Expanding research into the role of emotions in reflective practice engagement

Secondly, intricate relationship between teacher emotions and language teacher identity development in the process of reflection was uncovered, including emotions being the trigger, blockade, catalyst and product of reflection. Although both positive and negative emotions were established to play these roles, only negative emotions were reported to serve as catalysts. Although a large number of extant research studies have investigated how emotions trigger reflection (Anand et al., 2020; Arvaja, 2024; Botelho, 2021; Hong et al., 2024; Marshall et al., 2021; Zou, 2025), more research is called for to gain a deeper insight into the role of emotions as catalysts for reflective identity development (Yee et al., 2022).

Diversifying research participants

What is more, the homogeneity of the participant samples proved to be instrumental in gaining a deeper insight into the reflective practice engagement of three female, veteran ELT practitioners in the higher education context in Türkiye. At the same time, the fact that the participants bore so much resemblance to one another could impact the generalizability of findings (Xing et al., 2024). For example, although the extant literature does not universally point to a correlation between reflective practice and gender (Afshar & Farahani, 2015; Almusharraf & Almusharraf, 2021), most recent studies in the field hint at slight disparities between how female and male teachers engage in reflective practice with female teachers being superior at referring to ELT theories in their reflective engagement (Suryani, 2024) and focusing more on classroom atmosphere and the student-teacher relationship than their male counterparts (Suryani, 2024; Uştuk & Yazan, 2024). Future research could aim to increase the diversity of participants with a purpose of a gaining more insight into such claims.

Apart from diversifying the pool of participants in terms of gender, more variance can also be granted in terms of their educational institutions. In other words, future research can focus its lense on teachers employed in private educational institutions. As scholars adept in reflective practice underscore, deep and transformative reflective engagement cannot be diminished to a tool for teacher evaluation (Idris, 2023). Thus, exploring the environment of private education can provide more evidence on the impact of evaluation on reflection. As Brandenburg and Jones (2017) observed “institutionalized reflective practice can be used as a vehicle for sanctioning of performance appraisal, rather than for transformational learning and improvement in practice” (p. 262). Consequently, future research could be aimed at determining if and how teacher identity and teacher emotions are transformed in the process of reflection when reflective engagement is mandatory, evaluative and controlled.

Moreover, taking into account that reflective practice is not only instrumental for ELT practitioners, but also for teachers of other disciplines, comparative studies could be attempted to juxtapose the experiences of a wider array of participants (Aydoğmuş & Şentürk, 2023). Gaining a deeper insight into how teachers of various subjects transform their teacher identity and reconfigure their I-positions could lead to a better

understanding of the interrelation between reflective practice, teacher identity and teacher emotions.

Gaining a deeper insight into solitary reflective practice

Lastly, with an ever-growing interest in exploring collaborative reflective engagement (Bray & Fotheringham, 2022; Cowan, 2020; de Leon Pineda et al., 2022; Derinalp, 2022; Murphy & O'Mahony, 2023; Palacios et al., 2022; Paul, 2024; Wexler, 2023; Yee et al., 2022), the phenomenon of solitary reflection remains understudied. The present study uncovered that even if teachers are not engaged in group reflection with their colleagues, they could still yield the benefits traditionally reserved for collaborative reflective practice such as a decreased sense of isolation, higher self-confidence, and more compassion and empathy directed towards themselves (Bataller-Català, 2024; Esfandiari & Arefian, 2024; Lee & Bonk, 2024). Future research could direct its focus to solitary reflection and the mechanisms teachers employ to compensate for the lack of direct contact with colleagues during reflective paths. Comparative studies drawing similarities and contrasts between two cohorts of ELT practitioners, one group involved in collaborative reflective practice and the latter engaged in solitary reflection, could prove to be insightful in determining what teacher emotions are connected to each manner of reflective practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Interview questions for the first semi-structured interview

1. Tell me about your journey into the teaching profession.
2. How would you describe yourself as an ELT teacher? What is your teaching philosophy?
3. What aspects of teaching are important to you? Why?
4. What does being a good ELT teacher mean to you?
5. What are some of the biggest challenges you face in your current teaching context?
6. What do you usually do when you face an unexpected problem in your classroom?
7. How do you usually prepare materials for your lessons?
8. How often do you refer to your knowledge of ELT methodology and theories in your teaching practice?
9. Do you discuss your teaching practice with your colleagues? If so, how often.
10. How do you develop yourself as a teacher?
11. How has your teaching practice changed over the years?
12. Can you describe the range of emotions you typically experience throughout a teaching week?
13. What does the word “reflection” mean to you?
14. Do you think reflection is important for language teachers? Why/why not?
15. Tell me about your prior experience with reflective practice (if any)
16. Have you ever kept a journal or a diary in a professional context or in your private life?
17. From your point of view, what would you say is the main role of reflective journals?
18. Have you ever had your lesson(s) recorded?

APPENDIX 2

Interview questions for the second semi-structured interview

1. Tell me about your experience of engaging in reflective practice during the study.
2. What aspects of this experience did you enjoy?
3. What aspects of this experience did you find most challenging?
4. Tell me about your experience of keeping a reflective journal.
5. Tell me about your experience of having your lessons recorded and discussed.
6. Tell me about your experience of reflecting on critical incidents in your teaching practice.
7. Have you noticed any changes in your teaching practice in the course of the study? If yes, why did you decide to implement these changes? If not, why do you think your teaching practice remained unchanged?
8. Have you noticed any changes in how you perceive yourself as an ELT teacher?
9. What emotions have you experienced during the study?
10. Have you noticed any changes in how you feel during the course of the study?
11. What role, if any, did reflective practice have in your professional development?

