A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE IDENTITIES OF IRANIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN TÜRKİYE

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ABSTRACT

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE IDENTITIES OF IRANIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN TÜRKİYE

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The purpose of this study is to investigate accumulated experiential capital, post-immigration identity negotiation, and imagined identities of immigrant English teachers from Iran working in Türkiye, a group that is not well-represented in identity-focused research on teacher immigration. Drawing on the theory of poststructuralism, the study explores how these teachers' life backgrounds, formed during their years in Iran, contribute to their current identities. Bourdieu's theory of capital can best capture the resources playing a role in the identity of the teachers. The study also aims to discover how the teachers negotiate identities in light of the new contextual nuances after immigrating to Türkiye. Finally, the study discovers the imagined identities teachers possess, which are explored in the form of communities they want to associate with in the future.

The study employs a multiple-case narrative inquiry design, involving diaries and semi-structured interviews with seven Iranian immigrant private school teachers in Ankara, Türkiye. Data were analyzed thematically, with attention to the content of stories, commonalities, categorical analysis, and cross-participant comparisons.

The findings indicate that participants reconstruct identities by negotiating their Iranianness and new contextual realities. They both benefit and balance capitals earned in Iran with the new contextual realities, but they are subjected to new identities and experience a loss of their power within the new context. However, imagined identities show strong optimism in how they view themselves in the future. These results suggest that the identities of the participants are shaped by life experience, structural affordances and limitations, and imagined future trajectories within and beyond the host education system.

By emphasizing the voices of Iranian immigrant teachers in Türkiye, this study contributes significantly to discussions about immigrant teachers and identity negotiations. The study offers implications for educational institutions, teacher education programs, and immigrant teachers themselves. While it is essential to inform teachers of such status about their valuable potential, it is also incumbent on educational institutions to recognize their legitimacy and teacher education programs to facilitate their inclusion in educational planning.

Keywords: Teacher Identity, Poststructuralism, Bourdieu's Capital, Imagined Identity, Narrative Inquiry

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ İRANLI İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN KİMLİKLERİNE İLİŞKİN ANLATISAL BIR ARAŞTIRMA

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de görev yapan İranlı göçmen İngilizce öğretmenlerinin birikmiş deneyimsel sermayelerini, göç sonrası kimlik müzakerelerini ve hayal edilen kimliklerini incelemektir. Bu grup, öğretmen göçü ve kimlik ilişkisine odaklanan araştırmalarda yeterince temsil edilmemektedir. Postyapısalcılık kuramından hareketle çalışma, öğretmenlerin İran'da geçirdikleri yıllar boyunca şekillenen yaşam geçmişlerinin mevcut kimliklerinin oluşumuna nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu araştırmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin kimliklerinin oluşumunda rol oynayan kaynakları açıklamada Bourdieu'nün kapital kuramı temel bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, öğretmenlerin Türkiye'ye göç ettikten sonra karşılaştıkları yeni bağlamsal dinamikler doğrultusunda kimliklerini nasıl müzakere ettiklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Son olarak, öğretmenlerin sahip oldukları hayal edilen kimlikler, gelecekte kendilerini ilişkilendirmek istedikleri topluluklar bağlamında incelenmektedir.

Araştırmada çoklu durum anlatı araştırması deseni kullanılmıştır. Veriler, Türkiye'nin Ankara ilinde özel okullarda görev yapan yedi İranlı göçmen

öğretmenden günlükler ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Veriler tematik analiz yöntemiyle çözümlenmiş; anlatıların içeriği, ortak temalar, kategorik örüntüler ve katılımcılar arası karşılaştırmalar dikkate alınmıştır.

Bulgular, katılımcıların İranlı kimlikleri ile yeni bağlamsal gerçeklikler arasında müzakere yürüterek kimliklerini yeniden yapılandırdıklarını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar, İran'da edindikleri sermaye türlerinden yararlanmakta ve bunları yeni bağlamsal koşullarla dengelemeye çalışmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, yeni kimlik konumlandırmalarına maruz kalmakta ve yeni bağlam içerisinde sahip oldukları gücün bir kısmını kaybetmektedirler. Öte yandan, hayal edilen kimlikler katılımcıların gelecekteki benliklerine ilişkin güçlü bir iyimserlik taşıdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu sonuçlar, katılımcıların kimliklerinin yaşam deneyimleri, yapısal fırsatlar ve sınırlılıklar ile ev sahibi eğitim sistemi içinde ve ötesinde tasavvur ettikleri gelecek yönelimleri tarafından şekillendirildiğini göstermektedir.

Türkiye'deki İranlı göçmen öğretmenlerin seslerini ön plana çıkaran bu çalışma, göçmen öğretmenler ve kimlik müzakereleri alanındaki tartışmalara önemli katkılar sunmaktadır. Araştırma, eğitim kurumları, öğretmen yetiştirme programları ve göçmen öğretmenlerin kendileri için çeşitli çıkarımlar ortaya koymaktadır. Bu statüdeki öğretmenlerin sahip oldukları değerli potansiyelin farkına varmaları önemli olmakla birlikte, eğitim kurumlarının onların meşruiyetini tanımaları ve öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının eğitim planlamasına dâhil edilmelerini desteklemeleri de büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Kimliği, Postyapısalcılık, Bourdieu'nün Kapital Kuramı, Hayal Edilen Kimlik, Anlatı Araştırması

To those who left home

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NEST	Native English Speaking Teachers
NNEST	Non-Native English Speaking Teachers
TESOL	Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages
ESL	English as a Second Language
I-Identity	Institution Identity
D-Identity	Discursive Identity
A-Identity	Affinity Identity
N-Identity	Nature Identity
LTI	Language Teacher Identity
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
CALL	Computer Assisted Learning
MEB	Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı
EMI	English Medium Institutions
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
EIL	English as an International Language
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
DELTA	Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TTC	Teacher Training Courses
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ADHD	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
PTE	Pearson Test of English
ELT	English Language Teaching
PDI	Power Distance Index

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The current world is more connected, with the flow of information playing an important role in this connectivity. English language plays an essential role here, as international communication requires a shared language. This has turned English into a thriving industry in recent decades. Along with that, the need for qualified English teachers has been felt more urgently than before, as the huge number of learners means more teachers are in demand. While those people who speak English as their first language can respond to the needs of the market, this cannot be fully supplied by native speaking English teachers. As a result, in addition to raising English speakers for medical, business, international relations, and other purposes, individuals learn English in order to become teachers.

With the spread of English around the world, the number of non-native teachers has also been on the rise. A new identity is defined for the non-native teachers once they leave their country of birth and work as non-local teachers. They experience major identity shifts as immigration is a vital stage to shape or change identities (Georgi et al., 2012). Immigrant teachers negotiate identities constructed through their life experiences and those introduced by new contextual features. In addition to introducing high-quality teaching to the new context, these teachers can also play important intermediary roles between cultures by fostering intercultural awareness, acting as cultural translators (Georgi et al., 2012), and promoting sensitivity towards diversity (Hummrich & Terstegen, 2020). For Iranian English teachers who work overseas, the identities of immigrant and non-native can be applied.

For many years, Iran has played a significant role in supplying skilled workers to the global workforce, particularly to the United States (Carrington & Detragiache, 1999). English teachers also seek better opportunities abroad and find Türkiye a desirable destination. Türkiye has a long history of hosting English teachers from English-speaking countries. In recent years, however, teachers from neighboring countries have chosen Türkiye as their destination (Sarigul, 2018). There are several reasons for the immigration of Iranians to Turkiye. These include political skirmishes and the financial strains on teachers whose economic stability is volatile under such circumstances, and the Turkish job market that requires skilled teachers who can supply the needs of numerous schools and universities (Ghanbarlou & Sığın, 2022). That means there comes a surge in the number of Iranian teachers who enjoy life and work in a country geographically close to and culturally like Iran.

The movement is not without hurdles, since the person who crosses borders encounter identity issues besides financial, adjustment and social problems. Relocating to another country can be followed by pain, alienation, and conflict for the person (Canagarajah, 2016), nudging them to either take shelter in their home country identity, fully embrace the host country, or experience a period of in-betweenness or subject-in-progress (Kramsch, 2013). The immigrant is stuck between the previous identities and the new realities of the host country, and in such circumstances, in-betweenness could take shape as a reaction to the new identity reconstruction. While this identity issue can happen to immigrant teachers of English, they are also faced with another more global category which has traditionally featured the profession of English language teachers. Native and non-native identities for these teachers can be altered, resurfaced, or silenced once the person moves to another country. For a teacher from Iran, foreignness and non-nativeness are significant categories that can emerge as important role players in defining the teacher in Türkiye.

Considering the theoretical underpinning of identity studies, the new trend has been away from binary categories such as local/foreign or native/non-native and has tilted more towards fluidity of identity.

The move away from such binary categories to focus on the dynamic nature of identity is advocated by postmodern thinking, begetting poststructuralism. According to poststructuralism, individuals' identities are not defined in traditional categories that are mainly formed based on people's biology or social groups; rather, identities are anchored in the context of use (Block, 2013). That means if identities are to be investigated, they should be examined in accordance with the contextual features, interactions, and experiences. Studies on identity examine the way past experiences, current performance, and future imagined identity of self, both personal and professional, form the identity of the teacher (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Block, 2017)

Adopting poststructuralism lens means that identity investigations are not aimed at exploring individuals' selfs through biologically or socially assumed roles, which are traditionally used to define someone. Instead, identity is a multifaceted construct where an individual's moment-to-moment interactions provide evidence of who they are and how their selfhood experience changes. In this situation, identities experience change since contextual features demand new adaptations. In addition to contextual behavior, the role of a person's history cannot be played down as personal and professional background lead to the reformulation of new identities. Identities are shaped by one's past life, as beliefs, socialization, professional dilemmas, and judgments play a role in forming identities (Beijaard et al., 2004; Hammerness et al., 2005). In that regard, to have a holistic perspective of the identities of the sample of Iranian teachers of the study, their past lives and their socialization contributing to the reformulated identity are investigated.

The current study employs Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital to account for the contribution of individuals' past lives to their current identity. According to Bourdieu (1986), capital is accumulated over time as a result of an individual's networking in society, and it cannot function separately from the field. That means for the teachers in the study, their pre-immigration experiences are resources that can affect their current performance, thus shaping their identities. The current study reformulates, reinterprets, and gauges teachers' resources against the new social values.

According to Bourdieu (1986), in addition to economic capital, people possess social, cultural, and symbolic capital. Social capital refers to the individual's relationships and the support they receive from members of the community, family or tribe. Cultural capital is the skills, certificates, and knowledge of language (linguistic capital), and symbolic capital refers to recognition one gains from a particular possession. The current study adopts the theory of capital to account for the contribution of a teacher's past life in their current identity.

Besides the contribution of the teacher's past life, identity is heavily affected by the context and new interactions under the new geographical (spatial), political, economic, social, and cultural life of the teacher. Identity is not seen as a possession of the individual (Hu, 2022), but it is discursively shaped and negotiated among speaking subjects' interactions and narratives in social contexts. Interactions in schools and the broader community go against the fixity of identity and bring changes (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). A change in one's location, either place of work or country, is one example of a spatial change that can be followed by identity changes (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Either a relocation to a new office or another country, such changes require adaptation to the new cultural, social, and institutional norms. Poststructuralism views such spatial-oriented change in identity as a person's subjectivity. Subjectivity means that humans are not fixed and essential, but are diverse, contradictory, and dynamic. Subjectivity drives the conduct of the current study, meaning that the construction of the identity of the teacher is viewed in how they are exposed to a phenomenon and how they act in such situations. What poststructuralism emphasizes is that language is the place where identity originates. That means context or discourse surrounding the teacher regulates and constructs the identity of the teacher (Baxter, 2016).

In addition to language and discourse, power plays an important role in the way the teacher negotiates her identity. As identities are formed or regulated in discourse, the influence of power dynamics is unavoidable since, in discourse, there exist hierarchical positions among the interlocutors. This is put forward by Foucault (1984), who sees power not as limited to those who possess it abundantly, but also among individual members of a discourse community. The power members of a

discourse community possess can be a shaper of identity in every social interaction, affecting the quality of that interaction. In educational contexts, those wishing to maintain institutional norms may assert their power over the teacher, and that contributes to the identity (re)formulation of the teacher (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010). This can be a more nuanced issue for foreign teachers since power at the micro-level exists among individuals and shapes their interactions either positively or negatively (Block, 2014). Teachers might experience changes in the reconstitution of their identities as they lose power due to having the status of an immigrant or non-native. The teacher is in constant interaction with the students or other stakeholders in their educational institution, and such relationships are mediated by power, which can play a role in shaping identities.

Finally, the power of imagination can shape the present identity of a person. The identity rooted in the future imagination is referred to as imagined identity, which is the ability of the person to stretch their imagination and see themselves as a member of their desired community (Anderson, 1991). Migration (along with modern technology) is mentioned as a trigger of imagination, which itself can cause second migration (Appadurai, 1996). That means that movement across borders and the chance to teach in different institutions enrich the imagined identity of the teacher. The immigrant teachers of our study have already imagined themselves in a different setting, and that could mean that this imagination can even travel further away.

Given the fluidity of identity and the critical role of breakthroughs like immigration and imagined identities in teachers' identities, the current study was commenced to accumulate all identity-encompassing factors in the professional lives of a group of Iranian English teachers working and living in Türkiye.

1.2. Rationale of Study

In recent years, there has been a noticeable rise in the number of studies on teacher identity. The shift has resulted in viewing the teacher as a person with identity whose professional performance can be linked to their personality, background experiences, and contextual demands. Turning attention to the identity of the teacher means that

the teacher is no longer viewed as a syllabus practitioner only (Varghese et al., 2005). Understanding teacher identity can greatly contribute to the improvement of the teacher's professional development (Freese, 2006; Hoban, 2007; Korthagen et al., 2001; Olsen, 2008; Wang et al., 2021; Ulla et al., 2024). This is particularly salient among immigrant teachers. Immigration is undeniably a breakthrough in a career, which can be followed by major identity struggles, as the newcomer needs to reconcile their background and the demands of the new context. As put forward by Yazan et al. (2023), those who traverse borders and experience in-betweenness are more likely to strive to resolve their identity tensions. Block (2007) likens the experience of immigration to other categories, such as race, ethnicity, and nationality, in shaping the identity of an individual, since these constitute the backbone of a person's sociohistorical background. Block (2006) asserts that for immigrants, identity is a conflictive process that creates ambivalence for individuals about exactly who they are and where they belong. Dikilitas and Yayli (2018) and Kumazawa (2013) consider experiences like immigration as a vacillation between formerly held ideologies and desires and the structure and cultural forces of the new context, introducing significant identity positionings. As such, identity for teachers has become a critical matter, and immigration is followed by new positionings. When it comes to studying identity, the influence of postmodernism and constructionism becomes noticeable. Postmodernism shifted identity studies to exploring how people are defined in social interactions, which is a significant stride away from viewing how fixed categories determine identities. Now identities are constructed by the individual in social, cultural, historical, and political contexts, and experience constant evolution across time and space (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kondo, 1990; Ochs, 1993). As such, studying the professional lives of teachers in the context of immigration can provide valuable insights about the reconstruction of their identities. Such awareness has an important role in the performance of teachers (Varghese et al., 2005).

In addition, due to the scarcity of the so-called native teachers of English in Iran, the issue of the native/non-native becomes more pronounced after immigration. That is because the teacher has been introduced to a more connected and international community, and the feeling of inferiority might emerge, contributing to an identity

clash. The teacher might feel more self-conscious (Reves & Medgyes, 1994), might experience feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt (Morita, 2004), and be less valued in the new country (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999) since the non-native identity has resurfaced.

Basing the rationale of the study on the aforementioned development in identity studies, we assume that the Iranian teachers in the study go through identity conflicts in Türkiye when they receive new labels such as non-native and foreign teachers. Rather than categorizing the teachers based on their easily identifiable categories, which have traditionally drawn lines around groups of teachers, I focus on the fluidity of identity and the way it is constructed in interactions. Nonetheless, this does not mean that traditional categories are entirely assumed to be ineffectual. Fluidity of identity, as embraced by the poststructuralist view, means that the traditional categories used to study identities (sex, race, nationality, etc.) are not entirely discarded, instead their role in reconstruction of identity are scrutinized. That means the current study investigates identity with regards to the Iranianness, foreignness, non-nativeness, and Persian-speaking identities of the teacher of the study.

While research on teacher identity has abounded in recent years (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Miller, 200), academic papers on the immigrant teacher identity do not seem to have adequately addressed the issues of this group of teachers. Although there have been calls to make efforts to understand immigrant teachers from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Liu et al., 2019; Yip et al., 2024), teachers with non-native or foreign backgrounds are not subjected to investigative procedures as much as those in inner-circle countries (Solano-Campos, 2014). In addition, an argument against the studies working on the identity of non-native teachers is that all these teachers are lumped together into one general category (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). That means the term non-native is attributed to any teacher who is not a native speaker of English, but there are non-natives of many kinds within this broad category whose identities should be under scrutiny. Moussu and Llurda (2008) have called for more research to study various factors in play when it comes to the performance of non-native teachers. Some of these factors are the context of work, the country of origin of the teacher, and the

time spent learning the language in inner circle countries. That necessitates moving beyond the traditional native/non-native speaker categorization to conceptualize and examine the social performance of teachers in the development of their identities (Hall, 1995). For example, the non-native immigrant teachers of the present study are remarkably characterized by their non-nativeness; however, as mentioned before, this was not a label that teachers would be constantly referred to when they were working in Iran.

What is lacking in the literature is published work in which the teacher who has immigrated is given the voice and power to narrate their story with complete freedom (Yan & Poole, 2024). That is also more pronounced in Türkiye, although the country hosts a considerable number of non-native foreign teachers in the teaching staff (Altaai & Gokgoz-kurt, 2023). In an encompassing study about non-native teachers in Türkiye, Selvi and Yazan (2021) recommended that foreign non-native teachers in Türkiye need further in-depth investigations if the educational system is aimed at benefiting from these teachers. Among the articles focusing on the non-native foreign teachers in Türkiye, Kucukali (2017) zoomed in on the identity changes of a Georgian teacher of English in Türkiye and revealed that the identity changes of the teacher included improved professionalism and intercultural competence. Cinkara (2022) investigated the transnational identity of four Syrian immigrants in Türkiye and demonstrated how the immigrants maintain an attachment to their host country and how that affects their work as teachers in Türkiye. As for studies on Iranian English teachers in Türkiye, I was unable to access many. Xodabande and Karimpour (2025) investigated identity reconstruction and resilience of eight Iranian English teachers in Türkiye. While the study aptly accounts for the main identity issues of eight expatriate teachers from Iran in Türkiye, it is limited in scope as it is not focused on a particular type of institution and merely takes post-immigration experiences into account. Other studies related to the topic of this thesis are restricted as they only make comparisons between Iranian and Turkish teachers in their teaching styles and personalities (Azari Noughabi et al., 2024; Orakci & Khalili, 2024).

Drawing academic attention to the English teachers working in Türkiye is important, as they have a unique status in the country. Firstly, they face the issue of

identification when they are viewed as non-native teachers when seeking employment in different educational institutions but are referred to as native teachers when it comes to official rules and policies about foreign-born teachers. Although being regarded as native in some regulations, they may not hold the title all the time, as they are under the shadow of native speakers and are not given the same privileges in the job market as native speakers (Öztürk & Atay, 2010). Secondly, when they interact with the students, a language barrier can block smooth communication, leading to feelings of alienation and some identity crises. Another strong element to strengthen the unique status of these teachers is the way they are viewed in the context of immigration. They might be viewed as someone who has found a haven to flee internal hardship or a temporary stop on their way to some other countries. The other factor is related to their Persian roots and identity. Besides their own language and culture, and those of the host country, a teacher from Iran must deal with the English language and culture, as that is what they have to be good at work and what they mostly use to communicate. The language they teach also affects their identity since 'who one is' cannot be separated from 'what one teaches', meaning for English teachers, the English language itself is an identity (Lynch & Motha, 2023).

Considering the important role of identity studies in the professional development of English teachers, the significance of migration experience in reconstituting identities, and the standing of teachers from Iran in the Turkish educational institutions, the conduct of the current study can be claimed to provide valuable results. My own positionality as an English teacher in Türkiye was another reason to work on this topic. I started work as an English teacher at a high school in Türkiye a year before gaining acceptance into a PhD program, and that year's experience was followed by a slight reformulation of my teaching techniques. Reflecting on my experience in Iran, the realities of the new context, and the stories I would hear about teaching in Türkiye prompted me to choose the teacher identity of Iranian teachers as a topic of investigation. My extensive online and offline search through large academic repositories has assured me that the present study is a major undertaking regarding important dimensions in the identities of some Iranian English teachers in Türkiye.

1.3. Significance of Study

The current study can prove significant in several ways. It produces awareness of identities for teachers, informs educational planners in terms of inclusivity, proves that inclusion can effectively work, and enlightens educational recruiters about what should be prioritized in their employment decisions.

The most significant contribution of the present study is the final awareness that the study can give to the immigrant teacher. With the empowering capability of narratives and the reflective experience gained through journal writing and interviews, we hope that teachers in the study gain a better understanding of who they are and then view their background and the new educational and cultural conditions more reflectively. In teacher education, identity has been pointed out as closely related to and in constant interaction with teacher beliefs and their learning (Beijaard et al., 2004), and identity awareness is a pedagogical resource (Colliander, 2017). On the one hand, the teachers can be made aware of the resources available to them, which are inherited from their personal, professional, and cultural backgrounds. That helps teachers work selectively and methodically in determining the degree to which their Iranian background contributes to their teaching practice. On the other hand, the knowledge obtained from the study can enable the participants to navigate the Turkish educational context professionally. The narratives of the participants who experienced some educational challenges firsthand can provide valuable information about the way identities are reshaped in light of new educational realities, assist the teacher in pinpointing the role of cultural differences in their teaching quality, and act as valuable resources for the teacher at times of distress, especially at the beginning of their career. Such knowledge helps the teacher find reasons for the challenges they experience after immigration. For the immigrant teacher, many of these problems can have cultural roots rather than professional ones.

The current study can also draw teachers' attention to their unique profiles. It enlightens the teacher about the existence of varieties and that such differences should not be viewed as shortcomings. It informs the teacher that a language spoken

with an accent is a legitimate variety of World Englishes in today's globalized world (Matsuda, 2008). This can help them view the inequalities experienced at work as social mechanisms that categorize people not merely based on capabilities but based on pre-determined social groups. Identity awareness can give teachers the power to "move ideas forward, to reach goals or even to transform the context" (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 183).

In her study, Lee (2004) draws attention to the increase in the number of immigrants in US schools and the fact that many of these immigrant students have white teachers. Lee (2004) emphasized the need to have teachers who have things in common with their students. As for migrant students in Turkish schools and universities, there should be a move towards having more immigrant teachers who can act as cultural mediators. The number of Iranians coming to Türkiye has been on the rise over the past decade (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025), and that means the proportion of migrant students to migrant teachers should move toward more inclusion of foreign teachers in the education sector. That is because culturally and ethnically diverse students benefit from teachers with the same background. After all, they are more aware of their language learning process and their challenges (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Therefore, the current study proves a significant step in helping students with an immigration background. By attending to the identities of Iranian teachers and acknowledging their resources, we can be hopeful that a teacher with identity awareness can similarly help students with a similar background by addressing their challenges and confusion in their educational trajectory.

Identity studies can also make a positive contribution to educational programs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The present study can shed light on the essential role of immigrant teachers in enhancing the educational system. That can be the educational and cultural background of these teachers, which can add more worldviews to the basis of an educational system. Such teachers should not be viewed through a deficit lens but as people whose differences can be enriching and pedagogically beneficial. The current study tries to prove this positive role by encouraging educational policymakers to be more inclusive when it comes to the role of teachers who have studied and gained work experience in a foreign country.

In addition, attempts should be made to discontinue the biased recruitment practice in many private institutions in Türkiye. There are still job openings that candidly point to the nationality of the teacher as the main hiring requirement (Selvi, 2011; Unlu, 2022). Tezgiden-Çakçak (2019) talks about the phenomenon of 'pseudo-native speakerism' in some institutions in Türkiye. This refers to the practice of presenting non-native teachers as native teachers by making teachers with Western looks or nativelike accents change their names and fake a native identity. The action is overwhelmingly affected by neoliberal ideas, where financial gains take precedence over other values. For the teacher, this might lead to identity problems, as the name of the person is the first and the most important shaper of identity. It could lead to more dishonest acts as the teacher starts the profession, and should come up with more made-up identity badges and background stories. For the employers who follow such policies, the present study can inform them of the more essential issues in the success, motivation, and investment of the teacher, which are far from simply observable features, such as name or accent.

As for the social benefits, the stories of the participants can show that diversity in the workplace is possible and useful. In today's world, the integration of immigrants is still a concern. While in many cases, the problem is viewed as more of a security and vetting-related matter, the present study can present success stories of immigrant teachers to show that successful fitting into the new context is possible as long as immigrants are given a voice in academia. This study can be a major step towards proving that the benefits of welcoming foreigners are more than the drawbacks when identities and changes in identities are academically investigated.

1.4. Research Questions

The present study is aimed at exploring the lived experiences of a group of Iranian English teachers working at schools in Türkiye. The study focuses on the ways their identities are navigated when teachers benefit from their background resources, and when they make attempts to adapt themselves to the new educational contexts. The study also tries to touch upon the way the teachers imagined themselves in the future, whether as teachers or other professionals. Simply put, the study focuses on the role

of life experience, current situation, and the future of the teacher. Looking at the issue chronologically, the study deals with three periods; of course, the poststructuralist lens of the study does not allow for demarcating identities in this way. Nevertheless, we can formulate the research questions in a chronological way to make it easier to organize the data of the study. Considering the three areas of attention in the study, which ask about teachers' past lives, investigate the current realities, and look at the future identities, we have designed the following three research questions to lead the conduct of the study.

1. How do a group of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye negotiate their identities in light of their pre-immigration experience?
2. How do a group of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye experience the transformation of their identities in the post-immigration context?
3. What kinds of imagined identities do a group of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye have, and how are these influenced by their experiences of migration?

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks

This study adopts an integrated theoretical framework including poststructuralism, Bourdieu's theory of capital, and imagined identities to investigate the identities of a group of English teachers from Iran in Türkiye. Poststructuralism views identity as fluid and dynamic, which is shaped in discourse. However, access to social, cultural, and institutional resources plays an important role in shaping teachers' identities. As such, the capital theory developed by Bourdieu is employed to account for the contribution of the social, linguistic, cultural, and institutional background of the teachers and the resources that help teachers reposition their identities after they start work in Türkiye. Finally, the fluidity of identity means that teachers are affected by the identities that they imagine for themselves in the future. This identity is explained using imagined identity and is elaborated in light of immigration. The following section discusses the theories in detail:

2.1.1. The Theory of Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is a move away from traditional ways of viewing identities as fixed and invariant. Rather, the theory argues that identity is heavily influenced by the context and the influential elements of the context. Before going deeper into the components of the theory, it is essential to consider theories preceding poststructuralism.

Identity was initially explained through biological reasoning, which would hold the person's genes accountable for their identity. The belief came to be known as

biological determinism, which attributed the development, beliefs, identity, social behavior, and learning of individuals to what they inherit from their parents. Over time, the theory not only failed to encompass all the complexities of identity but also caused the emergence of racist and white supremacist suppositions. Instead, crediting the role of the environment in shaping identity, structuralism proved to be a better alternative to explain the complex idea of identity. The role of the environment was emphasized in structuralism and became the central point of the theory, which was a significant improvement over biological determinism. In structuralist views of identity, social conditions such as cultural norms and structures influence the identity construction of an individual, and "the self is the product of the social conditions in and under which it has developed" (Block 2007, p. 15). In this regard, individuals' membership in social groups like religion, race, class, etc. determines their identity. Maintaining that human beings are formed and shaped either by biological programming or social structure is submitting to an essentialist view, that is, believing in the existence of intrinsic and fundamental qualities that define the nature of entities. Such essentialism, however, cannot capture the dynamic and evolving nature of identity.

The driving force for the emergence of poststructuralism was postmodernism, which entered the intellectual thinking in philosophy and literature in the 1960s and 1970s. Postmodernism critiqued the previous dominant ideas on identity, which viewed the 'self' as an essence that could be realized and portrayed with stable and distinguishable characteristics or as a property of a person. Along with social constructionist thinking, postmodernism, instead, shifted towards the role of human interaction in building and defining reality. It believes in the fluidity and fragmented nature of reality, and does not see a person as separate or opposed to the social world but as someone involved in a mutually constitutive process.

In discussions of identity, especially those concerning the place of identity in poststructuralist thinking, identity and the concept of *subjectivity* are used interchangeably. While identity is defined as points of temporary attachment and limited fixing for individuals (a temporary feeling of being a less proficient teacher, for example), subjectivity emerges in interaction and ongoing discursive process.

Block (2022) simply refers to identity as *who someone is,* either temporary or lasting, and subjectivity as the making of identity in *interaction*.

Adopting a poststructuralist view, researchers retreated from attempts to reach universal and invariant laws, disproved the existence of a unitary, singular, and essential identity (Weedon, 1987), disregarded the strict sense of truth, and accentuated plurality and interpretation (Castañeda-Peña, 2018). They highlighted the role of context and meaning without zooming in on the traditional categories, and they asserted that truth is examined in discourse and specific context, and the way it is adopted, built, and resisted constitutes the identity of the person (Duff, 2012).

When examining identities discursively, the stable truth, the stable structure of the linguistic sign, and the idea of system and progress are all infirm and temporary entities (McNamara, 2012). In poststructuralism, the focus is on the meaning, which is the place of departure, and a place where reality is constructed, truth is produced, and power is affected (Britzman, 1992). Besides the immediate focus on meaning, the theory takes into account the background of the person in order to define their identity. It tracks 'the constitution of the subject within a historical framework' (Foucault, 1980, p. 117). In fact, under this theory, identity is formed as an effect of history and the intersection of meaning with experience. With such a turn toward fluidity of identities, a deconstructed self, an unstable nature of truth, and centrality of meaning in constructing identity, modern identities formed in modern societies are only viewed as polarized concepts.

2.1.1.1. Poststructuralism in Language Learning and Teaching

In second language learning, poststructuralism was adopted to move away from the Chomskyan view of language as something cognitive and biologically determined toward viewing it as constructed in social interactions. The first trace of poststructuralism was marked by Pennycook (1990), who called for the 'need to rethink language acquisition in its social, cultural, and political contexts, taking into account gender, race, and other relations of power as well as the notion of the subject as multiple and formed within different discourses'. One of the main initial studies

was carried out by (Norton) Peirce (1995), who drew on Weedon's (1987) subjectivity and feminist poststructuralism to track the language learning experience of a group of immigrant women in Canada. She reported how the ability to switch between identities enabled her participants to find their niche as immigrant learners, garner power in interactions, and gain legitimacy to talk. The opportunities could not have been created had they stuck to their socially determined identities. Norton showed how identities are constantly negotiated in interaction with others and how they are organized and reorganized.

Poststructuralism provided the ground for the recalibration of approaches to topics such as language and identity, second language acquisition, multilingualism, writing, testing, and language and institutional practice (McNamara, 2012). Constructs such as us and them, citizen and noncitizen, good language learner and bad language learner, native English language teacher, and non-native English language teacher cannot be considered as the starting point to know the identity of an individual. The existence of such categories causes more of an "exclusionary" effect, leading to the creation of a wider gap between us and them. "It is here that the excluded existence of the other refugee, the other immigrant, the other homosexual, the foreigner, the non-native, the bad language learner, the English language teacher that says things with an odd accent, all are questioned" (Castañeda-Peña, 2018, p. 23). Poststructuralism tries to understand how the boundaries of such categories are socially constructed, maintained, and regulated.

The concept of fluid and fragmented identity is more evident in the case of individuals moving across borders who find themselves in a new sociocultural environment. The new environment makes some subject positions available as the individual faces new discourse, practice, and power relations. In this situation, language is not a tool for communication anymore, but a mechanism to create new subjectivities, such as fluent, integrated, or marginalized (Tun, 2023). For these people, their sense of identity is destabilized, and they start a period of struggle to reach a balance (Block, 2007).

Teaching is a meaning-making job, and teachers enter the classroom with their own histories, which affect their role in class. The dominant discourse present in the

educational institution shapes the way the teacher approaches the job of teaching. When a teacher enters a new country, their beliefs might not be in full agreement with what is the norm in the new setting, and the teacher must oscillate between their own sense of agency and the requirement to be in line with the discourse. The job of an immigrant teacher is full of conflicts between beliefs formed considering education in the home country, sense of agency, and the responsibilities in the new context. That means the teacher's identity consists of both the influence of previous experiences as well as present encounters (Britzman, 1992). Britzman (1992) believes that teaching is identity work and teachers are in constant negotiation of identity and becoming to find themselves rather than reach an 'ideal self'.

For immigrant teachers, the way certain identities (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, social class) are framed can change after teachers experience intercultural and international movement (Jackson, 2017). The idea of self for the immigrant teacher might be affected by the extent to which the teacher manages to either successfully immerse herself or feel detached and alienated. If the teacher is successful in integrating into the host society, she feels more connected to L2, while the teacher's alienation may cause the emergence of nationalistic feelings.

2.1.1.2. Language

Before discussing how language is viewed by poststructuralists, the short excerpt below shows how the speaker of four languages feels about the languages and his identity:

> . . . Changing languages is like imposing another role on oneself, like being someone else temporarily. My English-language persona is the one that superimposes itself on all previous others. In it are the seeds of Yiddish and Hebrew, but mostly Spanish . . . But is the person really the same? . . . You know, sometimes I have the feeling I'm not one but two, three, four people. Is there an original person? An essence? I'm not altogether sure, for without language I am nobody. Language makes us able to fit into a context. And what is there to be found in the interstices between contexts? Not silence … Something far less compelling: pure kitsch. . . . I often find myself becoming pure kitsch—a caricature of myself. Kitsch... is vicarious experience and faked sensations. I've sometimes talked about a life on the hyphen, as a neither/nor, a life in the in-between, but it is precisely that in-betweenness that makes me so uneasy. (Stavans, 2001, p. 251)

The person recites how the ability to use a different language in a context means a new persona because each language has some cultural, emotional, and psychological importance. For the speaker, the language used is not just a tool to communicate, but it is an essential part of his identity. Language is not fixed, varies according to the context of use, and that is what poststructuralism proposes. Language, as socially meaningful and prestigious (Pavlenko, 2002), is the centerpiece of identity that makes social interaction possible (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012), facilitates understanding the world and our identity, and provides affordances and limitations and enables us to make the world meaningful (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 5).

The rise in social constructionism, which was an upshot of postmodernism, changed the theoretical views in many areas of knowledge. In terms of identity, social constructionism de-essentialized the self as the entity abstracted from social life (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). That means the role of social interactions in defining the identity of an individual gains more importance. In poststructuralism, language takes a different shape. Poststructuralism goes against the traditional Western view of the core individual, and it sees the individual as 'diverse, dynamic, contradictory, and changing over historical time and social space' (Norton & Toohey, 2011). This is known as subjectivity, meaning an individual is discursively constructed and should be assessed according to the context. In this situation, a person is not trapped in one position, and dynamic characterizes the identity of the human being. According to poststructuralism, language and subjectivity are interrelated, and they determine the way a person negotiates their identity in various situations. Language empowers a person to scale an unequal power dynamic situation, as the subjectivity of the person equips them with the necessary linguistic tools to gain authority and power. As an example, a language teacher can use powerful words to show their position in an interaction, or their status in an interaction can enable them to use particular language. That means language is a site of identity construction; it can create linguistic discourse referred to as 'a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market on which it is offered' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 651)

Poststructuralism is a linguistic theory of identity positing that in various social interactions, like educational encounters, language acts as the building block in

constructing and negotiating identities (Hall, 1995). Rather than viewing language as just a medium of communication, poststructuralism foregrounds language as occupying a parallel role to a person's social identity. It is through language that an individual creates a sense of self in a specific time and place. As a resource, language enables the negotiator to gain power in a social network (Heller, 1987).

According to the pioneer of postmodernism, Jacques Derrida (1987), language consists of a series of signifiers (e.g., words, sounds, visual images) and signifieds (concepts). This means that meaning is created through the similarities and differences with other signs. In addition, meaning is constructed in the discursive context. In other words, language is in a constant state of flux, and meaning is not fixed and finalized but is redefined and contested in context. As a result, every context offers a new meaning (Baxter, 2016). In addition, meaning is cooperatively constructed depending on the interactants' standpoints in the conversation (Norton & Toohey, 2011). That means language is not just a tool to reflect meaning, but meaning is produced within language. When we talk about language in poststructuralism, discourse, which shapes language and is shaped by language, is another important topic that needs to be discussed.

'Language in poststructuralism creates discourses which form the object of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Discourse is defined as: "A group of statements which provide a language for talking about—a way of representing the knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (Hall, 1997, p.44). Discourses are systems of power/knowledge that define and regulate our social institutions, disciplines, and practices (Norton & Morgan, 2013). The discourse acts as the supplier of the terms that define identities and assign differential values to different identities or subject positions (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 284). Determining what is valuable and what is not, discourses affect resource allocation (Carney, 2004; Luke, 2004). That is because "it is mainly in discourse that consent is achieved, ideologies are transmitted, and practices, meaning, values and identities are taught and learned" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 531). That means identities given to individuals (single welfare mothers, Chicana lesbians, inner-city youths, etc.) are constructed in discourse, praised or condemned, and supplied with resources (Pavlenko, 2002). Identity cannot

be simply viewed as an institutional appointment (for example teacher), but it should be looked upon as the way it is discursively shaped through language and communication (Gee, 1999, 2000/2001). Discourse can lift the status of certain users of language and create dichotomies such as native and non-native users of language (Pennycook, 1989). In the case of our teachers, dominant discourse can cause a distinction between local and foreign teachers. The existence of multiple discourses can limit or facilitate the identity of the person.

Besides being a shaper of identity, language is viewed as some form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1979). That means having a formal language or being able to speak the language of a prestigious group, which is valued by institutional practices, is a resource that can facilitate one's success in social encounters. For example, a person who benefits from high symbolic capital can excel in the job market because symbolic capital can be converted into social or cultural capital. An example of this is teachers who speak English with an accent and are considered non-native and are discriminated against due to their deviation from mainstream English. In the immigration context, the importance of one's symbolic capital drives the person to adopt a particular identity (e.g., learner). While this can enable a person to make a faster move towards integration into the new context, it may sometimes clash with the identity they had before (Pavlenko, 2002). This can happen in the case of immigrant teachers if they observe that the new position clashes with their identity as a teacher, i.e., having to sacrifice their authority. In sum, language, as viewed by poststructuralists, is more than symbols and signs, can define and be defined in discourse, and is an identity maker. Just as seen in the quote at the beginning of the section, changing into another language means another persona; it can make the person view themselves as multiple people, not just one, and make the individual feel empty or exaggerated. It all shows that language and identity are closely interrelated.

2.1.1.3. Power

When we think of power, we usually relate it to what a person of higher rank wields as a control mechanism when dealing with followers and henchmen. However, Hegel's view on the topic can change our idea of power and can help us see it more

clearly when investigating identity. According to Hegel, people naturally see themselves as the center of the world. When they encounter another person with consciousness, the person becomes aware of themselves since they know that the other person knows about them. When individuals become aware of each other, a power struggle arises. That means one side does its best to dominate the other one, although dominance is guaranteed as long as the other individual recognizes the mastery of the winner.

Power in poststructuralism is not simply present in the structural categories of sociology (class, ethnicity, gender, etc.), but it follows Hegel's assertion that recognition gives meaning to power. Our behavior towards one another is constituted in discourse, and the power of discourse is omnipresent and is maintained by its subjects. However, power is diffused in discourse, and that makes it stronger and more difficult to recognize (McNamara, 2012). As was mentioned before, discourse is the way language has historically been used to form a network that builds and regulates identities (Baxter, 2016). Poststructuralism gives importance to the power of discourse in constructing identities:

> ... post-structuralist perspectives on identity have pointed out that individuals do not autonomously construct their identities in a social, cultural, and political vacuum; rather, sociocultural and sociopolitical discourses will determine what resources are available for use in the ongoing project of identity construction, just as the outcomes of this process, in terms of identities, will in turn shape the discursive patterns at work in different contexts. (Clarke, 2008, p. 24)

Discourse causes power dynamics to emerge, transmits, and get weaker, which leads to the construction of different identities (Baxter, 2016). That means in addition to the personal factors determining identity, it is also constructed within discourse affected by the game of power (Drayton & Prins, 2009). That is attributable to the fact that dominant discourses and social norms regulate what is considered acceptable or unacceptable within a given society or culture. Individuals' inability to abide by the dominant discourse in society, which has been embedded through years of practice, is considered nonconformist and may be subjected to stigmatization.

Foucault (1984) believes it is the discourse that represents reality and is institutionalized in systems of law, politics, and family. In other words, important institutions are the result of the discursive formation that is, 'competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organizing social institutions and processes' (Weedon, 1997, p. 34). As such, institutions produce discourses that become dominant. This hierarchy means that discourses are always in competition for status and power. To understand identity, we need to investigate power relations in discourses that attach qualities to individuals.

As was mentioned before, meaning is context-bound and not fixed, which means the traditional identity categories (teacher vs student) are temporary and are always subject to redefinition since the 'true meaning of each term takes place between social groups with different power interests' (Baxter, 2016). Emphasizing the existence of power dynamics in all levels of interaction, Foucault believes that individuals are subjected to the normalizing power of discourse, and they can exert agency to position themselves with the dominant discourses. In simple terms, individuals are not endowed with essences (black, woman, etc.), but identity is constantly formed and reformed in relation to both the structure (micro, meso, and macro factors) and the agency of the person manifested through language. A person can construct multiple identities as they position themselves regarding the dominant discourse of the given context. Norton's (2013) assertion on power can clarify the point:

> Like Foucault, I take the position that power does not operate only at the macro level of powerful institutions such as the legal system, the education system, and the social welfare system, but also at the micro level of everyday social encounters between people with differential access to symbolic and material resources – encounters that are inevitably produced within language (Norton, 2013, p.47).

In the language classroom, with the main role players (students and teachers), the existence of tacit rules (cultural and historical), and the unwritten rules of the general educational community (discourse), interactions are events that are regulated through power, affecting the identity of the role players.

For teachers, according to poststructuralist thinking, in interaction with others and receiving approval from students along with multiple doings (rather than just

being), teacher constitute their identity in discourse (Morgan, 2004). As the teacher's awareness goes up, she makes new texts of herself, and over time in discourse, she can gain her agentive power to resist or break the dominant discourse. In a school, teachers face numerous normalizing discourses in the form of rituals, such as meetings, demonstrations, and observations. The discourses are supposed to help the teacher internalize the norms of the school to help her fully integrate into the culture of the school. Such discursive practices, along with language, are constantly changing and are characterized with various contradictions, which constitute the identity of the teacher. The use of the word 'constitution' here denotes the idea that teachers are "a fully autonomous, self-aware subject, who can freely choose which aspects of her identity are of pedagogical value or to know in advance and how her identity matches up with a particular group of students" (Morgan, 2004, p. 173). However, if regulatory bodies are too strong to curtail the agentive power of the teacher, the identity of the teacher is said to have been stipulated by discourse, not constituted. In sum, according to poststructuralism, discourses are places of power negotiation, and they can either empower the person or undermine her power. Nevertheless, discourses are not just constituted of two poles of dominant and suppressed, but are dynamic and competing.

2.1.2. Bourdieu's Theory of Capital

There are two key terms, *habitus* and *field,* frequently used in discussions about Bourdieu's capital, and clarifying them is necessary before delving into the concept of capital proposed by the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu defines habitus as the habits, tendencies, skills, and dispositions that a person has acquired over their lifetime, and they unconsciously guide an individual's behavior and actions. Habitus refers to "a set of acquired characteristics which are the product of social conditioning…totally or partially common to people of similar social conditioning" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 45). According to Bourdieu (1979), habitus is the result of years of socialization in the family, school, and society, meaning social structures form habitus, and people with a similar background tend to have similar habitus.

Our habitus can last over time and formulate our identity, but it can also adjust according to changes in the context. That means habitus cannot be assumed to be invincible and rigid. As mentioned before, habitus is structured by one's social life, but it is also structuring since habitus determines how we perform socially. Take the example of someone at the dinner. That person knows how to sit, how to eat, and how much to talk at the table. That person might not have been explicitly trained about such manners, but acquired them by observing people around them in family and other social settings. However, the person must introduce slight changes to their sitting manner if they wish to be identified with a specific group. Just as one has to develop a new self to be able to suit a novel situation, habitus can also change over time when one is placed in a new situation, meaning there is a mutual constitution between habitus and context (Bourdieu, 1979).

