

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Professional identity of language teacher trainees during practicum: A metaphor analysis**

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**Abstract**

Teachers may face dilemmas when they realize certain discrepancies between theory and practice throughout their career. Especially for teacher trainees, such dilemmatic spaces may be beneficial in uncovering multiple identities developing and being shaped especially during practicum. More specifically, the most frequent discrepancy could be between the desire to explore one's own teacher identity and to please mentors and supervisors. Therefore, teacher training programs should provide spaces for teacher trainees to reflect and analyze those dilemmas so that they could develop their teacher professional identity (TPI) in an unproblematic and smooth manner. To this end, this study involved twelve senior English teacher trainees into a five-week process when they expressed their growing professional identities through metaphorical discourse within the scope of Teaching Practice I course. The thematic analyses of the elicited metaphors revealed vital hints about the TPI of language teacher trainees. Besides, the place and importance of metaphors for understanding TPI were discussed in the context of teacher education.

**Keywords**

Teacher identity, language teachers, practicum, metaphors.

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**Introduction**

Identity, regarded as a useful analytical tool to shed light into the connection between schooling and society (Gee, 2000), is also central to educational research as the concept of teacher identity and a distinct area of study (Beijaard et al., 2004). Searching for the components of teacher identity creates social awareness of various aspects of teaching and the meaning of being a teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). As well as in general education, teacher identity has been acknowledged as an essential issue in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Specifically, teacher identity is of particular importance since one needs to understand language teaching in order to understand teachers; and in order to understand teachers, one needs to have a

clear idea of who they really are (Varghese et al., 2005). In both the initial teacher education period and teaching career, the construction of TPI has drawn the attention of numerous scholars (Beijaard et al., 2004; Cameron & Grant, 2017; Izadinia, 2015; Zhang et al., 2016). The focal point in these periods is the fact that TPI is not a static attribute throughout teacher training for teacher trainees; instead, the development of the practicing teachers' career is a dynamic, active and constant process when they make sense of experiences (Gracia et al., 2022; Rodrigues et al., 2018). Such an on-going and changing process generates diversity in each teacher's conception of teaching and teacher actions (Garner & Kaplan, 2019). Learning to teach is a complex phase which each teacher goes through, and it includes an interaction between personal values and professional demands of teaching (Leeferink et al., 2019). In order to prevent the identity crisis which is possible as a result of this complex phase, we need to understand the factors influencing the teacher identity in an attempt to strengthen the teaching profession. Regarded as an identity making process (Schaefer & Clandinin, 2019), teacher learning is much more than learning subject matter, pedagogical knowledge and skills or teaching/learning theories. For that reason, how teacher trainees perceive teacher practices and attitudes is a vital question to be answered by the scholars. As a way to reveal those teacher practices and attitudes, teachers negotiate and discuss their conceptualizations and previous knowledge of the teaching profession; in other words, they reflect on their teacher roles (Clarke et al., 2017; Lim, 2011). In this sense, learning to teach should be acknowledged as a phase of teacher identity construction (Capps et al., 2012). Herein, metaphors are a tool for "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p.5) and have been recognized as a means for teachers to become aware of their own beliefs and/or work in relation to teaching (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Metaphors expressed by teachers concerning their identities are well-reported in the relevant literature (e.g. Alger, 2009; Farrell, 2011; Ma & Gao, 2017; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011; Zhao et al., 2010). Depending on the well-known significance of metaphors for understanding teacher identity, the current study aims to examine how language teacher trainees conceptualize their roles as future teachers by expressing themselves via metaphorical discourse. To this end, I provided the language teacher trainees to engage in writing critical reports around certain topics based on their experiences during the practicum. In addition, I asked them to portray their teacher

identities with a specific metaphor for each topic and, within the scope of this study, the analyses were solely dependent on these metaphors produced by the language teacher trainees. Thus, this study considerably contributed to the relevant literature by making it possible to draw deeper inferences about initial perceived identities of the language teacher trainees.