APPENDIX 3

Interview questions for video-stimulated interviews

1. What were your teaching objectives during the class? Do you think you have achieved them?
2. What do you think about the lesson you have just watched?
3. How did you feel during the class?
4. Was there anything in your behaviour that surprised you?
5. Was there anything in your students' behaviour that surprised you?
6. Referring to your reflective journal entry for this lesson, do you notice any similarities or differences between what you have just watched and how you reflected on the same lesson in your journal?
7. After watching your own teaching in the video clip, describe any emotions that arise as you observe yourself during your classroom practice.
8. Do you think that being recorded has influenced the way you performed during the lesson?

APPENDIX 4

Instructions for reflective journals

Dear teacher, thank you for taking the time to participate in my research study. Your reflective thoughts included in this journal will be instrumental in the data collection process. Before you start writing, here are some kind reminders:

- You can add journal entries to your journal as often as you wish. It's perfectly natural to have more thoughts you would like to record and share on one day, and less on another.
- There is no word limit for the journal entries. You can keep your entries as long as you find it necessary on a given day. On some days it might be a short paragraph, on others a longer entry.
- You can write about anything that you find relevant to your teaching and classroom practice on a given day. This may include situations that happened inside the classroom as well as events which took place before or after your classes, e.g. lesson planning or discussing the classes with fellow teachers.
- The reflections included in your journal will not be shared with anyone except for the researcher. Other participants of this study and the school management will not have any access to your journal.
- If there are any third parties mentioned in the extracts from your journals which will be included in the findings section of the present study, their names and any personal information will be changed for anonymity purposes.
- You are free to select a format and mode for your journal entries, depending on your general preferences or mood on a given day. Your journal entries can be written down (electronically or with pen and paper), audio recorded or video recorded. Feel free to switch between methods and test them to find a way of journaling that is optimal for you.
- I will collect your journal entries at the end of each week of the study.
- You will have access to transcripts of your interviews and journal entries even after the data collection process is complete. If there are any excerpts from your journals that you would like to expand on or modify, you will be given a chance to do so.
- Finally, please think about this journal as your companion for the duration of the study or even beyond it. I sincerely hope that you will find recording your thoughts useful and helpful in your teaching career.

APPENDIX 5

Critical incident form

Adapted from: Tołoczko, E. (2020). *Diagnosing critical incidents by teachers of English as a foreign language with reference to their domain expertise* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Warsaw]. https://depotuw.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/item/3724/Ewa%20To%C5%82oczko_praca%20doktorska.pdf?sequence=1

CRITICAL INCIDENT FORM
Name of the participant: Date:
PART 1: Description
Please describe the background to the situation (e.g. level of the students, type of lesson taught) and narrate the actions taken by you and other participants in the event.
Please describe the critical incident.
Please describe the emotions you experienced during the incident and the emotions you think other participants experienced during the incident.

--

PART 2: Analysis

Please explain the reasons why you found this particular incident to be critical.

What do you think were the underlying causes of the incident?

PART 3: Evaluation

How effective do you think your response to the incident was? Is there anything you could have or should have done differently?
--

Please explain the implications the incident had for you and for your students.

Please evaluate the value of the incident by referring to a wider context of language teaching. You can refer to your ELT knowledge and prior experience.

Please evaluate and describe the impact the incident will have on your future teaching practice.

APPENDIX 6

Ethical committee declaration

Evrak Kayıt Tarihi: 09.05.2024 Protokol No: 731059

Tarih: 28.05.2024



ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU
KARAR BELGESİ

ÇALIŞMANIN TÜRÜ:	Doktora Tez Çalışması
KONU:	Eğitim Bilimleri
BAŞLIK:	Exploring the role of reflective practice on emerging teacher emotions and the development of teacher identity of experienced ELT practitioners: A multiple case study. Ortaya Çıkan Öğretmen Duyguları ve Deneyimli ELT Uygulayıcılarının Öğretmen Kimliğinin Gelişimi Üzerinde Yansıtıcı Uygulamanın Rolünün Araştırılması: Çoklu Bir Vaka Çalışması
PROJE/TEZ YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ:	Doç. Dr. Gökhan ÖZTÜRK
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Works

1. Keskin, M. (2023). Discovering and Developing Research Interests: A Narrative Inquiry into Three Doctoral Students' Experiences. *Yükseköğretim Dergisi*, 13(1), 9-18. <https://doi.org/10.2399/yod.23.1225236>
2. Keskin, M., & Öztürk, G. (2023). Exploring the Perceptions Regarding Language Teacher Educator Identity: A Multiple Case Study on Three ELT Teacher Educators. *Pedagogika*, 148(4), 85–105. <https://doi.org/10.15823/p.2022.148.5>
3. Keskin, M. (2022). Native English-speaking Teachers (NESTs) in the Minority: How Do Three NESTs at a University in Türkiye Perceive Their Professional Identities? *Language Teaching and Educational Research*, 5(2), 92-108. <https://doi.org/10.35207/later.1125201>