Another key term in Bourdieu's conceptualization of social interactions is the concept of *field*. It simply refers to the space characterized by groups of people seeking different types of capital. "Fields are both the building blocks of society and areas of social activity that are relatively autonomous and that have developed their own set of rules and organizational arrangements" (Carter & Spence, 2020). According to Bourdieu, the field has rules, regulations, relationships, and hierarchies, and is characterized by power struggles. Within the field, individuals adopt various positions according to their social, cultural, or economic capital. The immigrant teacher in the new field might face regulations and positions that had not been defined for them in their home country, and this could cause an identity clash or demand extra energy to be able to adapt to the new field. If the teacher is equipped with enough capital, they can adapt more easily to the new field. When the teacher immigrates, she encounters a new field where interactions, methods, and teaching philosophies might differ. In the new field, the issue is not only dealing with the differences, but also developing a new identity.

2.1.2.1. Capital

For a long time after the influential book written by Carl Marx, *Das Kapital*, the word capital only referred to an individual's wealth. However, to have a better

understanding of the structure and functioning of the social world, reintroducing capital in all forms is necessary (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu defined capital as the material and immaterial resources that can bring power to the owner and can help the person gain social recognition. In the present study, the concept of capital is used to help us capture the full picture of the resources that immigrant teachers gain in their home country and introduce to their professional life after immigration. It provides us with a framework to categorize resources based on their origin and then track their influence on the identity of the immigrant teacher. For immigrant teachers, identity is linked to how their capital is revered, negotiated, or questioned in the new context (Colliander, 2017). A person's identity reflects the capital they possess. Berger (1986) believes that what we appreciate as beauty is rooted in our being as a class member and status and is a mix of cultural and economic capital:

> He is, after all, telling us in effect that our "deepest" and most authentically experienced convictions of affirmation and revulsion, our visceral senses of the true, the beautiful, the good, the natural, the self-evident, in which reside our very sense of who we are, are only (but not at all merely) expressions of the peculiar mix of invested cultural and economic capital that defines our memberships in classes, class fractions, and status groups, and our commitments to their associated styles of life. p. 1447)

In his book, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Bourdieu talks about other forms of capital that are the result of one's upbringing and socialization process. These include social, cultural, and symbolic capital.

Social capital is the network of people, mutual acquaintances, and social recognition that provides the person with the support of collectively owned capital. The capital is gained in families, tribes, and institutions, where one gains credibility, and it is the result of the trust cemented amongst the members. Social capital is obtained and maintained once individuals facilitate their interaction through creating a safe shared system based on reciprocal trust aimed at reaching mutual benefit. The members gain profit from their membership in the group, and this creates solidarity, and the person accumulates more capital through this membership. This type of capital is also accrued in proportion to the size of the institution, as the person knows many people and is known to many, which all yields more productivity. But it is not just the size

of the communities that determines the quality of social capital. It also depends on the relationships – whether members are well-connected or have the spirit of sharing with others. In more close-knit communities, the social capital can be more enriched. Bourdieu (1986) asserts that social capital is not an end in itself but can be converted into other types of capital, like cultural and economic capital. A person can use their connections (social capital) either to promote themselves in their job (economic capital) or to learn some new skills (cultural capital).

Cultural capital is everything from the power of speaking, linguistic competence, academic qualifications, and titles that their possession, like economic capital, brings an advantage to the individual. Bourdieu (1986) divided cultural capital into three types: embodied, objectified, and institutionalized cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital refers to the power, skill, or ability gained through education and socialization, and it is present within an individual, not handed over to them. Embodied cultural capital is formed over the years and becomes part of one's manner and language. For example, an individual who spends hours appreciating a painting cannot be said to have gained that knowledge in a short time, but that is the result of years of learning about art, and it is now this knowledge that is part of their life.

Cultural capital can also be claimed to exist in the form of cultural objects individuals own, which is known as objectified cultural capital. This is the tangible form of capital that can be transferred to others, and its possession can bring social distinction. For example, a teacher keen on collecting rare books owns objectified capital. This capital is either gained through economic capital or cultural capital. It is possible for an individual to own objectified capital but lack embodied capital. The example can be a person who owns a huge library of valuable books but does not find a chance to benefit from it. The other type of cultural capital, known as institutionalized capital, refers to academic qualifications and degrees gained through formal education in schools, universities, and any training institution. English teachers, especially non-native teachers, must be equipped with institutionalized capital if they want to increase their chances of employment.

Symbolic capital is associated with qualities or material possessions that bring recognition to the possessor (Bourdieu, 1979). This form of capital shares some

similarities with economic capital or cultural capital, as it empowers the owner and can promote them in society. However, unlike the other forms of capital, symbolic capital cannot be seen, and its possession does not make any economic or cultural sense if it is not recognized by others. People purchasing expensive paintings desire to have symbolic capital, and they try to hide the economic benefit of such possessions, but they cannot be claimed to have capital if the value of the painting goes unseen. If the economic nature is revealed, the capital loses its symbolic logic and turns to economic capitalism. For immigrant teachers, symbolic capital is associated with the degree to which their qualifications, professionalism, and cultural and linguistic background are recognized in the host country. Teachers with high symbolic capital (e.g., a native speaker) might be able to attract attention and benefit from the social capital created (Christian & Bloome, 2004). In other cases, a teacher with a degree from a prestigious university can gain symbolic capital by being respected as an educated individual and can gain economic capital by being offered a well-paying job.

As far as teachers are concerned, they are professionals with various forms of capitals – abilities, certificates, and skills, which determine their success or failure. While a teacher might enjoy having a name in the field (symbolic), another teacher can boast about their qualifications in higher education or internationally recognized training (institutionalized), and someone might prove competence by showcasing their hard-fought skills (embodied). Habitus of the teacher consists of the way the teacher acts in a context, which is referred to as the field, and they are affected by the resources of the teachers, known as capital.

When talking about the background resources that teachers capitalize on to progress in their job after immigration, we use these three types of capital (social, cultural, and symbolic) to help us reach an explanation of the way the background of teachers helps them in their profession. Bourdieu's theory of capital is proven to be a valuable lens to explore the lives of immigrants, how they are related to their background, and how they prosper after immigration (Feng, 2025). It can also account for the influence of language, environment, cultural heritage, and values on the academic performance of immigrants (Feng, 2025).

Bourdieu's theory of capital is used in studies aiming at discovering the contribution of social and cultural resources to the well-being of a system, a student, or a teacher. For example, Liu et al. (2022) demonstrated how Spanish teachers in the US schools could use their social and cultural capitals to overcome Anglocentric hegemony in the schools where they teach Spanish. The writers showed how teachers' Spanish-speaking background acted as a capital to help them overcome social, structural, and advocacy challenges. Drawing on their capital also helped teachers with their identities, as their cultural identity was bolstered when they reflected on their histories and resources that their culture offered them. The teachers managed to be role models for their students to form bicultural identities.

As one example tying capital and identity, Colliander (2018) studied the identity of a group of immigrant teachers in Sweden using the theory of capital to explain the teachers' skills and capabilities. The study showed that the teachers enjoyed a high level of institutionalized capital, which influenced their identity, making them see themselves as competent teachers in the professional field, where an immigration background could have been interpreted as less competent. Cultural capital of teachers also helped them have a better connection with students of immigrant background profiles, and helped the teachers strengthen their roles as teachers and stand against marginalization. As for networking and connections, the teachers managed to join communities of immigrant teachers, which gave them the power to have wider imagined communities because their bilingualism was viewed as a positive contribution to their community. The immigrant teachers of the study also enjoyed symbolic capital when their bilingualism was recognized, leading to a strengthened identity.

2.1.3. Imagined identity

Human beings are endowed with the power of imagination, which, over the years, has made it possible for them to conquer the world and become the dominant species. Our complex language enables us to picture ourselves in a novel situation with new people around us, to communicate with each other, and to talk about things that do not exist. According to Polkinghorne (1988), our *self* is not static but is an

arrangement of the events of our lives into a history consisting of both what we have been so far and what we want to be. The new self, constructed based on imagined states, is a new identity that is conjured up in association with people and situations that are not tangible and are not an everyday reality. As identities are more fluid and nations are plural, people identify themselves with communities beyond those they live in (Block & Cameron, 2002; Burbules & Torres, 2000; Hannerz, 1996). We can form imagined communities through a feeling of belonging to a community whose members we have never seen. This imagined community can be all the people of a country because "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). Although we have not met members of our imagined community, we hope to meet them one day, and that hope can be a source of inspiration. We desire to join a community that can direct a future worthy of hard work for us (Norton & Kamal, 2003). Imagination needs to be distinguished from 'wish', though. Wish is just some fantasy with no possibility for action; imagination, however, is the more elaborate picture filled with the feeling of hope and followed by purposeful action to achieve a goal (Simon, 1992). As stated by Simon (1992), "hope is constituted in the need to imagine an alternative human world and to imagine it in a way that enables one to act in the present as if this alternative had already begun to emerge" (p. 4).

In education, a person's ability to imagine themselves in a future currently inaccessible can help their learning process. As Norton (2001) asserted, learning is not limited to the current communities one is a member of (schools, language clubs, etc.), but it is also possible for members of distant communities accessible through the person's imagination. Norton (2001) likens learners' motivation as a psychological construct to a new concept of investment, which is a fluid and social construct. Investment is the drive one gains because of picturing oneself in an imagined community. It is more in line with poststructuralist views that see language learners as having complex identities that are dependent on changes in time and place (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

To show the importance of imagined community in the learning process, Norton (2001) makes the following example. An immigrant from Poland is willing to take

computer courses in Canada, the country where she has recently moved to. She is discouraged from doing so by her English teacher due to her low command of English. The student's reaction is to quit the course immediately. Norton continues that the student's reaction seems hypersensitive but is justifiable since the student's imagined community, which had become her identity, has been shattered. She had invested in this community, but she was positioned as a simple immigrant whose competency in English was not enough to join her desired community. For teachers, the ability to have the power of imagination has been reported to be greatly related to a better awareness of teacher identity, agency, and their motivation (Xu et al., 2023). They are also more confident people in their job, more purposeful, and also more socially aware individuals (Doro, 2020). If the individual fails to have a clear imagination to associate their future self with a particular group of people, they will be consumed with the feeling of fear, which prevents the person from investing in their learning (Murphey et al., 2005). Investment in a language brings symbolic capital (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money), which will be followed by the person's acquiring cultural capital and social power. The richness of a person's cultural capital is related to the improvement of a sense of self. Therefore, according to Norton (2013), investment and identity are closely interconnected. The learner's or teacher's imagined community forms an imagined identity, and the investment in learning and teaching language should be viewed in this context. In short, investment occurs at the intersection of identity, ideology, and capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

The meaning that is defined for our imagination cannot be defined in the void, but is the result of some actions. It is our present and past experiences that fuel our imaginative power (Dagenais, 2003). It is the result of what goes on in our current world. Appadurai (1996) argues that our modern world is characterized by technological progress. He believes this has modified our power of imagination and has empowered human beings to have connections with people thousands of miles away. That can contribute to the imaginative power of individuals. In addition, mass migration, as Appadurai (1996) argues, has greatly affected the ability of people to move around the world, broaden their worldviews, and then have richer and clearer imaginations. Today, globalization has made the members of the world

interconnected, and Anderson's (1991) assertion about the connection of the people of a nation can be extended to include all the world as an imagined global community (Robertson, 1992). Identities in such a modern world are more hybrid, and that means people can imagine themselves belonging to multiple communities. However, imagination might be distorted by institutional and social realities. In a study by Xu (2012), a group of highly motivated and adamant teachers during practicum were shown to be turned into teachers bound by rules and limited by the curriculum. Their imagined identity collapsed, and teachers were turned into chasers and disillusioned beings. For learners, Wu (2017) argues that institutional factors can shape the imagined identity of learners. It was shown that the practical attitude of two high-achieving learners in Taiwan was rooted in the expectations of their school, since the limited use of English at school constrained the imagination of the English learners. The writer concludes that "imagination at the personal and individual level is still subject to hierarchy and rules of the dominant society" (p. 120). However, in the case of another learner, Wu (2017) discusses that the sociocultural knowledge of the learner, which he had gained in the family, made him go beyond the limited worldview the school proffered and enabled him to have a broader and clearer imagination.

In another study, Dagenais (2003) shows how the affordances of the present situation can empower people to imagine. The study discussed the imagined identity of parents of immigrant children in Canada, and how they exploited their past and present resources to picture the benefits of multilingualism for their children. Imagining such an identity is a projected identity based on reality, but it is not possible for everyone. It indeed was possible for parents because of their levels of education, social networks, and material resources. Norton and Kemal (2003) also argue that for teachers and students of English, what they imagine is a response to the current needs and desires as well as their reconstruction of the past. They demonstrated that the Pakistani students were influenced by their current situation in their imagined identity as they envisioned a future where Islam would be valued and respected. However, referring to the idea of all the people of a nation as one imagined community (Anderson, 1991), the writers state that migration, changes in demographics, and technological advancements have made the idea of an imagined

community more complex. The students of Norton and Kamal's (2003) study imagined a literate and interconnected future where English and technology would play an important role. They talked about the importance of technology in their imagined world, while English is an essential tool to operate in that world. It also shows that being literate is a significant shaper of imagined identity, as it gives them the confidence to have such imagination.

Imagination builds an imagined community for everyone, including teachers. That is because people know themselves and other people in a specific temporal and spatial context (Trent, 2016). Therefore, an imagined community refers to any community a person desires to enter. For teachers, this is the willingness to join the community of native speakers, local teachers, or proficient speakers of the language. Affiliation with such communities is related to the teacher's beliefs and awareness of the self, language, and community. Having student teachers talk about the community they wish to enter in the future can bolster their power of imagination, meaning their imagination is partly rooted in the productive classroom discourse they have during their teacher training programs (Pavlenko, 2003). The new identity that the teacher had pictured for herself would propel her to invest in their job to gain the legitimacy of joining that community (Barkhuizen, 2016; Darvin & Norton, 2015). As expressed by Ovalle Quiroz and Gonzales (2023), teachers exert time, energy, and commitment toward professional development if they feel they belong to the community of expert teachers and proficient English speakers. For example, imagining herself reaching her full potential as a professional teacher in a real class with real students, a student teacher spends more energy on her performance, forms a new identity, and gains the ability to turn a vague future into a more tangible future at work. Student teachers in Pavlenko's (2003) study showed that teachers imagined being in a native-speaker community to validate their personal and professional identity. But this imagined membership causes them to view themselves as second-class teachers. That not only affects their interaction with native speakers but also their non-participation in in-class activities and professional choices. Pavlenko's study revealed further support for Vygotsky's (1978) contention about the power of imagination, consciousness, and control. In this study, it was found that viewing themselves as multicompetent and bilingual teachers rather than incompetent non-native speakers helped teachers

see their potential, try to propagate this view, and have more active participation in their educational activities. Pavlenko's insistence is on making attempts to enable teachers to reimagine themselves as productive and multicompetent users of the language rather than viewing themselves based on the already established NST/NNST dichotomy. This is only possible through the power of imagination. She believes that "marginalization within the profession will continue unless those who use the target language as their first join the process of critical reflection on language ideologies and linguistic theories that inform our practices" (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 266).

Even though the teacher's initially imagined plans might not lead to what she had imagined at the beginning, her imagined community can stay strong and enable her to make important career decisions (Barkhuizen, 2016). In a longitudinal study, Barkhuizen (2016) tracked the change in identity of an immigrant teacher of English in New Zealand. He showed how the teacher's career path, location of work, and further professional development were all affected by her purposeful vision. Barkhuizen (2016) analyzed the narratives of this teacher and reported that although the initially imagined identity did not fully materialize, she did manage to have a role in the community she had envisaged when she was about to step into a teaching career. In another study, Chang (2011) investigated the way the professional background and imagined identity of two PhD students influenced their current investment. It was found that the students' current investment was affected by the culture of their imagined communities. The students attempted to invest in their language proficiency, as for a non-native speaker in the US, mastery of the language is an essential skill.

2.2. Globalization and Increase in Border Crossing

Migration seems to be in the nature of human beings. About 70.000 BC, Homo sapiens, in search of food, took the route towards Asia and then Australia, and finally to the Middle East and Europe. Probably before that, humans had reached the Americas by boat or over a land bridge from Asia. This is how it all began, as we know from the prehistoric records. After this, humans have been on the move either in their own community, for colonization purposes, or whole community migration

for better weather or more food. Migration has continued to be an urge for human beings, and the official figures of immigration can easily prove that the world has become restless, and the trend is toward further movement of people across the globe. By the year 2020, the number of migrants around the world had escalated to around 281 million (IOM, 2020). The increase in human migration over the years, along with improvements in communication tools, has provoked more interconnectivity and interdependence of people; a phenomenon known as globalization. In this globalized world, more human contact brings more local diversity and faster exchange of commodities and information (Kubota & Lin, 2009). Migration has been more specifically favored by skilled people. The rise in the aging population in most of the developed countries has made governments offer tempting immigration plans to bolster their workforce. As Canagarajah (2006) put it, people, goods, and ideas easily find their way through the porous national boundaries, which is the result of the 'compression of space and time,' making it possible for people to have constant movement between communities and communicative contexts (p. 25). Once settled in the new land, which in the case of skilled workers is mainly immigration to more developed countries, foreign workers can gain international knowledge, create their own contacts, improve their risk-taking ability, and develop relationships.

The interconnected world created by more movement across borders needs a shared language to facilitate cross-cultural communication. Language is a means through which social relations are established, and in the globalized world, this interaction goes beyond one's locality. This has turned language into a commodity. It is not just a source of ethnic pride or identity but a capital (Bourdieu, 1991), which is also referred to as 'linguistic commodities' (Heller, 1987). To own this commodity, knowledge of English, which has come to be the lingua franca, is essential. In the current world, the number of users of English as a second language is about a quarter of the world's population, resulting in having more non-native speakers of English than native speakers (Crystal, 2012).

One of the most significant upshots of globalization is the reconstruction of the identities of people whose lives have been affected by this hybridization and

movement of people. The rise in neoliberalism, which heightened the power of the market, privatization, and the move toward individualism, meant new identities for language learners and teachers. The new identities, such as immigrant teachers, minority teachers, and dichotomies known as native versus non-native speaking teachers, are the ramifications of the new world order.

2.3. Immigrant teachers

The term refers to a category of teachers who leave their country of birth to live and work in another country. Once in the new country, they constitute a low percentage of teachers, so the term minority teachers is also used to identify them. Immigrant teachers can be both natives of English-speaking countries or others, but normally the term immigrant is attributed to those coming from non-English-speaking countries. In this study, I use the term immigrant to refer to those teachers whose cultural, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and national backgrounds are different from those of students and most of the other teachers. When focusing on their non-nativeness, the term non-native is applied to these teachers. Immigrant teachers in Türkiye should be distinguished from refugee teachers who may stay and work under different working laws. In this study, the term immigrant refers to teachers who are not from English speaking countries and legally live and work in Türkiye.

Other than globalization and ease in international travel in the modern world, the rise in the number of immigrant teachers can be the result of attempts by educational authorities to tighten the achievement gap between students of various backgrounds (Rocheleau, 2017). That has been accomplished by introducing teachers with backgrounds similar to those of foreign students. In the US, between the years 2000 and 2010, more than a hundred thousand teachers from other countries were added to the educational system. Despite such large-scale recruitment, the population of immigrant teachers is still disproportionate to the students with the same experience (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). In Germany, a country with high immigration, the statistics prove the existence of such a disparity, with 37% of students being immigrants compared to 8% of teachers (Krüger-Potratz, 2013). Such a disparity, which is also observed in a broader scope in testing, access, and

achievement, has made diversification of the teacher communities essential (Neena, 2018; Nevarez et al., 2019). To reach a balance in education in terms of diversity, more recruitment of immigrant teachers seems to be a necessity. As multilingual and multicultural agents, immigrant teachers can act as successful agents in dealing with diversity in schools (Irvine, 1989). They are referred to as 'cultural ambassadors' (Cook, 2000) as they can mirror their own culture to boost intercultural understanding among students, teachers, and parents. The language and culture that these teachers bring to the educational milieu and society can be used as pedagogical tools and a means of more cultural contact. With their cultural, linguistic, and racial backgrounds as valuable resources, immigrant teachers can have more efficient interaction with their students to establish positive cultural identities (Yeong & Bahng, 2023). They can exploit the benefit of being culturally different from local teachers to connect with migrant students, and they can refer to their own language-learning experience to provide feedback. Immigrant teachers can be role models (Zirkel, 2002), a source of motivation (Höckel, 2020), and empathetic individuals (Edelmann, 2013). They usually have a strong work ethic (Cook, 2000), have stronger multicultural beliefs, which contribute to their higher self-efficacy, and seek higher educational and occupational goals compared to non-immigrant teachers (Van De Werfhorst & Van Tubergen, 2007). Immigrant teachers can also contribute to the educational development of students, their attendance, retention, advanced-level registrations, and acceptance into colleges (Achinstein et al., 2010). The positive influence of immigrant teachers is not limited to the school per se. They can demonstrate the complexities of current societies and calls into question the power dynamics (Strasser & Leutwyler, 2020). Rissanen (2023) shows that Muslim teachers in Finland and Sweden can act as cultural brokers by enlightening others about Islam. They are also involved in mediating conflicts among Muslim and non-Muslim parents or students at the school. In Czechia, Roma assistants in schools have been referred to as bridge makers between the majority culture and the minority culture, and as individuals who have a profound effect on the educational involvement of students with a Roma background (Němec, 2023).

In spite of the benefits that immigrant teachers can introduce to the profession, they face some challenges in the host country. One of the most serious problems, which

can also be true for most Iranian teachers in Türkiye, is the language barrier. Lack of proficiency in the local language can block access to other resources, the most significant of which is finding employment (Putjata, 2019). This can also disrupt communication with other teachers. Studies show that these teachers feel marginalized and are viewed as second-class citizens in the host country, causing their abilities to remain unrecognized and their identity questioned (Feuerverger, 1997). The unfamiliar context can also pose a challenge. For example, immigrant teachers working in schools in the US experience culture shock owing to the lack of familiarity with the policies of the institution, expectations of the principal and parents, lack of knowledge about procedures and strategies, and discipline issues (Hutchison, 2005). The other problem is with the way teachers of immigrant backgrounds are presented in society. Asian teachers in the US, for example, are viewed as less competent teachers and might be believed to lack proficiency in language and cultural references. This results in serious issues when in contact with the students (Yang & Pak, 2023). There have also been reports of immigrant teachers leaving the profession due to feelings of inadequacy (Clark & Flores, 2001) and alienation from traditional values and goals in the school (Foster, 1994).

Integration in the new context is important for teachers to survive after immigration. One important factor is a sense of belonging, as this creates motivation for the immigrant teacher (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). More sense of belonging and less experience of otherness mean a smoother integration in the new context. The integration process can be stifled if those in the majority view the others as too dissimilar to them. This is supported by the study of Russian and Ethiopian teachers in Israeli schools, where issues that contributed to a sense of otherness were different among these, stemming from their cultural background (Gindi & Ron, 2023). In the case of neighboring countries, culturally similar countries, or countries sharing historical events, the issue for immigrant teachers can be even more challenging.

2.4. Native versus Non-native

Immigrant teachers are also subject to another categorization, and it can be more pronounced when they move to a teaching context where there are both native and

non-native speaking teachers. Although needing further explanation and more precision in academic studies, the terms Native English Speaking Teachers (NEST) and Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNEST) are frequently used. NEST refers to teachers whose mother tongue is English, which means they are born in countries where English is officially spoken, while NNEST refers to teachers born in other countries, which means they do not speak English as a first language. This distinction is more evident in the TESOL industry, as native teachers are believed to be more qualified than non-native ones. This is mainly believed to be affected by Chomsky's (1965) proposition of the ideal speaker and listener, which is defined as a native speaker in a homogenous speech community with enough knowledge of their language. Chomsky believes that the intuitive ability of native speakers to decide what is right gives them the ability to make sound judgments on grammar and vocabulary. This, however, was bolstered by interlanguage theory (Selinker, 1972), which refers to the intermediary language formed in the process of learning a language. The concept of an intermediary language implies that non-native speakers are in constant attempt to reach native-like competence, and such a proposition implies that non-native teachers are regarded as less proficient speakers of the language. Native speakerism is a term coined to refer to such an unfair situation. The native speakerism attitude favors natives since they are the conveyors of Western culture, a culture supposed to be the genesis of the English language and of English language teaching methodologies (Holliday, 2006). Under this view, the natives are the norm against which the proficiency of non-natives is assessed.

Non-native teachers have especially felt the discrimination in the job market. As a result of such treatments, they see themselves as second-class teachers if they do not manage to gain the required linguistic capital, such as a native-like accent (De Mejía, 2002). We can claim that the dichotomy has been taken to an extreme when we see that non-nativeness and skin color are linked. In some cases, a colored teacher is considered non-native even though they speak English as their first language, whereas white teachers are easily viewed as native teachers (Holliday, 2013). Although many TESOL professional institutions have been established to create equality among NNESTs, non-white NESTs, and white NESTs in terms of job opportunities, it is a real challenge for NNESTs and non-white NESTs,

especially in ESL settings and programs, to find a teaching job (e.g., Mahboob et al., 2005).

It was Paikeday (1985) who first acted as the iconoclast and stood against the beliefs in the superiority of native speakers. He criticized the superficial approaches in defining the term, believed in the importance of non-linguistic features in creating mismatch, and warned of the discrimination that the construct can cause. Chomsky's notion of an ideal speaker was then discussed as an idea that had been uncritically admitted into the field and had been exploited as a guide for scholars interested in justifying the native speaker supremacy (Bhatt, 2002). However, much of the current debate on the dichotomy is believed to have entered into the open discussion by the work of Peter Medgyes, who published the groundbreaking work, *The Non-native Teacher* (1994). He demonstrated that the majority of non-native teachers admitted to their lower proficiency compared to the native teachers, and that this can adversely affect their teaching. It was recommended that non-native teachers have more exposure to authentic language use in order to advance their linguistic proficiency. In addition, they should be made aware of the advantages that their non-nativeness introduces to the field (Reves & Medgyes, 1994). One advantage is that these teachers are native speakers of their mother tongues. These speakers have a different language and thought process in a way that bilinguals are more competent compared to monolingual speakers since they can benefit from the existence of more than one language in their linguistic repertoire (Cook, 1999). That means the speaker of English as a second language should not be viewed as a less competent user of language, but as a speaker who can enjoy the positives of multilingualism. They should know that they have an asset that is lacking in the majority of native speakers, and they should be educated on how to benefit from it. In more recent years, attempts to distinguish between languages possessed by bilinguals have been put into challenge, and the practice of benefiting from all the languages that a person owns has been encouraged. Rather than seeing the languages of bilinguals as separate entities, pluralingualism tries to present a more integrated approach toward individuals speaking two or more languages. According to pluralinguistic approaches, to define the linguistic identity of a speaker, movements should be undertaken away from the individual treatment of languages a person possesses

towards including the richness of the resources a person has built up, and equating possession of multiple languages to a richer repertoire (Ellis, 2016). The diversity introduced by non-native speakers should be harnessed and channeled toward a more effective language learning experience for the learners. Knowing two languages equals familiarity with two linguistic systems and two cultural backgrounds, which can all benefit the teacher either in approaching the teaching task, maintaining contact with students of the same profile, or clarifying the route of language learning to their learners.

There are other reasons to strengthen the argument against the native speaker's superiority. In today's modern world, it is not easy to demarcate speakers of a language since an individual could be a speaker of multiple languages, and people can interact with people of other cultures. As such, we cannot assume English to be limited to the inner circle countries only (Canagarajah, 2005). Moussu and Llurda (2008) have gathered convincing evidence to invalidate the dichotomy. They refer to the discussion made by Nayar (1994), who says that since every speaker is endowed with a language, the matter of speaking English as a mother tongue cannot be assumed as a celebrated quality. The writer believes that the emergence of the dichotomy is an act of Anglo-centrism to show that only the possession of English as a first language should be worthy of attention. Secondly, research on World Englishes has proved that English has become indigenized in many countries, including the outer circle countries (Kachru, 1985). Therefore, those who are English speakers in these countries cannot be dismissed as speakers of an inferior version of English. In addition, the matter of intelligibility makes the line between these two categories even more ambiguous. There are differences between the ease of understanding educated non-native speakers and uneducated native speakers. In addition, language proficiency entails knowledge of context. To have a full understanding of a situation or a topic, every person, regardless of nationality, should have basic knowledge of the context. Contextual familiarity determines the nativeness of the person, and that is not easy to specify. English cannot be claimed to belong to a specific culture, and therefore, there is no legitimate and codified standard to act as the model in learning and teaching English, and there's no legitimate platform for teaching culture (Modiano, 2005). As such, rather than trying

to imitate native speakers, non-native varieties should be given enough attention to bring the act of learning and teaching English closer to the real environment and to establish a framework for cultural studies (Modiano, 2005). In spite of many studies about the myth of native and non-native teachers, the category is still alive and attracts attention. For the Iranian teachers studied in this study, the status of non-nativeness has brought about identity concerns, which will be explained in the findings section.

2.5. The Move towards Identity

More and more academic research has been transitioning or evolving towards investigations to show that a teacher is a person with identity whose competency should be divorced from their country, culture, and race. Membership as a native or immigrant user of language is more a matter of self-ascription in which identity is at the core of the matter (Davies, 1991). "Language teachers and students in any setting naturally represent a wide array of social and cultural roles and identities: as teachers or students, as gendered and cultured individuals, as expatriates or nationals, as native speakers or nonnative speakers, as content-area or TESL/English language specialists, as individuals with political convictions, and as members of families, organizations, and society at large" (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 451). Researchers now challenge essentialized views that result from giving importance to the country of birth, but attend to the sociohistorical and context-specific negotiations of identity, and try to avoid viewing non-nativeness under universal categories (Rudolph et al., 2015). The native and non-native category is the result of foregrounding the country of birth, but we should not bother with this category anymore since its emic relevance is not taken into account, and it is not the only social identity, but identities are more motile than this (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Current studies of identity focus on the dynamic negotiation of identity both within and across the categories of being and becoming (Rudolph et al., 2015). That means foreignness or non-nativeness is determined through the negotiation of the teacher's identity in interaction with the students and other role players within a specific context (Rudolph et al., 2015). That is why half of the teachers in the study by Inbar-Lourie (2005) were reported to be native teachers in one situation. That means some situations present a self-ascribed

non-native as a native speaker. Moussu (2006) showed how certain students might assume their native-speaking teachers to be non-native teachers. They show that a universal identity of nonnative speakers cannot be ascribed to teachers, but identities are formed in interactions and, as mentioned by Faez (2007) are 'complex, dynamic, relational, dialogic, and highly context-dependent' (p. 231). Ellis (2016) argues that the diversity that exists in the language learning experience should be investigated to gain information about teacher identity. She shows examples to prove that teacher linguistic identity is not well represented by NEST and NNEST categorization, but language experiences inform us about personal and teacher identities.

As such, recent scholarship adopts postmodern and poststructuralist views to look for the answer in identity studies and problematizes binary categories in viewing diversity. The studies move away from the concept of fixity of identity towards more fluidity, meaning identity cannot be one category permanently, but changes frequently in relation to contextual variables. Such a move is seen as consistent with the ontological and epistemological theories and avoids discriminatory terms to describe teachers, as the native speaker fallacy and native speakerism. As an example, to prove the weight of context on identity, we can refer to Faez (2011a). She scrutinized the multiple identities of 25 teachers-in-training in Canada. In order to capture their identities, she developed categories including bilingual (no dominant language), English as a first language speaker, second-generation English speaker, and English-dominant, L1-dominant, and English-variety speakers. She showed that the linguistic identity of the teacher is context-bound and can change over local and temporal features. That means who the teacher is should be explained in the context and categories in which a teacher is born, and the new labels created as a result of immigration cannot fully explain an individual's identity. Identity is defined in the context, and that is something explained through the tenets of poststructuralism mentioned in the section about theoretical frameworks.

2.5.1. Identity

We live our lives with our labels, and we present ourselves to others with these labels. The labels are of such importance that we may make important plans, orient

ourselves at times of interaction, and imagine a future for ourselves. When a person is identified with a label such as a student, teacher, or another, the features of that label greatly influence that person's identity and life (Appiah, 2005). In today's highly bureaucratized society, we are constantly required to reveal our labels and answer questions about who we are (Blommaert, 2005).

Making an effort to find the answer to the question 'Who am I?' has always been present in human beings. Most probably, it was René Descartes (1596-1650) who first changed the direction of attention from nature to the self as a thinking, conscious being. With his famous quote,' cognito ergo sum (I think therefore I am), he embarked on a path of exploration to discover the role of the self in driving humans toward prosperity. Since then, the matter of identity has been overshadowed by discussions about the centrality of self and nature in the individuality of a person. The current increased zest to explore identity probably goes back to the mid-nineteenth century, when countries were being industrialized and secularization was gaining ground in industrialized countries. Traditions and religion lost their power in providing the answer to the people, and instead, self-fulfillment was sought on earth rather than in supernatural powers. Such social changes, along with the psychologically groundbreaking proposal by Freud and James in the late 19th century, gave more credence to the power of the individual and downplayed the pre-ordained destiny in life, which all resulted in the rise of individualization (Block, 2013). The changes brought the more essential issues of factors in the modern world that can contribute to the construction of an individual, and that partly explain the rise in popularity of identity in academic studies. According to Block (2013), the rise in social movements aiming at dismantling the ethnic, gendered, and racial hierarchies and fighting for human rights in post-colonial and post-World War II periods is all the result of new turns toward identity and recognition. The *self* is not a fixed entity but is affected by life events and personal narratives, and this shapes the person's current and future self.

"We are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how they will end; we are constantly having to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives. Self, then, is not a static thing or a substance, but a configuring of personal events into a historical

unity which includes not only what one has been but also in anticipation of what one will be." (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 150).

Gee (2000-2001) defines identity as a dynamic concept that should be more closely approached than the traditional categories of race, class, and gender. To define identity, Gee states that people act and interact in a context, and they are viewed as a certain 'kind of person'. This recognition as a certain kind of person, which should be considered a quality at a given time and place, and can also vary across contexts, is the person's identity. For Gee (2000-2001), there are four ways to view this 'kind of person'. Nature Identity (N-Identity) is what we are born with, for example, a man or a woman. N-Identity collapses into other types of identity when they are recognized. The second identity is the institution or I-Identity. This is the identity that our membership in modern economic, social, and political institutions grants us. Here, there are power dynamics involved, and there are varieties to this identity depending on the willingness of the person to occupy such identities or have them imposed on them. The third is the discursive perspective (D-Identity). This is gained in relation to the dialogue with others or in discourse. If rational individuals view a person as a certain kind of individual (e.g., charismatic), then this identity is recognized in discourse and attributed to the person. The last one is affinity identity (A-identity), which is the affiliation of a person to a certain cause. These practices with others give the person the power to be identified with. Gee makes the example of *Star Trek* fans who engage in certain practices and gain power through participation and sharing. A caveat to this is that these perspectives on identity become the identity of individuals when there is recognition by others. Gee makes the example of the label, African American, which can be recognized as any of the four perspectives depending on the people's different views of nature, norms, traditions, discourse, and dialog or affinity groups.

2.5.2. Teacher identity

Recent academic studies on teachers call for a reformulation of the role of the teacher. The teacher should not be viewed as a technician of the language with the main responsibility of delivering whatever the syllabus stipulates. Rather, the

classroom is a complex milieu of interactions where the teacher plays an important role in the development of self. That means traditional categories to judge the efficiency of the teacher, such as knowledge, belief, and attitude, cannot rightfully grasp the complexity involved in defining a teacher (Varghese et al., 2005). To cover the range of factors determining the teacher's identity, we should pay attention to the way the teacher is treated at work (Clark & Flores, 2001), the policies followed to structure a curriculum (Cross & Gearon, 2007), the way bilingual policies are realized (Varghese et al., 2005), the way racism and cultural differences are handled (Johnson, 2003), the number of students that come from different social and cultural backgrounds, and the way institutions work, teaching resources are distributed, and professional work is made accessible (Miller, 2009).

Teacher identity provides the answer to the question of how language teaching should be approached in the classroom. For the professional life of teachers of English, identity can be viewed as an organizing element and 'resource that people use to explain, justify and make sense of themselves about others, and to the world at large' (MacLure, 1993, p. 311). "Who teachers are and what they bring with them, individually and collectively, matters in what and how they teach and thus, to students, families, communities, and institutions" (Varghese et al. 2016, p. 548).

Tensions may always feature the work of a language teacher since the multiplicity of voices means the teacher should encounter situations where uncertainty about one's identity may prevail. Where there is a conflict regarding social and professional expectations and one's personal beliefs, there might be identity tensions (Pillen et al., 2013). In such a situation, the negotiation of identity is mediated by competing and conflicting ideologies. Attempts to understand the identity of teachers involve the type of tension teachers have to deal with, the ordeal the teacher has to go through to cope with the tension, and how that tension affects the teacher's job. As Canagarajah (2013) put it, tensions may be left unresolved in a teacher's professional life. Tensions can result in critical insights and lead to in-betweenness.

There are many studies proving that knowledge of the identity of the teacher plays a role in teacher development (Freese, 2006; Hoban, 2007; Korthagen et al., 2001;

Olsen, 2008; Riopel, 2006). A teacher aware of their identity is believed to be able to make better decisions regarding their practice, the choice of content of teaching, and their interaction with the students (Beijaard et al., 2004).

To achieve a clearer understanding of teacher identity, references to some important definitions of the term are made. According to Olsen (2016), multiple factors play roles in shaping the identity of the teacher. These include the teacher's immediate environment, past experiences, social roles, and belief systems. Upon having interaction, the teacher engages in a continual exchange of dynamic factors that are major shapers of identity. This causes the teacher to readapt and redefine their role. As such, Olsen (2016) believes that identity is an ongoing process and is formed by the immediate context and experience. According to De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012), identity has a complex and multifaceted nature that can be understood in various ways. It can be personal or contextual, formed in interactions, and it can be either in one's thoughts or shown in social actions.

According to Barkhuizen (2017), the abundance of research on various aspects of language teacher identity (LTI), along with quite a number of theories proposed on the construct, has made the conceptualization of LTI an obscure act to the point that trying to have a definition might muddy the waters. He believes that a definition of the term can be "improbable, exclusionary, and possibly counterproductive" (p.3). While a major step towards understanding identity is to reach a precise definition of it, many issues interface, which make it difficult to define teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011). However, Barkhuizen (2017) has tried to present a definition to include all aspects of the idea, not just events going on in the classroom, but also wider sociocultural entities affecting language teacher identity in one way or another. He accepts that the broad spectrum of the field makes it difficult for the definition to be inclusive and attempts to include every component, which might make the definition even more confusing, so it needs to be approached and interpreted situationally. Although in this definition, all the main factors contributing to the identity of the teachers have not been included, it can act as a guideline for identity researchers: "Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical—they are both inside the teacher and outside in

the social, material, and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony: they are contested and resisted, by self and others, and they are accepted, acknowledged, and valued, by self and others. They are core and peripheral, personal and professional, they are dynamic, multiple, and hybrid, and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTIs change, short-term and over time—discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places, and objects in classrooms, institutions, and online". (Barkhuizen, 2017, p. 4).

The definitions of teacher identity discussed here reveal two essential factors shaping the identity of a teacher of language. According to Varghese et al. (2016), teacher identity is something "produced and discursively constructed within hierarchically organized racial, gendered, linguistic, religious, and classed categories and processes within teachers' personal lives as well as in and through their teacher education programs, classrooms, schools, disciplines, and nation-states" (p. 546). This means that identity, on the one hand, is formed in the native culture, language, race, and categories the teacher is born into. In addition, educational background, especially the teacher's years of studying English and teaching, can play its fair share in the teacher's identity. In the present study, this area is the focus of the first research question. For the immigrant teacher, identity shaped in the new context is influenced by their experience in their native country. On the other hand, practices of the teacher under the influence of the contextual variables, and in day-to-day interaction with students, colleagues, principals, parents, and other stakeholders, can experience changes in identity. The following section discusses the contribution of the teacher's past life and their prior experience in forming identities.

2.5.3. Identity and prior experience

The definition of teacher identity by Barkhuizen (2017) mentioned above contained the word historical as one of the factors affecting the identity of the teacher. This means that we benefit from resources that our life experience has made available to us. These are the historically available resources that have been granted to us through

years of living (Menard-Warwick, 2016). Identity is linked to people's actions as well as the resources they can benefit from. The resources accessible to the individual and also the practices of the individual show the identity construction of the person (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Teachers can benefit from their social and professional backgrounds to improve their performance at work. They integrate their personal backgrounds into their classrooms, making them an essential part of the sociocultural environment in the learning space (Varghese et al., 2005). Poststructuralist views of knowledge hold that knowledge depends on the plurality of ideas, meaning positions are relative in forming views. This demonstrates that teachers' identity is shaped by their sociocultural background and their current practices (Freeman, 2002).

Personal background includes categories that are traditionally used to determine identity, such as ethnicity, race, nationality, migration, gender, sexuality, religion, social class, and language (Block, 2006; 2007). There are researchers in the field who have called for the importance of life histories in identity and the need to have more investigations in this regard (Hayes, 1996; Golombek, 1998). Teacher identity starts years before they begin their career. It is intertwined with the development of the self, which initially originates in the family. The teacher's socialization forms beliefs, cognition, and values that determine the role the teacher adopts at work. That means what the teacher is in class is a reflection of their value system (Ellis, 2016). Understanding this value system is essential in understanding teachers' professionalism, and it signals a change from prescriptive approaches to teacher training to descriptive ones (Ellis, 2004).

Teachers spend a considerable amount of time studying in different educational institutions. These years of schooling contribute to the structure of their identity. That is because what teachers perform in class has roots in their own experience, which is formed through years of schooling and establishing interactions with their own students. Such experiences have cemented ideas and expectations that are bases of identity (Nespor, 1987). What is unique about teachers' occupations is that they have observed teachers at work as students, so they form definite ideas about the role they will adopt in the future (Lortie, 1975). For a majority of teachers, their past

learning experience, which in most cases is teacher education programs, is completed during their bachelor's or master's studies or in training courses. Such a period is the most significant stage where language teacher identity is formed (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). The strong beliefs that language teachers hold at the beginning of their profession about important issues like how teaching is done, how students should be treated, and how they can progress in their practice are the result of their academic education (Bailey et al., 1996). However, the language-learning experience of teachers suffers from a shortage of sufficient academic investigations, although identities mainly stem from this powerful resource (Ellis, 2016). Ellis (2016) believes that past learning experiences should be closely examined to activate the reflective power of teachers to develop teaching beliefs. Thinking deeply about their past experience, teachers gain awareness about the way their identities have been formed, the way they garnered knowledge in their field, and the way they accumulated power. Without reflectivity, the role of past learning experiences will only be part of their teaching practice, with no positive contribution to their professional identity.

Akyeampong and Stephens (2002), in a case study on teachers from Ghana, showed that issues like the previous academic performance of teachers, the waiver time before entering college, and the difference in their socio-economic backgrounds caused teachers to start training programs with varied identities. They suggest that teacher training programs should take the background and expectations of the student teachers into account when establishing educational policies. In another study, Shin and Rubio (2023) tracked the identity of an immigrant ESL teacher in California. It was shown that the current identity of the teacher reflected his experience as a critical reader of the world and a critical actor. The study shows how such experiences shape the current identity of the teacher as a critical educator. The teacher made efforts to raise his students' historical and political consciousness, which reflects his philosophy of teaching shaped through years of being in education. In another study, Nganga (2011) used a narrative study to investigate the identity change of international teachers in the United States. It was shown that differences between the values the teachers hold and those in the US hinder the work of teachers in achieving success.

The teacher is also socialized in a culture that makes the teacher who they are. A teacher's cultural background is not solely a determinant of their personality, but it also affects the way the teacher interacts with students and implements the syllabus. The teacher's culture creates a community where the person shares similar characteristics with a group of people while maintaining their own unique features. The cultural background of the teacher is a resource that teachers can benefit from to address linguistic, economic, cultural, and ideological concerns. This is supported by the sociocultural-historical theory, which claims that the development of a person cannot be divorced from the social and historical context in which they are raised. The theory is grounded in Vygotsky's theory, in which thinking is the ability to use symbolic and material cultural tools, which are unique to the context. The central point of Vygotsky's theory is that learning is achieved in interaction with others and through using cultural tools in a particular context (Rogoff, 2003). Cultural tools are formed in successive generations, and the teacher of the present moment is the carryover of years of interaction, creation, and transfer of knowledge. The personal history of the teachers in the ESL classroom contributes to the formation of the sociocultural landscape of the class (Varghese et al., 2005) since the teacher brings cultural artifacts of their culture to the class. That means that personal history is rooted in one's culture. The definition given by Hall (1990) can further clarify how culture contributes to the formation of identity, which is referred to as cultural identity:

> … one, shared culture, a sort of collective ''one true self,'' hiding inside the many others, more superficial or artificially imposed ''selves,'' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common… Cultural identity is a matter of ''becoming'' as well as ''being.''… identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall, 1990, p. 225)

It shows that our interaction with a group with whom we share commonalities determines our being and becoming. However, it cannot be said that people are affected by the culture, but they contribute to the creation and subsistence of culture, and both individuals and culture *mutually constitute* each other (Rogoff, 2003). Such social and cultural complexes, along with interactions with members of the group who share a culture, constitute a teacher's beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideas, which

contribute to the identity formation of the teacher (Richards 2008; Singh & Richards, 2006).