### **Literature Review**

Language teachers are recently recognized as active agents who integrate their professional, sociocultural and sociopolitical perspectives and beliefs to classroom dynamics (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Nguyen, 2016; Varghese et al., 2005). Such a shift toward a sociocultural perspective leads researchers to regard the concept of identity as a core constituent of language learning and teaching (Miller, 2009). By definition, in practical terms, identity is a reflection of how people view themselves and how they perform their roles within different settings (Burns & Richards, 2009). Specifically in the field of language teaching, teacher identity is more likely to be fully understood as a result of the analysis of its characteristics (Varghese et al., 2005); which can be listed as: “Identity is multiple, shifting and in conflict; related to social, cultural and political contexts; being constructed, maintained and negotiated basically through discourse.” That is to say, language teacher identity is shaped from multiple changing and conflicting variables such as personal, professional, social, historical and cultural variables. This means that language teachers are not already equipped with a well-constructed identity from birth; rather, their identity results from their engagement with the sociocultural contexts in which they take place. From this perspective, it is obvious that language teachers develop their identities through discourse in a similar manner with general education teachers. However, language teachers’ specific discourses possess characteristics which correspond to the three themes listed above by Varghese et al. (2005). The first two characteristics are pertaining to the position of non-native teachers and the status of the language-teaching profession. The third characteristic refers to the fact that language teaching is accepted as a marginalized profession, leading to the instability of teachers’ practices

and lives. This marginalization may make it more complex than predicted to understand and investigate language teacher identity.

Considering the scope of this study, it is necessary to know how language teacher trainees understand the TPI concept with its influencing factors. In a recent study, teacher trainees are inclined to make sense of TPI as a transformative process which is full of ups and downs (Leeferink et al., 2019). They also tend to associate TPI to diverse variables that may be helpful for them to maximize their commitment and develop identity towards the teaching profession (Izadinia, 2015). This identity construction process is a steady step for some teacher trainees who could easily combine concepts and practices from different contexts in their daily life because they do not have an internal debate about their teacher selves (Olsen, 2008; Leeferink et al., 2019). Such teacher trainees' characteristic features include the knowledge of teaching strategies, communication strategies with their colleagues and being self-critical in their work (Salazar & McCluskey, 2017). Yet, there are also trainee teachers who have to cope with different confusions, crises and tensions (Meijeer et al., 2011). In such circumstances, these rough times may be concerned with lack of motivation and commitment (Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019) or lack of intrinsic motivation towards teaching (Leeferink et al., 2019). However, it is possible for teachers to experience an inspiring incident when they are capable of motivating themselves back (Meijer et al., 2011).

As an intellectual tool to explore a range of teaching aspects, metaphors may be conceptualized as a powerful way for providing teachers to express the meaning of being a teacher more profoundly. Those specific teaching aspects can be listed as teachers' beliefs about teaching (Alger, 2009), professional knowledge (Zhao et al., 2010) and identity (Farrell, 2011; Ma & Gao, 2017; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Most particularly, metaphors have been acknowledged as the roots of teacher identity (Saban, 2006) and provide insight into teachers' practices over their career and life span. Beyond that, the analyses of teachers' metaphorical expressions inform teacher education in general and language teacher education in particular (Ma & Gao, 2017). Moreover, metaphors have the capacity to represent the notable characteristics of language teaching (Ma & Gao, 2017; Zhao et al., 2010). For instance, one of the metaphors used by language teachers points to the role of acculturator (Farrell, 2011); and such a role of intercultural mediator is enacted by understanding students' native

cultures and facilitating students to adapt themselves to the target culture. In order to reach out this sort of metaphors and to deeply understand the multifaceted nature of teacher identity, metaphors are possibly a relevant vehicle to investigate TPI during both pre-service and in-service teacher training.

## **Method**

### ***Research design***

This research was designed as a phenomenological study with the intent of analyzing perceived or experienced phenomena (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). The focused phenomenon in this study was the metaphorical expressions of teacher identity produced by language teacher trainees during practicum. Phenomenological research, which was originally developed by von Bertalanffy in 1928, is based on general systems theory on the whole. Von Bertalanffy argued that all phenomena contained patterns that created a system and the common patterns within the system provided greater insight into the phenomenon (Drack, 2009). For this reason, the current study was an attempt to scrutinize the mental schema and conceptual system of teacher trainees in terms of identity in the course of teaching practices accompanied by reflective observations of language classes. With this in mind, the participants experienced a seven-week adaptation period when they were expected to carry out unstructured observations and mini-teachings along with their familiarization with the school procedures and their mentors at practicum schools. Following this, their task was to write critical evaluations about specific topics assigned by their supervisor. Most importantly, they were requested to share their views toward their newly-developed identities through metaphors during five weeks. Throughout the whole semester, the participants and their supervisor came together in order to debate their growing professional identities at regular intervals.

### ***Participants***

The participants of the study were twelve teacher trainees (10 females and 2 males) majoring in English language teaching at a public university in Turkey. All did not have any teaching experiences except for micro-teachings conducted in foreign

language teaching methodology courses. They were all senior students who completed core teacher training courses such as English language teaching approaches, linguistics, language acquisition, teaching language skills, language and literature teaching, teaching English to young learners and so forth. At the time of the study, they took part in Teaching Practice I course throughout one semester (12 weeks). Within this course, they attended practicum schools so that they could have a chance to put their theoretical knowledge into practice in real language classes. Six of them attended a public high school and six of them attended a public primary school as trainee teachers. The convenient sampling strategy was employed for the participant selection. Indeed, the participants were all the first individuals involved in this Teaching Practice I course which was integrated into the new English language teaching curriculum. This new curriculum was introduced and applied in 2018 for the first time and the Teaching Practice I course was instructed in a renewed procedure. The different feature of this course is the involvement of real teaching practices in the syllabus of this fall term course, rather than merely requiring teacher trainees to conduct observations as in the previous version of this course named as the School Experience.

#### *The data collection tool and analysis*

The data were gathered using a set of guiding questions (see Appendix) prepared by the author who was the participants' supervisor. Each week, the participants were introduced a new topic so that they could perform observations of both their mentors' and their own teachings. Namely, the task contained reflections on practices and behaviors of the mentor on one hand; and the trainee teachers' self-evaluations. Weekly topics were determined as *Lesson Preparation*, *Building Background*, *Providing Comprehensible Input*, *Strategies and Interaction*, *Application and Assessment* respectively. In light of their reflective evaluations about those topics, each participant was asked to think of and create their own metaphors per week. At the very beginning of the process, they were given specific information about the concept of metaphor through examples and asked to complete this sentence "*This week, my professional identity resembles to/is like ..... because .....*".

As the whole data were qualitative in its nature, thematic analysis from an inductive perspective (Guest et al., 2012) underpinned the data analysis in this study.

Firstly, the reports were read over and over again; and secondly, coded for metaphors accompanied by the interrelating explanations. After determining those initial codes, thirdly, themes were elicited and reviewed iteratively. During all the phases, the ultimate purpose was to search for the most important or interesting patterns by making sense of the data rather than merely summarizing it. Each week's reports were analyzed in its own right and the reports of the participants from the primary school and high school context were analyzed separately. The reason for this was that the differing topics of each week and the age and level of students in different school contexts might have an impact upon the content/nature of metaphors created by the trainee teachers. The database which was full of seventy three metaphoric expressions and twelve umbrella metaphors was approximately thirty pages long in total. These detected metaphors as a result of the analyses were supported with the prominent excerpts.

To ensure and increase the trustworthiness of the study, direct quotations from the participants' metaphorical expressions were reported (Roberts & Priest, 2006) in the findings section. The whole data were coded twice by the author to test the intra-coder reliability of the research. Agreement on the two occasions of coding was calculated using the Miles and Huberman's formula (1994), which yielded 91% consistency. Further, the finalized umbrella metaphors were evaluated by an independent researcher who placed the individual metaphors in appropriate umbrella metaphor categories. Joint decisions and consensus between the two coders were provided.