A study about Pakistani teachers, for example, reveals that teachers trained in educational institutions in their home country produce discourses that are the result of the dominant discourses in which they have been socialized. For example, the teachers see teaching as a 'sacred profession', a 'religious duty', or a 'prophetic profession', which shows the way teaching is conceptualized under the shadow of institutionalized and cultural discourses heavily influenced by religious ideologies (Shah, 2023). These teachers, whose identities have been shaped by sociocultural and historical backgrounds, are referred to as bicultural teachers. They are endowed with the ability to identify with students of various backgrounds and attend to their linguistic, ideological, and social concerns (Menard-Warwick, 2008). Teachers with such resources can draw on their identity at work; therefore, their identity can be a pedagogical tool (Morgan, 2004).

Other than the teacher's culture, race is one of the most complex and sensitive social issues, which always evokes strong feelings about identity. The current argument about race centers on the idea that race is not a biological construct carrying objectivity and stability as the main characteristics; rather, it is socially constructed and can be parallel to the concept of the nation, which is an imagined community (Anderson, 1983). However, this socially constructed concept cannot be separated from the individual and group identity of people, and it powerfully determines the way people think, believe, and act. In education, the process of racialization can contribute to identity construction and subjectivity among learners and teachers (Kubota & Lin, 2009). When it comes to teaching foreign languages, the impact of race is most noticeably seen in creating the native speaker and non-native speaker distinction (Norton & De Costa, 2018). In both teaching and learning languages, there is a lot of interaction among people of different races, which can make this human feature more visible than in other situations. The racial background of the teacher can be active in the identity construction of the teacher and then can influence the performance of the teacher at work. When considering language contact during historical encounters, it becomes clear that language is also a

racialized construct. Motha et al. (2012) believe that the whole idea of teaching English and the emergence of English learners and English teachers are racialized, which are all dependent on racial, national, and colonial formations. Because of that, there exist racialized categories among teachers, such as White and non-White, settlers and colonizers, and native and non-native. The fallacy of attaching native speakers to White and non-native speakers to non-white demonstrates the power of race in discriminating against teachers of English. Given the neoliberal turn, being identified as a particular race is accompanied by more outcomes at the expense of giving the title of 'authenticity' to certain speakers (Norton & De Costa, 2018)

According to Von Esch et al. (2020), a vast body of literature shows that among teachers of English from racially diverse backgrounds, there exists the hegemony of English and whiteness. For example, regardless of the country of birth, non-White teachers are normally othered and are characterized as "lacking" (Aneja, 2016). In such a situation, the teacher has to fight for legitimacy and reconstruct their identity about racialized ideologies present in language teaching (Von Esch et al., 2020). The study by Vitanova (2016) showed how three minority female teachers in the United States had to fight the racial ideologies in place to gain credibility in their work. The study shows how teachers unknowingly sustain the linguistic and racial injustice in their discursive practice (Thomson & Stakhnevich, 2010). Racialized ideas have been implemented in the form of native and non-native teachers in many institutes where both types of teachers intermingle. The three female English teachers in the Turkish context reported feelings of inferiority and inadequacy and the need to struggle to gain visibility and legitimacy when there are native speakers of the language (Öztürk & Atay, 2010). This type of discrimination, which is assumed to be only based on linguistic competency, has racial discrimination embedded in it. Seeing native speakers as superior to non-native-speaking teachers is a racial construct and needs to be further studied to detach the derogatory term and to urge educational institutions and even governments to obliterate this dichotomy.

2.6. Studies on the Identities of Immigrant Teachers

This part reviews some major studies that have mainly placed immigrant teachers and their identities at the center stage on both a local and an international scope.

There are also studies about the way imagined identity is investigated and the contextual characteristics that form such identities.

The first study is about the role of Nergiz's background as an English teacher working in Türkiye and how she benefited from her past life. Using narrative inquiry and obtaining data through semi-structured interviews, Gümüşok (2021) shows how the teacher can draw on her background to approach students and provide motivation. Using her experience in high school, where Nergiz would express her disagreement when observing unfair treatment, she managed to act in an understanding way and stand up for her students. Exploiting the background well also enabled her to adopt the identity of a leader rather than just a teacher. That is mainly down to the fact that she shared many characteristics with her students in a way that she could use her life story as a motivating factor. The study brings numerous instances where Nergiz managed to handle conflicts, boost spirits, and create positive feelings like love, trust, and support.

Using poststructuralism, Shin and Rubio (2023) traced the identity change of a secondary ESL teacher who immigrated from El Salvador to the United States. The study shows how the teacher's identity is influenced by his past life, including the experience of being an outcast in the new setting, his migration experience, and his experience during a civil war in his home country. The study revealed that the teacher managed to benefit from his past life in reshaping his present identity as well as his identity about his future self. For example, he used his experience to teach his students using historical fiction and critical skills. He also managed to foster global citizenship ideologies in his students and make them understand the connection between past and present life. His success in implementing a curriculum and raising students' awareness of important matters shows the critical role of past life in the teacher's current and future identity.

Sun (2012) traces the influence of teachers' backgrounds on their current professional identity. The participant of this study, a Chinese teacher of English in New Zealand, is over-conscious about being accepted by her students since she is both an immigrant and a new teacher in the workplace, something bound to be

related to her identity. The study shows that the teacher's practical knowledge in teaching secondary school, which she has inherited from her native culture, can direct her journey of identity reconstruction once located in a setting that presents socio-cultural novelties. In the new setting, she tries to identify herself as a Chinese teacher and follow what is expected of her, as she would have in China. She does her best to make sure that 'everything goes smoothly', driven by an idea based on her heritage culture.

In another study, Elmas (2021) recounts his intercultural experience as a Turkish immigrant teacher in the United States, Germany, and the UK, where he navigates identities in different communities. He talks about the clash he experienced between his social capital and the new social and educational field. Relying on his social capital, the author discovered that his identity is defined in terms of his skin color, language proficiency, and nationality. He talks about his success in inclusion in the new settings by gaining symbolic capital or benefiting from the recognition that his Turkish background had granted him.

In a study on immigrant teachers, Sun and Saito (2024) focused on the adaptation processes, sense of belonging, and professional identity of immigrant teachers in Australia. The study demonstrated that the teachers face challenges in having their credentials recognized, and face cultural hurdles and problems in finding their way in the Australian education system. It suggests taking steps to understand these teachers and attempting to include their experiences in the educational system.

Investigating the professional identity of immigrant second language teachers, Colliander (2017) demonstrated that, in addition to their main teaching role, immigrant teachers played the role of cultural mediators. Such a role is shown to be undeniably significant when the teacher works in a multilingual setting.

In a study with a focus on the adaptation skills of foreign teachers, Golombek and Jordan (2005) talked about the multiple and conflicting identities of two Taiwanese student teachers as international speakers of English in the United States. The teachers gained confidence over time by applying strategies such as gaining enough

knowledge about students and the context of work. Through such mechanisms, they managed to combat native speakerism norms and reposition themselves as legitimate teachers. For them, knowledge of teaching and the ability to establish rapport with their students played an important role in reconstructing their professional identity.

Kayi-Aydar (2015) investigated the power of social forces on the teacher's agency. She did a study about an ethnically Spanish teacher of the Spanish language born in the United States. The teacher was found to be able to practice her agency in her school located in a Spanish-speaking community. However, it was difficult for her to show the same degree of agency at college since she was positioned as an ethnic and linguistic minority. It confirms the poststructuralist concept of identity where context, embodied in the change of job and place of work, makes the teacher's social categories, such as race and native-speakerism, remerge. It creates serious identity issues, as in this case, the limbo state of being detached from the white teachers, as well as those non-white teachers, was a reason to force her to quit the job.

Narratives of a Chinese-born teacher of English in China who worked in the United States as both a teacher of Chinese and English (Fan & Jong, 2019) showed how the teacher viewed herself as an incompetent teacher in comparison with teachers whose mother tongue was English. Despite such an inferior view, the teacher managed to employ her academic knowledge in the immigration context to help her build the identity that the new context demands. Such a reformulation of identity proves its fluidity in professional settings, and it can be achieved through reflective practice.

Two teachers of English from different countries working in the United States were the participants in a study exploring the matter of intercultural identities and how they address cultural issues with their students (Menard-Warwick, 2008). Their teaching identities were reported to be affected by their biographical experiences as well as the institutional context. The two teachers are regarded as successful teachers by the end of the study, as their hybrid cultural identity and accommodating two cultural systems enabled them to be away from conflicts or alienation, which could happen to a foreigner. The study approves the importance of teachers being equipped with intercultural identity and applying that in their classes. This can help the teacher to have a smoother adaptation and help with students' cultural awareness.

Cinkara (2022) researches the transnational identity of four Syrian immigrants in Türkiye. He showed how four EFL teachers and researchers establish a connection with their host country by having the role of agents in the integration of other Syrians. As for their identity as researchers, a bilateral relationship was found between the contributions of these teachers to the Syrian and Turkish contexts. In another study, Ozmantar et al. (2023) explored the lived experiences of Syrian refugee teachers in Türkiye to shed light on liminal identities, social exclusion, and the agency of these teachers. Drawing on the capability theory and attesting to the fluidity of identity, the author uses the term liminal identity to describe the situation of refugee teachers since they are stuck between refugee and teacher. They sometimes have the identity of a refugee and sometimes a teacher, which causes feelings of exclusion and loss of professional identity. However, the author discovered their strong political agency in their communities. When they are at work, the Syrian refugee teachers are deskilled and marginalized, but once among their fellow countrymen, they exercise strong social capital, leading to valuable contributions in their communities.

This chapter started with an introduction to the theoretical framework of the study, including poststructuralism, Bourdieu's capital and imagined identity. I also talked about the new trend in the current world and the way globalization and immigration have given rise to the need for English teachers. I then discussed the views towards native and non-native categories and the fact that they are now viewed in light of teacher identity. I focused on the determining factors in teacher identity, talked about the importance of teachers' past lives, current identity determinants, and the future identity of teachers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Paradigm and Design

3.1.1. Qualitative Research

How we make sense of our surroundings is not solely based on statistics and figures, but on many other factors. Here is an example to show how qualitative research is less defined by numbers:

> A person is unlikely simply to return from the doctor's surgery and take the treatment that he has been prescribed. It is more likely that the doctor's actions and the treatment will be discussed and evaluated. Medication decisions will be made in the light of these discussions, in the light of the person's experiences with the treatment, and in the light of past experiences with the doctor and other illnesses and treatments … People live their problems and illnesses socially; they cannot be viewed as isolated individuals responding automatically to the instructions of their doctors (Stimson & Webb, 1978, p.52).

While research on natural phenomena assumes that groups of people possess variables and the aim of the research is to discover and investigate these, qualitative research values the freedom given to participants to identify important issues and explain them through their own selected terms. It tries to capture all the relevant factors in psychological, social, and educational phenomena. In this type of research, the activities of the people in their everyday lives and the meaning of their actions are recorded and analyzed. Individuals construct multiple realities, and the researcher discovers and reports the meaning individuals ascribe to these realities (Creswell, 2013). Data for this type of inquiry are obtained through recording detailed accounts of the participants' lived experiences (Creswell, 2013) and taking into account both

micro and macro factors, with questions about process, understanding, and beliefs (Barbour, 2014). The methodology is supposed to achieve empowerment (McNamara, 2009) of an unprivileged group, and to provide a fuller picture of the lives of a specific group of people. In order to discover these realities, the researcher needs to follow the individual(s) closely since their reality is constructed in their subjective experience and is affected by cultural, historical, and social context. It is also affected by the subjectivity of the researcher, as the way data are documented and interpreted is affected by the researcher's educational and experiential background. Qualitative research relies on texts as the medium of communication and as the starting point to make decisions about reality. Textualization in qualitative studies involves taking notes of observation data, writing diaries, transcribing interviews or any examples of lived experiences into textual data, and interpreting the data (Flick, 2009).

With the spread of multilingualism and the increased attention to identity, new views on identity adopt a poststructuralist lens and regard previous theories as prototypical and essentialist. We adopted a poststructuralist perspective to guide the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data on the identities of the participants. The methodology driven by poststructuralism can account for the complexity and fluidity inherent in identity (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004), as well as equity and power (Norton & Toohey, 2011).

Viewing data through the poststructuralist lens means that I should acknowledge the three main methodological understandings of this type of research (Norton & Toohey, 2011): Firstly, the findings of the present study are 'situated and partial'. That means my positionality and tools of investigation played an important role in the discovered themes and the subsequent interpretations. Secondly, sufficient attention was paid to both structure and agency. That means how social practices shape individuals and how people exercise their power to shape the structure. Finally, as with all poststructuralist studies, the present study took Foucault's account of power and tried to discover how power circulates in all social encounters of the teachers. The study avoided 'grand narratives' about identity shapers, but sought traces of identity in the moment-to-moment behaviors of teachers.

3.1.2. Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is the act of collecting and analyzing stories of individuals as data, piecing clues together to reveal what is normally not visible. The definition below aptly shows the importance of narratives in research.

> A personal narrative is a distinct form of communication: It is meaning-making through the shaping of experience; a way of understanding one's own or others' actions; of organizing events, objects, feelings, or thoughts in relation to each other; of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions, events, feelings, or thoughts over time (in the past, present, and/or future) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 951).

The fact that stories narrated by those who experience them can represent reality means that investigating stories could replace the paradigmatic mode of thought, which is based on rational thinking and arguments. Moving away from this mode of thought led to a movement in research known as the narrative turn, which has been believed to be a more legitimate mode of thinking and researching than rational thinking. Narrative research is based on the belief that people understand their lives in storied forms, like a story plot with a beginning, middle, and end (Sarbin, 1986). It values the stories of the participants, provides natural and authentic data that can be easily remembered, and offers a window to reveal the individual's stance toward various social and psychological issues (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012).

Narrative inquiry has been used extensively in research studies aiming to research individuals' identities (Josselson, 2011), because narratives provide a unique way to make sense of oneself in the form of stories. When reciting stories, the subject has enough distance to reflect on the stories as they happened, to reveal their views about the events, and to show how the subject makes sense of them. In relation to each self, narrative inquiry tries to understand the multiplicity of each identity, as each person is an author with their own story to share (Josselson, 2011). Narratives can also reveal important elements in the personal and professional lives of teachers (Barkhuizen et al., 2025; Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Loughran & Russell, 2002; Webster & Mertova, 2007). What teachers say is representative of their identity, so their narratives can help us

explore their inner worlds about their careers and the social activities relevant to their identities. In a study employing narrative inquiry, there are four keywords used by narrative inquirers, namely living, telling, retelling, and reliving. That means the person narrates the story they have experienced or lived. Retelling is when the individual talks about their experience to the researcher. The retelling process could result in identity change as the individual retells their stories (Clandinin, 2023).

When researching the identities of individuals using narrative inquiry, there are points that need to be taken into consideration (Clandinin, 2023). Firstly, identities are made in a mutual relationship between the person and the world, which makes it necessary to have as much contextual information as possible. That means data related to the social conditions in which narratives have taken place, that is, who says what, when, how, and with what consequences, as well as personal conditions such as the narrator's feelings and desires, should also be documented. In addition, the constructed identities can change or might remain stable over time. Therefore, temporal aspects about the past, present, and future of people, places, things, and events under study should be remembered. That simply means when analyzing data, the researcher should bear in mind that the narrated story might be affected by the passage of time.

Narrative inquiry maintains that what we obtain as data is co-constructed because of the interaction between the teacher and the interviewer. This goes against the belief that individuals possess knowledge, and the researcher's responsibility is to unearth that knowledge. In line with that, when connecting with teachers of the study to obtain their stories during the diary-keeping period and during interview sessions, I made sure that the stories would benefit from the collaborative construction of narratives, meaning that the data collector is not a passive recipient of data but actively engages in the co-construction of narratives. This is what happens in real life, as people tend to tell their stories to someone ready to listen to them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). My status as an immigrant English teacher helped me to assist the teachers in constructing their stories. This was in the form of providing well-aligned prompts during journal-keeping months or asking follow-up questions during the semi-structured interviews of the study.

While having stories as data is the common feature of all narrative inquiry investigations, the purpose and theory of the study determine the overall approach taken towards conducting a narrative inquiry study. The approaches adopted in language teaching and research can be language memoirs, biographical, autobiographical, etc. (Barkhuizen et al., 2025), and the one adopted in the current study is referred to as *study of multiple narratives* (also known as multiple-case narrative). Here, the researcher analyses narrative data from multiple participants to gain a clear picture of their lived experiences that shed light on changes in identities. Rather than basing the findings on the common emerging themes only, the researcher tries to reach an in-depth analysis of the individual (Josselson, 2011). The study of multiple narratives makes it possible to have comparisons among participants, find common identity markers, and focus on a particular case individually.

In relation to analyzing the data, the study adopted the *analysis of narratives* pathway. Using this, the researcher reads the stories (written or spoken) multiple times and tries to select those that contain valuable information in addressing the research questions. This act of finding commonalities and categorizing data is still a paradigmatic mode of research; however, the data includes narratives of participants (Polkinghorne, 1995). This is different from another commonly used method, *narrative analysis*, in which narratives are used to present findings even though the data might be non-narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995). Since we had a large set of data that included stories collected from seven participants over a rather long time with in-depth interviews, looking for themes and finding particulars in the data is the analysis type that had to be followed (Polkinghorne, 1995). This strategy is also known as categorical analysis, which is placed in contrast with holistic analysis. Categorical analysis excludes parts of the data belonging to a category and makes comparisons with other narratives (Josselson, 2011).

In addition, since the study of identity is mainly concerned with what is said rather than how something is said, the analysis only engaged in *content* analysis. That means the focus was on the message the participants meant to convey and was not concerned with the discourse or the linguistic analysis of the data.

Narrative inquiry is not subject to the test of reliability, since the data and the path that the study takes depend on stories, the setting of the stories, interpretation, and the subjectivity of the researcher (Barkhuizen et al., 2025). That means narrative studies do not have the power to be repeated in a future administration and are not to be judged based on reliability measures normally used in quantitative studies. In a narrative inquiry study, an individual is not considered to be fixed in accordance with what they narrated because any story is likely to change in the future (Josselson, 2011).

3.1.3. Rationale for choosing narrative inquiry

In this part, we are going to discuss the main reasons for the employment of narrative inquiry as the methodological design of the study.

Firstly, narrative inquiry is born out of postmodern ideology, as is poststructuralism, and the methodology these theories propose attracts investigators who want to distance themselves from the quantitative standpoints promoted by positivism. Like poststructuralism, narrative inquiry examines experiences with the possibility of finding new experiences and maintains that some knowledge is in the form of narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The narrative turn, with an emphasis on subjectivity and interpretation of data, revitalized storytelling, which had been pushed away by modernist thinking with its focus on facts and rationality over personal experience (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). That means research based on stories of participants does not place much value on hard evidence but aims at the simple stories that are gained through the empathy and mutual understanding of the researcher and the participant. This associates narrative inquiry with a postmodern movement in both social reality and in doing qualitative research. Postmodernism challenged the existence of an invariant truth and promoted the idea of the diversity of perspectives, and individuals are believed to be able to position themselves with the social constructs and their own being. To inquire about lives under such viewpoint, storytelling acts as a valuable tool in capturing the way people act on the world. Besides, for the participants of the study, as border crosses and teachers, narrative inquiry seems the justifiable methodology to trace the change in their

identities before and after immigration. The methodology can capture the experiences of immigrant teachers as there is no single truth representing them, but their voices are 'multiple, situated, and partial' (Ladson-Billings, 2019). This is reflected by poststructuralism, which claims that people's stories are interpreted in context and that one single claim can capture the multiplicity of teachers' lives. According to poststructuralism, for people entering a new setting, identification is not a simple trait, but rather a discursive process (Rana, 2021). Narratives are the best tool to reflect the process of finding the new self in the new setting.

Furthermore, narrative inquiry can be the voice of the underrepresented individuals. The methodology is a way to "help people think, feel, and 'be' through the power of stories" (Archibald, 2008, p. ix). There are dominant institutional narratives that can cause oppression, but the narratives of the oppressed can be an enabling mechanism for them to voice their stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) showed how a CNN report sways towards a distorted reality by presenting mentally disabled people as a social threat. However, stories of this marginalized group can change professional practice and reveal injustice to the point of bringing about major social change. Immigrant teachers can be claimed to be among the group of people whose stories should be attended to, since their stories in academia have not been sufficiently studied (Yan et al., 2024). Iranian teachers of the present study are neither native speakers nor local speakers, so they might have identity struggles due to being a minority group in Türkiye. In addition, the status of non-Turkish non-native teachers has not been fully investigated or paid attention to in the Turkish context, which suggests that very few people have listened to the stories of this group of teachers. Individuals' stories can bring about institutional change by challenging the mainstream voices. Chase (2018) reports multiple cases where rigid, long-held human practices have been broken thanks to the opportunities that made the voice of the underrepresented be heard.

The next reason for using narrative inquiry lies in the power of stories. Besides providing input for identity analysis, stories themselves are a site of identity negotiation because they provide a chance for the individual to use a variety of linguistic and paralinguistic features to create an image of themselves. In earlier

analytic studies on stories of individuals, the focus was not on how these stories created the identity of the person, but instead mostly on how the person presented themselves and others as characters in the story. However, the problem with just presenting oneself is that narrators portray themselves as characters with specific norms of acting, which can be constrained by cultural norms, but they fail to talk about who they are (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). Going beyond a mere presentation of facts and giving the teacher the chance to explore and narrate feelings makes narratives themselves an opportunity that reveals identities. As stated by Barkhuizen (2011), the process of narrative production itself is a social practice in which identities are negotiated.

One aim of the study was to discover the imagined identity of the Iranian teachers of English in Türkiye. Their immigration and present identity can lay the ground for imagining themselves in a new context. Besides current contextual features that can drive the imagination of teachers, narratives can help the teacher envision their future and see themselves in their desired community (Kramp, 2004). Stories of teachers locate them in imagined communities and can help them think deeply about future possibilities for their teaching (Barkhuizen, 2016). That being said, stories of the teachers of the present study are input for the analysis of identity and a chance for the teacher to explore their future possibilities. When narrating different events, participants can weigh up their current situation by reflecting on the positive and negative aspects of their job and foreignness in the current context, and then stretch their imagination to be part of the community to which they wish to belong, which can provide valuable information about their imagined identity. As such, the power of narratives to reveal an imagined future is another justification for the use of narrative inquiry as the methodology of the study.

In the following sections, a detailed description of the procedures followed to collect and analyze data is provided. The purpose is to inform the readers and future researchers how my study was carried out, which is a way to boost the rigor of the study (Flick, 2009). I start by giving information about participants and how they were selected, and then continue by talking about the main instruments used to collect data and how the data are analyzed.

3.2. Research Setting

This section highlights several key issues about English language teaching policies in Iran and Türkiye. It is supposed to help us better realize the conditions where the teachers of the study worked for the initial years of teaching, and the factors that played key roles in their identities. The section also traces the history of foreign teachers in Türkiye and provides information about their current situation in Türkiye.

3.2.1. Foreign language education in Iran

For an English major graduate, there are two main paths to follow to find employment in Iran. The first one, which is laborious but mainly viewed as a more attractive option, is to find employment as a teacher in government-affiliated schools and universities. This requires going through recruitment steps, which involve multiple meetings and interviews aimed at checking the teaching capabilities and general background of the candidate. The other way to secure a job is through the private sector, which has taken the responsibility of educating a major portion of the population. Although an easier option, working in private institutes has its own drawbacks. Teachers must work more, and bear the fluctuations in the payments. The other option that has gained more popularity and has been fueled by the economic hardship in recent years is to leave the country. In this section, a brief history of foreign language education in Iran, employment options and the related problems, and the reason for the allure of Türkiye is going to be explained.

The first official institution to teach foreign languages in Iran was *Darolfonoon,* meaning the school of skills, which was established in 1851. At the time, the syllabus of the school for foreign language education included some of the important languages, such as French, English, and Russian. This continued for another century, when the English language commanded greater attention. In the Pahlavi era (1925–1979), the Shah of Iran aimed to modernize the country by relying on the political and economic potential of Western countries. He adopted a westernization policy where borders were open to many British and American investors and skilled workers. The discovery of oil and the presence of the British Petroleum Company in

the southern cities of Iran meant British engineers had an easier way to find their way to the country. The presence of the British engineers in some southern oil-rich cities created a mixed, unique lifestyle (Abbassian, 2015). In addition, the rise in international collaboration meant the country needed more Iranians to be capable of speaking English, which would attach importance to the teachers of the English language (Hayati & Mashhadi, 2010). At the time, there were famous American and British language schools operating in Iran that were in charge of promoting the English language among Iranians (Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015). They could benefit from native teachers to prepare teachers for work in these institutes.

The situation did not last long, as the 1979 Islamic revolution heralded an unprecedented anti-Western ideology acting as the ruling system in Iran. Now Britain and the US were seen as enemies whose only objective was to exploit weaker nations, and the new agenda for the Islamic government was to take dewesternization and demonarchization steps (Borjian, 2013). This meant the high status and the speedy spread that English was experiencing would have to come to a halt. A move known as the Cultural Revolution in Iran, which happened in the years following the revolution (1980 to 1982), was aimed at purging the academia of any Western and even non-Western vestiges and setting the Islamic principles as the criteria against which educational policies should be oriented. For the status of English language teaching, major changes were felt necessary in accordance with the new political system in power. Mazlum (2022) has penned down the situation in these words:

> ... following religious leadership's decrees, decisions pertaining to the choice of which foreign language to include in the national curriculum and when to teach it have been affected by Iran's discourse of anti-imperialism, anti-Americanism, anti-westernization, Islamic indigenization, and propagation of revolutionary values and ideals suggesting that some political figures' faint wavering calls and conciliatory rhetoric to open up to the international community have had no influence on these two dimensions. (Mazlum, 2022, p. 270)

Since the Islamic revolution, English has been subject to suppression mainly by political and Islamic ideologies. In spite of regaining its importance over two terms of a reformist president, the inauguration of a hardliner as the president in 2005 revived the tenets of the Islamic revolution, and this was accompanied by a period of

indigenization of the field of humanities (Borjian, 2013). Efforts toward the Islamization of education were more urgent in the case of English textbooks, which had to be reflective of the social reality of the time. The localized versions of the newly created English textbooks did not include sociocultural aspects of the Western world and instead focused on national culture and Iranian values (Mirhosseini & Khodakarami, 2015). The new textbooks mainly focused on grammar, vocabulary, and reading with disregard for listening, speaking, and writing (Jahangard, 2007). This, along with traditional teaching techniques (Riazi, 2005) and the inflexible curriculum (Davari & Aghagolzadeh, 2015), made high school graduates learn only some basics in English with a lack of any proficiency in communication skills. Local teachers shouldered the primary responsibility of teaching and training after the revolution since almost all native teachers left the country, with very few remaining in the private sector (Moghaddam & Murray, 2019).

The current situation is characterized by old-fashioned teaching techniques in state schools, modern methods in private schools and evening institutes, as well as a reformed version of textbooks. Given the status of English in the current world, it has found an important place in the school and higher education curricula. That can be understood from the weight it is given for the university entrance examination, its necessity in universities as a compulsory unit in both general and technical English, and its determining role in PhD comprehensive exams. In the research community, publications in English are more valuable, and conferences with presenters speaking only English have become more frequent across the country (Sadeghi & Richards, 2016).

Currently, the education before university in Iran is a two-tier 6+6 system. Students first start learning English in the first year of secondary school. The number of hours allocated to English in the weekly syllabus is between 50 and 80 minutes. A recent change in the English language curriculum has made the syllabus more reflective of real-life situations, as there have been some communicative activities added. The new textbooks by the Ministry of Education are a great improvement over the previous ones, as they make it possible for both teachers and students to practice more skills rather than just grammar and vocabulary. The situation in the private

sector is generally more promising, as they are more open to internationally recognized systems of teaching English, which can guarantee better customer satisfaction for them.

3.2.2. Determining factors in the professional identity of Iranian teachers

In this part, we have tried to have a brief look at the educational, social, and political factors that have mainly influenced the identities of local English teachers in Iran.

Firstly, the newly established revolutionary government, which had made Islam the main pillar of its revolution, urged the officials to take measures to have an Islamic model of Education. That model was more reflective of Islamic ideas in some subject matters, among which English was included (Rassouli & Osam, 2019). That means teachers of English should always regard the boundaries in their work at times of teaching, especially when it comes to culture-related discussions. As teacher education programs have one of the most important roles in the identity construction of teachers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011), and a majority of teachers in Iran are trained in government-affiliated universities or teacher training institutions, the presence of Islam can be felt in the identity of Iranian teachers. Visible signs of Islam can be seen in single-sex education, compulsory assembly chants in support of Islam, and Islamic principles in textbooks (Rassouli & Osam, 2019). It can be claimed that identification with Islam is one of the factors playing a role in the identity of a teacher from Iran.

The other factor is the way social distance is respected between the teacher and their students. In modern English classes, collaboration and intimacy are observed between the teacher and the members. However, this might be impeded by the comparatively inflexible education system currently in place in Iran, where English lessons are run like a traditional teacher-class interaction. One factor that has led to this gap is the rather high power distance (Hofstede et al., 2010) among people of different ranks. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), this power distance refers to the extent to which people embrace the more powerful status of their superior or look for equality. In language classrooms, there is no neutral relationship between the teacher

and the students where learning occurs, regardless of who has a stronger position. There exists a rather strict teacher-student line, which makes it difficult to create a friendly and supportive atmosphere needed for communicative activities (Ekstam & Sarvandy, 2017). Achievement in a lesson is equaled by other lessons, which is mainly through long lectures by the teacher, repetitive drills, and drilling and cramming for tests. Locally produced books, in spite of including communicative activities, have not managed to solve the issues for a variety of reasons (Rassouli & Osam, 2019), which is beyond the scope of this research to delve into. As for teachers, the rigid system can produce powerless teachers who are enslaved by the nuts and bolts of the curriculum. Askaribigdeli (2020) shows how a teacher in a public school in Iran, with an initial identity of a revolutionary teacher aimed at introducing significant changes to education, has to face the poor performance of his students on exams. That was the result of his ignorance of the important elements of the syllabus and following his own methodological principles. After a while, he feels that the best way to keep his job is to succumb to the curriculum and abandon his agentive power. In another study by Stetson and Wagner (1980) on the results of the Hand Test among Iranian, Chinese, and American students, it was shown that Iranians tend to be more obedient to authority. The reason for that is attributed to the status of Islam in the country and the tendency of people to revere a supernatural being.

Another determining factor in shaping the professional identity of Iranian English teachers can be the frequent top-down changes introduced to the education system, especially at the primary and secondary levels. It can be said that changes in English textbooks for secondary school are one of the cases that brought improvement. However, at a broader scope, the policies of English language teaching decision-makers have been stuck between tradition and modernity, yielding ambiguous laws and poor performance of students in tests (Ekstam & Sarvandy, 2017).

The power of history in shaping an individual's identity cannot be overlooked, and this also holds true for teachers from Iran. With a rich history which dates back to the Achaemenid Empire and the great conqueror, Cyrus the Great, Iran (then called Persia) has always been famous as the only land that could rival the Roman and

Greek empires. With that in mind, Iranians always revere their past and identify themselves as proud Iranians too.

3.2.3. Teacher recruitment process in Iran

Clarity in requirements for finding a teaching job can greatly help interested teachers to find a job in the public sector for Iranian teachers. However, this is not always the case. Mirhosseini et al. (2023) discovered a series of official documents to discover the underlying policies for teacher recruitment. The first and most widely mentioned requirement for teachers willing to work in the public sector is obedience to Islamic principles. This has been referred to as reliance on Islam and attention to its values in all aspects of social life. In addition, the studied documents denote commitment as another requirement for employment. It is not clearly specified what this commitment includes, but some sources refer to it as the commitment to one's job and responsibility, Islamic principles, and faith in the Islamic revolution, as well as Islamic leadership. In some other sources, commitment is described as dedication to the constitution and the Islamic leader. The third criterion in teacher recruitment is the knowledge and expertise of the teachers. However, it is not clearly mentioned what expertise encompasses, since teachers with associate bachelor's degrees, bachelor's, and master's degrees might apply for the same job. While the ability to meet these three criteria can enhance the chance of employability, it is not a guarantee for employment, since the requirements have been derived from different sources, and there might be new requirements revealed to the candidates at the time of the recruitment process. The Ministry of Education is in charge of curriculum planning, textbooks, assessment, and any major educational decision. It is also the main regulatory body for budgeting and payments of the educational staff. For many, the public sector teaching job can be a desirable option. That is because of enjoying regular payments, job security, exemption from military service (if it applies), stable salary with bonuses, and, in some cases, affordable accommodation. However, the frequent nationwide strikes and street protests of teachers in Iran for better salaries and more stable employment contracts (Abedini, 2020) show that teaching is not a satisfactory job. As far as financial matters are concerned, public school teachers, on average, are paid about $300, which makes it difficult to keep the family afloat for a family of two (Rezai & Sarkhosh, 2021).

A more accessible job opportunity for both newly graduated and experienced teachers of English in Iran is in private institutes. The number of these institutes has mushroomed over the past few years, as you see language institutes in almost all main streets of cities, towns, and even small villages. Although their increase can come down to the desire to make money, it can be claimed that one reason for the boom in this number is the inefficiency of public schools in raising competent English speakers. As far as educational matters are concerned, private institutes in general have been doing well in terms of having their own flexible curriculum and not following the top-down rule of the Ministry of Education. They usually have their own teacher training courses and try to have an updated system of education with textbooks published by famous international publications. Depending on working hours and the size of the institute, payments range from $34 to $394 per month (Rezai & Sarkhosh, 2021). However, according to Rezai and Sarkhosh (2021), teachers in language institutes cannot benefit from a stable job position, a regular salary, and health insurance. That is because making money is a priority in these places, and attempts are made to keep the expenses as low as possible.

Under such circumstances, where the expectations of the teachers are not fulfilled, dissatisfaction might arise. Studies on the Iranian EFL teachers in Iran have revealed factors that make teaching a real struggle. For secondary junior English teachers, Afshar and Doosti (2015) have shown that inadequate salaries act as a hurdle for teachers to pursue research and further academic endeavors. Although they have reported satisfaction because of the nature of the job, such as imparting knowledge and serving society well, they have been under pressure due to low knowledge of the students, an unsupportive principal, and their low occupational status. Other problems for the teachers have been teaching for testing purposes, the asymmetrical power relationships in education, and the social and financial crises (Tohidian et al., 2023). Other secondary important issues related to the English language teaching curriculum include the inflexible system, learners' expectations, assessment and teachers' payments (Safari & Rashidi, 2015), textbooks and facilities (Aliakbari & Saeedi, 2022), being viewed as undervalued professionals (Atai et al., 2022), insufficient CALL infrastructure (Meihami, 2021), and the gender inequality in government prepared textbooks (Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, 2020).

Despite these challenges and calls for reforms in educational policies, there have not been major steps to improve the situation of teachers or introduce significant changes to the English language teaching curriculum. English curricula are sometimes topics of discussion among politicians, but they mainly lead to non-educational skirmishes rather than workable solutions. Some concerned academicians have pointed out the failure of the education system to raise the level of English language proficiency among university graduates. They have called for a change in attitudes towards innovation and modernity to achieve scientific growth in Iran (Borjian, 2013).

3.2.4. Emigration of Iranians

Leaving the country has been an escape route for Iranians over the past few decades. This can be applied to teachers of English in Iran since, as mentioned, the employment opportunities in both public and private sectors cannot guarantee relief from economic hardships and a stable and fulfilling job in their field. Moreover, in the broader context, immigration has been viewed as an enticing prospect since Iranians have either benefited from immigration or have had to choose it to flee constraints at home. In the 1950s, Iran was experiencing an unprecedented speed toward modernization and required experts in various fields, mostly engineering. The Shah of Iran sent large groups of students overseas, mainly to the USA, to learn the required skills and to funnel back the outcome to Iranian industries, such as the oil industry, which was booming at the time. That was the first contemporary exodus of Iranians, which laid the foundations for the immigration process in Iran. A few years later, the political system went through one of the most profound changes, and that was the 1978 Iranian Islamic revolution. The years preceding and following the revolution were characterized by a mass immigration much larger than the previous one. People saw immigration as the only option to escape the potential problems that the change in the political system might bring about (Mobasher, 2018). In recent years, Iran has witnessed a new wave of immigration, which does not include political activists and human capital flight only. The cruel sanctions imposed on Iran, which have not been lifted after years of negotiations, have crippled the economy and have given rise to more immigration. Other reasons can be the political suppression of protestors, government corruption, violation of human rights, and

socio-demographic factors (Azadi et al., 2020). There has been a sharp increase in the number of Iranian migrants from a total of around 800,000 in 1990 to 1.8 million in 2020 (Iran Migration Outlook, 2020). The immigration of educated people, known as the brain drain, has also been estimated to have experienced a tenfold increase (Azadi et al., 2020). Countries hosting the majority of Iranians are the United States and Canada, while Türkiye ranks fifth, which has been affected by the triple increase in the number of Iranian immigrants over the past five years (Azadi et al., 2020). At present, the number of Iranians in Türkiye is more than 155,000, which places Iran as fourth among other foreign nationalities in Türkiye (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025).

Political, economic, and educational factors in Iran and Türkiye can help explain the rise of emigration from Iran to Türkiye. First, Iranians can enter Türkiye with no visa regulations and can stay in the country for 90 days. Citizens of Iran used to be granted a house-rent residency permit for one or two years, which could be enough time to find a job and settle down. With this opportunity gone now, a better option is to find residency through a student visa. In this type of visa, Iran ranks first among all foreign countries (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025). The geographical proximity, visa exemption, cultural proximity, and an economically more stable and more attractive host country have made Iranians view Türkiye as a favorable immigration destination in recent years. The number of houses bought by Iranians in Türkiye (Turkstat, 2021) shows that Türkiye is a haven for both migrants who plan to stay permanently in the country and investors who are looking for a more stable economy.

Among all the people with various intentions coming to Türkiye, English teachers from Iran have also found the country an ideal location. It was not feasible for me to acquire any official figures about the exact number of Iranian teachers in Türkiye. My understanding, based on connections and Iranian social media groups and communities in three major cities of Türkiye and the high number of schools and universities (roughly 3000 according to Turkstat, 2022), is that there is a noticeable number of Iranian teachers in Türkiye. On the other hand, Türkiye does not keep the borders closed for English teachers for many reasons, which will be enumerated in

the next section after a brief introduction on the status of English language teaching in Türkiye.

3.2.5. English Language Teaching in Türkiye

Türkiye is geographically located at the intersection of Asia and Europe, with proximity to North Africa and the Middle East. As the only official language of the country, Turkish is spoken by almost 85 million people. Based on Kachru's (1985) three-circle model of World Englishes, Türkiye is an EFL country in the expanding circle where English is neither an official language nor a second language (Öztürk & Atay, 2010). Regarding the level of English proficiency of Turkish EFL learners, the Education First English Proficiency Index results (EF, 2023) reported a score of 493 for Türkiye, meaning that among 113 countries that took part in the test, Türkiye's rank was 66. That proves that the level of English proficiency has not been on par with other advancements in the country. Like any modern state, Turkish authorities have made attempts to be connected to the modern globalized world to be able to function properly in the world of politics, economics, and benefit from scientific advancements. To reach that aim, a reassessment of the educational system should stand as the first major step.

For many years, language teaching in the Ottoman Empire was limited to Arabic and Persian teaching for religious and administrative purposes. The *Tanzimat* period (can be translated as reorganization) is known as a period of westernization of Türkiye during the Ottoman Empire. The period is characterized by a series of economic, administrative, and legal reforms. (Hatipoglu, 2017). It also aimed at modernizing the educational system by introducing new curricula and secularizing schools. The famous *Lisan Mektebi* was opened during this period with the agenda of teaching French as well as the languages in the expanded areas under Ottoman rule (Hatipoglu, 2017).

With moves toward modernization, English became a language in high demand. This caused the spread of teaching the English language in the country, both during the late years of the Ottomans and the early years of the Republic of Türkiye. In 1953, a

unification of schools with other Maarif schools (an educational institution) was followed by making English the medium of instruction for science and mathematics. In the following years, the spread of private and Anatolian high schools made the presence of English capability in society more noticeable. However, there came concerns over the efficiency of such a policy (Sricoban & Saricoban, 2012). By the 1980s, globalization had reached far beyond the West, and in Türkiye, knowledge of English meant better jobs and prosperity. Teaching English gained an essential share of the market of education, and predictions were made about the role of English in one's success. The increase in the number of private schools and Anatolian High Schools, which was the outcome of the transition from community-based ideals to privatization, along with the importance of the market (Kirkgöz, 2007), was accompanied by the expansion of English language teaching in many areas of life. By 2005, the number of private secondary schools and Anatolian high schools had surged to more than a thousand (MEB, 2006). Later efforts were mainly made to boost the efficiency of English language teaching across the country, the most important of which was the Ministry of Education Development Project in 1997. The project included some radical changes, such as incorporating English in primary school curricula, increasing methodology courses in teacher training programs, introducing communicative language teaching, and making efforts to have more student-centered classrooms (Kirkgöz, 2005). The project went through further changes to be in line with the latest developments made in the EU and the updated methodologies and principles introduced by academia. Later, modified policies by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) lowered the mandatory age to the second grade in schools in Türkiye (MoNE, 2018a).

English is one of the compulsory subjects in universities where the medium of teaching is Turkish (Kirkgöz, 2019). It has replaced French and German and is supposed to enable university students to understand technical texts in English. Türkiye launched English-medium universities in the second half of the 20th century. Since then, the number of EMI universities in Türkiye has rocketed, and currently English is the medium of instruction in 25 universities for around 50% of the programs (Arik & Arik, 2018). Upon gaining the accepted score to enter university in the national university exam, students can choose to study at an EMI university. If

their English proficiency is below the required score, they are supposed to take a one-year preparatory school to level up their proficiency. Besides the global status of the English language, competition among universities in attracting both national and international students has contributed to the surge in the number of EMI universities (Kirkgöz, 2019). Currently, many businesses, institutions, and sectors gain both further connection with the world and fancier prestige at home if they include English in different domains of their activities. The analysis of job advertisements printed in two high-circulation newspapers in Türkiye has shown that about 70 percent of jobs, especially jobs related to import and export, product management, data analysis, sales, and secretarial jobs, require English as a requirement for employment. For young people, proficiency in English can be a passcode for their entrance to their dream countries, mostly Western countries, and for many, it is the way to communicate with everyone beyond borders (Atay & Ece, 2009). In short, in present-day Türkiye, knowledge of English is a means to flourish both individually and professionally (Atay & Ece, 2009).

3.2.6. Foreign English teachers in Türkiye

Considering the importance of English in the world and the Western tendencies of Türkiye in international relations, the need for competent users of the English language should undoubtedly arise. The need became more serious when, in 1983, the private sector was allowed to found its own private schools. That meant a huge surge in the number of schools and students. The reformulation of the education system would also demand proper planning and the ability to implement such plans, which would, in turn, necessitate English language learning accessible to many people across the country to abide by the rules of equality of power and wealth (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). In addition, the success of educational plans was dependent on the ability of the educational authorities to provide competent teachers (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998), because the role of teachers in student success has never been downplayed or denied.

To address this lack of qualified teachers, one strategy was to look beyond borders to supply the needs of the education system. The plan was welcomed as fruitful, as

foreign teachers are believed to contribute to the internationalization and prestige of schools (Tatar, 2019) and increase the intercultural awareness and communication skills of students (Aydın et al., 2019). Foreign teachers can be non-local teachers who wish to find better jobs abroad or develop their careers. This was initiated by having teachers come to the country from English-speaking countries. According to Sarigul (2018), this wave of native teachers entering Türkiye was one of the most unscreened employments, as being native was sufficient for the person to start teaching. They were backpacker teachers whose only qualification was their mother tongue. The Turkish relationship with the United States and the establishment of the Peace Corps in Türkiye meant that some American Peace Corps volunteers would enter Türkiye. The status of English and the lack of qualified teachers made the wives of American officers find jobs as English teachers easily, with no certificates required (Akbaş, 2006). However, the idyllic situation did not last long, as in 1985, the Ministry of National Education made it mandatory for foreign teachers to have academic qualifications if they wished to work as teachers in schools affiliated with the Ministry. They were required to have at least a four-year academic qualification and teaching experience (Sarigul, 2018). Not only did it not stop foreigners from coming to Türkiye to teach, but it also allowed teachers with both sound general English and knowledge of pedagogy to enter the education system. In one case, the teachers were assumed to be the sole role players in enhancing English language proficiency in Türkiye. This led to the process of hiring about 40,000 native English teachers. They were supposed to cooperate with local teachers to achieve the aim of improving the quality of English language teaching across the country (Coskun, 2013).