## **Findings**

The participant teacher trainees produced seventy three metaphors, all of which were categorized under twelve umbrella metaphors. Indeed, the logical foundations or justifications for using each specific metaphor can also be understood from the connections between metaphors and umbrella metaphors as illustrated in Table 1 below:

**Table 1.** The umbrella metaphors and the corresponding metaphors expressed by the participants

No	Umbrella metaphors	Metaphors	
		Primary school context	High school context
1	Knowledge reflector	Sun, language switch, dictionary, tourist guide, parrot, lamp, candle, book	Treasure chest, candle, light, sycamore, stove, dictionary, torch, book, light bulb, brainy smurf
2	Nurturer	Florist, mother, sister, playmate	Florist, water, mother, family, parent, father
3	Director	Rainbow, tour guide, compass, runner, navigator, router, mirror	Life coach, problem solver, guide, shepherd, alarm clock
4	Molder	Enterpriser, builder, gardener, designer, corrector	Pencil, gardener, farmer, sculpture
5	Authority figure	Soldier, lion, superhero	Lion, queen
6	Exertive	Bee, ant	Apple worm, ant
7	Researcher	Cameraman, explorer, binocular	Explorer, scientist
8	Artist	Narrator, speaker, comedian, actor/actress, entertainer, clown	Speaker, actor/actress, newscaster
9	Democrat	-	Ruler
10	Judger	-	Lady justice
11	Healer	Emotional spark	Angel
12	Novice linguist	Young bird, sprouting flower	Empty paper, turtle, young bird, tourist, small tree, student, sprouting flower

As summarized in Table 1, the analyses of metaphors are separately presented for primary school and high school contexts as the participants attended different type of practicum schools at the time of the study. Overall, it is clear that the participants associated their teacher identities with some “traditional teacher roles” such as being knowledge reflector (presenting new knowledge to students), director (leading students toward the right track), molder (shaping students), authority figure (being a power owner in the classroom), democrat (determining the rules in the classroom) and healer (providing emotional support). Considering the remaining metaphors, the participants built relations between teacher identity and such roles as nurturer (meeting the needs of students), exertive (being a hardworking instructor), researcher (discovering problematic issues), artist (being a performer on the stage), judger (providing equity among students) and novice linguist (being a newcomer in the teaching profession). In the following section, the detailed analyses of each umbrella metaphor are explained.

### *Umbrella metaphor 1: Knowledge reflector*

This category is represented with various metaphors such as sun, dictionary, book, treasure chest, brainy smurf, candle and so on. There are some common metaphors (book, dictionary, candle) elicited from both the participants who attended a primary school and a high school. Based on these, it is obvious that the participants conceptualized themselves as an inspiring source of knowledge and the duty of language teachers is to transfer the necessary knowledge to students. In other words, the participants perceive that language teachers should extend students' knowledge system in a professional way. The following excerpt exemplifies the brainy smurf metaphor which is examined under this category.

*Brainy smurf:* "This week, my professional identity resembles to the brainy smurf because I was goal-oriented and knew exactly what to do. I was well-prepared for my teaching session and had to teach all the knowledge about the topic including both the content and linguistic information. Most importantly, I was successful in answering all the questions of students. I only had little hesitations while answering. My efforts of being self-confident in front of the students made me feel happy." (P9, Week 4)

### *Umbrella metaphor 2: Nurturer*

In this category, the revealed metaphors are florist, mother, sister, parent and so forth. The common meaning that can be inferred from all these metaphors, from the eyes of the participants, refers to the idea that language teachers should always take students' individual needs, interests and differences into account. Namely, the participants emphasize that a language teacher's role should be to organize a positive learning environment so that students could emotionally and intellectually grow. Thus, they believe that teachers should ease students' language learning difficulties like a family member. Moreover, most of the metaphors put under both primary and high school contexts are the same (see Table 1) and the below excerpt indicates the parent metaphor that can be directly associated with this category.

*Parent:* "This week, my professional identity resembles to parents because I was supportive and helpful all the time. I was very willing to support the students in

every sense. When I felt that my students had difficulties in learning the content or lost their motivation, I made every effort to help them learn. I think I was in the mood of distributing parental love to each student.” (P7, Week 5)

### *Umbrella metaphor 3: Director*

This category includes the metaphors of rainbow, compass, mirror, guide, shepherd, all of which pinpoint to the conceptualization of language teachers as a guide who gives instructions and directions to students. In return for this, students are responsible for receiving and following the instructions. In contrast to the teacher identity as knowledge reflector, the director metaphor shows that the participants are of the opinion that teachers should be the seatmates of their students along the learning road instead of being a source of knowledge. That is, in an English classroom, students are not passive receivers of knowledge from their teachers; instead, they make language practices under the supervision of their teachers. The following excerpt is an explanatory representation of this category.

*Rainbow:* “The ideal metaphor for me is rainbow because I bring colorful knowledge keys that each student of mine is inspired from. I know that each student’s preference for colorful keys is always related to their individual needs, interests and differences. I mean I only lead them in the learning adventure and they are totally free to choose their own way; in other words, their own color” (P2, Week 1)

### *Umbrella metaphor 4: Molder*

The example metaphors represented under this category can be listed as builder, gardener, farmer, designer and so forth. Language teachers have the role of transforming raw students into matured individuals in emotional and intellectual terms. That is, the participants highlight that a language teacher should teach for the purpose of raising students who will become broad-visioned citizens. As is clear in the following excerpt, shaping and molding students are a crucial part of language teachers’ professional identity.

*Farmer:* “The learning period is a season and I am the farmer who waits for her fruits to grow. I am working hard in order to help my little fruits, my students, become ripe fruits. During the whole season, we study both content and world knowledge to fully grow.” (P6, Week 2)

### *Umbrella metaphor 5: Authority figure*

Within this category, it is possible to encounter such metaphors as soldier, queen, lion and superhero. Language teachers are expected to be authoritative in the classroom to a certain degree. This is necessary in order to be a forceful and effective teacher especially with regard to teaching skills and maintaining a steady and trustworthy stance towards students. The lion metaphor emphasized in both primary and high school contexts nicely refers to the need for language teachers to have a certain power in the classroom.

*Lion:* “I feel myself like a lion in the classroom. I have a good command of English language and I am the king of the jungle and the classroom is my jungle. Therefore, one of my roles is to manage the classroom and I do this like a lion who is the king of the jungle.” (P5, Week 2)

### *Umbrella metaphor 6: Exertive*

Under this category, the metaphors of bee, ant, and apple worm are placed. As understood, the participants find making effort and working hard for the teaching profession as vital. The participants believe that they are obliged to undertake too many responsibilities and roles as future language teachers. The reason behind those multiple roles is most probably related to the fact that language teaching expertise holds a great number of dimensions. To exemplify, teachers should be able to always renew themselves with regard to teaching skills, pedagogical knowledge, educational technologies, classroom management and even more so that they could more easily keep up with the professional requirements of today’s global educational arena. The metaphor below can be regarded as a relevant representation of such a necessity verbalized by one of the participants.

*Ant:* “This week, I am like an ant. I have worked diligently so that I could be more decisive in the classroom rules, more serious in my attitudes toward students and more focused on my teaching skills.” (P10, Week 3)

### *Umbrella metaphor 7: Researcher*

The metaphors of explorer, scientist, cameraman and binocular which belong to this category show that the participants assign themselves the role of discovering

problematic issues in their own teaching settings. That is to say, language teachers should be able to conduct small-scale research on the topics which they are curious about with the intent of improving the teaching quality and maximize student learning. It is apparent that language teachers need to have a spirit of exploring things as is evident in the following excerpt.