However, the arrival of native speakers created the division of native versus non-native teachers, which was discussed before. In Türkiye, as in many other contexts, native speakers are viewed as the sole perfect example of English speakers and are thought to be the ideal teachers in any context (Celik, 2006). Native speakers are advertised by private language schools and language institutes to garner attention and boost their enrollment rates. These schools have unequal payment procedures that favor native speakers and usually do not blame them when insufficiency comes up (Celik, 2006). There are about 65 thousand foreign teachers

of English in Türkiye, which makes them have a share of less than five percent of all language teachers in the country (Celik, 2006). A large number of these teachers are not from English-speaking countries but are non-native teachers in their own countries who have traveled to Türkiye for a variety of reasons. According to Sarigul (2018), foreign non-native teachers are mainly from Ukraine, Greece, Iran, Bosnia, and Syria. The economic growth with a good GDP standing in the world compared to the neighboring countries (World Bank, 2021) has made Türkiye a dream destination for immigrants from the neighboring countries. However, needless to say, the reasons for immigration cannot be limited to the pursuit of money only, and in recent years, a general trend in migration could have added to the zest for migration to Türkiye. It can be claimed that, in contrast to the past, migration of teachers is not limited to native speakers, but non-native English teachers might seek the opportunity to teach in countries other than their own.

The Turkish labor rules have made it easy for immigrant teachers to find employment in the country by setting the 2% rule, allowing educational institutions to hire foreign nationals with respect to the ratio of 2 percent of locals (Bostancioglu, 2022). Migrant teachers in Türkiye have been reported to be beneficial in their contribution to the educational agendas. They are a blessing for those who vehemently object to the use of any Turkish in English classes. Students have to speak in English to communicate with them, and syllabus planners mostly consider speaking classes for this group of teachers (Ataii, 2023). Generally, learners have shown a positive attitude toward the performance of these teachers, especially in the assessment of grammar and writing (Koşar, 2018). Bostancioglu (2022) discusses the benefits granted by non-native teachers who have immigrated to Türkiye. They introduce growth in intercultural awareness and communication, usually introduce a good level of English to their institution, and promote further collaboration among colleagues.

These teachers can also provide the opportunity to familiarize learners with a variety of accents available in their country, region, or the world (Skliar, 2014), which can be a good stride toward understanding English as an International Language.

3.2.7. Iranian English teachers in Türkiye

Having discussed the situation in Iran and Türkiye, the following lines try to shed light on the status of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye, considering their background in Iran and the foreign language situation in Türkiye. Knowledge of the following points can significantly help in internalizing the identity issues that will later be uncovered in the data.

In terms of job security and financial stability, Iranian teachers can have a better chance of finding employment once they are relocated to Türkiye. This is both related to the economic power and educational system, which, in the former case, has given birth to numerous private schools all seeking English teachers, and in the latter case has generated English-medium universities all in need of language teaching professionals. The contract-based and stable salary system that Iranian teachers receive in Türkiye is not taken for granted, since they need to value their jobs and do their best to have their contracts renewed at the end of the year. However, there are still restrictions that are rightfully in place to avoid unscreened employment, which has been intensified in recent years. For example, one requirement is that English teachers should have academic degrees from prestigious universities or have enough job experience. In addition, they need to have proof of general English, with the benchmark set at a considerably elevated point. This means Iranians will be under pressure to prove themselves as capable individuals, as is the case for most non-native teachers (Llurda & Calvet-Terre, 2022).

In addition, the close geographical and cultural proximity of the two countries has proved to be beneficial for the newcomers. On the one hand, there are sufficient differences to enable the Iranian teacher to establish a good relationship with students and colleagues. On the other hand, the differences are not too many to yield constant cultural misunderstanding or attitudinal conflicts. This is in sharp contrast to claims about native speakers not having enough cultural awareness, which has resulted in their disregard for the sensitivity of the issue and its possible effect on their students (Al-Jadidi, 2009). Bostancioglu (2022) sees this cultural juxtaposition as an opportunity to develop learners' intercultural communication skills since

immigrant teachers can come from many different countries. That means they can provide the chance for the students and even their colleagues to meet and learn about different cultures.

The third point about Iranians in Türkiye is related to another commonality between the two cultures. As was mentioned before, Iranians experienced an Islamic revolution and later an Islamic country, which has affected their attitudes towards Western powers, as the homeland of the language they teach. Although Türkiye has followed secularist ideologies in recent years, it has a long history of being governed by Islamic rule during the Ottomans. This means Islam has an important role in the identity of Iranian teachers and the new country they have stepped into. In addition, both countries enjoy rich, distinguished histories, and that has made both peoples have something important in common. Such a fusion of Islamic background, historical pride, and moderate context can have identity-related consequences that might affect the social behavior and identities of teachers.

In addition, every speaker from a different country means more variety. According to the pluricentricity and subjectivity claims, this variety should be encouraged and promoted rather than sidelined. In addition to their multilingualism, which is an advantage for the teacher (Ellis, 2016), Iranian teachers enjoy the richness built up under at least three identities. They have been affected by their native culture over the years of socialization in Iran. They have received their education in Iran, enabling them to have a second view of the educational system. Moreover, their experience in learning another language has enriched their cultural identity by being immersed in the culture of those countries where English is a native language. As a third culture, the Turkish context adds to the cultural diversity of these teachers. Besides being their country of residence, as teachers, they need to develop an awareness of Turkish culture. With the existence of three cultures in their repertoire, Iranian teachers truly represent the principles backed by English as an International Language (EIL), which sees English as a medium to have international and intercultural communication and can help students have exposure to varieties in English (Matsuura, 2007; Sharifian, 2009). Finally, the professional identity of these teachers is formed in their home country under the influence of their culture and educational norms (Fuller et al.,

2005). Once in a new cultural and pedagogical landscape, Iranian teachers are likely to experience emotional, social, and mental conflicts since their personal histories are formed by their membership in different communities, which determines their social and pedagogical beliefs (Colliander, 2018).

3.3. Participants and Sampling

Since the goal of sampling in qualitative research is not representativeness or generalizability (Barbour, 2014), but delving into the lived experience of the subject, the researcher has the power to reach out to specific desirable participants. In order to find participants who have enough stories about the phenomenon in question, I chose purposive sampling. It allows the researcher to find subjects based on a predetermined set of criteria since the focus is on cases that can provide us with a great deal of information about issues relevant to the purpose of the study; cases that provide a specific – 'biased' or 'information-rich' – perspective (Patton, 2002). Participant selection was conducted before the data collection began, but the sampling population was kept open throughout the study, and new entrants were allowed. One type of purposive sampling is criterion sampling, which is selecting participants according to a predetermined profile (Patton, 2015). That makes it possible to have a homogeneous sample to carry out a deep analysis of the concept in question (Flick, 2018). The purpose here is not to make assumptions about all Iranian teachers of English working in Türkiye, but to conduct an in-depth analysis in order to reveal major identity shapers for each of the participants. The following criteria helped me limit the scope of inclusion as participants in the study: (1) English schoolteachers born in Iran with some experience of teaching in Iran. (2) Those who have immigrated to Türkiye over the past five years and intend to stay in the country for a long time (or at least this is the initial intention). I did not aim for long-time residents to have a limit on the degree of inclusivity since we are not trying to have a maximum variation in our sampling, but rather a homogeneous group. (3) Those who currently work in one of the K-12 schools in the city of Ankara. Since immigrant identities can be affected by the conditions in the current state, we have limited the workplaces to schools only to avoid further variability here. (4) They are willing to share information about themselves and class activities weekly and then give consent

to attend an interview session afterward. Since receiving any training in Türkiye can affect the present identity of teachers, I have also included such information in the profile of students and considered that at the time of data analysis. As international teachers are not allowed to teach at public schools in Türkiye, all seven teachers of my study worked in private schools in Ankara. Demographic information and the number of entries for diaries and interviews are listed in Table 1. A short bio for each participant can be found in Appendix 2. As the data in the table shows, some of the participants received their training in Iran, and some sought certificates after their relocation to Türkiye. For non-native teachers to be eligible to work in international institutions, CELTA is mostly a requirement. CELTA is short for Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults, an internationally recognized qualification that is considered the initial certification for those willing to teach second-language students. Some of the participants went for DELTA (Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in Türkiye to boost their employability chances in the Turkish job market (Table 1).

Since sample size is not an agreed-upon decision in qualitative research (Flick, 2018), I tried to have an initial number of participants and then look for more if necessary. Considering the theory driving the study, I did my best to have information-rich participants who could provide enough information about the research question rather than assuming that a specific number can guarantee attainment of the desired information.

Table 1. Participants' demographic information

Teacher	Age	Gender	Educational Background	Teaching Experience (Years)	Training in Türkiye	Living in Türkiye (Years)	Diary (No of Words)	Interview (No of Words)
Maryam	42	Female	MA in English literature MA in ELT	12	Yes DELTA	5	8980	6057
Mina	44	Female	BA in Physics CELTA	17	No	3	7540	6385

Table 1. (continued)

Soroush	40	Male	BA in English literature MA in ELT	15	No	3	1822	8064
Reza	35	Male	BA in Translation	6	Yes TESOL	4	3844	6008
Azar	41	Female	BA in English literature MA in ELT	12	Yes CELTA / TESOL	5	1971	5468
Niki	30	Female	BA in ELT MA in ELT	8	Yes DELTA	7	2430	9513
Niloufar	43	Female	BA in English literature MA in ELT	13	Yes CELTA / DELTA	3	4584	12843
						TOTAL	**31171**	**54338**

Impeding factors like access to participants and their willingness to participate (Barbour, 2014), along with the driving factors such as my own cultural capital as a person sharing most of the features of the target participants (Barbour, 2014), finally resulted in reaching out to seven Iranian English teachers to participate in the study. The purpose was to analyze their data to see when saturation is reached. That means the analysis and collection of data were done concurrently to reach a stage where the researcher decides that the data render no new patterns (Flick, 2009). Inherent in qualitative research, challenging data and openness to new trends remained options to choose throughout the whole study.

Among the seven participants of the study, I already knew three of them for a relatively long time. I met them individually and explained the project in detail, and gained their consent easily. Although I knew them already, I discussed some ethical issues with them, assured them that the study would not hurt them in any way, that their confidentiality would be respected throughout the research, and that their information would not be used for any other purposes. They were also assured that they would have the chance to withdraw from the study at any time before or during the study. I made it clear that their stories would be used for research purposes, so they should not feel under any pressure to produce stories for the sake of friendship

or just have something to present. Having thought of the common manner among Iranians, I felt it necessary to refer to it, since Iranians' deep-seated inclination to make a friend happy could have resulted in the creation of fake or instrumental data. Along the same lines, since teachers could adopt a pedantic approach to writing anything, even their own stories, I reminded the participants that their stories that truly recount what happened to them and speak their sense of self are what matter to me. The other participants were introduced to me through Iranians who are either teachers or students here (snowball sampling). I initiated contact with them, set a meeting time, and saw them in person. Of the four teachers, one of them gave initial consent but pulled out in the first week since she claimed to be too busy to write down weekly stories. With the other teachers, I tried to keep in touch before the journal-keeping phase of the study began. After the first meeting, I sent them some messages containing information about the way diary keeping is done, as well as reminders about the ethical issues of the study. Besides that, I tried to have friendly chats with them. This was to make them feel at ease sharing their stories with me later throughout the study (Creswell, 2013). Throughout the study, I tried to keep in touch with all seven participants and meet them in person from time to time. Sometimes, in our friendly meetings, I could obtain some stories and events that they had not included in their journals. I even felt that they were freer to share these, as this was not in a written format (which can be considered a formal act), and they did not recount these for a research study but for socializing purposes.

3.4. Data collection

For the investigation of the identity of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye, I need to have access to the lived experience of teachers presented in first-person narratives. There are various collection tools used by qualitative researchers that make this access possible. This study has benefited from diaries and interviews.

3.4.1. Diaries

Diaries are reflective activities that provide a chance to know the individual's ongoing identity (re)construction (Barkhuizen, 2016). I exploited diaries to find access to the teachers' experiences, thoughts, and feelings since it is a less

cumbersome reflective task compared to other means of data collection used in qualitative investigations. I assume that interviews might not capture some stories that teachers experience at work since they require extensive reflection, as the teacher should think about events that happened over a longer period than diaries. However, weekly diaries provide a chance to mull over the past week and jot down anything worthy of consideration. They have a great benefit over other means of data collection as they greatly reduce the issue of forgetfulness and reveal stories that might be hidden or muted in interviews. In addition, diaries can enrich the interview questions as they provide a glimpse into the lives of teachers and hint at questions that had not initially come to the mind of the researcher (Barbour, 2014).

In our study, I formulated interview questions with insights gained from previous studies as well as an analysis of diaries. Finally, as an indirect way of communication with the researcher, diaries make it possible for the writer to express their feelings more freely, and the researcher can track the development of emotional responses over time (Block, 2007). This was obvious in the case of Mina, whose emotional frankness, when she ran into some conflicts with her boss and students, was more evident in her diaries than in her interviews.

To design the structure of the diary phase of data collection, I followed Barkhuizen and Wette (2008). I tried to give the participants a sense of direction by listing a series of thought-provoking prompts so that they could use them to think about their experiences and write them down. This made it possible for me to deal with fewer irrelevant stories. However, if instructions are too restrictive, there is the risk of sacrificing the discovery of reality since it could limit the expression of thought. I did my best to compromise between freedom to narrate stories and deference to the structure of the diary. One advantage of diaries is that they can be structured at the researcher's whim (Barbour, 2014). As such, I decided to limit my structure to a few prompts only (Appendix 1) and then give enough freedom to the participants to write whatever else, and however they desire. In meetings with the participants, I asked them to just think of anything related to their Iranianness, foreignness, and non-nativeness and then write about the event. In case they needed something thought-provoking, they would be advised to refer to the prompts. Since narratives are not

solely about events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), I encouraged the participants to express their thoughts and feelings too. For example, one of the prompts asks teachers to write about an event in which they felt incompetent because they are not native speakers of English. Since writing on a weekly basis can be something challenging for the participants, I decided to make it easier for them by allowing them to write in Persian or send voice messages if they wished. I asked them to narrate their stories in a friendly communicative way, and that they do not need to obey the formal writing conventions.

Data collection through diaries began on the first week of November 2023 and lasted until mid-February 2024. I decided to announce the end of diary keeping when I noticed a decline in the number of stories. At some points, I would contact the participants to inquire about their delay in sending stories. In case their response was a lack of anything new related to the prompts, I gave them new prompts to elicit more stories. However, after four months of weekly story sending, it became evident that data saturation had been achieved since the last stories were mostly narrating things already reported or deviating from the prompts and the purpose of the study. In addition, over the last month, the number of stories was undergoing a downward trend. Two participants sent their stories in Persian, and five in English. All of the participants sent written weekly journals, though they sometimes preferred to send voice messages. There were some national holidays during which schools were off, and I received a very low number of stories. During such periods, I asked the teachers to focus on teacher meetings and training to recount events. I saved all the stories under pseudonyms on a password-protected computer and kept the edit option open in case teachers wanted something to be changed or removed. By the end of the diary-keeping stage, I had collected 174 entries containing 31,171 words in total.

3.4.2. Interviews

In a postmodern mode of knowledge, interviews are effective instruments since they are a site for the social construction of knowledge, as opposed to the positivist standpoints where knowledge should be collected. The construction of knowledge in interviews is made possible through the interaction of participants, since here

‘knowledge is interrelational, interwoven in webs of networks’ (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Interviews are the main tool to collect data for a narrative inquiry study (Flick, 2018). As a retrospective practice (Barkhuizen et al., 2025), interviews provide information in the form of stories told by the participants with the help of the researcher. One problem with the interview data is that they might not squarely fit what happened in reality, as the data might be colored by the passage of time and the subjectivity of the narrator. However, the data can give information about ‘… the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding her relation in the world’ (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). Interview data should be analyzed deeply, and the researcher needs to believe in “the interpretive nature of narration” (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 169) in order not to fall into the trap of viewing stories of the participants as pure facts and truth. In interviews, participants are given enough freedom to narrate their lived experiences, and a rapport is established between the participant and the interviewer (Rezaei, 2017), which can be one reason for interviews being more popular than other data collection tools. Interviews in narrative inquiry are normally lengthy with open-ended questions to make it possible for the respondent to have the freedom to talk about their life story as completely and honestly as possible (Block, 2022) and provide the researcher with sufficient narrative data. Semi-structured interviews are the most common type in narrative inquiry, which are structured with some pre-set questions, follow-up questions, and an interview guide, and are both organized and flexible. They respect the perspectives of the respondent and warn the interviewer against directing the whole interview process (Barbour, 2014).

I drafted interview questions based on the major studies about the identity of teachers of English, the identity of immigrant adults, and the way identity is defined in poststructuralism. In addition, I went over the diary data, found areas in need of further elaboration or areas lacking information, and designed some interview questions specific to each teacher. I developed an interview protocol to guide the conduct of the interview sessions and to have follow-up questions when participants go blank. This protocol helps the interviewer approach the task with enough clarity. It also contributes a lot to the procedural reliability of the data (Flick, 2009). I ordered the questions starting from some personal and experiential inquiries, their

teaching life in Iran, the current situation in Turkish schools, and plans and aspirations.

Each interview session started with a generative narrative question related to the research question to encourage the participant to start recounting the main narrative. For example, I inquired: 'I'd like to know about your background as a teacher. Can you tell me what drove you toward choosing teaching as a job?' The teacher would then be given the freedom to provide as much detail as they wished. While the interviewees were narrating, I did my best to pinpoint any ambiguous areas and ask them follow-up questions if necessary (narrative probing). For example, a follow-up question was like this: 'You told me that you learned English by studying some coursebooks; do you mean you never took a class or anything?' When they had finished recounting an event, I then sought the opinion of the participant (balancing stage). I gave them confidence that they were an expert in their field and could comment on the events, make judgments, and engage in a discussion. In this stage, 'why' questions were asked after all 'how' questions had been clarified.

I piloted the interview questions and interview guide with another English teacher to evaluate the clarity of questions, timing, the order of questions to ensure smooth progress, and the need to have backup questions. I tried to diagnose the questions and rephrase any questions that might not be easy to understand.

The interview sessions were set with consideration of the availability of the participant. During the interviews, it was important to make sure the participant was at ease, and no narrative was produced due to the existence of power asymmetry (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). My power as the interviewer was limited only to organizational matters like posing questions, defining the interview situation, timing, and terminating the interview. I did my best to turn the interviews into an interactive communication rather than a long monologue. Of the seven interviews, five were conducted face-to-face and two online. I gave the participants the freedom to choose either English or Persian to talk about their experiences, and they all opted for English, though at some points they would switch to Persian to express their thoughts or feelings more clearly. I had already informed the teachers that the interview would

last roughly two hours and that there could be another interview. So, they were requested to find some free time and to be free from obligations so that they could be at ease during the session.

I started the interview by asking about the teacher's decision to become a teacher and the hurdles and joys they experienced along the way when they were teachers in Iran. Questions in this part mostly included references to the past to help the participant have a retrospective inspection (Flick, 2009). The second part of the interview aimed at discovering the way identities are reshaped under the circumstantial realities of the new context of teaching. We focused on anything that questions their being as individuals and as teachers because of carrying identities as foreign teachers, Iranian teachers, and non-native teachers. Final questions explored their imagined futures and tried to discover the contribution of their immigration to such imagination.

Having carefully read diary entries and analyzed most of them, I started the interviews with a full understanding of the main identity shapers for the teachers. Although this helped me have a better interaction with the participants and play a more active role, I did my best not to impose my worldview, since the interviewer should not have early evaluations and should try to have a non-directive style (Flick, 2009). That could damage the scientific process of the interview and lead to the production of data that is not fully reflective of lived experiences. I also tried not to limit myself to the prepared questions and rely on presuppositions, but instead adopt an explorative stance when interviewing the teachers. I did my best to have the interviewee resume their original trajectory whenever I felt that they were going into too many details about their personal life, or inclined towards irrelevant memories, or just went blank in remembering something. Since qualitative study seeks to achieve specificity in narrations, I made sure to ask the teachers to give a detailed description of the event instead of forming a general picture (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). My attempt was to go beyond simple answers in order to gain "a maximum of self-revelatory comments" (Flick, 2009, p. 152). That was achieved by having teachers provide more explanation, examples, and justifications. Each interview session lasted roughly an hour, and 5338 words of data were collected.

As far as transcription is concerned, some tend to achieve maximum exactness by conveying pauses, breaks, and even non-linguistic symbols. The procedure is called upon depending on the nature of the analysis since it brings natural science ideals in conversation and linguistic analysis, and the reason is that the organization of language yields important data about the language producer's motifs. However, for more psychological and sociological inquiries, as in the present study, where content produced is the main element under investigation, exactness in transcription is only justified in some exceptional cases (Flick, 2009). However, as a requirement for the transcription for thematic analysis, I did my best to have an orthographic transcription, which is a verbatim transcription of all verbal data as well as significant non-verbal data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), such as long pauses, laughter, or significant body language. As the transcriber of the data, I am fully aware of the purpose of the study and the way the data was going to be analyzed, so I had the ability to decide what to include as the final data. To be consistent with the transcription, I followed Drew's (1995) transcription convention. Firstly, since manageability was an important issue, I did not have to convert the spoken language, which was not related to the purpose of the talk. The fact that I was uncertain about what to include in the final analysis made it justifiable to ignore data deemed to be unnecessary (Barbour, 2014). Secondly, I tried to stick to the recommendations for clarity of the work to have the final product readable and interpretable. Finally, I took great care to keep the identity of the participants concealed during the transcription since the teachers mentioned names of people and places that could not be included in the transcribed data, as it would breach the ethical rules.

3.5. Data Analysis

Adopting narrative inquiry, the study relied on the stories of seven teachers to gain data on their identities. To analyze data, I used *analysis of narratives*, a type of narrative inquiry that chooses narratives that can address the research questions and then finds common and meaningful stories that zoom in on one particular topic. This type of analysis does not require the researcher to present the data in the form of narratives, but narratives are used as data to draw conclusions.

One of the most flexible methods used to find patterns among data, which adopts a content analysis approach and can answer any research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013), is thematic analysis. There are single-case thematic analysis and multiple-case thematic analysis, and the current study employed the latter. In multiple-case thematic analysis, when investigators are looking for codes and themes, they can compare narratives of the teachers regarding their identities in the new setting, and then reach a shared theme coming out of their data. It also sheds light on the individual differences among teachers (Barkhuizen et al., 2025). Adopting a systematic approach, like multiple-case semantic analysis to analyze data, adds to the rigor of the data analysis. In addition, thematic analysis makes the researcher approach data unbiased, as she takes into account all data using the same analytical lens (Barkhuizen et al., 2025). Thematic analysis might be wrongly referred to as an overly simplistic way of data analysis, but it demands a great deal of rigor on the part of the researcher. That is because the researcher needs to be able to determine themes and be able to distinguish among themes based on their contribution to the study. In addition, a thematic analyst should have a thorough knowledge of social and psychological issues on the topic (Block, 2022). Besides reading into data, the researcher needs to connect data to the outer world, to provide a thorough description of the context, and to justify the emerging data in light of the major socio-cultural trends. Thematic analysis is a way to link the tangible data to more abstract concepts. Although frequency is a determining factor in thematic analysis, meaningfulness is not limited to the most common patterns only, but to data that is most meaningful. That means when doing thematic analysis, I took into account both emerging themes based on the number of occurrences as well as the significant contribution of a less frequent theme in addressing research questions.

There are two approaches researchers adopt to carry out a thematic analysis on data (Flick, 2009). The deductive approach analyzes data to seek confirmation for pre-determined themes, concepts, or categories. They have been developed based on the previous research and the topic of the study. When coding and finding themes, the researcher tries to focus on data that match those categories rather than revealing something not planned in the data. Although this approach is more focused, there is the danger of missing out on important novel data (Flick, 2009). An inductive

approach, on the other hand, tries to analyze everything in the data to reach a conclusion solely based on what has been presented as data. This type of approach is mostly associated with grounded theory, where there is a lack of prior theory, and requires the researcher to immerse themselves in data to find themes. What I have tried here is to exploit the positives of both approaches. I have based my analysis on the three main identity shapers, which have helped me structure my study and research questions, i.e., the contribution of past life in the current identity of teachers, the negotiation of identity in the current context, and their imagined identity. Having these in mind, I analyze data to see what can fit these three general categories. This is the deductive phase of my analysis, as in this type of analysis, predefined categories can help approach data (Flick, 2009). Having done that, I give myself enough freedom to immerse myself in the stories of the participants and consider every bit of information as a potential contributor to theme construction, but I have a sense of direction by modeling the three time-framed categories (past, present, and future) as my guidelines throughout the analysis phase. Deciding what to analyze and how much data is required for analysis is one of the challenges that any qualitative analysis might impose on the researcher (Norton & Toohey, 2011), and applying both a deductive and inductive approach is a way to address this issue.

As a requirement for any qualitative data analysis, iterative, emergent, and interpretive principles were followed in my analysis path (Dörnyei, 2007). Iterative quality postulates that there should not be a clear-cut boundary between data collection and data analysis, but there is a constant movement between data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. I did not wait until all data were collected, but started data analysis three weeks after the start of the diary collection phase of the study. The data collection process was informed by the re-interpretation of the data gained through the initial analysis. The findings would be kept in a research journal I had started for the research project, and then they would help me reformulate diary prompts or research questions. The emergent feature of qualitative research means that the study "…is kept open and fluid so that it can respond flexibly to new details or openings" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 37). I was ready to introduce changes if necessary throughout the study, since data analysis would give new directions. For example, the number of participants was kept open in case more participants needed

to be added. I also did not aim at a specific number of themes and succumbed to whatever number would emerge in the data. The interpretive feature of qualitative analysis necessitates avoiding data as objective truth but placing them in the context of use. It also means that meaning needs to be interpreted and viewed from different angles, and the perspectives of the participants as well as the researchers should be taken into account. The focus of the researcher is to make an effort to unravel the way participants see the world. Such an understanding is possible when the researcher approaches the task reflexively, describes the context in detail, and constructs meaning interactionally. My positionality here determined a role. One great advantage is my own identity as an Iranian teacher of English in Türkiye who has worked in a K-12 school for two years and has experienced the issue of being foreign and being non-native in Türkiye. These were useful in contacting other Iranian teachers of English, bonding with them, and encouraging them to be open to sharing their life stories for research purposes. The interpretation of data is the product of my studies on the topic and my own take based on what I have read in the data. The following section outlines the steps that I followed to identify the eight final themes.

3.5.1. Data familiarization

I started with data familiarization, which included reading and re-reading the data to familiarize myself with the data and discovering an initial sameness in the stories submitted. I read some entries multiple times to make sense of them, and even to look for some potential themes. Since two teachers sent me their stories in Persian, the act of translating their stories could also be considered part of familiarization (Braun & Clark, 2013). In the diary phase of the study, I continued the process of data collection and analysis until I discovered fewer stories submitted by the participants. In order to gain access to more data, I sent them more prompts based on what I had analyzed and, therefore, what I had learned about my data. For instance, after the rudimentary analysis of data, I noticed a tendency of some teachers to refer to the differences between Iranian and Turkish students in terms of the strong liking that they develop towards their teacher and how this affected their well-being. I tried to seek confirmation from teachers, but at the same time, I did my best not to impose

my personal view here (Barbour, 2014), as such I shared new prompts with the participants and asked teachers to think of differences they have observed between Iranian and Turkish English learners. This is what the iterative feature of qualitative research requires: having a cyclical approach, not a linear one, and continuously moving through data collection, data analysis, and interpretation.

3.5.2. Identifying codes

What is meant by a code is 'a word or a brief phrase that captures the essence of why you think a particular bit of data may be useful' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The act of finding codes in the data is the coding process, which involves going over data, making sense of it, and then finding codes to represent that piece of data. The strategy I adopted to code the narrative data was what Braun & Clarke (2006) suggested, which is to do complete coding first and then selective coding. Complete coding involves selecting any piece of information that is related to the research questions and analyzing it. So I decided to code all the data related to the topic, and in case of doubt about the relevance of a narrated piece to the research questions, I decided to go on with coding and make a decision later. However, I exercised caution not to commit 'cherry picking'; selecting just the information that could support what I wanted to present. I benefited from both semantic codes derived from the semantic meaning of data and data-derived codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006); codes that involved my interpretation of data. For example, 'feeling responsible toward my students' is a semantic code, as this is exactly the phrase used by one of the participants, but the 'feeling responsible to present one's culture' was a data-derived code. After initial coding, following Braun and Clarke's recommendations, I went over the codes to make sure they make sense when they are separated from the data, as a name representing a code should be self-explanatory. After the initial coding, I went over all the codes and managed to identify some initial categories, so I created them and then put the new codes under the relevant category (code collating). At the end, I came back to all the codes, reviewed and re-categorized them, and deleted some of them. I used MAXQDA to code the data since the options offered by the software, such as visuals, tools, and team collaboration, facilitate the coding process, and code merging, collapsing, and categorizing can be carried out much more easily.

I went back and forth over the data to uncover exceptions, contradictions, and disconfirming pieces of information, and made some revisions to the categories. There were codes that needed clarification, so I tried to turn a word into a phrase to make the code as clear as possible. I also did my best to make each code fully representative of the information it is supposed to capture. In other words, I tried to make the code present the essence of the data. At the end of this stage, I was left with fewer codes but richer ones in conveying meaning. All the discovered codes are listed in Appendix 4.

3.5.3. Discovering themes

With the codes identified and collated, the next step in data analysis began. My deeper analysis here was intended to discover something important hidden in data related to the research questions; something that 'represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). I tried to find a sufficiently broad, all-inclusive, and summative statement that manages to capture the gist of all the codes that came to form a bundle with each other. Shuttling between the theories and data, I tried to define a theme that contains the most salient feature in the data. I took particular care not to miss important data, and at the same time not to try to develop a theme that is aimed at covering all the details. I had to review the codes many times, change some, and make some revisions to reach a theme. Despite the increased fatigue related to this process, I did not allow the desire to find any theme to interfere with my aim to have themes with a central organizing concept (Braun & Clarke, 2013), or to mix up a code with a theme, or to find a pattern unrelated to the research questions. In relation to research questions and commonality across data, some initial themes were discovered. They were open-to-change themes and were waiting for further analysis to be either rejected or modified. The candidate themes were formed in light of the theories of the study, poststructuralism, capital, and imagined identity, and were modified by going back to the codes multiples times. That is important since the final theme should be exclusive enough to cover all the codes falling under it. The theme review step involved applying minor changes to the candidate themes or merging some of them to have results that successfully capture the idea of the pattern. At this stage, I kept in mind

that not being attached to a potential theme is a priority. Therefore, if necessary, I was willing to discard a theme regardless of the interest I had developed for it. Until my satisfaction was achieved, this iterative theme-reviewing process continued. As the design of the study is the analysis of narratives, the purpose is to present findings consciously selected by the researcher and are rightly derived from the data. After reviewing the initial themes many times, the following eight themes are extracted from both diary and interview data: 1) National representation; 2) Cultural, social, and symbolic capital; 3) Knowledge of Turkish language; 4) Othering and identity uncertainty; 5) New educational realities; 6) The non-native identities of teachers; 7) Dynamics of power and control; and 8) Immigration and imagination.

The names that represent the theme were carefully chosen since the name can show the content of the pattern and the view of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In finalizing themes, I went over the recommendations made by Braun and Clarke (2013) so that all the theme discovery principles would be closely followed. The recommendations are listed in Braun and Clarke (2013), and the following includes some of them.

- The theme is not just a summary of the codes, but it is meaningful
- The theme has an abstract and meaningful central organizing concept
- The theme has clear boundaries
- There is enough data to provide evidence for the theme

Having achieved the final themes, I started the theme analysis step. The purpose was to provide enough information about each theme and support the fact that the argument made by the researcher is well-grounded in the stories of the teachers. At some points, to bolster the claim or present a different aspect of the argument, I used multiple quotations. I explained each theme in detail by providing a detailed account of the contextual features, since the analysis of context is no less important than the analysis of the content of short stories. “Stories don’t fall from the sky …; they are composed and received in contexts—interactional, historical, institutional, and discursive” (Riessman, 2008). That is because the narration of a teacher is not mimetic. It means that it cannot reflect what exactly happened, but it is affected by the particular setting, the audience, and the purpose of the story. As such, when

presenting a theme and talking about stories, I included information about the context of the narration; those that included interactional as well as social relations.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

While traditional modes of inquiry mostly seek to find general truths and facts, narrative inquiry mostly investigates individual interpretations of situations and their worldviews that are constructed through interaction with the researcher (Mertova & Webster, 2019). In narrative inquiry driven by poststructuralism, there is no general meaning for truth: rather, it is defined as it is perceived by an individual. Narrative inquiry does not look for the replicability of data since stories of individual participants are distinct to them and are produced under the circumstances special to those participants that can vary among individuals, so the notion of reliability does not make sense under poststructuralism and narrative inquiry. In a narrative inquiry, the purpose is to reach a 'well-crafted' and 'subjective interpretation' of data (Barkhuizen et al., 2025) rather than having reliable data. As for validity, it is important that the research is based on sufficient and reliable data and that claims are grounded in data. Here, generalizable data and prescriptive claims have to be avoided (Mertova & Webster, 2019). In the following section, I introduce concepts that should replace the conventional categories of reliability and validity.

3.6.1. Rigor

One of the most important mechanisms to ensure rigor is to have a systematic method to analyze data (Barkhuizen et al., 2025). Our use of thematic analysis as an approved and widely applied way to approach data confirms our systematicity. Another way to add to the rigor of the research is to keep a record of the way data is obtained and analyzed, and to have a detailed account of the way results are achieved. This makes it possible for the reader to have access to the data by following any specific part of the data collection or data analysis phases (Mertova & Webster, 2019). During the data collection period, I kept a record of all the important activities I had done to complete the project. In the data collection phase, I kept notes of diary entry difficulties, questions in need of reformulation, participants who were

active in sending stories, and my initial interpretation of the data and the themes. For the interviews, I took note of the results of the pilot interview and issues that the pilot interviewee had when dealing with the questions. While analyzing the data, I kept a record of all my initial thoughts when I read over the data for the first time, including candidate codes, my personal feelings about the stories, and the way the data could be related to any of the research questions. The meticulous record-keeping compensated for the failure of memory at many times and enabled me to have a more efficient connection with the findings. In the coding part, I kept a record of descriptions used for each code, then made use of them when they were to be mixed or modified (i.e., code collating). During the whole data analysis part, I took great care not to fall into the trap of intersubjectivity (losing the value of details and succumbing to the overall narrative plot) and smoothing (trying to construct positive results despite some controversies) (Mertova & Webster, 2019). In general, a detailed account of time, place, and the event of the narration of the teacher ensured the rigor of the study.

3.6.2. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness tries to address the issue of the relationship between what we have gained as data and what is reality. However, narrative inquiry is based on the linguistic reality of human experience, which means that what is gained through narratives is not supposed to perfectly match what the individual experienced. In other words, truth in research based on narratives does not mean 'correspondence to what has actually occurred' (Mertova & Webster, 2019). One factor that can boost the trustworthiness of the study is the use of humans to collect and produce data, as humans as a research instrument can prevail over other paper-and-pencil instruments (Mertova & Webster, 2019). If the participants are given clues in interviews to construct a biased version of reality, either consciously or unconsciously, there is less trust in the data since the story does not match the reality (Flick, 2009). In journal keeping, this can happen when structures and limitations prevent participants from narrating what happened to them. As for the diary phase of data collection for the present study, I tried to give enough freedom to narrate whatever happened in their classes in relation to their foreignness, Iranianness, and non-native speakerness. As

shown in the appendix (1), the main question is one question only, so that the prompts would not lead the participants toward a forced creation of stories that are away from reality, and their stories would be a transparent window into reality. When they needed clarification or assistance on the question prompt, they could read over the other prompts to know exactly what they were supposed to narrate. Additionally, I tried to have member check to reach validity. The trust between me and the participants that had been built before the study and during the data collection (in addition to years of friendship with some of them) facilitated contact with them. Besides having contact with the participants during the journal-keeping phase and after interviews, I tried to share some of the findings with the participants to know their opinion and to understand whether the results are dependable and credible in their opinion. I also needed to make sure of my understanding of their stories. That is why keeping in touch with the participants was necessary. I followed Barkhuizen's (2010) recommendation on member checking by showing the findings to the participants and applying their comments in the analysis. Since people might recognize the researcher as a person with authority, they might not be too willing to criticize their work. In addition, people show reservations when it comes to finding faults with the work of a friend or acquaintance who has spent years working on a project, and that is more pronounced in Iranian culture. I assured the participants of my study that their ideas would result in the improvement of my work, so they were given both encouragement and freedom to express their honest opinions about the data. I should add another benefit to carrying out a member check. When people realize that their opinions are sought about a topic, they feel respected and valued; therefore, they take the job more seriously. In two cases, having heard of some of the codes, participants were able to remember more related stories. The new stories were added to the data, since qualitative research is not bound to a clear-cut data collection period.

As another layer of analysis to add to the trustworthiness of data, I tried to follow Mertova and Webster's (2019) suggestions on truthfulness. Initially, I judged the soundness of the theme against my personal experience as a teacher with the same profile as my participants. The stories of the teachers matched what I have experienced in Türkiye, or had happened to another teacher, with some slight

differences. If not, I used my logic to make sure of the plausibility of the narrated event. Finally, to account for the potential bias of the researcher, as the main analyzer and interpreter of the data, I had another coder carry out coding of some of the stories and go over the themes to make sure of the plausibility of my interpretations. To do that, I asked a friend of mine, who is sufficiently experienced in doing thematic analysis, to do the coding of 10 diary entries of two of the participants and propose the potential themes. Before that, he was informed about the purpose of the study, research questions, and the profile of the participants. He was also aware of the importance of his analysis in my study and the fact that his suggestions could reformulate my codes and themes. We sat together and discussed the emerging codes. Since the study assumed postmodern theories, where the shift is from consistency to thoroughness, we refrained from running technical inter-rater reliability calculations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), but focused on having a reflexive and interpretive effort in reaching agreement. That is because data are subjected to different interpretations according to the attitudes and knowledge of the coder. In most cases, though, we could reach an agreement about our coding, and the only discrepancy was the name that we had used.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Individuals participating in the study have certain rights, and it is incumbent upon the researcher to make sure that their rights are respected (Creswell, 2013). Protection of the rights of participants is a move towards conducting the study ethically and is a boost in the trustworthiness of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As a requirement of the Middle East Technical University (METU) ethics committee, the researcher needs to gain the approval of the committee before carrying out the data collection process (Appendix 5). The process included submitting different forms about the purpose, setting, and participants of the study. The approval process required submitting informed consent forms signed by the participants and a document containing the potential risks involved during the data collection process. The teachers of the study were fully informed about the study and signed the related forms. They were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point before, during, or after data collection, that their data would only be used for research

purposes, and only the researcher would have access to their stories. Data were stored on a password-protected computer, and nothing was stored on cloud sharing platforms. Before the data collection process, a pseudonym was used to refer to the participants so that the narratives would not be linked to the real narrator. I also tried to make them comfortable in sharing their stories by having contact and developing a friendly relationship weeks before the data collection began, since narrative inquiry necessitates a strong bond between the researcher and the participants and the act of co-construction of stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I did my best to create an atmosphere where participants feel free to share their thoughts on anything they wished, and I assured them that talking negatively about their institution would not have any effect on their future career. Nonetheless, if they had signed any non-disclosure agreement with their institutes or showed reservations to share some data, they were reminded to feel free to hide any information they wished.

During the diary phase of data collection, I told the participants that they should not feel forced to have a story for each week since nothing related to their identity could have arisen. I also told them to imagine an audience for themselves when writing the story (Barkhuizen et al., 2025), so that they have less forbearance to share their narratives. During the interviews, I took steps to ensure that I would not intervene in personal matters for the sake of co-construction of the stories, and made sure that my follow-up questions would not cause discomfort or stress. If I assumed that a certain question could make the person uneasy, I would remind them of their right to skip it. During the interview sessions, I was determined to show that the interviewee is precious to me as a respected teacher whose situation can be improved through research rather than as a source of data only. Finally, as was mentioned before, the participants were asked to comment on the themes I had found so that my findings would not be in sharp contrast to what they truly believed.

3.8. Researcher Reflexivity

For the researchers doing narrative inquiry, personal justification should be made and included in the written work. That means the researcher needs to see who they are in the context of the work and to know what stories the researcher is living in. That

means research cannot be separated from the way the researcher sees themselves (Clandinin, 2023). As a qualitative research study, this study confirms that everything is subjective and open to interpretation. In this type of research, the researcher approaches the phenomenon subjectively, so the reflexivity of researcher plays a determining role in the way data is analyzed and interpreted. That means the related educational and experiential background of the researcher should be taken into account when perusing the findings of the study. In this part, my intention is to elaborate on my background, the way my identity was formed in Iran, and how it changed when I experienced immigration.

I did my bachelor's in English language and literature and my master's studies in English language teaching in Iran, and then worked in Iran as an English teacher for about eight years. I then immigrated to Oman for a while and taught English in a school before immigrating to Türkiye, where I have been an English instructor at a university over the past six years. The desire to conduct a study on the identity of immigrant English teachers originated from the transnational lifestyle that I have had over the years, being on the move both in Iran and out of Iran. It was either for study purposes, which I did in Iran in English language teaching, or work purposes, which were in different cities in Iran, Oman, and Türkiye. Could I be a different English teacher or a different person when I embarked on teaching in the new context was something that I wanted to discover. I gained most of my teaching experience in Iran with students of various levels, ages, cultures, and personalities. The limited availability of social networks at the time, which made our highly restricted national TV the only channel to connect to the outside world, turned the English class into a window to gain familiarity with Western culture. In many cases, I had to juggle the negativity of the mainstream media towards the United States as one of the English-speaking countries, and the prevalence and importance of English in the world. I could clearly observe an uncertainty among my students, especially during my time in the most conservative city in Iran. They seemed like they had to choose between embracing the necessary evil and showing patience to see what the English class would proffer. In addition, those years heralded economic pressure on the people of Iran, which led to mass immigration. In every class, I had students who had someone among their friends or family members in other countries. I had to deal with

immigration questions daily, either about the best locations to go or ways to go. Soon after starting teaching in Iran, I had to encounter these concerns, besides being an English teacher. As an Iranian, immigration just adds to the multiplicity of identities, as this time you have to be a responsive person about the situation in your country. This time, you feel a sense of belonging to your country as your home, but there are things that you cannot defend. Experiencing such ebbs and flows during my teaching years was sufficient to have an investigation on the identities of immigrant teachers. Throughout the study, I attempted to approach points reflexively by connecting them to my professional and personal background. I experienced cases related to my foreignness and I tried to use them to judge the soundness of the stories of participants, to empathize with teachers, and to make judgments about the codes and themes. In some cases, I could feel that the stories shared by my participants were events I had also experienced, so that would assure me of the credibility of the data. During the interview session, I shared some experiences myself, something that happened to me related to my Iranian identity, and that would act as examples for the participants to remember similar events. Most importantly, I felt and was explicitly informed that my being a teacher facilitated my approachability for the participants. Being able to keep the flow of our conversation and share many things about the job can be one of the strongest points of my study, as I have rarely observed any other teacher signaling resilience in sharing what has happened and what they truly think.

One thing that I tried to do in the study was to record all my reflexivity through a reflexive journal. The notes in the journal were helpful when connecting with the participants during the interviews, as well as analyzing data and discovering themes. The reflexive journal provided the opportunity of having even more reflection by connecting what was found and what I thought. It was the best way to keep track of my own train of thought.

In this chapter, the main methodology used to conduct the study and the reasons for using it were clarified. To talk about the setting of the study, I gave some information about the educational systems in Iran and Türkiye, the determining factors in shaping the identity of Iranian teachers and major reasons for the immigration of Iranian teachers, and the reasons why they choose to work and live in Türkiye. I also talked

about studies of multiple case narratives, analysis of narrative, and thematic analysis as the methodology employed to collect and analyze data. Sampling techniques and reasons for using purposive and criterion-based sampling, along with basic information about the participants as well as data collection tools, diaries, and interviews, were the other points fully described here. In the data analysis part, I talked about why the study employed analysis of narratives data analytic technique, what type of thematic analysis was used, and what steps and precautions were taken to code the data and reach the final eight themes of the study. The chapter ended with discussions about rigor, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and my reflexivity as the researcher.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study focuses on the identities of a group of teachers of English working in K-12 schools in Ankara, Türkiye. Firstly, the study tries to identify the contribution of the cultural and professional life in Iran to the present identities of these teachers. Secondly, the changes in the identities of the teachers as a result of immigration and educational novelties are traced and reported. Finally, the study investigates the imagination of the teachers to discover the discourse community that they wish to be identified with in the future. It benefits from narrative inquiry, which relies on the stories of the participants as data. The stories were then analyzed using thematic analysis to discover the main themes emerging, which can best address the three research questions. Of the eight themes, themes 1, 2, and 6 are the emerging codes from data focusing on the resources that play roles in shaping identities and the new identities that are attributed to the background of the teachers. There are four themes that have emerged in relation to current professional engagement of teachers in Turkish schools, their concerns, and their reassurances in their interaction with different people at work. The last theme provides data about the future participants have imagined for themselves and the way immigration can play an active role in the emergence of the future imagined identities. This section analyzes each theme, connects it to the past, present, or future engagement of the teachers, and refers to essential quotations to support the emergence of each theme.

4.1. Theme 1: National Representation

According to Block (2014), a person's past life can be a source of identity dilemmas when they experience major life transitions. For the teachers of the present study, this dilemma arises when they are confronted with situations in which they need to

provide unbiased information about their country, Iran. They have been found to show unwillingness to fully attach themselves to their Iranianness, find a middle-ground here, or dispel anything related to who they were before their immigration. In their stories, teachers talked about various inquiries they have faced, ranging from anything about the teacher's local language, culture, and their native country, to more specific questions, such as religious beliefs, parents' situations, and political views. The way the teacher responds to such questions can undeniably play a role in forming an image of their homeland. In their interactions with their students or colleagues, the teachers showed concern about their role as cultural representatives when getting involved in culture-related discussions. However, considering the way Iran is represented in the media, teachers did not find it too easy to talk about their country. They talked about the necessity to strike a balance between honesty in representation, possible consequences in revealing everything, and shaping the listener's view of Iran.

4.1.1. Hiding

What we extracted from the data is a combination of strategies teachers applied when talking about their home country. A teacher might try to avoid revealing their identity or to fabricate a completely new one. In the quotation below, Azar narrates a story in which she went to the retreat when it came to revealing her country of origin:

> ... the girl asks me teacher I still don't know where you are from? I just smile and invite her to pay attention to the lesson. I don't want to talk about my country and I don't want to say where I am from because of the bad experience I had in my previous school. In that school, in a parent teacher meeting, one of the parents asked about my nationality. As soon as I told them, some parents raised eyebrows and seemed not to like this.' (Azar)

Among the eight teachers of the study, Azar is one of the most experienced ones with more than five years of teaching experience in Türkiye. She has been to different institutions and has become familiar with the way a teacher from Iran is treated. She had the experience of encountering parents who would not approve of her as a legitimate English teacher because of her nationality. She believes those people's reactions made her feel sorry for herself, and the way English teachers are judged in

different places. Because of that incident, she decided to refrain from disclosing her identity so that inquisitive inquirers can guess her background from the available details. She would rather remain unknown than bear people's judgment about her country of origin. In her diary, she talks about the efforts students made to discover her nationality, but she did her best to avoid discussions about her background.

Although hiding her identity seems not to be a very daunting task for Azar, Soroush did not find the idea of faking his identity something he would prefer to do at work. Among the teachers of the study, Soroush is the last one who decided to leave Iran for work in Türkiye. When he was hired at a secondary school in Ankara, he was adamant to prove himself as a competent teacher. Given the fact that he was the only male teacher and the only foreign teacher with almost no knowledge of Turkish in the school, he felt that he was isolated among colleagues, but at the same time dependent on them. However, as he narrated, the new set of circumstances did not allow him to feel any different. Rather than lamenting what immigration had inflicted on him, he needed to show that his identities as a foreign and male teacher were not obstacles to his ability to connect with young learners and show an excellent classroom performance. However, what was disappointing for him upon his signing of the contract was when he was asked to adopt a Western name and hide his Iranian name. In the highly prestigious school where he works, there exists a considerable number of teachers from English-speaking countries; however, recent years have seen a noticeable increase in the number of teachers from countries where English is not the native language of the people. Asking non-native teachers to adopt a Western name can be a marketing strategy to show the adherence of the school to old quality standards. When asked about his strategy to juggle his real identity and the made-up only for work identity, Soroush mentioned that it would not be too difficult to evade getting into discussions about his background because he has the authority, but things might get out of control when he's out of the class:

> During discussions about cultural differences, I found myself second-guessing my responses, wondering if they aligned with the persona I had crafted. This constant reminder that I was expected to embody a different identity eroded my confidence, even though I knew I was a proficient English speaker. (Soroush)

For Soroush, the fabricated identity could sometimes be confusing for him as he was not sure whether some people were familiar with his real identity or not. It cannot be easy for him to keep track of the situations he presented himself as a different person than he had presented to his colleagues and the management of the school as an Iranian, but to the students and their parents as a native speaker of English. As he said in the interview session, "I sometimes think that there are various versions of me in this school" (Soroush). He has to play different roles in the school, for each he needs to be a different person.

For Niloufar, revealing something about her religious background made her think that she had initiated an inappropriate topic in an unfamiliar situation. In the following quote, we can see that Niloufar blames herself and wishes she had not carried some perspectives with her after migration.

> Why did I show my Iranian origin by discussing something related to religion. I was criticizing myself that although I have got rid of all my religious beliefs, they're still in me. I still want to talk about them and share them with others while others do not have such concerns in their lives. Maybe I should stop carrying things that have been with me since birth. (Niloufar)

This is something that Niloufar narrates after having a short talk with some colleagues about how religious her colleagues are. Niloufar used to carry religious beliefs during her teenage years, which would stay with her until she spent years at college and found a new circle of friends. She believes that among her colleagues at the private school in Ankara, there are not many people who care about such issues, and she should not have entered such a sensitive topic. In her view, this is something that should not be carried to the new context, where developing a new self is a move toward integration. For her, that new self should not be things that used to be important for her (like her religious background), but something that can help her integrate into the new context.

4.1.2. Partial Representation

While hiding the country of origin is one way to avoid the quandary of cultural representation, zooming in on the positive aspects of their country is another strategy

that the teachers showed to benefit from. The positive features are about the profound heritage and cultural legacy inherited from the golden years of the Persian era, where the country was the center of culture, literature, and scientific activities. For almost all Iranians, their culture and history are a source of joy and national pride. This is also observed about the teachers of the current study, as they welcome the idea of presenting themselves as Iranian and openly talking about Iran while circumventing negative issues. Although Azar mentioned that she mainly tried to hide her nationality, she agrees that sometimes it is unavoidable to talk about her country of origin:

> ... but sometimes I have to talk about my nationality. I have to tell them and I try to be honest. Yeah, I don't exaggerate about anything I say for example that in the past we had a brilliant country, yes, but years ago it was like thousands of years ago. (Azar)

She prefers to create a positive image of her country in the minds of her students, so she does not want to focus on the negativity that the students might have heard about Iran. Although she mentions that Iran's prime time was the time of yore, Azar tries to make it something she truly appreciates, and that is what real Iran is. In contrast to such ancient glory, she tries to downplay the current problems by blaming the faulty political system. This is a technique of representing the country, but not becoming too engaged in defending something that opens several other unexplored topics. On the other hand, Soroush believes that talking about the positive and negative aspects of a culture is a serious issue, which is sometimes done recklessly. He talked about his efforts not to engage in these topics when his principal asks about Iran. He adopts a partial revelation strategy, which is to have discussions about positive cultural aspects. In his diary, Soroush recalled some questions about the value of the Iranian national currency and the economic situation in Iran. Instead of giving a clear and direct response, he managed to swerve and talk about the situation in Türkiye, and then continue the discussion about Iran when the economy was in a better situation.

Maryam thinks that politics has created a bulwark to represent her country.

> These days I have nothing to share, unfortunately, because of the political situations. So I'm kind of embarrassed or I don't like to talk about it or just

> say that OK, people and government are not the same. I try to promote the culture and to talk about nice things, but at the same time I'm very sad I cannot say how beautiful a country Iran is or how rich our culture is. (Maryam)

She feels sorrowful for not being able to represent her country as she is willing to. She believes the non-cultural and media-filled news about Iran repels her from delving into cultural discussions with students. Therefore, what she does is similar to what Soroush and Azar did, that is, doing a partial representation of her background.

4.1.3. Full Representation

The professional identities of the teachers of the study cannot be separated from their nationality, as we observed situations in which they had to navigate their Iranianness by either confronting some questions or avoiding them. Reza, however, prefers to avoid any censorship and openly talk about Iran as the gesture can have positive results.

> 'I represented pride and honour. Yeah. Always. Because I don't know if it's a good thing or bad thing, but it's a fact that they know so little about my culture and everything so I would love to share it with anyone from my heart. Yeah, the place I was born and the kind of, I don't know, traditions or anything, anything related to my culture is valuable and I would share it with love.' (Reza)

Reza mostly talked about the glory and the pride he gains from the Iranian culture, and he does not show hesitation to address sensitive questions that are not welcomed by others. He takes pride in the old days of his country, and he is happy to introduce himself as a person born in that culture rather than a person of the current government. However, he says that he does not go selective, and if he encounters a question that makes him touch on the negative aspects, he would not be afraid to turn it into an enlightening moment.

As was observed, when it comes to talking about Iran, teachers either avoid any discussions, only talk about positive aspects of Iranian history and culture, or try to be honest and approach the issue with an open mind. What is clear from their experiences

is that teachers' background stays with them, as this is a main part of their identity, and they need to be ready to encounter questions that address their background.

4.2. Theme 2: Cultural, Social, and Symbolic Capital

Immigration has endowed teachers with resources that they would not have enjoyed had they not moved out of the country. What resources mean is whatever the teacher has gained through the new identity of 'foreigner', which can help her boost her performance and productivity as an English teacher. In addition, teachers benefit from what their past has provided them, either their culture or previous training, to excel in the current context. As was discussed before, Bourdieu's (1979) theory of capital is used in this section to guide the share of the new identity and the teacher's past in their current professional identity. The resource that was mentioned before is what Bourdieu called capital. Although capital is mainly known as economic capital, Bourdieu tactfully expanded the concept to define capital as whatever helps a person gain an advantage in a situation. There are three types of capital that were used to clarify the benefits that foreign teachers have in Türkiye. Bourdieu's categorization made it possible to have a clear idea of what we mean by benefiting from a resource at times of transition to a new context, and how it helps the teacher in their profession. Bourdieu (1979) talks about forms of capital that are the result of one's upbringing and socialization process, forming our habitus, and these include social, cultural, and symbolic capital.

4.2.1. Social capital

Social capital is the network of people, mutual acquaintances, and social recognition that provides the person with the support of the community (Bourdieu, 1986). The teacher can benefit from social capital by having opportunities to expand their circle consisting of like-minded people.

4.2.2. At school

The teacher narrated stories about the way their foreign identity helped them connect with their students or some colleagues. Maryam talks about a situation where her foreign identity helps her build rapport with her students.

> I have a student in my X class who is from Zimbabwe. Her parents immigrated to Turkey about 3 years ago. I guess she had some Iranian friends who taught her some Persian. She loves practicing them with me to show she knows some phrases. That's also a great feeling for me to see someone caring about my culture. (Maryam)

> … sometimes I can change it into a fun moment when I ask students to translate to me what they have just said. They all decide to show off their English in this situation by having the best translation. It's interesting to see that even the most inactive student tries to say something and explain something in English. (Maryam)

Maryam works in an international school where there are foreign students. She says that one of her concerns at school is that she may sometimes feel ostracized because of her foreign status. However, she talked about opportunities to bond with a foreign student, and she believed that could have been on account of sharing the identity of foreignness. The students in her school have been living in Türkiye for a few years, have an acceptable command of the Turkish language, and attend regular public or private schools like local students. Maryam talks about situations where she starts a friendly chat with foreign students at the end of class, and as she mentioned in her diary, she would love to know 'their story,' as she believes that every immigration story can be a brilliant recollection. Concerning the Turkish students, she narrates stories about the way she tries to have everyone involved in the lesson by asking questions about Turkish culture and language, resulting in a more friendly interaction between her and her students and strengthening her social capital. For Mina, her Iranianness created an opportunity to bond with her students:

> I like talking with students about things like the situation in our countries and show national pride and the like. But we're not allowed to talk a lot about our countries and should mainly focus on the lessons. This week Iranian national football team was playing Qatar. It was an important game. I have two students in my class from Qatar. Then we started talking about our teams and how powerful they are, who is going to win and things like that. It was a nice moment to share stories about our countries, out national teams and it was nice to show each other that we love our countries. (Mina)

Mina is an experienced English teacher whose years of teaching have been mostly in Iran and with adult students. Upon starting her career in Türkiye, she had to accept a teaching position at a school since her qualifications would not allow her to work

with adults at either a university or a language school. At the beginning, she encountered significant difficulties managing her classes and tolerating students' misbehavior, but over time, she managed to create a closer relationship with them. As shown in the quote above, she did well to capitalize on her foreignness to spend beautiful moments with her students by finding common ground with them. In the school, there are moments for her when she feels proud of being Iranian because it brings her respect and helps her connect things to her background. Niki, a young teacher of English in Türkiye, experienced some discrimination in her country, Iran because her family belongs to a minority religious sect. Upon starting work at her current school, she was happy to have found the chance to meet a Kurdish colleague. Her background enabled her to have a good relationship with that colleague, which also contributed positively to her performance at work.

4.2.2.1. Out of school

One factor that makes communities work and grow is that members feel supported in different ways and focus on items that bring them closer to each other than things that might cause division. The participants of this study talked about the Iranian communities they enjoy spending time in and how connecting with other members of these communities helps them in different ways. They believe that having the status of a foreigner or being a *stranger* makes the relationships stronger. When asked what group of people, Iranians, Turks, or other foreigners, they feel closer to, they all mentioned Iranians. Having a common background is undoubtedly the main reason for that response, and the capital gained in these groups is invaluable. This is what Reza says in response to this question:

> .. closer to definitely people from Iran because we share everything together, lands culture everything, literally everything. So I am open to that. I can share easily. I can ask for help easily. … Turkish people are really supportive of their friends, especially I mean, I personally have some experiences like that, like when I asked some for help I received it, I got it like the very same day. So yeah, they're nice people, but I cannot get close to them as I do to Iranians. (Reza)

In response to the question of which group of people the teacher feels closer to, they went for the Iranian group as their ideal choice. For Niki, however, both groups are

valuable, and she spends an equal amount of time with both Iranian and Turkish people. Having stayed in the country for about seven years, being married to a Turk, and speaking the language fluently are the reasons for her almost complete assimilation into the Turkish culture. In spite of that, she still talks about situations in which she benefits from her Iranian identity to connect with people, understand them, and gain social capital.

Social capital, the assets gained through relationships based on a common ground, is a precious tool in bringing people closer to each other. It is something created when common features are found, and foreignness and Iranianness are shown to be factors that can create this common ground. The stories of teachers above showed that simply being from another culture provides the opportunity for the creation of this capital, either in interaction with students or with people from the same country.

4.2.2. Cultural capital

Cultural capital is the non-economic resources that help the individual progress in their life. It can be in the form of knowledge and skills (embodied), academic qualifications or recognized certificates (institutionalized), or objects that represent something valuable (objectified). Once legitimized and recognized by the new institution, cultural resources that are developed in the teacher's home country can become valuable resources and turn into cultural capital after immigration (Shin & Rubio, 2023). Bourdieu's concept of capital is used here to account for the resources that contribute to the newly shaped identity of teachers in the new *field*.

Among the teachers of the study, we have tried to find examples of these three forms of cultural capital that are the contribution of the teacher's background or were created as a result of carrying a foreign identity.

4.2.2.1. Institutional Cultural Capital

During interview sessions, teachers were asked questions about their educational background. The academic degrees and various certificates proved that the teachers

benefited from rich institutionalized cultural capital. They all received their education in Iran, earned university degrees, and pursued higher education. They spent their initial years of experience in Iran before moving to Türkiye. As was mentioned before, the main drive for the immigration of teachers of English from Iran to Türkiye has been securing a more profitable career. This means the teacher who is looking for a job in Türkiye should have high academic degrees with enough related work experience. After immigration, although benefiting from institutionalized cultural capital, five teachers tried to further their careers by gaining an internationally recognized certificate, such as CELTA and DELTA courses. The stories of the participants showed that having a university degree and seeking more practical training courses have been an incessant engagement for them. This is what Soroush mentioned about his qualifications and proficiency in English:

> So I could talk about university degrees or other things that are issued by other authorities like CELTA but the one thing that I'm really proud of is my proficiency because I've really worked hard on it, whenever by watching things in English or listening reading them in English. I'm just trying to study some vocabulary, you know …. or going for another one like DELTA or … (Soroush)

Soroush's academic qualifications have been his rich cultural capital, and he managed to turn his resume into a glittering one. Nonetheless, he still tries to improve himself by seizing opportunities to become more proficient in general English and teaching. With over 15 years of experience in teaching English and holding academic degrees and CELTA, Soroush still tries to take any opportunity to deepen his institutionalized capital.

4.2.2.2. Embodied Cultural Capital

In addition to the institutionalized cultural capital, embodied cultural capital is discovered in the narratives shaping the identity of some teachers of the study. This type of capital refers to the skills and competencies learned in Iran that are now present in the behavior and actions of the teacher and are part of the teacher's habitus. For example, a teacher has discovered the benefit of a particular game in her home country and has found it beneficial with the new students in the new context.

In addition, what we refer to as embodied cultural capital is the contribution of immigration itself in creating educational opportunities for the teacher. Niki, one of the instructors whose teaching experience has been in Türkiye, talks positively about her years in Iran and how that helped her in post-immigration years.

> … the frequent feedback I received from students was my proper American accent which made me a better teacher in their eyes... It seemed like students preferred having a teacher who focused more on pronunciation and speaking rather than the other skills/systems. Additionally, I have received positive comments about how I can integrate different fields and subjects into the English learning process. (Niki)

Niki is capable of having educational fusion by choosing positive skills and strategies that can work best with the new students. The skills she learned in her hometown are part of her embodied cultural capital that have now become her professional identity, and they contribute to her understanding and practice of teaching. Similarly, Azar, who has taken the CELTA course in Türkiye, talks about what she acquired during her Teacher Training Courses (TTC) in Iran and how that finely shaped her body of knowledge to present at the CELTA course and also at her job in Türkiye.

> ... in Iran I joined those TTC [Teacher Training Course] courses. Afterwards I got my CELTA certificate in Turkey. But how I used to teach and also how the supervisor gave us the feedback after each observations I think I learned a lot about how to teach how to give feedback, how to manage the class. I think I could implement those things that I learned in Iran at work in schools here in Turkey. (Azar)

Azar spent her early years of teaching in Iran, working at one of the most prominent language schools in Tehran. She talks about different teacher training programs, on-the-job training, and frequent observations that she went through to be ranked as a competent teacher in her language schools. She now proudly talks about them, and believes that the training programs had a major role in her professionalism. Now, after immigration, Azar can capitalize on the educational knowledge that her country of birth granted her.

When reflecting on the contribution of the educational system in his country, Soroush talks about the amount of time and energy he spent analyzing students'

behavior and applying ways to control them when he used to teach teenagers in Iran. Upon his relocation to Türkiye and starting work at a private school, he was expecting a remarkable difference between the students of the two countries regarding their class behavior. Observing almost similar conditions, he managed to use his experience to have unruly teenagers under control. Here is a narration written in his diary about how he approaches these students:

> In Iran I was not allowed to kick a student out of class. It was not forbidden but that action would mean that I was not able to have everything under control. Seeking help from management was considered a weakness, and teacher had to come up with strategies so that expelling from class never had any roles in their class management. Although the rule was unjust …, I did manage to have proper class management under different circumstances. I have used the same strategies I used to do in Iran and fortunately it has worked so far." (Soroush)

Soroush used to teach general English to teenagers and then adults before he started teaching IELTS preparation courses. When talking about his time as a teacher of young learners, he talked about many incidents to clarify what he means by class management. It was not an easy task for him at the beginning, but he progressively gained an understanding of the way the job should be done. After immigration, he started a job at a secondary school where class management is a crucial part of the job. Although his cultural capital needs to be mobilized and adapted to fit into the new context, Soroush has been successful in retrieving what he learned in Iran and applying it in the new context. He expected to have different types of students, which was not the case, but he realized that his capital gained in his country could come to his assistance in having proper class management.

Besides resources gained in the home country, we can also refer to cases where foreignness acts as cultural capital. This refers to moments the teacher uses her foreign identity to enlighten her students by having discussions about important issues, away from teaching English.

> … I asked a student to give a promise to pay attention to the exercise. Another one said 'erkek sozu' (man of his word). … At first I showed my surprise in a fun way and told them we have this in our culture. But then

> suddenly everything clicked and I thought to myself that it is sexist to say that but my reaction to it was making it sound more fun. The only thing I did was to remind them that it's not something appropriate… . (Maryam)

This is a brilliant moment in the interaction of student and teacher, where the teacher goes beyond her role as an expert in her field to act as a cultural representative to teach some life lessons to her students. The way the teacher handles the situation and informs the student of the existence of something sexist in both cultures can be rooted back to her Iranian culture, where a similar idiom is mistakenly used. It can also be said that the teacher has developed this type of embodied cultural capital under the effect of the situation in Iran, wherein women's social freedom is more restricted.

On the same topic, Niki has recalled a few cases regarding the role and status of women in Iran and the issue of hijab that has appealed to many students. These show that the existence of a foreign teacher promotes cross-cultural discussions in class, the benefits of which can be the promotion of a more egalitarian society. Other than these, the teachers have either written or discussed in interviews many cases where they cherished the merit of being Iranian because of the joyful moments that would be created in class. Here is one example:

> ... that was one of the best topics to attract their attention because they were so curious about my culture as an Iranian. For example, I'd show this picture of kebab, and they were like oh this is not our kebab and I was like no this is ours. … So in this way, even those who were sleeping would get motivated. And they knew that I didn't know Turkish, so they had to speak in English with me and I was enjoying it because sometimes I was making them angry… . (Niloufar)

In general English classes, there is always an emphasis on information gaps to have discussions between teachers and students. The story of Niloufar can well show how a foreign teacher can create this situation to the point of exciting even the most inactive students. The fact that this is created thanks to her identity puts this type of capital under cultural capital. In short, being from a foreign country in itself grants the teacher opportunities to have discussions, which can lighten the mood or come out as useful life tips, and such qualities are the cultural capital of the foreign teacher.

4.2.3. Symbolic capital

Symbolic capital is qualities, features, or material possessions that grant recognition to the possessor. What Bourdieu (1979) means by recognition refers to anything that is a source of pride, and makes the individual stand out, and brings honor to the owner of the capital. What is important about symbolic capital is that it is interpreted in the context, and if it is not recognized by those players in the context, it ceases to be a form of capital. For teachers working in another country, symbolic capital can be related to the extent to which their qualifications, professionalism, and cultural and linguistic background are recognized in the host country. For example, teachers with high symbolic capital (e.g., a native speaker) can be attractive candidates for recruiters and can then gain social and economic capital as a result of their symbolic capital.

4.2.3.1. Cultural Richness

When analyzing data, we have interpreted the non-financial assets that are related to the teacher's background and have made her proud of her Iranianness or foreignness as symbolic capital. In the following excerpt, Niloufar talks about a situation that can make her proud of herself.

> …whatever the reason, such situations [talking about Iran with colleagues] make me feel different and this difference feels good. When I go to a government office to take care of some paperwork especially immigration office, my nationality can be a burden to have my job done easily, so that makes me not like being an Iranian, but in this case that made me happy." (Niloufar)

Immigrants should deal with some paperwork at the immigration office almost every year. The office is staffed with Turkish speakers, a situation that makes it difficult for people like Niloufar to communicate. She talked about these as cases that make her frustrated with herself and her nationality; situations that her Iranian identity cannot help her. Her view of her nationality changes when she has casual talks with her Turkish colleagues. They start deep conversations about Iranian culture, make cultural comparisons, and talk about what she has learned in Iran. In such situations,

language of communication is not an issue anymore; therefore, her culture is positively recognized, leading to her positive feelings about her background. The Iranian culture enriches Niloufar's repertoire if she is placed in the right context, where there are people who are aware of the things she admires.

4.2.3.2. Positive Reputation

For Azar, however, positive recognition has already been built thanks to their predecessors. She believes Iranian teachers enjoy a good reputation in her current and previous schools, and she benefited from this positive image.

> I think in Turkey as an Iranian teacher, I feel good because Iranian teachers are somehow they gained some respect and you know kind of acceptance in Turkey because mostly in many schools or reputable academies, universities, Iranians as English teachers are very welcomed and they like them. I mean, even the job owners, the students …. (Azar)

When going through difficult times in a school in Ankara, Azar had to choose another private school as her place of work. In her job interview meeting at the new school, she could proudly talk about her country when one of the interviewers referred to a previous Iranian teacher they used to have. They talked positively about that teacher, and that made Azar's culture recognized, which finally helped her continue the interview session more confidently. The context of Türkiye grants this recognition to teachers of English coming from Iran, and for this reason, this positive reputation can be regarded as symbolic capital.

When talking about recognition and the importance of one's background after immigration, Soroush referred to the assets owned by each culture that can act as symbolic capital, but may not serve this purpose if the reality is distorted. He refers to the ability of the individual to either create capital or even destroy it by the way they hold attitudes toward their immigration:

> If I just talk about the present situation in Iran and the economical, political and social problems, then I am going to be considered a low life person who fled hardship. But if I pride myself on my country, if I just focus on positives

> of my background, you know then I am showing myself as a knowledgeable person with a great background who is seeking better opportunities by moving to Turkey. (Soroush)

Soroush narrates a situation in an English school where they would normally ask for updates on Iran's political and economic situation. Once he meets a Turkish teacher who is found to be a great admirer of Iranian movies. Since then, they have mostly engaged in cinema-related conversations, which made him realize the numerous beautiful features he can focus on rather than the merely newsworthy issues like politics. He writes in his diary how the attitudes of colleagues changed when they gained some basic knowledge about Iranian cinema, the Oscars and Golden Globes recently won, and the different plots those movies have compared to the clichéd stories made by American movie producers. He means that what we present about Iran leads to the way we carve our names in the minds of foreign people. We can talk about the political skirmishes, or we can bring up the positives. What we are in a foreign country is determined by how we act.

This theme, in summary, shows useful resources that the teachers of the study gained in Iran and carried across the border. From academic degrees and skills to having Iranian communities and positive reputations, the teachers are identified with what Iran has given them, something that stays with them for a significant number of years. We observed that foreignness created a new person struggling to survive in the Turkish context while carrying the responsibility of presenting their culture. Most of the teachers in the study have economic capital as the main impetus to leave Iran, but there might be very few wary of the fact that this relocation grants them capitals other than economic capital; capitals that are valuable and should be cherished.

4.3. Theme 3: Knowledge of Turkish Language

According to the poststructuralist mode of thinking, language is not a tool to represent meaning only, but it is a shaper of the individual's identity, and that means the language that one uses plays a role in the identity one negotiates. In poststructuralism, "our sense of self and our identity or 'subjectivity' is constructed and performed in language (Baxter, 2016, p. 36). Accordingly, for immigrant

teachers, knowledge of the language of the host country can significantly define who they are in the new context, and it is highly influential in their integration after immigration. The stories of the teachers revealed many cases where they are at a disadvantage because of their poor knowledge of Turkish. Before delving deeper into this theme, it should be pointed out that for Iranians living in Türkiye, proficiency in the Turkish language is linked to the ethnic group they belong to. For ethnically Azeri people, Turkish can be easily acquired thanks to the proximity of the Azeri and Turkish languages; for others, however, gaining knowledge of Turkish necessitates learning it through taking courses and studying. Two teachers of this study were lucky to know Turkish well, and so have been on a smoother path towards full integration. On the other hand, the other five participants do not have any knowledge of Turkish, or it is limited to some basic phrases to deal with everyday tasks. For these teachers, a lack of knowledge of the local language has created problems both at work and out of work. At the time of the study, they had been living in Türkiye for quite several years, but they were not able to deal with everyday interactions easily. That is due to some reasons. Firstly, they are English teachers who deal with people who know English at work, and in their view, that is not a serious issue. However, as will be shown in the following lines, lack of Turkish proficiency has created serious problems for them. Secondly, they have limited their interactions to Iranian groups of friends. Although this enriches their social capital as was discussed before, it causes alienation and exclusion. The following discusses situations in which language is a contributor of identity crisis.

4.3.1. In class

The teachers talked about situations in which their lack of Turkish language made them fail to connect with their students. Poor knowledge of Turkish caused Maryam to feel marginalized in class. English teachers are mostly encouraged and sometimes required to speak English in class. As Maryam narrated, students might not obey the rule all the time, and that may make the teacher feel confused and lost when she finds herself among a crowd of foreign language speakers. The fact that students share a common language while the teacher does not have anything to share creates feelings of frustration or alienation for her.

> ... sometimes a student says something in Turkish, everyone starts laughing and saying something like a joke …. but I have no idea what's going on. Sometimes I feel that I don't fit in here because I can't be part of this group you know… (Maryam)

This is a situation where the teacher is excluded from the classroom discourse because language acts as a barrier that prevents the teacher from blending in. Although Maryam wrote further in her diary that she had moments when her lack of knowledge in Turkish made students enthused with explaining something related to the Turkish language and culture, she laments the fact that sometimes she does not have the necessary tools to connect with a discourse community that is an essential part of her professional identity. Being a member of this community is a source of satisfaction for the teacher, as this shows that the teacher has found a place among her students, but being excluded from it, although for viable reasons, can be a source of frustration for the teacher.

For Niloufar, the ability to speak the local language is so important that it can influence her authority in class when it comes to class management. When she started work at a private school in Ankara, she had to have a class of troublemakers under control. It was a demanding job for her, and she complained a lot about their behavior and lack of motivation. She believes that they did not follow her and ignored her instructions because she is not a local Turkish teacher. She thinks students can easily usurp her power because students feel their misbehavior is not taken too seriously by a foreign teacher. Similarly, Azar, who experienced teaching the most troublesome classes in her previous school, believes that not knowing Turkish or speaking it with an accent can undermine the teacher's authority.

> ... we are not allowed to speak Turkish in the class. So many of them maybe they don't even understand completely what I say. And also they feel like more comfortable when their native teacher when the foreign teacher comes to the class so some of them just become more naughty, sometimes they don't listen that much. (Azar)

She believes that her students behave themselves when a Turkish-speaking teacher is controlling them. Although Azar speaks some Turkish, she believes that a local teacher has more authority than she does, and she thinks her students might not even

understand what she says in class. Lack of Turkish causes the teacher to be disconnected from her students, crippling her ability to apply basic class management authority. This shows the empowering quality of the language that can build a new identity as either a competent or an incompetent teacher.

4.3.2. At School

The inability to communicate is not limited to the classroom atmosphere in interaction with students, but it can also be related to barriers between the teacher and other people in school. Reza believes that in class, she has managed to have everything under control as he learned some essential phrases to use, but he referred to cases where his poor knowledge of the Turkish language led to feelings of disenfranchisement and isolation. For example, when meetings are in Turkish and he is not given assistance or a very basic translation, he feels that he does not belong, and he is deprived of some privileges.

> This power, I think, comes from the other person's perspective. If my manager looks me down like thinking low of me, yeah, definitely I would feel powerless, especially when they speak Turkish and I cannot communicate properly with them. So yeah, that's when I feel I have nothing to say you know. (Reza)

Here, he is asked whether he feels powerless when encountering a person of higher rank, and he believes language plays an important role in causing this feeling. Language here for Reza is not just a tool to talk about what we want, but it is something that creates meaning and makes a person feel powerless. Just as technical language might exclude those who are not educated in a field, creating power dynamics, language causes Reza to become marginalized. For Azar, poor knowledge of the language of the local people means not finding acceptance into a community, the membership of which can bring many benefits.

> ... it is not because of things like time of class or I don't know asking about salary and things, it is something more important. We should talk to people, to get to know them, to form a circle of friends and to enjoy this community. But our poor Turkish proficiency makes me feel away from the main group you know, away from those who decide for us … (Azar)

Azar sees the issue as more serious than gaining some basic information about how things work in her workplace. She believes in the power of a community and takes her decision-making ability away. To view this problem through the lens of poststructuralism, we should say that for Azar, language is a gateway into society, as she needs to build her social identity by getting to know the social contracts, and the first step to build that identity is to find her way into the groups of colleagues and important people in her school. When Soroush talked about the situation in his school, he seemed satisfied with how communication is made between the foreign teacher and the school staff. In Soroush's school, the coordinator is always tasked to pass on essential information and the gist of meetings to Soroush in English. Nonetheless, this is not a way to gain acceptance into a community and to be identified with a group; rather, it is simply using language in its most basic form, which is a tool to transfer knowledge but not as an identity maker.

In her diary, Azar wrote about her reluctance to revert to her limited proficiency in Turkish because it reveals her real identity.

> … when I am on the shuttle bus, I have to shout to ask the driver to stop or to open the door. Most of the time, because there are students of the school on the bus I feel too shy to say something in Turkish because I speak Turkish with a strong accent. I don't have self-confidence to ask for something in Turkish. (Azar)

On the school bus, there are both teachers and students. Despite her self-acclaimed acceptable proficiency in Turkish, Azar feels too self-conscious to speak the language with an Iranian accent. Language here is not a tool to communicate, but something that tells about a person's identity, and Azar prefers to be deprived of communication to show herself as a competent and authentic member of the Turkish-speaking community. For Niloufar, revealing her identity through speaking some very basic Turkish means adopting an identity that is not representative of her true self:

> I had to get some official papers at the immigration office. As soon as the person sees my passport, he starts treating me like a little kid. He communicates with me to give me some instructions, and he realizes that my Turkish is not good enough to have a smooth communication. Of course, he is a very nice person. But it's my feeling because how I am treated takes me

> back to my school days when everyone wanted to teach me something. I feel so small that I forget the little Turkish that I know …. (Niloufar)

Niloufar has a master's degree in teaching English and is confident about her English when she is in class, but a lack of knowledge of the local language has taken away the power that she has in other situations. This is what poststructuralism holds: having a fluid identity determined by the context. She is infantilized because her passport shows that she does not know the language, so, like a young child, she should be meticulously directed. This is a burden for the teacher, although the people around her might not be aware of that, and their aim is just to help her.

During the interview session, we discussed the importance of learning Turkish, and the teachers whose Turkish proficiency is at a low level agreed that learning the local language is a priority for them.

> I didn't go for it [learning Turkish] because I had my own Iranian friends and I'm happy with them. At work also I have some Turkish friends, but it is just at work. (Mina)

For Mina, learning Turkish did not seem to be a necessary task since she was surrounded by Azeri speakers who could help her deal with everyday tasks. Later on, she realized that it is essential to speak the local language, and she has decided to improve her Turkish ever since. Niloufar has been taking classes since she found the job at the current school and made the decision to stay in Türkiye. Similarly, Reza and Soroush have tried to do self-study, and they claim they have been successful so far.

This theme was the result of a substantial number of codes that reflected the problems the teachers faced because of their poor knowledge of the Turkish language. As was discussed in this section, except for non-Azeri teachers in the study, Turkish proficiency caused alienation and concealed identity. The teachers accepted that practical everyday work can be dealt with using technology or assistance from friends, but to integrate into Turkish society, they need to have an acceptable command of Turkish.

4.4. Theme 4: Othering and Identity Uncertainty

This theme discusses a new but unfavorable identity that the teacher has to bear as a teacher who was not born in the country where they are teaching. Our world has historically observed conflicts stemming from the ethnic or cultural differences between two peoples. Being treated differently merely due to having a different race, nationality, gender, or language seems to be accepted as a fact of life rather than a complication in need of a solution. As was discussed before, poststructuralism posits that an individual's identities are not fixed entities but are reshaped as the person passes through important milestones, one of which is a change in their place of living. That being said, for the teachers of this study who have started work in a new country, identities are influenced by the contextual features of the new setting, one of which is carrying the label 'foreigner'. That means the teacher might be viewed as a different person with low or high capability, and could receive comments and feedback at work because of being from a different country.

4.4.1. Experiencing Discrimination

We discovered some stories revealing comments from students, colleagues, or parents that lack cultural sensitivity. The comments were either made intentionally out of malice or playfully to have a laugh or a fun moment. During her first year of work at the school, Niloufar was bluntly subjected to a jarring comment from the student:

> The first year I remember there was this kind of friction between me and one of the students … I think that I asked him not to chew gum or something and then, it was interesting, he told me that who are you to tell me what to do and I said I'm your teacher. He said OK? And I said, I'm your teacher. He goes yeah, but you're not Turkish. I said so what's the difference? He said you're not a Turkish citizen you cannot tell me what to do …. (Niloufar)

Before immigrating to Türkiye, Niloufar had worked as an English teacher in Iran, and she had spent some years in Malaysia, so she was experienced enough to deal with disruptive behavior in class. However, encountering such a comment was so shocking that she wanted to divert attention from the point in question. She was

partly relieved when some of the students asked their classmate to watch his mouth. Niloufar accepted the fact that such insensitivity is not an everyday reality for her. She believes that such rude acts mainly happen when a student needs something to fight back when they seek ways to justify their laziness, impoliteness, or any misbehavior. Nonetheless, the event recounted by Niloufar implies that the student feels a superior character in the confrontation because of his nationality. Another explanation for that could be his beyond-the-class English proficiency, which could have made him arrogant enough to attempt to prove his power, and the teacher's non-Turkishness seems to be unrelated to his motives. In another situation, Maryam has a petty argument with some students, and then she manages to overhear them:

> …and I clearly remember one student who said that this teacher has come from Azerbaijan and she thinks she can order me around. If I was a native teacher, probably they wouldn't have said that because natives are respected everywhere. (Maryam)

Here, Maryam remembers a confrontation with a student. To have the class under control, the teacher ordered the students to sit separately, and consequently, the only tool they had access to in order to take revenge was probably the nationality of the teacher, who is not Azerbaijani but Iranian. We can see that for both Maryam and Niloufar, the reason for suffering discriminatory actions is due to the students' desire to direct their anger or disappointment. As mentioned before, these incidents are not an everyday reality for the teacher, but make the teacher aware that her authority before the students could be negatively affected by her nationality, and as Maryam mentioned, it is something that may not happen to a native teacher because of the respect they receive. Azar thinks that the label 'foreign' caused chasm between local and foreign teachers in her school. She talked about the view towards foreign teachers, which would make her uneasy when she was in their company. She believes this could have been the result of the way foreigners are paid, the number of teaching hours they are assigned, and factors that are not under the teacher's control. She referred to one of the instances that was irritating for her:

> In X school if Turkish teachers do not get to their classes on time, I don't think it will be something serious. I remember a Turkish teacher always was late for about 20-30 minutes because of traffic. Nobody said anything to her;

> nobody complained about it. But if I or other foreign teachers were late for some reasonable reasons like the busy elevator or morning traffic, then they start moaning and groaning that 'Oh look foreign teachers are always late, blah blah. (Azar)

Azar believes that she has been the victim of her visibility at work since she is one of the three foreigners in her school, and that has put her in the spotlight. She later explained that in her new school, she tries to leave the teacher's room early to get to class. However, this is again the reason for getting some strange looks and being the instigator of interpretation about her internal aim to get to the class 'on time'. She says that in her school, it is an unwritten rule that the foreign teacher needs to make as few mistakes as possible to save herself from judgment. While Azar thinks that the unjust pay policy in practice in private schools is the root cause of the way she is treated, and that is the situation in all schools, Soroush denies the existence of unequal pay in favor of foreigners. On the contrary, some schools pay foreigners lower salaries and give them more classes. This can be a more overt sort of discrimination compared to what teachers experience in interaction with students and colleagues. It is not easy to verify what Soroush mentioned since the rules set by the Ministry of National Education (Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, MEB) necessitate foreign teachers being given the same number of working hours and following the payment rules of the Ministry of Labor, the pay policies of which do lean towards foreigners. However, when it comes to the private sector, the regulations can be subject to the internal institutional policies of the school and deviate from the macro policies of the ministries.

4.4.2. Navigating differences in and out of class

In some other cases, teachers of the study talked about situations in which they have to cope with sensitive topics related to national or cultural differences. Their narratives show that they have to be overly prudent when dealing with such cases. As was discussed in theme two and the importance of capital in educating students, such events in class can be turned into constructive moments, but they can have opposite effects if they are not approached professionally. There is the chance of failure to cope with sensitive background-related topics for the Iranian teachers of the study,

since they talked about their lack of experience in dealing with these, as there are not many people of various nationalities in Iran. For Maryam, for example, the matter of ethnoracial differences was such a sensitive case that she did her best to avoid it, but then she pondered over the fact that avoiding it might not be the best solution.

> I have two black students in my class. I always take great care not to make those Africans feel ignored. Once I had to make the meaning of the word 'race' clear and I don't know why a student suddenly said 'teacher! I am racist'. I just said that it's a terrible thing and of course I understand that you're joking. I immediately continued the lesson to stop any further discussion on the topic. But why didn't I want to explain something more on the topic? (Maryam)

For Maryam, who is an experienced teacher and is almost double the age of her students, the necessity to educate her students about sensitive social issues seems to be unavoidable, although she did not feel prepared to do it when something related occurred in her interaction with the students. What Maryam narrated here and then explained the situation in more detail in the interview session shows that she sometimes feels stuck in situations that involve something related to one of her identities, a foreigner. On the one hand, seeing herself as an influential character in students' lives, she feels responsible for enlightening the students about anything related to race. On the other hand, she cannot present herself as someone who defends foreigners, as this is her identity too, and a teacher is supposed to be fair to all students. Maryam mentions that she did not know how those two black students were feeling in that situation, and they could have taken it as a joke because they are young and might not have experienced racism in their lives, but it is the teacher who needs to deal with such situations wisely and be more socially conscious. However, she believes that she failed to approach the problem properly due to the novelty of the situation. For Reza, a rather similar incident caused him to feel insecure and not certain how to behave. He refers to the strong feelings local students have towards Syrians in Türkiye in terms of their life here and the allegedly relative comfort they have been provided by the government. At the time of data collection, there was news about Syrians, which could spark constant discussions about racially charged news in class. Reza talks about the enthusiasm students would show to bring up these topics and present them for discussion. His identity as a foreign teacher seemed to be something that would add to their enthusiasm. Like Maryam, he refers to his difficult

task here, which is to deal with a problem that had gone beyond his main role as a teacher and had demanded that he act as a wise judge to resolve an issue. He found himself forced to take a side in such situations, and that would be siding with his students, but he did his best to defend the refugees as desperate people without shelter and basic necessities. Whatever solution the teachers adopted, this phenomenon is something completely unprecedented for Iranian teachers; something that took them by surprise and made them either blame themselves for not being able to respond appropriately or not having any information about it.

Mina talks about an incident in which the teacher intended to get students involved in a critical thinking activity. It started with the simple, unbiased question of 'what would you do if you had a lot of power' and then ended up as a group of eighth graders throwing the most blatant racist insults at each other. The class consists of students from three nationalities, and they all happened to be aware of stereotypes to take advantage of and use against their classmates. The insults are so offensive that they cannot be used here. Mina stated that the incident left her transfixed as she was neither able to stop it nor informed enough to settle the dispute. She said that kids do not show any self-restraint when it comes to hurling discriminatory insults at each other, whether racial, gender, or ethnic. They are not aware of the dangers such language might cause and have not been educated about this. However, as a foreign English teacher whose main responsibility is to teach English, she is not sure whether she should intervene in such matters or not, because her principal has categorically forbidden teachers from talking about their countries. That could be because the principal wants to avoid any such discussion, but what is happening in reality in the classroom is different from the principal's expectations. In case of such incidents, the foreign teacher's main concern is to keep her job safe by following the wishes of the principal rather than thinking of raising aware and responsible kids. Mina talked about a situation she observed among her colleagues, which was a reminder to her that addressing race is an everyday fact, and she needs to tolerate it. Observing one of her colleagues likening another colleague to a racist nation, Mina says that she was not prepared for such a thing, as she would have never experienced something like this in Iran. As she narrated the story, she said that in Iran, there are more 'similarities' among people, which makes racism a matter for others, not for us.

In this theme, we talked about the changes in the identities of the teachers due to the new social realities that the teachers encounter in their schools. Being subjected to insensitive comments or facing conflicts and inquiries made the teachers of the study more thoughtful about another layer they need to add to their identities. They must navigate new labels that are given to them or deal with unprecedented situations. The next theme focuses on the educational aspects that the teachers deal with after their immigration.

4.5. Theme 5: New Educational Realities

This theme is related to the mismatch the teacher experiences at work; the incongruity between what they are used to in their profession and the institutional policies, and what they experience in reality when they start work at schools. In light of the new realities, the teacher is supposed to fine-tune their teaching, behavior, and their true 'self' to find a place in the novel situation. I have already discussed the evolution and the current format of both the Iranian and Turkish educational systems, and the teaching life of teachers before immigration. This theme is supposed to go deep into the narratives of the teachers to see how they are treated in their educational institutions and if there are significant identity changes after their relocation.