*Cameraman:* “Cameraman. I'm constantly recording what is going on in the class like a cameraman. In this way, I can realize the problems in relation to tasks, instructions or students behaviors; and I have the chance to immediately do what is needed as the teacher.” (P9, Week 1)

#### ***Umbrella metaphor 8: Artist***

This category includes the artistic aspects of the language teaching and the related metaphors are defined as comedian, actor/actress, clown, and newscaster and so on. It seems that the participants believe that students will find joy in learning if they blend an artistic component with language teaching. In addition, language teachers can deliver the content through art activities in more creative ways and this is an inevitable part of their professional identity. One of the representative metaphor of this category is related to integrating humor into English classes as clarified in the following excerpt.

*Comedian:* “This week, my professional identity resembles to the presenter of a stand-up show because I made some jokes to make my sweet learners to laugh especially when I realized that their attention was low. In the end; they enjoyed, I enjoyed and the lesson was full of joy.” (P5, Week 3)

#### ***Umbrella metaphor 9: Democrat***

Only one participant who attended a high school during the practicum mentioned language teachers as democrats. She enacted her roles as a rule-maker in the language classroom. While they are making the rules, they believe that students should also have a right to share their own opinions in a stress-free classroom atmosphere. Such a procedure may make it possible to design a democratic/liberal space where there is a dialogic relationship between students and teachers. Joint decisions should be made; and for this, teachers should be open to students' feedback on the classroom rules. In terms of student roles, this metaphor indicates that students do not obey teachers without questioning. That is, democrat teachers do not simply comply with the

regulations and their students do not passively receive any rule presented to them. The following excerpt explains all these in detail.

*Ruler:* “Today, I had to re-announce the classroom rules just like a ruler and I could not teach in a smooth way because my focus was on the flaws I detected. Throughout the lesson, I had to set up certain rules about student behaviors and tasks.” (P10, Week 3)

### ***Umbrella metaphor 10: Judge***

Just like the democrat metaphor, one single metaphor is defined as Lady Justice within this category. Based on the data elicited from one participant who attended a high school during practicum, it can be inferred that language teachers need to make judgments in the course of lessons particularly when there are breakdowns or interruptions in their teaching. These interruptions are possibly linked to classroom management problems. Specifically, language teachers may not be ready for unexpected classroom management problems and thus, it becomes much harder for them to make right decisions or judgments. Striving to deal with student disputes, conflicts or disagreements can be overwhelming for language teacher for most of the time; for that reason, they should find ways for providing equity among students. The following metaphor indicates that being a judge should be a part of language teachers’ professional identity.

*Lady Justice:* “To provide students with a quality education that they deserve regardless of their race, language, religion or gender, everyone should have equal opportunities. With this notion in my mind, I was like a Lady Justice. Indeed, I tried to be a Lady Justice.” (P12, Week 1)

### ***Umbrella metaphor 11: Healer***

This category is represented with the metaphors of emotional spark and angel. Depending on these two metaphors, students are regarded as patients and the duty of language teachers is to appropriately treat students so that they could get rid of their deficiencies or mistakes. However, the dominant cure that teachers should provide seems to help students fix their sensitive inner problems if necessary and at critical moments. This role of healer is considered to be important for language teachers as a

strategy to make students emotionally ready for language learning. The excerpt below exemplifies the healer identity attached to language teachers.

*Angel:* “I have a heart of gold this week. My professional identity is like an angel with soothing wings because my all effort was for making students feel better and more positive.” (P3, Week 5)

### ***Umbrella metaphor 12: Novice linguist***

The participants from a high school context appear to stress that they are novice linguists more frequently. Obviously, the participants perceive themselves as being at the beginner level in terms of teaching skills and are just taking their first steps for the teaching career. They believe that there are many teaching experiences for them to gain and the practicum process is the starting point of all these experiences. Besides, there are some participants who define themselves as a stranger in the classroom context, which means that there is still a lot to learn for these future language teachers. Some of the metaphors expressing this category are turtle, empty paper, tourist and sprouting flower.

*Turtle:* “This week, my personal identity resembles to a turtle because I was inexperienced and very slow in improving myself as a future teacher. Sometimes, it was really hard for me not to know what to do in some situations. I feel that the development of my teaching skills will take a long time. This idea affects my mood negatively.” (P4, Week 2)

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The aim of this study was to reveal how language teacher trainees conceptualized the teaching profession and being a teacher during their initial teaching practices within the practicum experience. Their conceptualizations were discovered through metaphors utilized as a tool for understanding how they perceived their current professional identities. The thematic analysis showed that the teacher trainees assigned certain traditional roles to themselves such as knowledge reflector, director, molder, authority figure, democrat and healer. Similar results were also found by Karabay (2016) who examined the metaphoric expressions of Turkish language teacher trainees. Those roles can be considered as similar to the perceived identities of

teachers and teacher trainees involved in mainstream education. As understood, language teacher trainees considered themselves as responsible for transferring language knowledge to their students. While doing this, they also perceived themselves as being inclined to direct their students toward the right track so that knowledge transfer could be successfully performed. In this knowledge reflection and direction process, the teacher trainees remolded their students in terms of both content knowledge and attitude development. Considering the way of teaching, as democrats, the teacher trainees viewed themselves as the rulers of the classroom. In other words, one of their roles was to organize the learning environment within the framework of jointly determined rules, which means that the teacher trainees created chances for their students to freely articulate their own views on the classroom rules. Regarding teacher behaviors, the teacher trainees saw themselves as possessing power with regard to dominating the classroom and teaching process. However, at the same time, they enacted the role of healer as the provider of emotional support so as to create effective and healthy learning paths for their students.

The remaining professional language teacher identities were all related to being nurturer, exertive, researcher, artist, judge and novice linguist. Analyzing these metaphors in their own rights, it is clear that the teacher trainees, as nurturers, had the belief that they should be able to meet student needs in the sense of both emotional and academic development. Besides, they had the responsibility of discovering and solving problematic issues, just like researchers, in their classrooms. Another revealed identity was judge which refers to providing equity among students as a way to take up a position and a character. Different from this, the teacher trainees might also be considered as performers on the stage; therefore, they should have the capabilities of such artists as comedian, actor/actress or newscaster. Last but not least, the teacher trainees drew attention to their identity as being exertive and novice linguist during the practicum. They were all novice as future language teachers because they were a newcomer in the teaching and learning arena; thus, they needed to be exertive to cope with the lack of experience in teaching. Interestingly, any clue related to the role of intercultural promoters was not found in the metaphoric expressions of the language teacher trainees. It was an expected metaphor from the participants; yet, it was never addressed. However, it was found in the study of Farrell (2011) which led us to the

idea that language teachers should be able to understand students' native cultures and facilitate students to adapt themselves to the target culture.

The divergent aspects of language teaching from mainstream education in terms of teaching philosophy and classroom actions have been illuminated in this study since metaphors have the capacity to represent the notable characteristics of language teaching (Ma & Gao, 2017; Zhao et al., 2010). The role of being democrat, artist or researcher may be put forward as prominent examples for this. That is to say, these distinct identities as well as the other revealed identities are all clues showing that multiple identities of the language teacher trainees can help teacher educators better shape teacher training programs based on the genuine values and beliefs. If teacher educators understand what forms the TPI of the trainee teachers, they can help those trainee teachers reach a deeper understanding of themselves. To accomplish this, the use of metaphors can be encouraged for the reason that metaphors have the potential to improve the identity construction process. All in all, TPI should be incorporated into teacher knowledge base and metaphors could be a logical first step on the road. As in this study, metaphorical discourse has the power of unraveling the multifaceted nature of teaching which combines teachers' beliefs about teaching (Alger, 2009), professional knowledge (Zhao et al., 2010) and identity (Farrell, 2011; Ma & Gao, 2017; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011) from a holistic perspective. On the basis of the present study, future research could be geared toward the evaluation of teacher trainees' metaphors so as to uncover their beliefs and values developed during the everlasting TPI construction process; even, their identities could be investigated through metaphors when they become practicing teachers. By so doing, the interaction between personal values and professional demands of teaching (Leeferink et al., 2019) and the ups and downs of the TPI construction process are possible to be entirely understood in the long run.