4.5.1. Prescriptive syllabus

What is meant by a prescriptive syllabus is that the school makes sure that everything is meticulously planned, and the role of the teacher is to follow the plan. Maryam, who has been teaching in the same institution for the past five years, believes that her role as a teacher has gone through some changes because she cannot practice her creativity when needed.

> … there are many cases that I feel I don't like to teach what's in the syllabus but I have to because you know it's in the syllabus and you have to respect it. I feel more like an office worker who has to enter some numbers on a system every day without any necessity to show creativity. (Maryam)

She narrated an incident where she had to play a poor-quality song aimed at teaching conditional structures. She knew the song would not be beneficial, and students, who tend to believe that the teacher of these materials is also the producer, would not like it either. However, she knew that she did not have the power to replace it with something of her choice. In case a teacher is bold enough to introduce out-of-syllabus materials, they should ask for permission and come up with a reasonable rationale for their act, which makes it difficult for the teacher to go through. In Maryam's school, dissenting actions are not warmly embraced since the syllabus planners believe they disrupt the unity of both decision and practice across the classes. When she talks about the poor quality of some tasks and materials, she is assured that they will change it, but normally, that does not happen. While she can change the task herself and replace it with something more beneficial, she is requested to keep things professional since this might cause differences among teachers, and then might damage the educational homogeneity in classes. This is also Azar's concern, who found some materials prepared for children well below the real age of the students. She thinks that the teacher's suggestion should be sought when producing materials, as it is the teacher who implements the materials and can give the best feedback about whether something has worked out well or not. Similar to Maryam, Azar also believes that her role at the school is so mechanical that anyone with some basic ability to speak English can be an English teacher. Soroush also raised concerns about the number of reading tasks in the weekly syllabus. He talked about situations where he had to cover all the readings, which would kill the joy of learning English and cause fatigue for both students and the teacher by the end of each week. Although he took the initiative to bring up the issue in a weekly meeting with the supervisors and other managers, he did not succeed in making a significant change to the syllabus. The reason for that again was the difficulty in changing something that is being practiced across the schools in the country. The centralized syllabus made Niki lose interest in teaching:

> Yeah, but I kind of blame the school because we are going through a very fixed, unchangeable syllabus that we have to just cover something like I want to think about how I can make this passive lesson fun but when I check the lesson plan, I see that, uh, I have to cover all the things, all the rules related to passive voice as an example and I don't have the time to come up with

> anything to write or even like bring something different because the school even doesn't allow that … (Niki)

That was what Niki said when asked if the syllabus abated her desire to teach English. Even if she is willing to introduce something extra to make the lesson more appealing, she feels restricted by lesson plans imposed from above, implying that any change introduced to the syllabus equals unruly behavior. As Niki said in the interview session, in her institution, teachers are urged to show creativity and are given lectures about the importance of teachers' agency, but when it comes to real practice, they are treated as passive individuals who should only be told what to do. When the teacher steps into the class and observes the rigidity of the syllabus, it becomes clear that the utopian descriptions of the teacher during the training were far from reality.

4.5.2. Rules and announcements

Participants also talked about the number of rules in their institution and the necessity to adapt themselves to the internal policies that are organized in a detailed manner. When asked to compare the situation with what they experienced in Iran, the teachers referred to the more strict system of education in which efforts are made to regulate even non-teaching activities and behavior. It seems that rules have been applied in every aspect of the teacher's professional life, so much so that they find it difficult to follow them and to make the required adaptations. For example, Soroush talks about very elaborate homework policies that students should follow, and the role of the teacher being a shrewd observer, so that students respect the rules. He talked about a situation that puzzled him, as he was not sure which rule applied to which situation. As an example of a micromanagement case, he talked about certain rules for the teacher's chair in class, and for how long the chair should be in class, and when it should be taken out. For him, the chair is not something in need of regulations, and the teacher should be given the freedom to use it or not.

Reza referred to the intra-school comprehensive achievement tests in his school. As he narrated, the process of administering the test contains numerous details, and the teachers who oversee administering the test should know exactly how to start, what to

do during the test, and how to end it. As he believes, some rules are essential to make sure things proceed smoothly, but some are not necessary. When asked about his opinion on this, he says that discipline available in schools makes it necessary to make sure nothing is ignored at the time of having a very important exam. In the following quote, he shows his dissatisfaction with a new rule being applied to the exams:

> … she (supervisor) said that there's going to be some new rules about exams. She said that in the meeting with the principal they decided to make new rules so that teachers would not have a chance to see the exam questions. Why is it so? What would be the problem if the teacher saw the questions? What came shocking to me was that everyone agreed with what she said without questioning the reason behind this decision ... (Reza)

The teacher is unable to understand the rationale behind some rules when he is shocked that everyone has fully agreed with the new policy made by the principal. He thinks that it should not be a problem when the teacher (who is the invigilator) sees the question paper before and during the exam. To justify his idea, Reza said that teachers inevitably see the questions after the exam when marking the papers, so it does not make sense to prevent them from doing it. However, he cannot raise an issue here as he notices that everyone has shown agreement to the new rule, and he presumes that it might be related to something that he is not familiar with. In another situation, he talks about the long process he had to go through just to have some hours off, as he was in a hurry to take care of an emergency. He refers to the multiple steps he faced and the different people he talked to so that he could gain permission to leave the school only a few hours earlier. The teacher sees these as unnecessary steps that slow down the process of getting permission, which can be a real problem in times of emergency. Reza also referred to the detailed rules about the times that teachers are permitted to take off their uniforms when they are on school premises. While some rules are mentioned to be useful and worth respecting, others are seen as just redundant.

Soroush and Mina shared stories about the way teachers were informed of the updates in their schools. As Soroush said, there were changes made to the syllabus or timing of meetings, and he was informed of these at very short notice. Here is something he shared in his weekly journal:

> Today, they switched up the plans without giving me a heads up. I prefer not to find myself rushing through tasks. I was at my desk when the vice principal comes in, saying I've got a lesson to run. I took a double take at the class schedule to check if that's the case and I somehow messed up. The vice principal then casually mentioned that there had been a change in plans as if I had to see that coming! (Soroush)

Soroush stated that for him, clarity in the schedule is a priority, and when he is not briefed about the changes, he feels overwhelmed and stressed out. Because he has always been an organized person, he always checks things before he takes action to make sure he does what he is supposed to. However, when there are last-minute changes, he feels that he has to develop a new understanding of reality: circumstances might change unexpectedly, and the teacher should be ready to get accustomed to it. For Mina, one of the main sources of information in her school is her Iranian colleagues, some of whom can efficiently communicate in Turkish. However, when she does not have access to them, her poor knowledge of Turkish blocks her smooth adaptation into the new context, and that is one reason for her struggle to catch up with rules and changes. She talked about weekly meetings in her school where updates are shared with everyone. While she is briefed after each meeting about the new changes, she is sometimes forgotten:

> … the only explanation for this could be the weekly meetings where things are run in Turkish. Probably that had been announced it in those meeting and I'd missed it because I can't understand Turkish. But somebody should have translated it for me as this is the case sometimes. (Mina)

In the quote above, Mina talked about an assignment she was asked to do by her supervisor, but she had no idea what she was talking about. She asks around and realizes that everyone knows about it except herself. She believes they had forgotten to inform her of something announced in the weekly meeting. She acknowledged that her lack of knowledge about the assignment was due to her inability to understand Turkish. However, to ease the process of assimilation for the teacher, especially at the beginning of her career, she thinks that there should be measures so that the teacher feels part of the community, and her foreignness should not be an obstacle to that.

4.5.3. New roles

Some teachers talked about new roles they had to accept after starting work in their new workplace. While some expressed their satisfaction in taking on these roles, others found them beyond the responsibility of a teacher. For example, Niki sees mentoring a new teacher in her school as a great opportunity to take the first steps on the path towards teacher training.

> ... in Iran, during those years of my teaching, I was just a teacher although I was not very experienced. But here the second year the principal asked me to mentor Gulfer, who was a new teacher in our school. Gulfer did have some training by our supervisor, but I was in charge of making sure she does everything according to the rules of the school. (Niki)

Although being in charge of orienting a new teacher can be demanding, considering the teaching hours and the paperwork teachers have, Niki welcomes this as a great step towards a higher-level position in teaching, which can be teacher training. She views it as a positive change as it both provides the opportunity to make new friends and gain some useful experience.

For Soroush, teaching in Türkiye has so far been an exceptional experience since he has been a language arts teacher. Teachers in these lessons teach content-based English, and the main content is American and British literature. Soroush talked about the educational merits of these courses as the students do a lot of reading, analyze them using knowledge of literary techniques used in English literature, and then have related discussions in English. In such a lesson, Soroush sees himself more as a teacher of literature with the main role of explaining the meaning behind something they read in English. Soroush graduated from the English literature department at a university in Iran, but he had to do a degree in English language teaching to secure a teaching job because the job prospects for an English literature graduate are not very promising in Iran. He was happy to be given the chance to teach English arts classes, as this is something he is partly experienced in and is something different from what he has mostly done, although he showed a little discontent when talking about preparation time for these classes.

Azar, however, lamented a new role she adopted, which could be the result of a change in the way modern students behave rather than a change in the school. She said that she had to deal with students whose mental conditions would require a trained teacher with expertise in special needs education, and an English teacher should not be assigned to deal with these cases. For Azar, having neurodivergent individuals takes her toll beyond her ability.

> They're difficult in different ways for example mostly students have ADHD, hyperactivity disorder, Down syndrome, autism and a lot more… I mean the managers, the supervisors, they all expect the teachers to control those problematic students … there are some parents who are aware of their children's situation, but because they don't want to send their kids to those exceptional schools, they just keep talking that my child doesn't have any problem it's your fault blah blah. Last year we had two students with one of them with autism, the other one with ADHD. They were both in 4th grade and they were tall, big and sometimes they started a fight in the class. A few times they tried to hit their teacher … (Azar)

Azar says that she is already snowed under hours of teaching, paperwork, material preparation, and, in some cases, break time monitoring responsibilities. She therefore expects to have students whose conditions do not go beyond the teacher's learned knowledge. She believes that her Master's studies or the teacher trainings she received did not include any course related to teaching students with mental disorders, and therefore, it is not her job to teach these students. Based on her observation, these students encounter serious problems in communicating with others and usually have socializing issues because they are not among the popular students whom others want to have in their friendship, even in educational groups. When talking to Azar, I observed moments of emotional breakdown in Azar when she was talking about the situation with these students in her school. About the multiplicity of roles, Mina wrote about a typical day in her diary:

> When I ask Batool a question I have to hush everyone so I can hear what she says and I have to have a lot of patience when she wants to talk. It takes ages for Batool to answer just a simple question. Another one, his name is Raheem. He throws his stuff around and he's always busy looking for something. When I want to explain something, I have to help him find his stuff like I'm his mom. For example, Berda another student, he suffers from a sort of anxiety. When I want to talk to Berda, I have to be super calm because dear Berda might get stressed. Another student is mentally challenged and I

> have to deal with him as well. I have to know about the needs of this student. I must make sure that he doesn't get too excited and he's not left out. You know sometimes I feel that I am everyone here and the last one I am is a teacher of English. (Mina)

This is an example of fluidity of identity where a teacher is a teacher for a very short time in class, and then has to change roles when approaching students of different personalities and disorders. The teacher believes that she is far from her real self, the identity that she adopted when she started work as a teacher of English, but she has to deal with many students who force her to be someone different. It is not the role of a teacher, but a counselor, a care provider, a parent, and a specialist in students with disorders. Being involved in getting to know students and adapting oneself to the needs of the student can be a blow to the mental and even physical health of the teacher. As both Mina and Azar have made it clear, this is not teaching but extending oneself beyond the traditional role of teaching. Mina has also talked about other responsibilities she has to accept in the school, something that she did not have in Iran, and as a foreigner, she has been struggling to accept herself in her new role. For example, she has been assigned as the homeroom teacher of a class. That means she has to call parents and present updates about their kids' progress, test results, and behavioral issues. She needs to make sure that the status of each child is closely followed and documented, and that parents become fully aware of the situation of their child in school. Any negligence on the part of the homeroom teacher can cause serious problems for the teacher, as the satisfaction of parents is a priority for the school. This is despite the fact that Mina's poor knowledge of Turkish can prevent a smooth interaction with parents and might cause misunderstandings, which are likely to damage the trust of parents. Besides that, Mina and Niloufar have narrated stories related to non-teaching duties they have in their schools. These include extra material preparation, designing tests, and having monitoring duties during breaks and even early in the morning. As mentioned before, these responsibilities are not limited to foreign teachers, but have a role in the identity reconstruction of Iranian teachers because of the novelty of the experience. For example, the teachers stated that back in Iran, they were mainly identified as teachers, and material preparation was not something that they had to deal with, but the immigration experience familiarized them with these responsibilities. Whether a negative or a positive change, taking new

roles beyond teaching is a new layer to identity that teachers of the study have to come to terms with.

The theme titled new educational realities uncovered struggles and opportunities that the seven Iranian teachers of the study experienced due to the novelties in the educational institutions. We did not focus on similarities since they cannot result in major identity reconstruction. The theme showed that teachers have to adapt themselves to the rigid syllabus, new rules in their schools, and new roles that can be both pleasant and challenging.

4.6. Theme 6: The Non-native Identity of teachers

Regarding the contribution of teachers' background, which involves their education and socialization in Iran, I already discussed two themes (national representation and capital). Theme 6, which is titled non-native identity of teachers, is mainly the result of teachers' immigration, but it refers to a reemergence of an identity that is not duly focused on in Iran. Although the categorization is obsolete and studies are more focused on the fluidity of identity, the repercussions of being non-native still linger in the lives of teachers who do not speak the language as a mother tongue. For our teachers, once crossing the border, this label becomes more noticeable. The reason could be due to the role native teachers have played in Türkiye in recent years. Türkiye has benefitted from native English teachers, while Iran, in recent years, has mostly relied on local teachers to meet the needs of the market. In Türkiye, Iranian teachers are sometimes grouped as native and sometimes as non-native, depending on the internal policy of the educational institution. Under this theme, we report narratives in which teachers of the study expressed dissatisfaction with the discrimination they went through due to their status as non-native teachers.

Two teachers of the study, Niki and Soroush, talked about the Western names they had to be identified with to be presented as native teachers. I already discussed the plight and confusion because of faking a new identity (Theme 1).

Niki recounted stories related to the initial years of her time in Türkiye when she was trying to land a job. Her master's degree and some internationally recognized

certificates had ensured her convenient employment, but she realized that her native country could take some job opportunities away:

> ... I went there and then the secretary asked my name … and then she said but you're from Turkey so you can't teach here. We want native teachers and it took me like 15 minutes to explain that I am a teacher. I am a certified teacher that I can teach. I'm just Iranian, so it was very nonsense. I didn't like this attitude, but this is very common in Turkey. (Niki)

Niki completed her Bachelor's degree in Iran, did a Master's in Türkiye in English language teaching, and did CELTA and DELTA courses. She also gained an acceptable mark in the TOEFL exam, which would qualify her to apply to any institution. However, when she was trying to find work in an institution, she realized that her country of birth was the priority to allow her to apply for the job of teaching. This is an example of discriminating against the teacher because of the presumed inability to do the task properly, while she claims to have the necessary competency proven through her high qualifications. She also talked about other language schools she sent her resume to but did not receive an invitation to the interview session. She believes that the main reason could be the favoritism for the teachers born in English-speaking countries. The non-native identity became an issue of concentration for Maryam when she had a confrontation with her students during her first years working in Türkiye.

> Once they found out that I was Iranian and wasn't a native teacher, they tried to find mistakes in my English. They'd say oh you're wrong here or you said this and that and things like that. I remember that at that time I could prove them that they were wrong, but they didn't like me. They talked to the manager and asked for another teacher. That could be because I was not a native teacher or because I was Iranian. (Maryam)

Upon encountering unfair judgments of students who had had native teachers before, Maryam had to defend herself and her proficiency in English. She tries to prove herself as a legitimate teacher by attending to all the questions, but ultimately, she cannot free herself from that. Not having experienced such discrimination in her home country, Maryam navigates an identity that she was not used to experiencing when she was living and working in Iran. Presence in a foreign country can cause

some hidden identities to emerge and make one become more conscious of one's identity. Niloufar mentions that a particular name makes her relate the situation to her non-nativeness:

> I played an audio of the book in my class … The audio starts like this: So Hussein! do you come from a large family or small family? and Hussein seriously struggles to answer this question. Obviously he had difficulty speaking very basic English. The situation made me think about myself. It gave me the idea that as Hussein is an Islamic name and is very common in Iran and almost all Islamic countries, this means that people from these countries have a poor English command. I thought to myself as a teacher if I want to apply for a job, I probably run into the same issue. The recruiters will probably see my name on the CV and then will look at me as a person with a poor knowledge of English without even asking any questions. (Niloufar)

Sensitivity towards naming conventions means that the new context of work has made Niloufar automatically categorize speakers of English as us versus them. A simple name makes her start thinking about her English amongst all the speakers, and how she is at a disadvantage in potential interview sessions in the future because of biased and uncalculated judgments about her proficiency. Although the issue is real, Niloufar prefers it not to be stirred so that an alleged incompetence of hers is not brought to light.

In another situation, Niloufar talks about a conversation she had with the principal about some posts shared on the school's Instagram page. She notices two styles of English are compared and are captioned as 'normal English' vs 'native speaker' English. She takes a stance against the idea of referring to non-native's English as *normal*, which seems like a less standard version of the native speaker's English. She brings it up once she has a talk with the principal and tries to raise awareness over the matter, though she was not successful. The point about it is that immigration and carrying the label of non-native have made the teacher sensitive about the native versus non-native categorization so much that she takes action towards solving it. However, her main attempt is to let it be unknown by hiding or not discussing the myth that nativeness is associated with better teaching.

In the interviews, the teachers of the study were asked some questions that would seek their opinions on the language and teaching ability of native speakers and the

idea of native speakerism. It is acknowledged that native speakers' proficiency is a strong positive point for these teachers. Not only should it be denied, but non-natives should strive towards perfect proficiency in general English, as they are the source of knowledge for their students. Soroush talked about his efforts to reach that. For example, he still plans carefully to work on his general English ability.

> ... as a non-native teacher there is this proficiency side that always I feel inferior compared to a native speaker, so they have the gift of recognizing what's natural and what's not. So I'm trying to develop that by exposing myself to various sources, YouTube or books or newsletters or whatever. I need to work more and more to make sure that I'm going to be a proficient user of English. (Soroush)

It is important to know one's weaknesses and problems and then try to improve oneself in the profession. Soroush does believe that a native speaker's proficiency should be the criterion in assessing one's proficiency, and the negative atmosphere created against the native speaker supremacy in the market of language teaching should not make us ignore the fact that a native speaker's English can be the yardstick in assessing the legitimacy of one's knowledge in general English. Mina has her encounters with native speakers just to find her English lagging behind theirs, and that has made her adamant to improve herself. As she mentioned, being in contact with native teachers is beneficial since they can get to know what their level of proficiency is in English. Reza has referred to the superiority of native speakers in their accent, speed, and fluency in speaking English. He asserted that since those speaking English as a first language mainly come from countries developed economically and politically, people assume that they are competent teachers, but this can merely be a myth. The teachers have also raised comments on whether they admire the teaching qualities of native speaking teachers as much as their proficiency in the language. They mainly do not see a person who speaks a language as their mother tongue as being an equally capable teacher. Soroush refers to that as a *comfort* for him, since by excelling in teaching, he can make amends for his *mediocre* general English proficiency. It is a promising piece of finding here that teachers have not fallen for the marketers' showing a high regard for native teachers to promote their language school. The non-native teacher should primarily believe in their capabilities to succeed in the job market, especially in a multilingual context

like Turkish schools, where native speakers can be present and then be presented as the ideal teachers. Mina shows that she firmly believes that the native speaker superiority in teaching English is just a popular fallacy:

> ... but the point is I have always thought that a native English teacher does not necessarily run a class better than a non-native and I am very very confident about this. You know teaching is not a matter of having high level in speaking or writing … I do not like it when I hear ohh that person is a native speaker so they brag about it a lot …. As far as I know, most native speakers, if they didn't study in university, they are not good at the grammar or things that we know they might not know … (Mina)

She does not think native speakers are competent teachers, and she became more confident about this when she sent her daughter to a school where it was claimed that natives were in charge of the English classes. Mina did not hesitate to mention that the ability to teach English goes beyond only proficiency in the language. Making an example of his own strategies in providing in-class feedback, Reza believes that non-native teachers go through the major steps of learning a language, so they can detect areas in need of further work more efficiently than natives. He talks about situations in which students ask him about the best way to learn vocabulary, and he gives consultation following what he himself used to do as a learner.

The fact that the teaching industry is still inundated with the rhetoric, which recognizes natives as better teachers, made me ask about how the teachers feel about this situation. While some teachers grudgingly accepted the reality of being a second-class teacher, they did not view the current situation as a sign of surrender. Imitating native speakers or trying to present oneself as a person from a different country to gain approval can be a strategy to find one's way into the community of native speakers. However, the teachers of the study categorically rejected such an approach and did not find it a reason for a person to abandon their culture and their real identities. When I asked Azar whether she designs any strategy to be similar to a native speaker of English, she talked about her efforts to improve herself rather than to imitate someone. That is despite the fact that she had made some people disappointed by revealing her true identity and could have presented herself as a native speaker.

> ... I don’t try to change my accent, but I usually try my best. I try to watch American films so I always try to look more like a native speaker. But of course in some ways I'm not (a native speaker) because still whatever I do I’m from Iran. It [English] isn’t my first language. (Azar)

The professional life of a non-native teacher of English is heavily and consistently affected by their place of birth. As we pointed out in this section, almost all teachers of our study encountered discriminatory comments and behaviors because their first language is not English. Although they are confident about their proficiency in general English, they exert more effort to improve themselves, and they are aware of their positive qualities over their native counterparts. The promising finding was that teachers have remained faithful to their Iranianness by maintaining their cultural integrity. They do not wish to change either their accent or their names to be considered a native speaker, but take steps to be comprehensible and effective as a teacher of English. When the teachers were asked what identifies them in their work, they were not hesitant to point out as Iranian and non-native teachers of English, trying hard to make the most effective contribution at work.

4.7. Theme 7: Dynamics of Power and Control

Power has been a central argument in identity studies, where poststructuralism acts as the theoretical lens of the investigation. Identity studies have been interested in examining the way relationships between students, teachers, and other educational role players are under the influence of power among these social actors. Negotiating, avoiding, or producing power structures exist in educational contexts, and they shape teacher identity (Morgan, 2004). Understanding the concept of discourse, as used in social sciences, is important to know the way power affects relationships. Discourse is a common way to think, speak, behave, and interact, and it is shaped by the historical, social, and cultural influences and has become a way of conduct among a specific group of people (Clarke, 2008). In line with poststructuralist thinking, the Foucauldian concept of power means that discourse affects relations and either empowers individuals or undermines their power, and that contributes to shaping their identity (Baxter, 2016). The idea says that power can be macro-scale as a tool in the hands of governments or corporations, or micro-scale, determining the

relationships among individuals. Such rules can be applied to the classroom as it is not a value-free structure, but place of dominance, opposition, and resistance (Shah, 2023), and such power-embedded interactions determine the identity of the teacher (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). After studying the stories of the participants and analyzing their interactions with the important people in their work life, certain words and phrases have led to the emergence of the current theme that is explained under two sub-themes.

4.7.1. Reduced Power Distance

By power distance, we mean the way the relationship between members of groups who historically have unequal powers is defined. We asked questions about the way teachers treat students who are supposed to be at a lower power rank, and others in their jobs, like managers. This is in light of foreignness, which can affect the way traditional, powerful groups are formulated. Maryam, as one of the experienced teachers of the study who finished her Bachelor's and Master's in Iran and worked there for four years, believes that in Türkiye, there exists a thin line defining the boundary between the teacher and the student, making it possible for the student to establish a relatively close relationship with the teacher. However, this is not the case in Iran, where the teacher comes out as a more authoritative figure in class whose powerful status is also maintained in out-of-class relationships. This caused her some identity conflict during the initial years of teaching, as the degree of respect, authority, and space that she received was less than what she had expected. The expectation had been formed during years of studying and teaching in Iran, and now it is challenged.

> ... most of the time in Iran, students and teachers try to keep the distance. I mean students do not get too close to the teacher and there are boundaries but in Turkey teachers always talk to their students like they know them for many years and they just use sweet words to address them. This is [something] you rarely see it in Iran, I mean among Iranian teachers and the students. They're really close to each other. They touch each other. They hug each other. (Maryam)

Maryam believes that she is used to working in a culture where the teacher enjoys more power and status than her students because of her age, knowledge and

occupational status. That is why the tighter bonds in the classroom and out of class between teachers and students were something surprising to her. She also talked about the endearment terms Turkish teachers use when addressing their students. In the interview session, she said that at one time, a student had asked her to hug her, and she had rejected it immediately as she saw it as completely uncalled for. She does not believe this close relationship should be banished, but believes it is not easy for her to adapt herself to this new social conduct in Turkish schools. In another situation, Niki talks about her experience of doubting her role as an English teacher since she was not treated as a teacher but more as a friend who could even receive an invitation for a date. Having recently started work in the new school and being accustomed to the Iranian idea of the teacher-student relationship, she expressed her amazement at what she encountered during the initial years of teaching.

> … they give themselves the right to invite me to different places, to hang out after the class, to go beyond the limits that they should, and I can say I was very young. I was like 21 or so, and didn't have that much experience and I didn't know how to deal with it. (Niki)

She is unsure how to behave when she is asked out by her student, which could be just a simple invitation to enjoy some time out with the teacher. However, Niki might have misinterpreted the gesture as a romantic advance. This is an example of cultural misinterpretation, which results in the teacher feeling her authority being undermined. Examining the incidents through a Foucauldian perspective, we can see that modern interactions are not just defined by those who have a higher rank, but power exists in student-teacher relationships where the student can also exercise power over the teacher in building trust and connection.

The reduced power distance can also be seen among Turkish teachers when they have a confrontation with the boss or the principal. What teachers observed at work in the case of their Turkish colleagues is that the power gap between the boss and people of lower rank appears to be narrower.

> … in Iran we give the right to the person of higher rank and we believe we should follow him because they have this right. If they get angry, they have the right and if they're busy they have the right to be busy. But here Turks

> give the right to themselves and only after that to their person of higher rank. (Maryam)

Maryam believes that in Iran, people try to be more obedient and are more willing to follow the orders of the person in power. She holds a positive attitude towards what she observed in Türkiye, and she thinks this can bring a more democratic and socially healthier community, either in education or on a broader scale.

> "... I think they [other Turkish teachers] are braver. When they want something from the principal, they go and talk to him. It seems they are more assertive when they think something is their right and they should have it. What I saw from one of my colleagues, a Turkish teacher was that she stood up for herself and she didn't accept the extra workload. But if I was in that situation, I might feel uncomfortable and not brave to reject it." (Niki)

Like Maryam, Niki refers to incidents she observed at work and the way Turkish teachers show resistance when faced with allegedly unfair treatment. Niki believes this originates from cultural differences, which equipped her Turkish colleagues with assertiveness and tenacity.

4.7.2. Feeling Powerless

For teachers working in schools, dealing with disciplinary matters is an everyday reality, which necessitates having the power to apply discipline well. A significant part of the diary and interview data included stories talking about student misbehavior and the way the teacher dealt with them. When asked about differences across the two cultures, Soroush believes that he used to feel more like a person in authority when dealing with disruptive behavior or just trying to have things under control. He started work with young learners in Iran and gained valuable experience in class management. Later, he moved to teaching English to adults. After immigrating to Türkiye, he started work at a private school teaching grade 5 to 7 students, and in the new context, his class management experience proved useful.

> I suppose back then in Iran, teachers had like more authority. But here it might be one thing I personally felt that because I'm foreign here so I need to just be more careful. I cannot really be that tough with the students but in Iran

> I felt a little bit perhaps more free to exercise my power in class that was one thing. (Soroush)

The same issue with distance that caused teachers to be confused about their position when treating students out of class made Soroush disempowered in his class management. Although he has managed to adapt to such differences, he believes Iranian teachers in their own country have more power in class. Azar seems to be in a better position than Soroush in class management since she is more experienced with Turkish young learners and can speak some basic Turkish. However, she holds the same view as Soroush and believes that students' classroom conduct can be different when they have a Turkish teacher.

> … they think that since we're foreigners, so we don't understand the language, so they just say whatever they want, even some swear words. Or they think it's easier to break rules of the school when a foreign teacher is in the class. For example in my class they always want to go out and they go out and just walk in corridors or they just want me to play a cartoon. I get confused or shocked when I hear the same students act much better when they have a Turkish teacher. (Azar)

The teacher here refers to some limitations a foreign teacher can have, which contribute to their inability to have the class under control. She seems certain that such a mishap is down to her nationality since she has observed the same students being less demanding when they have a Turk as their teacher. Maryam believes that sometimes the student might make a comparison to justify their poor behavior. She talks about a confrontation with a student since the student had not been attentive and had refused to do any work in class:

> … I tell him OK now go out of the class if you don't want to listen. He wouldn't go out. He then says that he pays attention when the other teacher is in class. Then I say OK so now please go out and attend the other teacher's class. I send him out of the class and do not let him enter. At the moment I thought to myself that I'd never let him in my class. This is one of the situation that makes me regret being a teacher. (Maryam)

In Maryam's school, there is the tradition of assigning two teachers to each class. One teacher might be tasked with teaching particular units or parts of the syllabus, or in some cases, they have similar responsibilities with just different content. Maryam

talked about the negative aspect of this system, which is making it possible for the student to make an unfair comparison between the two teachers. In this scenario, the teacher's foreign identity gives the student the chance to place the blame on the nationality of the teacher to be able to move the burden off his shoulder. Nevertheless, for the teacher, the tension is so high that she just wants to get rid of the student. It causes Maryam to doubt her own self as a teacher and question the appropriateness of the job for her. Traditionally, she has had authority as a teacher in class, which has enabled her to exercise her power, but after immigration, this seems to have been undermined because of gaining the label 'foreigner'.

The teachers also expressed their loss of power when they feel discontent with something included in the syllabus or some responsibilities they have to respect, but they do not have the power to go against them. The strict syllabus was already discussed under the theme 5, New Educational Realities, in which we enlisted certain educational policies that the teacher finds unreasonable. Soroush talked about the syllabus, which includes a lot of reading lessons but little practice on the part of the students. He is the one, who needs to implement the syllabus, and he is aware of the pitfalls; however, he cannot take any action since he believes that if the issue is brought up, he might not be taken seriously. He believes this is something that a manager or supervisor should take the initiative to address. Niloufar has also raised a similar concern:

> you know we have the coursebook, but there's also this small book called material pack. This is something that teachers prepared before. The material pack has extra exercises. But sometimes I find the exercises not very useful I don't know they are not at the level of the students or maybe I think it's just a waste of time. So I told Mrs. X, our supervisor about this but nothing happened. The next year we had a meeting and they asked us if we have any suggestions. I said the same thing but again nothing happened. I was talking to some Turkish friends, and they said, come on don't make yourself tired, they just do what they want. (Niloufar)

Niloufar thinks that the institutional rules and dominant discourse in her school override her opinion and sideline her agency. When Niloufar observes her local colleagues doing nothing about it, she feels even less empowered, as she is a foreign teacher in the school. If there should be an initiative taken to address a problem, she thinks that should be done by her Turkish colleagues first.

Mina works in a private school where parents play an important role in running the school, so they should always be respected and given attention. She narrated a story to show that sometimes she feels powerless:

> … he asked me why I didn't reply to their message, parents are important to us and we should not treat them like that. I try to explain but he starts complaining and goes on and on. He says why the students have got low grades in the 'global perspective' lesson, and why my class is doing poorly compared to other classes. I try to explain but his behaviour does not give me any space to pull myself together. While I am crying I feel stuck in a situation where I feel like being a victim who is being interrogated by the police officer ... (Mina)

As the homeroom teacher, Mina failed to catch up on some responsibilities and did not manage to reply to parents' messages, which made them complain to the boss. When hearing about the teacher's tardiness, the boss becomes furious and shows extreme anger at the teacher. However, Mina wrote that she felt that she had the right to defend herself, and some of the accusations constantly levied at her were not right. She did not manage to defend herself because she was constrained by language barriers and the fear of losing her job. A few days after this incident, Mina wrote about another drama the boss had with a teacher who happened to be Iranian but had received her Turkish citizenship:

> Yesterday I heard that one of our Iranian colleagues had an argument with the manager of our school over salary I think, and also the number of classes. After the fight, she quit her job. She was a brave woman to pick a fight with Mr. X who's also the owner of the school. You know why? That Iranian lady knows Turkish and also has a Turkish passport. So that is why. You only have power if you are not worried about losing the record for becoming a Turkish citizen. (Mina)

Mina believes that feeling powerless is directly connected to her immigrant identity because she cannot speak the language to defend herself, and she is also afraid of losing her hard-earned job, which can result in losing her residency. Reza also narrates a story to show that as a foreign teacher, he always feels the threat of being dismissed and suffering the consequences. He talks about a petty violation of the rules that the teachers at his school made to be able to spend more time smoking during the break times. Although the act seems to be too trivial to jeopardize one's

career, he believes he cannot be like his Turkish colleagues because they are not worried about the work visa. More about school policies, Mina narrated some stories about the way the salary payment for foreigners is conducted in her school. As she discussed in the interview session, she always believed that teaching is such a rewarding job that money issues should not become a priority for a teacher. However, some ambiguous rules at her school made her talk about financial matters.

> We had a pay raise this month because of inflation. Foreigners were paid 11.000 liras more and then were asked to pay 6.000 back to school. … And worse than that is that you can't do anything about it and nobody gives you an explanation. (Mina)

Reza talks about another policy related to his work visa renewal, which was confusing to him, but he could not do anything about it:

> … so apparently they were trying to make me resign and they wanted to hire me again. I don't know about the rules and stuff, but probably I would not be able to ask for any compensation. So they didn't want to give it to me so they forced me because if I wouldn't sign God knows, maybe they wouldn't give me a new contract. (Reza)

For Soroush, life at his first school came to an end when he was asked to resign after working there for two years. The reason for that was the school was not able to afford to hire non-Turkish teachers anymore. He was then asked to sign some papers as part of his contract termination, but he believes that some of his rights were taken away, and he was not able to object to that:

> In my previous job, when I was leaving I knew that it was kind of unfair because they were trying to get out of paying me the severance and I knew that as a foreigner I was not in a position to demand that really so although I knew all this, I tried to be nice to him [the boss]. (Soroush)

Soroush and I talked about employment rules for foreigners in Turkish schools. He said that he had carefully studied the employment rules published on the Ministry of Labor website. Everything from payment, leave policies, start and termination of the contract, and performance and conduct of the teacher was clear. However, he blames

private schools as they just feel free to practice rules the way they wish. This makes it easy for them to take advantage of the powerlessness of the teacher, as they know that it is difficult for a foreign teacher to get involved in the legal actions of claiming their right. Niki sees an irony in this regard as she claims that her school benefited from their foreign staff to boast about the competent teachers they have. But they easily terminate a contract with them as soon as they run into financial problems, or they just think that they are not subject to any laws when dealing with a foreign teacher.

Finally, some teachers narrated stories about how they felt powerless to act because of uncertainty about societal norms. Niloufar talked about some questions she did not feel comfortable answering when she was teaching at her previous school. Niloufar has experience working in different cities in Iran, including the most conservative city, famous for being the religious hub of the country. She mentioned that during her second year in Türkiye, once she was in the class of 9th-grade students, she was asked some questions about her idea on the evolution theory and whether or not she found the theory true. Not feeling sure about the dominant view as well as the fear of losing her job, Niloufar tried to divert attention to something else and follow the syllabus only.

Reza also talked about facing political questions and that he did not see himself in a situation to reply. It was at a time close to the presidential elections, and he knew that even young students were eager to take sides and know about their teacher's opinion on this. Nevertheless, Reza was not sure how to behave to keep both sides happy, and he knew that if he said anything, he might make some parents too sensitive on the issue. Reza said that he just acted indifferent and told the students that he did not feel comfortable talking about such things. Reza added that the uncertainty to respond to such questions can be a problem for any teacher, but for teachers from another culture, because of a lack of cultural familiarity, this is a more serious issue. Learning his lessons after teaching in some evening classes where students are adults and discussions can go on with less forbearance, Reza says that he used to have a better relationship with those students than with students in his school because of social norms he always feels bound to respect.

As an Iranian teacher myself, I was briefed on how to approach such questions in Iran. When I was about to start a job in a private company, I was advised to avoid some topics of discussion and was given some heads-up about questions I might face in class. I asked Maryam about that, and she said she was aware of the rules in Iran when discussing sensitive topics, but she did not know how to behave in this situation, and her foreign teacher status could have made matters worse had she uttered anything unsatisfactory. She has decided to refrain from discussing any delicate matters to be away from any conflict. That is despite the fact that her deep-down belief is that as a teacher she should educate students on important matters and should try to present a hero-like image of herself for her students.

Under theme 7, I talked about situations in which the Iranian teachers of the study felt powerless. That happened in their encounters with the students at times of class management because of their foreign identity, or with the boss when they compared their situation to their Turkish colleagues. I also talked about a narrower power gap between people of unequal ranks, an observation that the teachers made in comparison to the situation in Iran. The teachers also narrated stories about how they felt at work when they were constrained by school policies, and how they experienced uncertainty when approaching sensitive questions in the class.

4.8. Theme 8: Immigration and Imagination

Immigration can result in a change in identities as the person is seeking to achieve a new self by leaving their country of birth. By immigration, teachers can picture themselves with particular groups: more experienced teachers, more proficient speakers of the language, or native speakers. Under the final theme here, I tried to collect data about the future imagination of the teachers of the study, their plans and dreams. I also tried to discover the way aspirations are affected by the current experiences in the post-immigration context. I asked the participants some questions about their plans, dreams, and wishes, and listened to the stories that were the work of their imaginations. The findings are explained under three sub-themes:

4.8.1. New Discoveries

In response to the questions about the fulfillment of dreams after immigration, I heard mostly positive stories. Niki, as a teacher who received two certificates in Türkiye and is planning to do a PhD course in English in the future, talked about the valuable training courses she managed to attend. That was one of her primary aims in leaving her native country and moving to Türkiye, and she was happy to have the freedom to join some internationally recognized courses. In addition to the availability of the courses, she talked about their affordability. She believes that if an English teacher in Türkiye intends to pursue further training by taking teacher training courses, they are not too difficult to access in Türkiye. She believes this is not an easily accessible target in Iran due to some limitations, such as less frequency of the courses and financial constraints. For Niki, the fact that in Türkiye, she had the opportunity to enhance her educational capabilities was a strong reason to talk positively about her experience in the country. The other experienced teacher, Maryam, who has spent more than five years in Türkiye, shows a positive attitude towards her initial years before the coronavirus pandemic broke out. Upon her entry to the country, she experienced some problems and had difficulty adapting to the circumstances. Nevertheless, as she mentioned in her diary, she managed to find a job, secure an acceptable salary, and even enroll in the DELTA course. That gave her a positive image of the new home, which made her continue teaching English in spite of her initial resentment of the job. She had a memorable lesson to gain from her course:

> … I came here and they offered me to have a DELTA. I couldn't afford it, but they said you just pay half and then the other half will be in instalments so yeah of course I accepted it because it's really expensive in Iran. … In DELTA course, we had to read a lot and then prepare something and then we were observed. We had pre observation post observation so we had to think about our work you know, think and think all the time. Actually these were kinds of life lessons for me. My life was in a way that I had to always do things that I came up with. I didn't think about them. I had to just go for it, do it and finish it. (Maryam)

In addition to the discounted offer, Maryam believes that the Cambridge DELTA training course was a great opportunity for her to learn to think. She learned that each

activity has a pre-observation and post-observation phase, and these are the strategies she should learn to apply to her life, as at the time, she says that her life had taken a downward turn. She sees it as one of the positives of immigration since the initial years of life in Türkiye, which were accompanied by difficult times, coincided with challenges she had to go through during the DELTA training course. However, the course greatly helped her make better decisions in her life, and that was the result of the feedback she received for her observed teacher practice sessions during the DELTA course.

When asked about his initial years in Türkiye, Soroush talked about the time he used to work in two different language schools where he was paid by the hour. He then managed to find a full-time job at a recognized private K-12 school in Ankara. However, as he talked about those years, he was always doing his best not to stop trying for better opportunities and not allow his stable job to cause him to drift into a feeling of stagnation. This is one example showing that after immigration, he came to the realization that he needs to feel responsible at any stage of his job to live up to the expectations of the students and parents.

> I started with at this school and then over time I thought about some important points I should be careful about. Things that maybe I didn't think of back in time. Like these kids have high expectations you know, I should put in more energy in the class, for example, or take my duties more seriously. I am now in a competitive market. I am also a person from another country whose post, position can easily fill up with a local teacher. So yeah, it's a lesson I guess. (Soroush)

For Reza, immigration has been an important element of his identity. Having worked in Iran for some years, he started thinking about gaining new experience overseas, which made him consider many options as his destination. He moved to Türkiye and found his potential in computer engineering, and started a master's degree at a Turkish university. This is what he responds when he is asked whether he is attached to his homeland and intends to try his hand in his native country:

> ... I do miss some friends and some places. Sometimes I even wish that I would have been in a better situation in Iran, but … I got this far because I needed to experience everything. I needed to come to Turkey to become the person that I am now. So No, I won't go back. (Reza)

He believes that immigration was essential in making him aware of his potential, that he did have the power to leave Iran and stand on his own feet. The immigration experience gave him the courage to go for studies and a career that he truly desires. To answer the question about the future community he wishes to be identified with, he talked about computer programmers, although the teaching experience and immigration helped him become clear about his vision. For Niki, immigration has also been a positive experience, and has made it possible for her to talk passionately about her dreams. She described how work and life in Ankara, and especially the university she attended and the people she met, allowed her to attend to more important interests in her life; things which she had imagined doing but was not able to.

> … they don't want us to be in contact with foreigners or with even strangers so that migration opened up this gate for me to talk with people and be the one that I didn't use to be in Iran. (Niki)

In the interview session, she talked about limitations she had in Iran because of the religious sect she belonged to. Niki wants to be someone she wants to be rather than someone who is shaped by her religious group or society, and she believes immigration has set the stage for that. On the other hand, Azar prefers to focus more on the negative consequences of her immigration to Türkiye. Moving to Türkiye was not a rewarding experience for Azar, and she believes that she could have invested her time in another European country. Although she has lived in Türkiye for about five years, has obtained the eligibility to apply for Turkish citizenship, and in a similar manner to Niki, has assimilated well into the Turkish community, she does not seem so content with her job and her future in Türkiye. As she mentioned, the difficult school could be one reason for that, since she must deal with very young learners every day. She does not identify herself with any member of the teaching or Turkish community, and the future she imagines is a substantial change from her current situation.

When Niloufar was invited to reflect on the positives and negatives of immigration, she talked about the hurdles she had to surmount during her initial years, like teaching responsibilities, dealing with students, socializing with colleagues, and

even communicating with managers, due to language barriers. Now, after four years of living in Türkiye and securing a steady job, she feels content with herself, as she did not allow the small problems to disappoint her, but gave her life lessons to be able to face the realities of life and then act in a resilient manner. When talking about her identity after immigration, she said that "it [immigration] gave birth to a new identity, an identity that does not easily break when facing some down moments".

4.8.2. Future Aspirations

The desire to succeed is present in many people, and teachers take various pathways to achieve important goals. Narratives of the teachers contained a considerable number of entries about the teachers' desire to achieve important aims. The teachers value these aspirations and depend on them to act as sources of hope for them in every aspect of their lives. They talked about plans to progress in teaching, develop themselves personally, and take action to give back to their society. When asked about her plans, Niki seemed very positive:

> Maybe I can make them [learners] motivated by using English to talk about and learn about different things in the world. It can be history, it can be country, it can be food, it can be anything. I was always thinking that maybe I would have a small atelier and I would just do mosaic art while teaching English or I would just have this club that people come and think and talk and share their thoughts in English or in any other languages as a club for everybody who can join. I want to find a way that I can just teach the things that I know to people in a more novel way in a way that the people who like things like me would join and see it." (Niki)

As the youngest and one of the most passionate teachers, Niki intends to stay in teaching and even go beyond the conventional class type. She talks about her thoughts to make teaching English a more interesting experience for the learners, such as integrating some types of art in her teaching. She also talks about her wish to learn something beyond what she is taught in class. Although what she mentions here is mostly related to her job, she shows her willingness to combine her professional and personal desires to satisfy the need to enjoy her job. As for the need to contribute to her society, she talks about her role as an activist:

> …I want people to... come up with a solution for how we can just emancipate... I want to just teach it to people, teach it to women. (Niki)

More on her future aspirations, Niki talks about the way she wants to give back to her society by addressing issues women face in both countries, and how she can push society towards more egalitarian values. As a school student in Iran, Niki used to observe differences between the two sexes, which would come as a surprise to her when she would see the way women were dressed in her home country. She thought about it when she wanted encouragement to immigrate, and now she tries to identify her future with someone who actively thinks about emancipatory plans for the people of her country, rather than solely a passive teacher.