### **Notes on the contributors**

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Medium of Instruction (EMI), metacognition, critical discourse analysis and reflective practice.

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## Appendix

### Guiding Questions

#### Week 1: Lesson Preparation

1. Were the content objectives clearly displayed and reviewed with students? How?
2. Were the language objectives clearly displayed and reviewed with students? How?
3. Were the content concepts appropriate for the age and educational background of students? How?
4. Did the supplementary materials make the lesson clear and meaningful? Why or why not?
5. Did the activities create language practice opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing skills? How?
6. Please think about the role of teachers as the planners of lessons. In this regard, can you think of any metaphorical expression that will describe your growing professional identity as an English teacher trainee? Please find an appropriate metaphor describing you and briefly explain it. In other words, based on your

observations and teachings at the practicum school this week, what does your identity resemble to? (e.g. a plant, an animal, an object, etc.)

#### Week 2: Building Background

1. Were the content concepts explicitly linked to students' background knowledge and experiences? How?
2. Were the links between past/previous learning and new concepts logical? How?
3. Were the key words or concepts emphasized by the teacher? Were they introduced, written, repeated and highlighted for students to see? How?
4. Please think about the role of teachers as the organizers of student learning. In this regard, can you think of any metaphorical expression that will describe your growing professional identity as an English teacher trainee? Please find an appropriate metaphor describing you and briefly explain it. In other words, based on your observations and teachings at the practicum school this week, what does your identity resemble to? (e.g. a plant, an animal, an object, etc.)

#### Week 3: Providing Comprehensible Input

1. Was the speech delivered by the teacher or you appropriate for students' proficiency level? (e.g. slower rate, simple sentence structure, being clear.) Explain in detail.
2. Was the explanation of the tasks given by the teacher or you clear? Explain with examples. In other words, were the instructions clear enough for students to understand what they should do during their tasks?
3. Was there a variety of techniques to make concepts clear? How? (e.g. modeling, visuals, hands-on activities, demonstrations, gestures, body language.)
4. Please think about the role of teachers as the providers of comprehensible input. In this regard, can you think of any metaphorical expression that will describe your growing professional identity as an English teacher trainee? Please find an appropriate metaphor describing you and briefly explain it. In other words, based on your observations and teachings at the practicum school this week, what does your identity resemble to? (e.g. a plant, an animal, an object, etc.)

#### Week 4: Strategies and Interaction

1. Were ample opportunities provided for students to use various learning strategies? (e.g. scaffolding, higher-order thinking skills, think-aloud, debates, brainstorming.)  
How?
2. Were frequent opportunities provided for interaction and discussion between teacher/student and among students? If yes, how? If not, why?
3. Was sufficient wait time for student responses provided appropriately? How?
4. Please think about the role of teachers as the supporter of meaningful interaction. In this regard, can you think of any metaphorical expression that will describe your growing professional identity as an English teacher trainee? Please find an appropriate metaphor describing you and briefly explain it. In other words, based on your observations and teachings at the practicum school this week, what does your identity resemble to? (e.g. a plant, an animal, an object, etc.)

#### Week 5: Application and Assessment

1. Were there any hands-on materials or manipulatives provided for students to practice using new content knowledge? How?
2. Did the activities (applied in the classroom) integrate four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) How?
3. Were the key concepts reviewed comprehensively? Briefly explain with concrete examples.
4. Was student comprehension assessed depending on learning objectives? Briefly explain with concrete examples. (You can also write about the use of feedback. Was the feedback regular and appropriate?)
5. Please think about the role of teachers as the assessors. In this regard, can you think of any metaphorical expression that will describe your growing professional identity as an English teacher trainee? Please find an appropriate metaphor describing you and briefly explain it. In other words, based on your observations and teachings at the practicum school this week, what does your identity resemble to? (e.g. a plant, an animal, an object, etc.)