The will to progress is seen in Niloufar when she talks about her plans for continuing what she likes, which is in line with her current job. She does not want to be stuck in one role, but expresses her love of doing something related to her real passion, which is teaching. She wishes to continue her career related to teaching, such as teacher training. Mina also expressed her plans, which include further educational pursuits with a focus on teaching at higher levels and more varied geographical locations.

> I will have got my MA degree by three years. I really want to say I will see myself working in a university in Turkey, but even if not, I will be in a point that when I look back at three years before, I will see improvements like maybe I am a supervisor or an examiner, or a more successful PTE teacher. It's not just for the money you know. I should be a good role model for my daughter and I should show her that a person should take responsibility and do that job well. (Mina)

What both Niloufar and Mina express about their plans shows that they need to progress in their jobs, as this seems to be an essential part of being successful. They are ready to sacrifice their comfort to reach better aims, as they did before by moving out of their country. As Mina said, for us, immigrants, moving forward should not stop, but should be done even faster. For Mina, it seems she is not so sure about securing a job at university, but she mentions her commitment to continue teaching as a teacher of PTE (Pearson Test of English). She shows that her imagined identity includes one's past, and when one looks back, she needs to see progress, and in her current attempt, she tries to build a future self where she feels satisfied with herself,

and more importantly, to present herself as a great role model for her daughter. As a mother of an 11-year-old, she needs to make sure that she plants the spirit of hard work and development in her daughter.

4.8.3. Taking a new direction

I have been a teacher of English for a significant duration, and I have found teaching to be a high-turnover profession in the countries I have worked in. While attending to the root cause of this is not the aim of the present study, the narratives showed that some teachers do not wish to remain in the job for the rest of their careers. In the subtheme named taking a new direction, I intend to zoom in on this group of teachers, and to explore their concerns more deeply. For example, Reza believes that teaching is not something he has ever desired:

> My passion is computer science. It always was, and it is right now, so I'm taking further steps for it. Right now I'm a university student and I'm doing my master degree in IT. So I'm planning to be a developer in future. It's a plan. I don't know if it works out or not, but I'm so serious about it and I'm doing my best to get there. (Reza)

In his bachelor's studies, Reza studied English translation at a university in his hometown, Tehran. He then worked as a registration officer at the biggest language school in his city before starting a teaching job at the same language school. Shortly afterwards, he moved to Türkiye and worked in some language schools and then found a job in a private school. He left that school after two years and has been working in another, more distinguished private school ever since. Although his destiny seems to be bound to teaching English, he said that he had never imagined himself as a teacher. The reason he chose teaching as a career was his analysis of the people with whom he worked in the language school in Iran, where he used to be an employee of the school. He found the teachers knowledgeable and approachable, and this made him believe that teaching could be the right job for him. After his immigration and working as a teacher, which gave him relative stability, he managed to enroll at university, complete a degree in engineering, and then think of a career change. In the interview session, he talked about starting teaching English out of

financial necessity, and teaching is not his burning desire. Instead, he would like to be identified as a computer specialist in the future rather than a teacher.

The same story explains the situation with Maryam and Azar, who do not intend to pursue teaching as a career, though, unlike Reza, they have not made a serious effort to learn a non-teaching skill.

> As I said before, my biggest plan is to quit teaching, but I'm not sure if I can do it because it's the career that I have had for many years. But actually my goal is to develop myself in some other ways to learn some other skills, or maybe if I would be able to study in some other majors so I can change my job. (Azar)

Although immigration granted Azar a job with an acceptable source of income, she had to go to great lengths to have her classes under control. She had to quit her previous school as she had difficulty getting along with her supervisor. In her current job, she must show extreme patience and fake kindness to be labeled as a good teacher. These have all made her so disappointed with teaching that she cannot have the imagination of herself as a teacher for the rest of her life. Her imagined self is formed based on her previous job as a school teacher, where she hardly had peace at work, and her pre immigration experience in Iran, where she would experience job insecurity. These have formed the future imagination of the teacher and have convinced her that teaching is not a job that she is inclined toward. The other experienced teacher, Maryam, was asked about her future, and in response, she narrated something showing the conflict between what she had in mind and what she faced.

> OK, let me give an example. I was in DELTA you know. Everything seemed very organized. Ok you introduce the lesson, you give the students something as exercise to do, and then you give feedback. They also talked about different ways to know the student psychologically which was interesting to me. But After DELTA, I go back to X school, I want to improve myself and want to follow everything I learned in DELTA, but no. None of them I could do because the student does not listen or takes time with something else, Ms. X [supervisor] wants me to do something else, and … . I love teaching when we are having a training, but I don't like it when I'm in class … (Maryam)

For Maryam, there is a mismatch between what she is taught in a training course about how teaching should be and the reality of the classroom. She is constrained by

the students' behavior or ways of learning, and by the commands of the school principal. What she has dreamed of as the ideal job for a teacher clashes with what she experiences in real life, and this is strong enough to make her think of doing another job.

Immigration means leaving home and imagining a different land as home, and this is undeniably a challenging change. Surely enough, the teachers of this study showed that they willingly stepped onto this path because they had a dream. Life in Türkiye made them reimagine a future, whether in teaching or another profession. Whether they achieved what they desired at the beginning or they are still seeking it, they expressed that their immigration experience made them into resilient individuals, and that would be enough to guarantee their further progress.

The final theme was the theme of the future, in which teachers expressed their plans and desires. They talked about the important role of immigration in their future decisions and their imagined identities as either more professional teachers, activists, role models or successful people in other careers.

In this chapter, I presented the findings of the study with the three periods of past life, present situation, and future life of the seven Iranian English teachers who are working in schools in Türkiye. I organized the findings under eight themes, some containing sub-themes. In short, I demonstrated that the identity of these teachers is affected by their past life in Iran, which was shown by the capital they gained and managed to enjoy after their immigration. In the immigration context, however, they faced situations that required them to change their identities regarding social demands and unexpected school norms, school rules, knowledge of the Turkish language, and power dynamics. However, despite differences and reconstruction of identities, teachers have reached a stage where they can muster the courage to aspire to achieve essential aims in their lives.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the identity of a group of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye. The study collected narrative data about prior experience, new identity reformulation, and imagined identities of the participants. The main driving theory of this research on identity is poststructuralism, which challenges fixed views on identity and makes assumptions about the instability and invariability of identities. Poststructuralism argues that identity is a fluid concept and that language, power relations, and interactions play a major role in the formation of identity. I tried to understand the change in identity under the effect of the teacher's past life in Iran. That means investigating the way past professional life played a role in defining teachers, and how the identity of foreignness became assets or liabilities for the teachers of the study. The study also tried to investigate the way teachers identify themselves as non-native foreign teachers in schools in Türkiye. It investigates their educational and social challenges and power dynamics. Finally, the study investigates the future identity of teachers by using imagined identity theories to discover the way teachers view themselves in the future and whether such a view is influenced by their current role as foreign teachers. To collect data for the study, I used narrative inquiry as the methodology and asked seven teachers to report their stories through weekly written journals and semi-structured interview sessions. They were asked to report stories related to their identity and anything related to their foreignness and non-nativeness. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data, and the following eight themes were produced. The list of all themes and subthemes can be found in Appendix 3.

- Theme 1: National Representation
- Theme 2: Cultural, Social, and Symbolic Capital

- Theme 3: Knowledge of Turkish Language
- Theme 4: Othering and Identity Uncertainty
- Theme 5: New Educational Realities
- Theme 6: The Non-native Identity of teachers
- Theme 7: Dynamics of Power and Control
- Theme 8: Immigration and Imagination

In this section, research questions are going to be revisited, themes linked to them are going to be explained in more detail, and related theories and studies are going to be discussed.

5.1. Research Question One

How does a group of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye negotiate their identities in light of their pre-immigration experience?

The first research question is about the role of teachers' background on their current identities, the way Iranianness and being a foreign teacher contribute to their success or failure in the new situation. In addition, it researched the new positive or negative roles that the teacher has to adopt after immigration. Themes 1, 2, and 6 have made the link between past and present. In theme 2, the significance of resources provided by the teachers' culture, background, education, and the status of foreignness is elaborated using Bourdieu's idea of capital. It shows that teachers of the study carry rich resources to the new teaching context, including their memories, teaching experiences, and culturally informed teaching philosophies that shape their identities. Themes 1 and 6 reveal crucial information about identities, proving the fact that the identities of the immigrants can be relational. How they portray themselves and how they are represented by others determines their belonging and legitimacy in Türkiye.

5.1.1. Theme 1: National Representation

The first theme is about dilemmas the teachers of the study experienced when they had to represent their Iranian background. This showed that our teachers in this study

encounter situations where they are asked about social and political vibes about their country. As foreigners, the teachers narrated stories showing that they had to define an inclination to be responsive to inquiries about their country, even though they did not prefer the questions. Given the negative image created by the Western-led media about Iran, which is mostly politically driven, the teachers are faced with questions that are not easy to approach. I found cases in which the teacher tries to hide her nationality to avoid such questions, while there were cases showing that the teacher would rather reveal data about her culture in a very conservative way, and some cases in which the teacher reveals everything and tries to be enlightening about her culture.

As discussed before, poststructuralism believes in the dynamic nature of identity, which is in the process of evolution and is influenced by personal and professional experiences. Ideas falling under the theory of poststructuralism do not view reality as a fixed phenomenon but rather as something constructed in context and through social interactions. That means identity is not a quality given to people but is constructed by the power of agency of individuals (Weedon, 1987) within a particular social, cultural, historical, and political context (Duff & Uchida, 1997). In these contexts, by the power of interactions, part of one's self is built in the flow of communication (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012)

The theory explains the behavior of teachers when it comes to representing their country. The teacher tries to be associated with a non-Iranian identity or just positive aspects of their national identity. The contextual features of the interaction with students and colleagues necessitate hiding or partially presenting an image of their native country. While the traditional identity features categorize the teacher based on conventional labels, the teacher herself, though, decides to identify herself with positive aspects of those conventional categories. This shows that identity is not something an individual owns, but it is something the person activates in light of the particular social, cultural, historical, and political context (Duff & Uchida, 1997). As was narrated by Soroush in the interview session, his identity is put on display in association with the context he is in. When he is among his students, he is obliged to construct a native speaker identity and act as if he is the one bearing the culture of

the British people. In other words, he tries to present himself in a particular way so that he can be congruent with the context that values native speaker quality. However, in a friendlier context with colleagues, he does not have to abide by his native speaker identity. As Soroush stated, he is normally recognized by his native speaker identity, meaning he needs to hide some parts of his real identity and reveal only some truth about himself. I observed that sometimes the teacher prefers to have a totally hidden identity. This is not an unprecedented phenomenon since, in the case of minorities, there have been preferences to be merged into the mainstream and not to be identified with the minority status (Edelmann, 2013; Lengyel & Rosen, 2015; Rotter, 2014). There are similar studies (Aneja, 2016; Jhagroo, 2016) showing the same covert identity phenomenon, where teachers are supposed to hide or modify information about their national, religious, or cultural background to survive in situations where their markedness can result in the loss of some privileges. For instance, the teacher adopts a Western name to be identified with the mainstream teachers and distance themselves from their immigrant status to boost their chance of employment or for any other purpose. This has also been observed in the case of Iranians in the United States and Canada, where media negativity against Iran has made many people stick to the less derogatory term of 'Persian' rather than 'Iranian' so as to be identified with the positive aspects of the Iranian culture (Khanlou et al., 2008). Talking to teachers about the degree to which they try to hide facts about their culture, I found the case of hiding relatively low. This is a positive observation compared to the situation Iranian teachers have experienced in the West, where fear of criticism because of nationality can make the teacher present themselves as citizens of any country other than Iran. I would argue that hiding something about one's identity can result in identity problems, and presenting everything about one's country might lead to misunderstanding. The best strategy, however, as we observed for Soroush and Maryam, is the strategy of 'selective representation'. That means trying to boast about things that have made you strong and determined to pursue better opportunities abroad and be a valued representative of your country. As an Iranian teacher myself, I have encountered many cases where I have found myself responsive about things happening in Iran. This is walking on thin ice for me. On the one hand, there is the matter of honesty and representing a clear picture of the situation, and on the other hand, there may be a wrong interpretation of what we

narrate about our countries. To escape the situation, I have mostly tried to focus on the positives and talk about days when the country was not showcased based on politically motivated conflicts, but was represented based on more positive features, such as culture and literature.

5.1.2. Theme 2: Cultural, Social, and Symbolic Capital

Second language teaching and learning should be analyzed in a broader scope, including life history, family influences, immigration, and socioeconomic factors (Menard-Warwick, 2008), meaning the professional life of a teacher is not just defined based on their current context, professionalism, and interaction, but it should be looked at retrospectively. This study collected narratives about the resources participants carried with them across the border to shape their current identity in the new context, in Türkiye. This was explained using Bourdieu's (1986, 1991) theory of capital, where the different resources helping the teachers in the field (school or classroom) were categorized into different types of capital. I found the importance of social, cultural, and symbolic capitals in the lives of teachers granted by their education and socialization in Iran, and by gaining a new identity in Türkiye as a foreign teacher. Capitals are important in being shapers of identity, and they can negotiate legitimacy and guarantee one's success personally and professionally. They are not just past histories to be forgotten over time (Colliander, 2017). Participants in Colliander's (2017) study showed that they draw on their past, such as their educational experience and cultural knowledge, to clarify, establish connections, and improve their performance at work. Similarly, participants in this study narrated stories showing the importance of their background and foreignness to excel in their jobs.

I reported on the richness of the cultural capital of all the participants of the study, especially their institutionalized cultural capital. One reason for the possession of advanced degrees is the requirements of working as an English teacher in Türkiye, which requires foreign applicants to have high academic degrees, although this is not so strict for native speakers of English, since their nativeness is their symbolic capital. Iranian teachers in Türkiye proved that their hard-earned cultural capital,

provided by their past life, could compensate for the lack of symbolic capital, or, as Bourdieu (1984) puts it, *titles of nobility* that native speakers enjoy. Native speakers are still popular among students, recruiters, and parents because they possess symbolic capital gained in a class society, which reinforces such inequalities (Bourdieu, 1984). However, Bourdieu (1984) attests that social origin and education can shape an individual's cultural capital. To put the matter in the context of native and non-native, I can see that Iranian teachers with the attainment of higher education can enrich and refine the capital that was not granted to them through their origin.

Cultural capital is "in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986: 17). In this study, I use the term cultural capital to refer to the skills and work experience learned in their homeland, and they are invaluable resources that introduce variety to any educational system. I documented narratives showing how the teacher benefited from what they learned in Iran and then applied it in the new school in Türkiye. The literature is rife with studies proving the importance of background knowledge of an individual in her current professional identity. For example, in a study on the Syrian immigrant teachers in Sweden, researchers categorized the teacher's influential background knowledge into three categories of adding, retaining, and subtracting to make it clear whether the background knowledge of the teacher granted to her in Syria should be improved, removed, or maintained (Ennerberg & Economou, 2021). One immigrant teacher was found to be more caring than others, and she talked about how she had applied her teaching philosophy in her home country. In another case, the teacher's experience of treating young children helped her to succeed in the new Western-style teaching context. That is similar to what Soroush in the current study mentioned about his ability to have better class management, which he attributed to his years of teaching in Iran.

In another study, Marom (2019) criticizes the way academic degrees of immigrants are regulated, leading to putting more value on conformity at the expense of losing the contribution of a teacher's past learning experience. The writer draws attention to the Canadian education system, which ignores the academic qualifications of foreign teachers and wants them to go through a *retraining* process, meaning learning skills

from scratch. The act is viewed as a loss of valuable cultural and pedagogical capital, and it removes the chance of introducing variety into the Canadian education system. It can also help numerous immigrants and multilingual students, and help improve multicultural awareness among students. We can see that cultural capital is something with a valuable contributory role, as a teacher of different nationalities means a teacher with more varied resources that, if exploited well, can be followed by positive results for the educational system as well as the teacher. As stated by Grenfell (2009), when talking about teachers' resources, the emphasis should be on the ways of benefiting from them rather than expecting the teacher to follow the norm. Grenfell (2009) adds that teachers should identify their habitus (ingrained ways of thinking and doing) to understand the place of their past life in their current teaching. He believes that foreign teachers bring linguistic capital as another resource which, if employed properly, can be turned into an asset to improve them, but if they fail to do so, their linguistic capital should be the cause of their alienation. In short, the educational institutions should be able to exploit the experience of migrants to improve teachers' performance, and also help the system to be viewed from a multicultural standpoint. For example, given the numerous common words between Persian and Turkish, Iranian teachers can be encouraged to benefit from this fact and turn it into something educational in their classes. If they fail to provide the desired results, the teachers have at least felt respected and valued to practice something of their culture in their teaching. If such a value is not granted, then the feeling of their language being useless in the new context could lead to feelings of alienation, a fact that turns a potential capital into a liability.

One of the sub-themes related to capital was cases that showed the social capital granted to foreign teachers because of their foreign identity. This is considered capital because when teachers have connections, they can achieve goals, reach satisfaction, and enjoy an improved school culture (Surmeli et al., 2024). Ozmantar and Mkwananzi (2023) showed that social capital boosted the self-confidence, sense of agency, and pride of refugee teachers in Türkiye by empowering them and bringing recognition and respect.

Some cases of social capital for the teachers was discovered in this study. For example, the presence of foreign students or a culturally different teacher in class

brought interaction opportunities for teachers and students, which strengthened student-teacher relationships. Similar to the findings of this study, instructors in Sanczyk's (2020) study found themselves able to connect with their foreign-background students much better because of the shared identity. The connection was followed by the caring and empathetic guidance of the teachers towards enlightening their students. One of the teachers managed to have a multicultural relationship with her friends, which resulted in improvement in her teaching, such as caring more about her students and making sure to adopt a more inclusive teaching philosophy. In Colliander's (2017) study, teachers could build a trusting relationship with their students, just as we observed in our study that foreignness would strike friendships between students and teachers (e.g., Mina's discussion over football with her students and Maryam's bond with her student thanks to the student's basic familiarity with Persian). Similarly, membership in Iranian communities was referred to as something positive that helps teachers' relationships, gain updates on occupational opportunities, and seek advice from people from the same country. Networking for the tiny community of Iranian teachers of English in Ankara can be easier and stronger because of the low number of teachers in this area. The positive effects of networking cannot be denied, and teachers should be encouraged to form such networks and do their best to boost their activity and performance in establishing connections with people in their own country. It is of high importance because one of the effective ways to garner social capital is through professional learning communities, where collaboration is at the core of these communities. What Surmeli et al. (2024) showed was several benefits that teacher support groups granted the teachers in upper secondary schools in Iceland during uncertain and turbulent COVID-19 times. Social capital enabled teachers to adjust themselves to the new ways of teaching and enabled them to go through challenges by having a company as a source of encouragement. The author found that teachers with more connections are more resilient and flexible. Although not quite comparable, the initial years of immigration can be times of turbulence and difficulty for teachers, as they encounter numerous issues related to settling in and finding a job. Through the years, fighting challenges and getting integrated have made it a difficult process. Building social capital through collaboration with teachers at the same school, or foreigners of the same country, or even foreign teachers, can help teachers get over the challenges

posed by immigration. Sharing stories and finding each other as incentives help the immigrant feel less strange in a foreign land. While cultural capital can positively influence the professional performance of the teachers, social capital leads to connections that help the teachers' survival in the host country.

As far as symbolic capital is concerned, we believe that this form of capital can be constructed for the teacher and by the teacher. We referred to the revelation Soroush experiences upon having a chat with a Turkish colleague about Iranian movies. He realized that the way Iran is pictured in the minds of the locals is through the description the Iranian people make. That means they can either present a beautiful picture of their country where strong wishes, hope, and optimism prevail or a dystopian place inundated with problems. Identity is designated in some situations, meaning an institution or a group of people forces the individual to adopt a particular identity, while it can also be actual, which refers to the identity shaped by the person's reflection and experience (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). In the situation that Soroush recounted, we could see that he had the option of producing symbolic capital by creating recognition for his country, or of referring to the negative aspects to plant negative thoughts in the minds of people interested in his country. In discussions over culture and nationality, perfection or an ideal is hardly found, but the way one views the way they have been shaped in the culture forms the views of others.

5.1.3. Theme 6: The Non-native Identity of Teachers

Discussion about the categorization of English teachers based on their place of birth seems to be exhausted and replaced with other concepts. There are even arguments against the use of the term non-native, believing that it promotes its use more than it solves the problem. However, as mentioned by Llurda and Calvet-Terré (2024), the issue should be further discussed because this wrong ideology needs to be problematized further in academia. They suggest more work towards fighting the native-speakerism fallacy since there is still more work to do to change minds about the legitimacy of non-native speakers. Narratives of our participants displayed concerns about the matter of non-nativeness, implying that the dichotomy has not

been eradicated. In addition, categorization is still a determining factor in drawing the attention of those in the market of English language teaching. Recruiters still prefer to have native teachers, no matter how proficient the non-native speaker is.

Another reason that makes this theme significant is that non-native teachers have mostly been treated as an extensive category without regard for the subtle differences existing among the members. Non-native teachers have so far been all grouped into a huge bundle as if their concerns are all similar and research results apply to all equally. However, as stated by Moussu and Llurda (2008), we need to take account of these factors when investigating non-native teachers: language teaching context; whether it is a second or foreign context; their country of origin and their mother tongue; their level of teaching, level of instruction, the time they spent in English-speaking countries, and also their proficiency in the target language. In short, in spite of the loud voices against the attention given to these two categories, the way to tackle the issue is to research it more to debunk it rather than adopt a silent strategy towards it (Llurda & Calvet-Terré, 2024).

The non-native teachers of the present study were asked to reflect on classroom or out-of-class events and then state anything directly or indirectly related to their status as a person who does not speak English as a first language. We received stories showing that the teacher had to struggle to figure out the precise status in the education market. On the one hand, their belonging to the relevant job description was relatively confusing to them because, in some cases, they are identified with native teachers as they are not Turkish, and in other cases, they are just referred to as foreign teachers. On the other hand, they have to assume a non-Iranian name to be identified with native speakers. I also talked about the situation where a non-native identity caused the teacher to be differentiated and viewed as less competent than native speakers at work. However, when the teachers of the study were asked about their opinions on the issue of native speaker superiority, they acknowledged the positive qualities native teachers can have, but showed awareness of their own capabilities as English teachers. Because of that, the teachers emphasized their relentless commitment to their culture and that they would not prefer to imitate the natives to be identified with them.

I referred to some of the participants of the study (Soroush, Niki, and Azar) who encountered discrimination because of revealing their non-Western names. Niki and Soroush narrated stories about the expectations of the school to fabricate a fake name to be presented as a native teacher. A person's name is closely related to the person's identity, something that can shape the individual's identity (Aldrin, 2016). That is because names in children's views are an integral part of an object, and for humans, they influence self-perception (Dion, 1983). For example, people who have positive views of themselves love their names, while those with a negative view do not. Surnames are social identity shapers since they are connected to a lineage or a particular city (Finch, 2008). The statements maintain that names are an integral part of one's identity, and if they should be changed, it should be done with utmost care. However, what I have observed in the data is the name change that easily happens for a teacher with utter disregard for the identity consequences that this might cause. Unwillingly, recruiters might damage the non-native teacher's sense of self and downgrade their confidence, while for them, that might simply be viewed as a business strategy. While this strategy might yield financial benefits, it places the burden on the teacher to act out a different identity for the students and everyone involved. While the name shift manner has not been addressed much in the studies about non-native teachers in Türkiye, attempts should be made toward the elimination of this wrong convention to save the mental and emotional health of the non-native teacher.

In the findings section, I also talked about discriminatory behavior, like comments about their English, that Iranian teachers experienced due to their non-native status. The idea is not something new, and the fact that non-native teachers are still regarded as less competent individuals compared to their native counterparts is still an unresolved problem in the English industry. Despite the numerous studies written on the topic, the non-native/native discrimination persists. In a recent *Language Teaching* journal article, Griffiths (2024) talked about the biased attitudes toward teachers of non-English speaking countries in a language learning summer program in New Zealand, although she reported that non-native teachers' proficiency was 'much better, in fact, than many L1 English speakers' (Griffiths, 2024, p. 2). As another example, Hsieh et al. (2022) referred to the narratives of a Chinese English

teacher who attended a practicum organized by the Australian TESOL program. Having observed the proportion of native to non-native teachers hired and the color of the teachers, she was disappointed at her chances of being hired as an English teacher in spite of her impressive academic qualifications. More elaboration on this issue is just revisiting a settled matter because the discrimination non-natives experience has been the topic of discussion for decades. However, I observed that among our teachers who did not have this issue in their home country before, the discrimination seems to exert a negative impact and place a strain upon them.

Our participants were also asked about their views on native speakers and the fact that they are given priority in the market. They referred to cases where they have either experienced themselves or have heard from others that native speakers are not necessarily more qualified teachers. However, they all talked about the unquestionable superiority of these teachers in their proficiency in English, and that they can be referred to as a criterion to judge the competency of a non-native teacher in terms of their general English. However, what we have found from the literature is that holding such an idea is against the move towards the acceptance of non-native teachers into mainstream teaching. Previous studies have come up with a term 'comparative fallacy' (Mahboob, 2005), which refers to the condition that native speakers are still treated as guardians of English and decision makers in determining the legitimacy of English teachers. They are still regarded as the body that can determine the authenticity of language teaching (Lowe & Pinner, 2016), and this does not help non-natives to catch up with natives, but just adds fuel to the existing unbalanced situation. In line with the findings of this study, Akinmulegun and Kunt (2002) found similar cases where non-natives felt inferior because of their pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary use. The authors recommended that this should be taken as an opportunity to develop the teachers. Rather than seeing these as flaws, the teachers should be incentivized to improve themselves, not to keep up with the natives, but to be able to impart true knowledge to their students. General English mistakes should not be seen as problems, and the high proficiency of natives should not be admired and lionized. Instead, teachers should be made familiar with the concept of 'sufficient knowledge of English' to be able to operate as an intelligible teacher.

Non-natives have great qualities to contribute to the profession, and there are great ideas proposed that focus on the assets that these teachers can introduce to the class. Insights from World English have challenged views of native teachers' superiority because of the universality of English. They defend the sole legitimacy of native speakers, question the exclusivity of English to only English-speaking countries, and refer to the current situation in the world where the chance of non-natives encountering is more than that of natives (Kachru, 1985, 1997; Matsuda, 2018). Ellis (2016) talks about circumstantial and elective bilingualism, meaning learning another language due to the necessity of circumstances or learning it willingly. She says that what matters in these cases is the positive contribution of another language in the richness of the person's experience, which results in a more professional performance as a teacher. She proposes that a person's linguistic identity should include all languages the person knows, rather than just their relationship with English.

For Iranian teachers of the current study, non-nativeness has surfaced and become visible because, while working in Iran, the matter of native and non-native did not constitute a serious concern. There are not many native speakers working in Iranian schools as teachers, and Iranian English teachers do not have to compete with them. However, once they immigrate to Türkiye, they are not only compared to the local non-native counterparts, but also to the native teachers. Although those immigrating from Iran own distinguished academic degrees, certificates of teaching, and also high marks in distinguished general English exams, they still experience discrimination based on their place of birth. Some points need to be taken into account. Firstly, they should be made aware of their multilingualism and, in many cases, trilingualism as an asset that should help them in their job rather than be an obstacle. As we elaborated in detail in the theme about the capital of foreign teachers (Theme 2), they need to be reminded that the unequal narrative hovering around native and non-native is either a marketing strategy or an unawareness of people about how a language is learned and what exactly the role of the teacher is in this process. That means we should encourage the teacher to hone in on improving themselves and benefit from the resources their background has provided to them. Our teachers showed that they have learned English in Iranian schools, have gained experience in

Turkish schools, and have been in touch with English throughout their professional lives. The familiarity with three cultures should have made the teachers strong enough to go against biases in favor of native speakers, whose only strength, as stated by the participants, is their proficiency in English. As Perry (2023) mentioned in the article about seven non-native speaking teachers from the Philippines and Japan, the teachers should be made aware that the change of views about them as competent teachers does not need external intervention, but needs to be developed in their own minds. That is achieved when they focus on self-development, learn how to appreciate their qualities, and work on themselves to advance in their field. They should be reminded that they are entrepreneurs of the self who can manage their lives and add to their values and benefits from their capital to succeed in the global multilingual ELT marketplace (Perry, 2023). Discussions revolving around native speakers and non-native speakers are too general and seem to work differently in different contexts. Instead, the emphasis should be on the contribution of the non-native teacher in the specific context. That refers to the contribution of an educated, experienced teacher from Iran with an advanced level of English proficiency, valuable capital grown in her hometown, and equipped with cultural knowledge, personality, and manners similar to the learner. Regardless of the capabilities of the native teacher, the spotlight should be turned towards the contribution that the teacher introduces to the educational system, rather than following the conventional categories of native and non-native, which are only determined based on the place of birth.

5.2. Research Question 2

How does a group of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye experience the transformation of their identities in the post-immigration context?

The following themes provide enough data to answer the second research question. They show how knowledge of the local language for immigrants greatly contributes to the way they are positioned by society, as poststructuralism places due emphasis on discourse and language when talking about identities (theme 3). The importance of social reconstruction of identities in situations where teachers experience othering

or alienation (theme 4), and how they need to rebrand their identities under the new social realities. This is also evident in professional situations (demonstrated in theme 5) where teachers need to navigate new selfs redefined in light of new rules and roles. They encounter situations where their one-sided identities experience different shapes. Finally, power (theme 7) seems to have both advantages and disadvantages for the teachers. While the teacher feels powerless in their encounters with students or managers, they might exploit the status of foreignness when students show curiosity, colleagues respect their unique experiences, and managers value their global perspectives.

5.2.1. Theme 3: Knowledge of Turkish Language

The third theme of the study revealed identity issues that teachers experienced due to their poor knowledge of the Turkish language. This included feelings of isolation in class or at work, as well as feelings of not having authority and power to have proper class management, encounter people of higher rank, and even deal with basic communication outside the workplace. Similar findings were reported by Fotovation (2010), who conducted a study on the professional and social identities of two Iranian teachers in Australia. She showed that the teachers had to cope with isolation at work and had to present themselves as legitimate teachers, mainly because of their accented proficiency in English. The teachers in the present study made confessions about the critical role of Turkish in their lives and that they experienced ostracization due to their poor knowledge of Turkish. They acknowledged that their poor proficiency had permeated their social skills and their self-confidence as teachers.

Identities are social in nature, and they are constructed in relation to others because we cannot claim that meaning is an essential property of human experience, but is made through interactions (Wodak, 2012). For the interactions to start operating, language is the most essential tool. In poststructuralism, language goes beyond its conventional use as a tool for individuals to reflect meaning and talk about identity, but identity is constructed and negotiated through language (Weedon, 1987). Language is a site for the construction of a person's identity, and cannot be viewed

as an assortment of structures not connected to their user, but should be seen as context-bound structures through which people engage in dialogues and negotiate meaning. Through language, a person builds their 'subjectivity', which refers to the way a person views herself in relation to the world. In arm struggles for power, the person might be placed in a lower position or might gain the upper hand in interaction, and language is an essential determinant of this position.

Reflecting on these and the isolation that some of the teachers in this study talked about, it becomes evident that knowledge of the local language is more important than just being equipped with a tool to deal with some everyday essentials. The teacher is building her identity after a major life-changing experience, which is immigration (Block, 2007), so the teacher needs to find herself in the new setting and build social skills, which contribute to her new self in the new context. If the teacher is frequently isolated because of the inability to communicate, she becomes identified with that over time. We could see some types of this isolation in the narratives of the teachers of the study. For example, in meetings and everyday connections, teachers had to step back when things would turn into Turkish. Undoubtedly, this is contrary to the success parameters involved in integration. Proponents of poststructuralism object to the matter of identity being simply assigned to individuals. They argue that identity is constructed in discourse, and language determines how the identity is constructed. For example, people speaking with different accents or degrees of formality in different situations construct their interpretation of themselves, and they reach that aim using their language skills (Block, 2013). When no language is uttered, the teacher makes herself isolated, and that is the new identity of the teacher. It is the position that the foreign individual has selected to be identified with, and it can lead to further isolation. Norton (2014) makes the example of an immigrant who does not want to be identified with a particular profession, but her poor command of English in an English-speaking country downgrades her class and her individual being. It is an example of the power of language that can *position* individuals. We saw examples by some of the participants revealing the teacher being aware that knowledge of Turkish is necessary not just to gain information but also to be identified with a particular group, the group with power. There are studies showing language to be the threshold into full

membership in a society (Lefever et al., 2014; Wodak, 2012), and it contributes to the person's self-identification with the host culture.

Similar to isolation, language can render individuals powerless. Our study showed cases where the teacher feels powerless when he has to have a conversation with his boss (Reza), or she has to have the class under control (Niloufar), or when she just wants to hail the bus driver (Azar). In these situations, the teacher feels her power is undermined because she cannot present herself as a competent person, as competent as a Turkish teacher. As we discussed before, Foucault (1980) believes that discourses are in competition and one discourse gains supremacy over others in human social interactions. The inability of the teacher to speak the language prevents her from entering the discourse and losing the battlefield to exercise her agency. Language enables the person to find their way to powerful social networks and the chance to interact with the members (Norton, 2014). Language should be viewed as a linguistic capital, which can be converted to other forms of capital (Block, 2013; Bourdieu, 1991). For example, teachers would be able to enjoy social capital strengthened through interaction with Turkish teachers if they were Turkish speakers. Nevertheless, the participants preferred to be isolated and be deprived of this capital. When teachers of the study were asked about groups of people they prefer to spend time with, they mentioned their Iranian friends because of sharing language and culture. Other than the participant's own preference, the blame can also be placed on school authorities. Foreign teachers in some schools are not expected to know Turkish. It is something the school authorities would welcome if the English teacher claimed no knowledge of Turkish. Because of these two social drives, the foreign teacher does not consider investing in learning the language. However, we discussed the necessity of knowing the local language for the teachers of our study, as it lays the groundwork for the teacher to start building social identity and negotiate the new identity as a new member of the community. Language is at the core of the teacher's identity, and the teacher takes the first steps towards integration by joining a community or forming their own community by learning the local language. What I have found about the teachers is that they are aware of the necessity of learning the language to live in a foreign country, as they have long-term plans to stay in the country and have serious plans to improve their Turkish in the near future.

5.2.2. Theme 4: Othering and Identity Uncertainty

According to Block (2014), for an adult immigrant, identity and self might be at risk because the previous life defined in history, culture, and language should be reshaped and replaced by new ones. One new area into which our participants had to adapt themselves and form a new self was the sensitive situation in which the teacher was either compared to a non-Iranian teacher or was viewed negatively only because of their nationality. We encountered stories in which teachers talked about incidents, either directed at them or at one of the students, wherein dealing with the issue required utmost care and sensitivity. Teachers talked about feelings of uncertainty about the best way to deal with situations in which they observed students making racist comments or inquiring about race-related issues.

They found them difficult to deal with for two reasons: Firstly, there are not many foreign people living in Iran, and that lowers the chance of such encounters in an English class. In addition, the teacher herself carried the identity of 'foreigner', which might make any solution by the teacher appear as an act to defend her own identity.

We kept records of some quotations showing that dealing with race-related issues is a novel phenomenon for the teacher. That is a new identity that the teacher had to negotiate in the host country and is expected to develop a new self in which such incidents are predicted and widely dealt with. Immigration means facing a myriad of new situations, which need one to develop a new identity, and that is more pronounced when the individual gets involved in an occupation that is accompanied by more identity-related issues. It cannot be expected teachers to be able to sail through such novelty while sticking to the same principles they have held onto throughout their lives. As I discussed before, identity is not considered a fixed concept but goes through changes according to changes in the context, and it is shaped in interaction. It is a hybrid concept that shifts depending on the roles individuals are assigned in an institution and the environment in which they start working (Barkhuizen & Mendieta, 2020). In this situation, the identity of teachers is affected by the community they participate in, including interpersonal behaviors with

the members of the community. This theme of the study showed that teachers in interaction with the students who are foreign students, in conjunction with the background of the teacher herself, define a new identity, which is the ability to address class discussions that involve individuals' differences in race, nationality, or culture. Teaching for an immigrant teacher means the ability to navigate one's past with the new dominant discourse and then develop a new integrated teacher identity (Alsup, 2006). What teachers experienced as race is in line with studies that showed teachers face sociocultural issues that require modifications in their identity (Alsup, 2006; Smith, 2018; Vélez-Rendón, 2010). Poststructuralism proposes that language does not just reflect reality, but it constructs reality, and that language is not just about the structure of the system used as a tool to transfer messages, but it is a place to form identities, positioning, and power (Norton, 2013). Language class is a place to develop new identities, both for the teacher and students. Considering this, we can say the teachers of our study need to develop a new identity that enables them to address sensitive cases in their classrooms. The teachers need to expand their understanding of the criticality of the issue of national and cultural differences in the current world, gain some basic understanding about the current racially motivated conflicts, and gain some knowledge about the status of Türkiye in this regard. Türkiye's history is rooted in diversity, the prime example of which is the vast empire of the Ottomans, which included more than 30 ethnic groups. That means hosting people from various countries has always been a fact in Türkiye and is still a reality. The Iranian teacher immigrating to Türkiye to work as an English teacher should be aware of this multi-ethnicity and the fact that this can easily find its way into her teaching class and might turn into either a lively discussion about the beautiful varieties that each country has or into a feud and skirmish. In the findings of the study, we reported cases where the teacher was subjected to insensitive racial comments or observed students engaging in race-related arguments. The teacher was shocked to see that students easily addressed their friends to levy the most disturbing insults at them or indirectly express racist comments, while the presence of foreign students and the identity of the teacher as a foreign individual made the teacher unsure about how to address the problem. Instead of panicking or feeling lost, or changing the topic by starting the lesson, the teacher needs to be a global citizen (Andreotti, 2006), meaning she should turn the situation into an enlightening moment

of education about critical world issues. It can be the responsibility of the language teacher to go beyond her role as a teacher of English and make some points clear about such classroom issues. In this way, the teacher can contribute to the well-being of the world by creating lively discussions in class. This can be a successful strategy since, on the one hand, the teacher's role in students' lives sometimes goes beyond a subject knowledge expert and turns into a hero, so that can be an effective starting point to educate them. On the other hand, language should have a role beyond the traditional role of a body of rules to be learned, but a channel through which issues are resolved. When Mina was asked about her strategy to address the vile, insensitive race-related behavior she observed in her class, she talked about the limitations she felt when she wanted to address the problem.

> … yes of course I could say, guys you should not make a judgement based on a person's color or culture, and we're all humans, you know, we are all equal' but I thought to myself that this is just a clichés and I should say more than that. (Mina)

Mina also talks about school limitations that prevent her from discussing race in class. She is not sure how the management will react once they know sensitive topics are discussed under her watch. If the issue gets out of control and parents are informed about that, she will have to explain herself to the manager, and that could result in her punishment or receiving a warning. In this situation, the teacher has to be a teacher only and follow the syllabus to secure her place in the school. However, according to the poststructuralist thinking, individuals are subjected to discourse and are shaped by it, but they can challenge the discourse and go beyond the imposed rules and responsibilities. The agentive power of the teacher, which can result in informed and unprejudiced students, is confiscated here, but the teacher needs to be given confidence to challenge the structures in play. Teachers of color in Von Esch et al. (2020) showed the ways they used their racialized identities and benefited from their own racial experience to challenge dominant ideologies and institutional norms. Having experienced racism here, the teachers of the study can tap into the experience to move towards educating the students about race. In a world where conflicts of ideas have made people too informed or misinformed about some highly essential topics, we need informed teachers to play an active role in lighting the path for our

students. Not only can it help the growth of minds, it can also build a sense of confidence in teachers and elate teachers when knowing that their presence in class goes beyond bodies of knowledge in charge of filling the students up with that knowledge, but they are part of students' identity, while their own identity keeps reshaping.

5.2.3. Theme 5: New Educational Realities

This theme turned attention to differences in the educational systems and novelties that teachers experienced. It tried to find narratives showing how the differences played a role in the reshaping of the post-immigration identities of the teachers.

Barkhuizen and Mendieta (2020) showed how the identity of a good language teacher is shaped in accordance with three interconnected factors of cognitive, sociocultural, and emotional. They showed that identity is constructed through interaction, reflection, experience, and professional practice. That means identities are built in practice, through day-to-day teaching. For teachers engaging in professional practice, identities are being built and negotiated, moving from periphery to the center (Varghese et al., 2005).

What I discovered from the data was cases showing that the teachers faced new ways of educational management, which would force them to adopt new survival strategies. For example, the teacher had to deal with a restrictive syllabus because everything had been meticulously planned, leaving no room for the teacher to show off her creativity. I also narrated stories of teachers who complained that the syllabus in their schools was too rigid to change, since everything was placed in the syllabus after a lot of meetings and discussions by the principal and other teachers, which would make it the final word. In addition, the teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with the way a series of rules had been specified for trivial matters. Although the teachers agreed that rules are to ensure the smooth process of learning and teaching in action, they believed that the number of rules and the nuances were beyond their expectations. Finally, the teachers talked about unprecedented roles they have to adopt that go beyond their main role as teachers.

I found that professional integration is not easily achievable because of the educational differences existing between the two cultures, which require teachers to develop new professional identities. Studies show that such differences affect the professional identity of teachers (e.g., Bressler and Rotter, 2017; Ennerberg & Economou, 2021). The foreign teacher might have difficulty having basic communication with pupils or may not be sure how to exercise his authority in the new teaching context (Bengtsson & Mickwitz, 2022) because the host society is culturally distant from that of the teacher. In such a situation, the teacher has to accommodate her identity between being a teacher and adapting to the new rules and regulations. The process of finding one's niche could be a site of identity struggle since it is influenced by uncertainty and a mismatch between teachers' own teaching beliefs and what they observe in the new context (Britzman, 1992). This is what Britzman (1992) says about a teacher exploring and reinventing her identity in a new context:

> [it] is the work of carving out one's own territory within pre-established borders, of desiring to be different while negotiating institutional mandates for conformity, and of constructing one's teaching voice from the stuff of student experience. This struggle to borrow, to negotiate, to claim ownership, and to take up that which seems already completed, suggests the contradictions within which teacher identity is constructed and deconstructed (Britzman, 1992, p. 24).

Negotiating identity in a new context involves significant contradictions, and the teacher has to navigate these to 'carve out' their territory there. The rigid syllabus, the new roles, and the seemingly illogical rules that our teachers have pointed out are the struggles that they go through to find their place in a school that is professionally and culturally new to them. For immigrant teachers, a mismatch between what they believe and what they are asked to do can lead to low confidence and a weakened sense of agency (Yip et al., 2024). As such, it is apparent that adopting strategies to facilitate the process of teachers' acclimation into their new school is necessary. This should be the responsibility of teacher training programmers, which becomes more important upon the initiation of a teaching job in a new setting. Once students' pedagogical knowledge is recognized and their resources are tapped into, can we be sure that the teacher is on the path towards becoming a valuable asset in the

institution. As Britzman (1992) pointed out, during their initial years, the teacher is responsible for educating students, but also receiving education. One way to get educated is to be observant and become familiar with the way an organization is managed and relationships are defined, although they might face contradictions as they both have the role of teacher and learner. Smith (2018) talked about the way foreign educators in US schools learned about cultural differences by observation, reflection, awareness, and the passage of time. In another study, Bengtsson and Mickwitz (2022) referred to strategies teachers employed to facilitate their integration into the educational system of the new school. For example, because of the incompatibility of the two educational systems, the teachers had to change their roles from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator. This happened by allowing the teacher to observe and go through tailored mentoring. Even bonding with other teachers and students proved to be helpful. In the end, immigrant teachers maintained their teaching fundamentals but managed to introduce significant changes to their teaching to fit in.

The immigrant teachers of the present study need to find their place in the new discourse. So they should be encouraged to observe these differences, study them reflectively, and show forbearance and inclusiveness when things are against their expectations. That is how they get familiar with the educational culture of their school, which is an essential issue to fully identify themselves with the new workplace (Wang, 2021). They should also be encouraged to adopt active roles in their institution, build a new identity, and find a middle ground between who they are as an Iranian teacher and what they need to be adapted into as an Iranian teacher in Türkiye. They should be informed that teaching in a new context necessitates introducing some change to their teaching beliefs, but that does not mean creating a huge canyon between their Iranian self and their Turkish self. Instead, success means the ability to navigate both identities to reach the optimal version. This version (identity) should be constructed in light of ‘compliance’ with the present educational conditions and their own unique capabilities. I can think of an example to make my point clearer. One of the questions teachers were asked was about the way they have changed as teachers after they immigrated to Türkiye. Among the answers, one relatively common reply was that they have been challenged more to incentivize

students to speak more in class. They narrated stories showing that back in Iran, the task of creating speaking activities in class used to be simpler for the teacher because the students showed eagerness towards activities, including only speaking English. However, it was not easy to get students to continue discussions in English. For example, students would stop discussing a topic after a short while. This is a conflicting discourse situation in which the teacher might either lament the issue and feel disappointed and conduct a class of blaming either students or herself, or it can be seized as an opportunity to navigate these differences. Through observation and reflection, and benefiting from their capital, the teacher can either adopt a middle ground strategy or skew towards one coping mechanism here. That does not mean complete acquiescence to the rules imposed on the teacher, but it means using one's background capital in the new context to devise plans to have a better teaching experience. As an immigrant, minority, foreign, non-native person, the teachers are prone to face numerous contradictions, and their success entails wisely navigating their abilities concerning the contextual demands.

5.2.4. Theme 7: Dynamics of Power and Control

One identity reconstitution of the participants of the study was related to their views towards the power they hold onto. The immigrant teacher might feel powerless because of gaining a new identity after immigration, or feel more powerful because of reliance on their background. The analysis of the participants' narratives revealed the presence of power dynamics in the relationships the participants had with the students, school authorities, and society. I discussed cases showing that the relationship between a student and their teacher was not as unequal as the teachers expected. The participants described their relationship with their teachers in Iran, and then compared it to what they are experiencing in their current workplaces. They said that Turkish students could enjoy a closer relationship with their teachers since they would not act in an egoistic way, which makes them approachable. It is remote from the strict and highly demarcated relationships that teachers were familiar with through years of teaching in Iran. The narrow power gap between the two is similarly observed in the relationship between the teacher and a person in authority. What the participants have observed is that Turkish teachers can easily challenge an

authoritative figure, and they are assertive enough to demonstrate disagreement if something does not meet their expectations.

We also referred to the narratives in which the teachers talked about their lack of power in confronting students. This includes times when the teacher needs to apply discipline in class, but the student exploits the teacher's foreignness to either disobey her or compare her to a Turkish teacher. There were also institutional constraints, such as school rules, either educational or non-educational, that would limit the agentive power of the teacher to act as freely as a Turkish native colleague would. The teachers also talked about their uncertainty regarding social conventions. That is because what is accepted in the dominant culture is not easy to pinpoint, and for the teacher of the study, it was not easy to know whether some statements would be socially acceptable or not. While the certainty about social norms the teacher used to enjoy in her home country is replaced with extra prudence in the context where she is a foreigner, it proves the contextual considerations in the understanding of identity, and the fact that identity is shaped by social relationships and contextual features.

About the first sub-theme (narrower power-gap), I can refer to the acclaimed work by Hofstede et al. (2010) to reflect on this cultural difference. Using data from an IBM survey during the 1960s and 1970s, Geert Hofstede achieved significant findings about the way power is defined among people of a country. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), the way power is treated among members of a society varies across cultures because there are historical, geographic, and linguistic factors that create a divide among cultures. The writers have used two indices of the Power Distance Index (PDI) to account for these differences. They have divided countries into two groups of High PDI and Low PDI. In High PDI countries, power is accepted as a fact of society, and hierarchies are more accepted and respected. These countries are characterized by powerful leaders in the family, schools, the health care sector, and workplaces. Low PDI countries, on the other hand, are less tolerant of inequalities, try to minimize them, and authorities should follow the rules if they want to stay in power. In these countries, in schools, classes are more student-centered, and in workplaces, managers and employees cannot be viewed as two poles apart (Hofstede et al., 2010). Based on the data and the definition of the indices,

Türkiye has a higher PDI with a score of 66, while Iran's score is 58. That means the power distance is less in Iran, and members of society strive for a more equal relationship when encountering a person of higher rank, like a doctor, boss, or teacher. However, the difference between the two scores is not high enough to expect a significant difference between the two cultures. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), a difference of five should be interpreted as minimally significant and 10 as moderately significant. This means the submissive act of Iranian teachers in an unequal situation compared with a Turkish colleague who is more decisive cannot be attributed to the way power is inculcated in social conduct and is not something rooted in the culture. Instead, the feeling of powerlessness should be associated with the special conditions that our participants experienced. They work in a precarious situation for several reasons. They are not fully proficient in the Turkish language, are not familiar with the rules, and are employed in private institutes where rules might be defined differently. For a foreign teacher, permission to work in a foreign country is a guarantor of permission to live in a foreign land. Therefore, teachers do not wish to risk their stay being a dissident at work. It is not a difficult task for an employer to discontinue work with foreign nationals, and the legal proceedings either do not apply to the foreign teacher or are too cumbersome for any teacher to get involved in. Dismissal from employment means the loss of international job experience and future prosperity in the country. These conditions were reasons for the participants to talk about their inability to take action in situations that would have been different if they were in their own country.

Some teachers expressed their powerlessness in showing disagreement when they observe poor educational performance or receive unfair treatment in working hours, salary, or severance pay. They talked about the syllabus that was difficult to change and the rules at their schools that were too rigid, but introducing change seemed impossible for them.

These situations make the teacher feel disempowered since, as a result of involvement in discourse, teacher identity constantly shifts (Liu & Xu, 2011), meaning power dynamics play a role in the identity construction of the teacher (Wodak, 2012). The power of the teacher can be undermined by the discourse that is

deeply embedded in the social structure, and changing it would be embarking on a long and tedious path. Power dynamics are at play, and they lead to a reshaping of identity when there are major reforms in an institution (Liu & Xu, 2011). For the immigrant teacher of the current study, moving to a new educational institution in a new country is a reform in their career and is affected by power dynamics. While a teacher engages in teaching with a set of beliefs, the institution tries to stabilize a body of knowledge, talks, and behaviors (discourses) in the minds of the members who access them and define themselves based on these. A powerful teacher might break long-held ideas and introduce their own idea; a task that is not easy, but it is possible for a teacher with an awareness of their identities (Morgan, 2004). For immigrant teachers, awareness of identity can equip them with a sense of agency and enable them to be iconoclasts. In line with what was discussed, there are a considerable number of studies showing the institutional constraints the teacher faces and is either successful to break through or not (Block, 2007; Liu & Xu, 2011; O' Keeffe & Skerritt, 2021; Wang, 2021) and studies are showing the strategies teachers used to encroach upon the limitations (Lam, 2004; Morgan, 2004).

When the views of the teachers of the current study were sought about the extent to which educational decision makers need to be followed, they conformed with what I believe has originated from the Iranian culture. That means that the teacher starts the job with the assumption that the curriculum designers and lawmakers have sufficient expertise in their job, and the purpose of a system is to make sure all the members accomplish important goals. Such views justify the teacher's obedience. We already pointed out the effect of the Iranian culture here that has made the teacher respect the word of the learned individual (Stetson & Wagner, 1980). This is in line with the study Shah (2023) did on a group of Pakistani teachers whose identities are determined by their religion, nationalism, colonialism, and administrative control. However, that does not mean teachers show complete adherence to what their culture has taught them, because a new context under the influence of the dominant discourse equips the teacher with a reformed identity. The new identity surfaced when the teacher observed rules that were arbitrary and lacked justification. That means the teacher is willing to be dissident, although they are struggling with foreign identity hurdles. That is another proof of the fluidity of identity: distancing oneself

from one's past as the situation demands the individual to be a new version of themselves.

The teachers narrated stories about unruly students who would find it easier to disobey a foreign teacher. Maryam recounted cases in which the student uses the comparison between the foreign teacher and the local teacher as a powerful tool in their hands when they need to come out as strong in their confrontation with the teacher. This could be the effect of the way the teacher is treated in the institution or society, as Morgan (2004) stated that unequal treatment might influence the way teacher sees themselves and the way teachers are seen by learners. In Chung Constant and Cao (2018), the authors reported cases of a teacher who experienced student discrimination because of being non-white and non-native, and this was reflected in the teacher's evaluations by the students. Liu and Xu (2011) pointed out a similar problem when students have teachers of different identities. They compare teachers and create tension when they observe a difference in the performance, knowledge, and class management of the teacher. The foreign teacher is subjected to a type of treatment that would not have happened if he had an identity aligned with the mainstream teachers. The educational institute needs to formulate policies to empower the teachers, as local ones; foreign teachers need to be involved in the task of disciplining children, which requires sufficient strength of the teacher in the students' eyes.

The study referred to narratives showing situations where the teacher felt unsure of the proper answer to a question or the way they should handle a sensitive topic about politics or social inequalities. Being culturally similar to Turkish people, Iranian teachers would not be assumed to run into cultural confusion, but the teachers' stories proved the opposite. A similar finding was reported about 22 teachers from different countries visiting the US (Ospina & Lopera Medina, 2020). They faced similar challenges, but the writers reported the great opportunity that resulted from the cultural dilemma of teachers while trying to adjust to work and life culture in the new setting. The study showed that the teaching abroad experience improved the cross-cultural awareness of the teacher and enabled them to embrace different cultures more easily. That is because the teachers were promoted to adopt reflective

teaching, as they need to improve their performance in teaching and need to be vigilant of cultural differences. Cultural bias might cause a foreign teacher into powerlessness; however, it can be gained once teachers are instructed to be reflective and turn the social confusion into an opportunity to boost their knowledge of the variety introduced by a culture. It is customary for an individual new to a culture to face cultural doubts and to feel unsure how to handle anything culture-related. However, rather than viewing this as a problem blocking integration and rapport building, it should be viewed as an obligation to enrich knowledge of the world, which would pave the way for the foreigner to reach desired integration.

5.3. Research Question 3

What kinds of imagined identities do a group of Iranian English teachers in Türkiye have, and how are the identities influenced by the experiences of migration?

The third research question is about the future of the teachers. In theme 8, we can see that teachers have identified themselves with different communities and in different professions in the future, which can be telling about the way they interpret their progress in the immigration context. The imagined future is influenced by the immigration experience as well as their professional lives in Türkiye.

5.3.1. Theme 8: Immigration and Imagination

As immigration can have an essential role in driving the imaginative power of individuals (Appadurai, 1996), I expected to find stories about the future that are affected by immigration experience. What emerged from the data was that teachers, after immigration, have reached a more stable working life in terms of both job security and financial achievements. They have also found opportunities to further their career by attending internationally recognized courses and receiving certificates, which help them thrive in their teaching job. They believe they owe this to the stability they managed to establish after passing the initial hurdles and landing a teaching job in a school in the city of Ankara. In addition, they talked about the courage, freedom, and audacity to start dreaming and making plans for their future.

The dreams are either to improve themselves in their job, do something different from teaching, or find ways to contribute to their communities. Two teachers talked about quitting teaching for different reasons, one of which was facing situations far from what they had expected during their training.

In the previous themes, I talked about difficulties the migrant teacher from Iran experienced either in their job or outside. I noted discriminatory behavior they had to experience because of their poor proficiency in the language, or foreignness, or non-nativeness. Here, we argue that despite such behavior, there exists support that brings optimism, and despite constant downturns, there is always a chance to re-envision, to find a profound hope to cling to and fulfill the long-cherished dream. Such aspirations make teachers *invest* in their job not only to gain financial benefits, but also financial, social, and symbolic capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015). As two examples, we talked about Niki's dream of contributing to her society by helping women in Iran, or Mina's dream of being a good teacher to be a great role model for her daughter. The teachers have invested in their profession to go beyond financial gains and accumulate social and symbolic capitals; benefits that they believe are more valuable than the money in the job. The teachers boasted about their imaginations and mentioned that immigration has granted them the ability to be more realistic and be away from sheer dreaming when talking about the future. They have learned how to have what Simon (1992) calls a "purposeful vision". To find similar gestures in other studies, we can refer to the pre-service teachers in Quebec, Canada, in the study by Chang-Kredl and Kingsley (2014). One of the teachers talked about her desire to help students achieve their dreams, and another one said that she aimed to raise critically engaged students who can accept each other's differences, learn how to approach world issues critically, and can empathize with others. Barkhuizen (2016) showed in his 'short story' method study how the participant in his study, Sela, a New Zealand Pacific Island ESL teacher, was determined to work for the improvement of her community, Tongan, through designing a curriculum that meets the needs of the people of her community. Barkhuizen (2016) continues that Sela's desire did not produce the results that she had imagined at the beginning, but the important thing is that her organization kept the teacher motivated and enabled her to make important decisions. As stated by Kramsch (2013, p. 195), imagination drives

the individual to exert investment, which results in the enactment of their agency and identity to deal with a task and to garner economic and symbolic capital.

That means we need to enable teachers to be able to start picturing a future for themselves in which they see their role. We heard from Azar that imagining a different future is possible for her because she was able to broaden her worldview when she was thinking of leaving Iran. As stated by Appadurai (1996), "more people than ever before seem to imagine routinely the possibility that they or their children will live and work in places other than where they were born" (p. 6). The move across borders, along with technological advancements, means identifying with a future community can be an easier task for the teacher.

In theme 6, I talked about the stable situation teachers experienced by teaching in Turkish schools, which made them powerful enough to be clearer about the future they want to imagine for themselves. When talking with the participants of our study, I found that they have real and significant dreams of their own, and they appear determined to achieve them. What they also referred to as an important stepping-stone for them to have the freedom to dream was to reach stability in Türkiye. They believed their stable job and reliable income, along with institutional support in receiving training and the confidence they gained in teaching beyond borders, built a specialized identity for them to carve out imaginations for their future selfs. According to the findings of Xu (2012), if teachers do not receive emotional, institutional, and professional support, they are likely to abandon their envisioned selfs, as the teacher in Xu's (2012) study imagined themselves as spiritual teachers but had to quit the dream because they were not encouraged but always restricted by their institute. The importance of proper support for the teacher to provide the ground for their imagination to soar was clear in the findings of our study. We put forth narratives in which teachers talk about their ability to think about their future careers, and the way they want to give back to society, thanks to their financial security, job stability, and the free time that they can have in Türkiye when working as English teachers. They also talked about educational opportunities that they received in Türkiye. These are the supports teachers have received to embellish their dreams. When a group of preservice teachers in Chang-Kredl and Kingsley (2014) were

asked to link their memories of their prior experience to their future expectations, they talked about former teachers, parental, and institutional supports they had received. The writers showed that future aspirations of these teachers revolve around the educational and emotional favors in a way that they aim to pay back the important people who have helped them in their lives. This shows the significant role of proper support in the professional life of a teacher. Not only do the supportive aids help the teacher progress in the profession, it creates a vision for the teacher to reciprocate the kind gesture they were lucky to have received in the first place. When Maryam was asked about her future goals, she talked about finding a non-teaching job as her main agenda. However, she mentioned that her current school is the only place she wishes to continue her teaching years if she has to stay in teaching for any reason. That is because she feels she owes it to the school to have a role in the school's progress. To defend her statement, she talks about her current role in the school as both a teacher and material designer, and the fact that she spends some of her lunch break time getting some materials or tests ready. She has accepted such responsibilities proudly. That is because it was this school that supported her in enrolling in the DELTA course, issued her work visa, and provided her with a stable job. The limitations exerted by the school can limit the teacher's ability to imagine a bright future and may make the teacher too constrained when her imagined identity is controlled (Wu, 2017), but a supportive employer can fuel the teacher to dream freely and to show agency to fulfill dreams.

I also documented the narratives of some of the participants whose future desire is to do something other than teaching. Reza talked about the opportunity he was given in Türkiye to realize his potential and to know that his desire is not in teaching but in computer science. For Maryam and Azar, however, reasons for withdrawing from teaching were related to the difficulties they have experienced along the way, more specifically, the problems they have in having students under control. It is not something new to hear about teachers willing to quit their jobs, as was mentioned about the immigrant English teachers working in China (Leigh, 2019). However, about Maryam, the reason for her decision is the conflict she experienced between the training stage of her job and the reality in the classroom. She talked about two sides of teaching: one is when she is in a training course, and she learns everything

about teaching, giving instruction, and giving feedback, which are easy and constructive for her. However, when she is in class implementing a fixed schedule, dealing with disruptive behavior, or doing lots of paperwork, she feels this is not something she wants to do for the rest of her life. This aligns with the study by Xu (2012), who demonstrated that in the transition from the theoretical explanations to the actual classroom practice, one of the teachers changed her identity from a language expert to a disillusioned outsider. That was due to the role she had to adopt, which was mostly rule-based and syllabus-focused, with no room for the teacher to practice her agency. However, in some other cases, although a conflict is found between the individual's imagination and real-world inequalities, such as the discrimination the person has observed in the workplace, the observation has turned into a source of inspiration and hope for the person (Dagenais, 2003). This can be explained by the support the teacher needs to be provided at times when the imagined identity collapses, and the teacher desires to introduce a significant change in her profession. Identity is constructed emotionally, and it is interconnected with fear (Ahn, 2021). A teacher's future dream could be distorted or destroyed because of fear of job loss, lack of progress, or anything scary. However, the teacher needs support to regain her ability to reimagine a bright future. In his article about the ideal self of 12 Iranian teachers, Meihami (2023) talks about the effectiveness of a professional learning community formed by teachers with shared values to enable teachers to take risks and reflect honestly on their performance and reimagine the future of their teaching. In addition to the institutional support mentioned before, the support teachers can gain from other teachers is invaluable.

In sum, the findings of the study showed the complexity of identities and numerous factors that come into play to shape identities. I talked about how the identities of the teachers of the study can be affected by their pasts, and how they deal with race, non-nativeness, educational rigidity, and power dynamics. I also described the dreams, hopes, and aspirations of the teachers that are shaped under the new life in Türkiye. In the final section, we will talk about limitations and implications of these findings.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Identity studies have gained attention in academic research, particularly studies about the identity of students, teachers, and even teacher trainers. All these studies claim to be attempts to resolve the most important issues these groups face in their educational endeavors. Because of the influences that postmodernism wielded on identities, poststructuralists challenged the previous views of identity, which were mostly the result of looking at matter in biological or purely structural ways. Rather than viewing identity as a fixed and invariable feature of individuals that persists over time, it was now seen as a fluid concept shaped in discourse, language, and social interactions. The fact that identity is always shifting means that major life events, such as immigration, are characterized by identity reconstruction since immigrants negotiate identities between different discourses when they cross the border and face new ways of doing things. In studies about teachers, poststructuralism avoids grand narratives about teachers and gives credit to the teacher as a person who builds identity in interaction with major role players at work, rather than a person armed with a body of knowledge with fixed and unchanging identities. Teacher identity studies try to make a distance between the teacher's self and the discriminatory category of native/non-native views of the teacher in conjunction with their country of origin. Building on this thinking and considering the recent views on teacher identity, I tried to investigate the way identities of a group of immigrant teachers are reconstructed. The teachers who shared their experiences were Iranian English teachers who immigrated to Türkiye over the past 10 years, had their education, training, and work experience mainly in Iran, and then started the job of teaching English at schools in the city of Ankara. The study aimed to unravel the way teachers benefit from their background built mainly in Iran, and the way they enjoy the new status as foreign teachers. This is explained by the idea

of capital proposed by Bourdieu (1986), which sees any knowledge, network, and recognition as some form of capital. I also researched the new identities formed in light of immigration, meaning the identities were either because of immigration experience or the new contextual realities. Such reconstructions are explored through the lens of power dynamics, native speakerism, and imagined identity. Additionally, the study tried to collect stories about the imagined identities, which would shed light on the possible selfs that teachers picture for themselves in the future. As for the participants, they were selected based on their knowledge and potential to share the information that I needed, and then were asked to keep a journal to write down incidents and memories happening in their classrooms every day. Adopting narrative inquiry as the methodology of the study meant that the participants were given enough freedom to narrate stories related to the prompts or interview questions. Analysis of narratives, as one form of narrative inquiry, allowed me to explore the narratives that would lend support to the three research questions. The analysis yielded eight themes related to before immigration, current lives, and future identities of seven teachers of English from Iran.

The first research question asked about the contribution of the background of teachers to their current identity. One new identity characterizing the Iranian English teacher in Türkiye resulting from their background is the responsibility of representing their country by being informative, maintaining civility, and paying tribute to their native culture. Discussing this theme, I attested to the fluidity of an individual's identity since it is shaped through their interactions in particular contexts. In other words, the discourse demands the teacher to reveal a particular identity through language and cultural codes that represent their home country as it really is, hide their identity, or showcase the positives of their culture only. I also revealed narratives showing how the identity of the teachers is shaped by the cultural, social, and symbolic capital granted to them in their home country. I showed how the Iranian migrant teacher could benefit from the three types of capital built for them in Iran, and then they can apply it in the post-immigration context. Similarly, there is capital granted to the teacher because of having the identity of a foreign teacher, playing an essential role in shaping the identities of teachers. The Iranian background made the non-native identity of the teachers more visible in Türkiye, and

this theme was placed under the contribution of past life. This label was not a significant issue for the Iranian teacher in Iran but appears to be a point to consider after immigration. I discussed stories showing that teachers' obligation to deal with the fallacy of native speaker superiority. I talked about narratives showing that wrong superiority is perpetuated by the misbeliefs of our participants, giving more legitimacy to something that should be dispelled. The efficiency of the two groups, however, should be replaced with studies about the contribution of a teacher from Iran to the well-being of a system or a teaching group.

The second research question examined the identities of the teachers concerning their educational experience in Türkiye. That means the study weighs up the stories of the teachers to see the shift in their identities in light of their commitment to the institute, interaction with students and other teachers, involvement in institutional formalities, and views towards social conduct while holding the identity of a foreign and non-native teacher. The identity is bound to change and gain a new form as it cannot be an invariant construct, and immigration is undeniably a breakthrough to cause change in identity. One of the themes showed how some of the teachers of the study suffered from their poor knowledge of Turkish and how it caused the loss of their powers in encounters with students and managers. Such a shortcoming is important when we view language as the gateway to forming identities, and the inability of the teacher to be identified with essential discourse communities related to the profession or even personal life causes infantilization and isolation. In addition to language, the teachers were found to be subjected to insensitive comments that included their nationality and their differences from other nationalities. The incidents make the teacher aware of having roles beyond being a teacher of English, which gain severity considering their status as immigrant teachers. This theme proved the importance of having teachers who are aware of world issues and can act as the information provider for the students whose source of information might not be reliable, and then might make judgments about their foreign teacher or classmate based on a misinformed mindset.

Under the theme New Educational Realities, we showed how the teachers of the study had to deconstruct and reconstruct a new identity to be able to find ultimate

adaptation in the educational and bureaucratic systems of their schools. This includes the ability to accept differences in their schools, such as the existence of too many and sometimes unnecessary rules, and the ability to accept new roles such as material designer, tester, and even cultural representative.

According to Foucault (1984), power is everywhere and is enacted in discourse and interaction among members of a discourse community. We talked about cases where the teacher feels powerless when dealing with misbehavior in class, talking to the boss, or having social conduct. However, to gain power, the teacher has to join particular communities, but that cannot be possible as institutional norms can be hard to breach. The close relationship between teacher and students implies a less strict power gap among people of different ranks in Türkiye; something that the teachers in the present study found hard to get accustomed to during their initial years of teaching. These novelties posed identity changes for the teachers after immigration. While the teachers who were interviewed mostly found themselves able to sail through the new culture and educational realities, I found mixed emotions when they talked about the future.

The third research question aimed at discovering the dreams and aspirations of the teachers formulated considering their immigration experiences. I talked about the important role of immigration in giving teachers the tools to dream about their future. This implied the critical role of important life skills in the imagined identity of a person. Teachers talked about the support they received from their schools, the stability they reached in Türkiye, and the experience they gained from immigration, which contributed to the type of future they have imagined for themselves. The study has teachers as the main participants, and all three research questions had a group of teachers of English as the focus of attention. In line with that, the study is hoped to bring significant changes to the lives of teachers, as the main role players in an educational system, and this brings about improvement in language learning.

6.1. Implications of the Study

The current study is hoped to be a small step toward a rise in understanding of identity, an improvement in the way foreign teachers in Türkiye are guided through

their educational career, and a final aim of an improvement in the educational systems. It tries to show the positive contributions that a teacher from Iran can make in teaching English. The following contains what we believe are the roles teachers, teacher trainers, and educational authorities can play regarding identities and teachers who are not locally educated.

6.1.1. Implications for teachers

Teachers' reflection has an important role in shaping the professional identity of the teacher (Izadinia, 2013), and one area for reflection for the foreign teacher is to decide about the role of their background in their teaching. I talked about cases where Iranian teachers of the study managed to capitalize on their resources to improve their performance, network with other Iranians, or gain recognition. One task for the immigrant teacher is to approach their professional life reflectively by considering their own beliefs, values, and teaching philosophy they have held before their immigration and how these experiences need to be reformulated in light of the new circumstances. Making connections to Iranian culture, trying to benefit from training and strategies used in their hometown, and keeping in touch with people of their own country should be an integral part of their capital-benefiting endeavors. These resources were referred to as capital, but they will be considered capital when they are integrated into the teacher's identity. In line with Cook's (1999) multicompetence theory that places extraordinary value on learners' bilingual system, the Iranian teacher should be made aware of the existence of such competence, which is enriched by knowledge of their native culture and language, English culture, as well as Turkish culture.

The foreign teacher needs to know that focusing on nativeness as the only criterion to judge competency is something wrong promoted by marketers, and instead, the teacher should focus on the way they can benefit from the identities labelled as 'foreign' and 'non-native'. On the other hand, the teacher needs to gain knowledge of the way the educational curricula work in schools and show openness and preparedness to embrace differences. Such differences might be judged to be unnecessary or outlandish, but the teacher should know that success comes at the

price of the ability to abandon old beliefs that seem not to be working and add new dimensions to the identity.

I also talked about the importance of social connections that the teachers have managed to establish in Iranian communities. While this is valuable capital, the teacher needs to gain familiarity with the discourses dominant in schools. As mentioned by Foucault (1984), power is constituted, transferred, and undermined in discourse. To gain that power, teachers ought to be familiar with institutional discourses and social behaviors (Sarangi & Roberts, 2002). I believe one way to empower the teacher is to build on enriching the teacher's social and cultural capital, which can be achieved by prompting foreign teachers to establish more relationships with local Turkish teachers. Although all colleagues aim for the same agenda, teachers bond based on cultural background, and that can be especially true for Iranian teachers since their number in each institute is enough to have small communities. Although such communities can provide the teacher with valuable networks and connections (as was mentioned in theme 2), they should not morph into secluded havens where one feels comfortable, and anyone outside is viewed as uncertain and threatening. As Gee (2001) mentioned in the discussion about Affiliative Identity (AI), networking is an identity maker, so teachers should keep in touch with Turkish nationals to gain insights about teaching values of each other, methods applied to make a lesson engaging and informative, and strategies to deal with the unpredictable and their tactics in approaching students. In addition, small moments of togetherness suggest that in teaching, be it enjoyable or not, challenging or not, we share the same pain and joy, although we are from different countries. Throughout the study, I enumerated cases in which teachers shared stories about difficulties stemming from linguistic and cultural differences. Participating in social exchange with locals can shape a teacher's professional identity into a person who has managed to bring together the capital gained from Iranian experience and has become enriched in interaction with locals. Alsup (2006) believes that a teacher's professional identity is reinforced when the teacher has a role in different discourses involving interaction with students, mentors, teacher educators, family, and peers. Therefore, social capital can be obtained and enriched after immigration with important role players in the discourse, and this can be turned into cultural capital

over time. For Turkish teachers, the opportunity to have a professional relationship and even friendship should not be underestimated. The variety introduced by the teacher into the curriculum can also be enjoyed during non-teaching hours. This helps both sides develop intercultural understanding and more tolerance of differences. A well-connected teacher can excel in life, and this is even more probable when the network of people includes a variety of ideas, which can be achieved by having a variety of cultures in the network. Professional Learning Communities (Meihami, 2023) are collaborative groups for teachers that greatly help teachers to develop their identity and to have a clear imagination about the future groups they wish to belong to (imagined identity). The communities focus on the agency of the teacher so that they can achieve important roles by relying on the power of the crowd and by having a bottom-up collaborative culture (Meihami, 2023). The formation of such communities at schools with teachers of multiple backgrounds should take precedence.

6.1.2. Implications for teacher trainers

Three participants of the study enrolled in teacher training courses (CELTA, DELTA, and TESOL) in Türkiye either before starting their job or during their work. As the target group of such courses is mainly all teachers of English around the world, they usually adopt one-size-fits-all assumptions about teachers instead of considering the context of learning and the target audience. That was shown in the stories of the Iranian teachers who proudly talked about their certificates in teaching English but expressed no familiarity with the way it should be done in the Turkish context. The disappointing point is that such courses tend to be structured so rigidly that any attempt to include local nuances is viewed as a disruption of the smooth flow of a perfectly working process. However, throughout this study, I have emphasized the importance of context and the way the identities of the teachers originate from their background and how they are reshaped under contextual features. As expressed by Motha et al. (2012), what is included in teacher education should not be far removed from the real lives of teachers, but should include content about teachers' identities and histories. For the foreign teacher starting work in Türkiye, the teacher needs to be familiar with the Turkish education system,

communication skills, cultural differences, and the way these are reflected in the curriculum. From essential values to more detailed information about teaching and assessment, expectations, and students' characteristics, some matters need to be addressed in a training course for the foreign teacher. In this study, narratives of the participants revealed instances where they were confused about social conduct, school rules, and unforeseen roles. Having a teacher training course for foreign teachers, albeit very brief, seems to be the least that can be done to prepare the teacher for the journey on a new path.

In addition to setting the stage for the smooth transition of the Iranian teacher into the Turkish work culture, a training course for the foreign teacher can be planned to serve a secondary purpose, too. I have already discussed the contribution of teachers' socialization and former training to their teaching. The training course is where the teacher can be briefed about the role of their background and mother tongue in teaching, and the way the use of a first language should be exploited to help their teaching practice. Such a briefing should be accompanied by encouragement and clarification that the teacher is identified as a foreign, non-native teacher, but with the firm belief that these identities positively contribute to the learning process.

In addition, the foreign teacher should be trained on how to approach cultural issues in the host society. The critical role of intercultural knowledge for study abroad students moving from Türkiye to other countries is shown in Çiftçi and Karaman (2018). Similarly, a foreign teacher should be educated on intercultural knowledge and sensitivity before starting work in Turkish schools. It should not be assumed that assimilation and familiarity with differences are achieved over time without any effort to raise teachers' awareness. Such training should not be limited to the foreign teacher only; the local teachers also need to know how to help the foreign teacher in this regard. Turkish teachers have been reported to lack knowledge of other cultures (Taner & Karaman, 2013), so the inclusion of cultural training in the teacher training programs is an essential step in making assimilation a smoother process.

Finally, the teacher needs to gain knowledge about critical matters going on in our current world. I argue that we are presently in a very critical period in history, where

misinformation has made it challenging to distinguish truth from fake. At the same time, owing to the 24/7 digital engagement of our students, they are kept informed of trivial to the most pressing issues. Since a teacher has traditionally been the source of credible information and enlightenment for the knowledge seekers, they should still be able to act as the guru in times of uncertainty for the students. The teacher should keep themselves informed of world issues and should have the ability to analyze such issues, since the malleable mind of the student is highly likely to refer to the teacher to seek guidance. We observed cases where the teacher was not confident to address inappropriate comments made by the students. A teacher equipped with the knowledge of culture and global issues can best seize the opportunity and turn the situation full of feud and agony into educational and enlightening moments.

6.1.3. Implications for authorities in education

Some instances were discussed in which the teacher had to go through unfair conditions, either related to the pay or organizational rules, because of a lack of familiarity with the rules in their educational institutions. Not denying the fact that the teacher is responsible for being informed of the rules of the institution they work for, the school authorities need to have more transparent policies regarding their recruitment and employment. Teachers expressed their satisfaction with the clarity of labor laws about them, which can be found through reliable sources. However, differences are observed when laws are practiced. Teachers also shared stories regarding unfortunate incidents where rules were not clarified at the time of their job interview, dismissals that happened without any explanation, and the hopelessness they went through when they found themselves unable to take any legal action. Foreign teachers should be given confidence to be treated in compliance with the clearly explained laws, and should be informed of the ways to seek their rights in case of mistreatment. Such actions contribute to a boost in a teacher's sense of trust and confidence and positively influence their performance at work. I talked about the importance of support for the foreign teacher, which allows them to form a new imagined identity. It also created a moral duty for the teacher to pay back to the institute by conscientiously accepting and respecting responsibilities. The social etiquette of *adab* in the Persian language refers to the necessity of showing proper

behavior in communication, but it also means gratefulness of the recipient of a favor as the act benefits the receiver's soul (Khaleghi-Motlagh, 1982). It is in Iranian culture to reciprocate a favor, and that is felt even more essential when the favor introduces a significant change in the life of the receiver. The behavior was shown in stories of the teachers when they talked about how securing a job in Türkiye enabled them to think about important goals and how they owed things to their company. This can happen when employment rules and regulations of the institute are evident, and they are honestly followed throughout the years.

According to Dryton and Prins (2009), certain markers of success in adult education favor middle-class values, promote them, and then present them as ideal class. This comes at the expense of marginalization or placing blame on those who do not fit such predetermined categories, such as low-income, non-white, minorities, or immigrants, etc. Following Foucault (1984), Dryton and Prins (2009) argue that education plays an important role in perpetuating such inequalities by applying them and educating them, causing a certain mendacity to turn into truth. We referred to some prejudiced practices in some language schools, favoring native speakers, asking non-natives to present themselves as natives, and treating foreigners unfairly in payment and working hours. The recommendation here is for education authorities to cross-examine the discourse, which might favor certain groups and attempt to eradicate them, so that macro educational policies move towards more egalitarian practices, with educational achievement as the only criterion to determine success. Education is supposed to instill and promote proper human manners, and this should start with the way education itself is structured. An unbiased approach when treating people involved in education is the first step towards that aim.

6.2. Limitations of the Study

This study failed to address some points or was limited in its investigative scope, which needs to be addressed here. Firstly, the scope of the study could have been more focused so that an in-depth analysis of the identities of the participants could have been possible. At the time of study planning, this was the only study focusing on the identities of some teachers from Iran. I aimed to investigate the main identity

shapers from past and present conditions and imagined identities. I have made every effort to investigate the areas of identity to the fullest, but certain limitations due to the nature of the task could have acted as obstacles along the way. My recommendation for future researchers aiming to investigate the identities of a select group of teachers is to focus on identity shapers over a limited time frame.

Secondly, as far as participants of the study are concerned, attempts were made to have information-rich participants to be able to collect enough data about identity changes after immigration, although this would be at the cost of the maximum variation principle in sampling. I should say that at times of data collection, I found a certain mismatch between the former experience of two teachers and their experience in Türkiye, which would make them add a caveat to their narratives. That was about their experience in Iran, which was limited to teaching general English to adults, whereas here they teach school students. Although this is something that has caused the teacher to be obliged to reshape their identity, it might affect the way the teacher views their new identities in Türkiye. The stories related to such a mismatch, which could produce significant codes, were not included in the analysis, but this is something that should be taken into consideration in studies researching the change in identity for immigrants.

Having narrative inquiry as the methodology, the study benefited from journal writing and interviews as data collection tools. However, due to the nature of narratives that are an indirect way to get access to the truth, they might be colored by the judgment and opinion of the narrator. To compensate for that, a more direct data collection tool, such as class observation, would shed more light on reality, as the real performance of the teacher and interactions with students are closely watched and scrutinized. In addition, my interaction with some of the participants in groups of more than two revealed the advantages of focus groups as a data collection tool. Although they were in the format of non-research and informal chats, the meetings turned out to have data that had not been generated under the teacher's hesitation. Considering the informal nature of these meetings, the teacher feels free to share their work experiences in a friendlier manner than in other situations. In such gatherings, teachers are sources of input for each other, and they start sharing

experiences about an incident, then get feedback from each other, and then continue sharing more. Focus groups and observation can guarantee the generation of reliable data and ensure the achievement of triangulation.

The study mainly focused on the identity issues originating from the contacts and novelties teachers experience at work in relation to their teaching. Although there was data about the out-of-school life of teachers, the main share of data was related to their professional identities. However, the identity of a foreign teacher outside of school is tied to what goes on at work, and separating these settings was done to make the study more manageable. To achieve a thick description in identity research, their out-of-school preoccupations and feelings should be studied and connected to their professional lives.

6.3. Suggestions for Further Studies

The current study was the only major investigation to treat several Iranian English teachers in Türkiye as people with identities whose professional lives need to be scrutinized. We hope this will be the beginning of more research on identity studies of both local and international English teachers working in different institutions across Türkiye. The following are some suggestions for interested researchers in teacher identity and the multifaceted factors related to it.

This study was limited to teachers of one nationality only, but there are teachers from other countries in Türkiye whose professional life has not been the subject of significant studies. The number of foreign teachers, mainly from Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, and Syria (Presidency of Migration Management, 2025), who are working in Turkish educational institutions is noteworthy. However, the scarcity of academic studies on them implies that the foreign teachers are an underprivileged group. Academic studies need to discover the assets that these teachers bring to the educational system, the variety that they introduce, which can be harnessed to improve their work and others, and the concerns they have. Conducting an online search, I came across a noticeable number of studies about the native/non-native dichotomy in Türkiye, but I believe the foci of studies should be tilted to what the

educational systems currently possess. They benefit from a remarkable number of non-natives who are willing to help the system thrive, but academic studies are following the old convention of the native vs non-native category. Only when academia generates enough reports on the eligibility of these teachers can we be hopeful that these teachers will be able to unleash their potential and help improve educational systems.

Gaining better insights into the lives of teachers is possible when identity is researched across and through time (Barbour, 2014). For a foreign teacher, a change in identity can be best materialized when the study covers periods starting from the start of the teacher's job until the teacher gets fully adapted to the new context of work. During this process, the important changes that the teacher experiences can all bring about shifts in ways the person views themselves in comparison to the people around, and norms and regulations. In addition, identity studies can include data from all the educational actors and their contribution to the identity construction of the teacher. These include the views of students about having a foreign teacher, syllabus designers, teacher recruiters, and parents. How the foreign teacher is viewed in their eyes can yield valuable information about the way the teacher is identified. I recommend that a longitudinal study about the professional life of a foreign teacher, with views of all stakeholders into account during the teacher's initial years of work in Türkiye, should be a topic of study for future researchers.

Language is a central concept in poststructuralism and is viewed as the shaper of meaning and identity. This meaning becomes more complicated when the individual teaches a language as their job, and works in a country where people speak a foreign language. Identity studies in light of such contrasts necessitate conducting a data analysis with linguistic study as the main analysis tool (Barkhuizen, 2015). Such a study allows researchers to trace how meaning is negotiated by the use of language and how that shapes the identity of the foreign teacher.

6.4. Final Thought

The study was carried out as part of my PhD program in English Language Teaching. The journey was replete with my acquisition of more knowledge about identity,

making the term less challenging to define, further familiarity with research methodology, and keeping abreast of the updates in the fields of English language teaching, sociology, and immigration studies. However, if I need to distance myself from the requirement of the course and focus on achievements as valuable as academic accomplishments, I should refer to the followings. In the course of the investigation, I managed to obtain insight into the world of some of my fellow citizens who carry the honorable title of *teacher*. Listening to the stories of the participants and some other Iranians who have long lived in Türkiye, which was for data collection or merely socialization, I discovered concerns more important than those focused on by academics. Immigration adds to the number of uncertainties, internal conflicts, and occupational concerns of the teachers whose personal lives are attached to their professional careers. I found the teachers playing the role of a parent who should be extremely cautious when addressing a student, a humble worker who needs to respect boundaries since their utterance can be influential, a member of society who needs to be a role model for the young child while maintaining respect and professionalism in the eyes of overly concerned parents, and a citizen who carries the burden of providing for the family and struggling to keep the family afloat while leaving them all behind once they are at work. Amongst such various identities formed in the context of expectations from everyone, the teacher should try hard to keep their well-being. I heard stories about teachers' emotional meltdowns at times of distress, which were so strong that they made the teacher determined to quit. I believe teachers' well-being has only been turned into pompous terminology in academia rather than real efforts to make everyone involved in education aware of the fact that a teacher is a human being with identities, which should be understood and respected. The situation becomes more critical for immigrant teachers, since they have their own roles to play, as was elaborated throughout this study. I hope the current study can be a small step towards more attention to teachers around the world who must disengage themselves from their real identities to be labelled as *professional*.

One way to listen to the teacher is through narratives, which can be conducted by asking teachers to document their classroom and out-of-classroom experiences in a non-academic style. During the journal-keeping phases of data collection for this

study, I had the problem of encouraging the teachers to think about what happened in their classes and put the events on paper. However, after a while, I could hear positive comments regarding the act of reporting stories. The teachers expressed their satisfaction with the way writing could make them reflect on their performance and then have the chance to view it as someone else. This time, they have the chance to be an observer or a researcher who views their performance not with a judgmental eye, something that they are familiar with, but with a sympathetic tone. The teacher passionately talked about the power of journal writing and the way it made them feel much better about themselves and their work as a teacher. As they said, the fact that they knew someone was going to closely analyze the stories and draw important conclusions would make them satisfied to do the activity.

As far as immigration and attachment to the home country is concerned, the teachers expressed their proud feeling when it comes to talking about their home country, Iran. For some, Türkiye has been a comfortable home; they have found permanent jobs and homes here, might have married a Turk, and have developed positive feelings about the country. When they travel to Iran, strange feelings of in-betweenness might preside over them. However, when we listen deeply to them, we can see that they still have a strong emotional attachment to their native land, and they apply their Iranian identity in most of their decisions. What I could see is that culture is a strong shaper of identities, which strengthens a person's ties to a particular community. Although crucial life changes, such as immigration is followed by major identity changes, the individual's essence remains the same. As one of them said, we have become used to the teaching life in Türkiye, and sometimes even Turks cannot recognize our foreign identity, but we are still a teacher from Iran.

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APPENDICES

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND DIARY PROMPTS

Interview Questions

What influenced your decision to become an English teacher? What educational steps did you go through?

- Tell me about some of your problems, fears, and struggles you went through on the path toward becoming an English teacher.
- Tell me about some of your successes and accomplishments.
- Who do you consider your favorite teacher and why?
- To what extent did learning English change you?

What steps did you go through to be qualified as an English teacher?

- Could you describe the teacher preparation courses you had?
- How have your knowledge and skills been growing?

What is it like to be a teacher (or teacher of English) in your country?

Can you think of situations in which you have used your personal or professional background to improve your performance at work?

- Something you learned in your home country, and have been able to apply here.
- Someone influential in Iran has greatly helped you create your own teaching philosophy
- Something cultural you shared with your learners to help in their learning.
- Reference to the linguistic background to help you with your teaching.
- How does your personal multilingualism benefit you? Can you think of situations in which you might be able to use your language in a meaningful manner?

Do you think the English language has affected you in any important ways?

- Has English made you a different person?
- How is your Western identity made? (books, films, etc.)

What was your first impression of Türkiye?

What is it like to be an English teacher in Türkiye?

- How do you compare the educational system, students, work ethic, etc. in Iran and Türkiye?

Do you see yourself as fully integrated? Why or why not?

- What can be the greatest obstacle to integration?
- Have you ever done anything to blend into the community of Turkish or native teachers?

Do you think teaching in Türkiye has influenced your performance as a teacher? If yes, how?

Can you describe your daily responsibilities at work?

- Describe your typical classroom.

What constitutes a good teacher? Do you think the idea of the ideal teacher changed after immigration to Türkiye?

What does being Iranian mean to you in Türkiye?

How do you see yourself as a non-native English speaker?

- Considering the belief about the supremacy of native speakers, how do you view yourself and your English as a non-native speaker of the language?
- Can you share any instances where you had to confront or challenge certain assumptions or stereotypes about being a non-native language teacher?
- Do you try to be associated with native-speaking teachers? (by changing accent, for example)

How has immigration affected your personality and your performance as an English teacher?

- How do you deal with the challenges as you're in a different culture than your own?
- Can you share any instances where you have had to confront or challenge certain assumptions or stereotypes about you as a foreign English teacher?

Have you experienced cases where you have been discriminated against because of having a different culture or language?/How did you feel?

Which group (people of your country, Turks, or other foreigners in Türkiye) do you feel more attached to?

Do you feel less powerful than others because of being an Iranian, or a foreign or non-native teacher?

- Do you see yourself as different from Turkish teachers? If yes, how? Do you feel less powerful when encountering a student due to being a non-native foreign teacher?
- Have you felt powerless when giving students advice, warnings, etc.?
- Do you feel less powerful when encountering someone of higher rank in your institution due to being a non-native foreign teacher?

Do you feel you have any roles as a foreign teacher? Playing the role of a cultural expert, …

Do you care about your students as much as you did in Iran? Do you think that the purpose of immigration is just to make money and you'd rather care about those from your country rather than foreigners?

What is something related to your job that might make you leave Türkiye?

Can you share any significant experiences or moments that have made you question yourself as an English teacher?

Have your dreams been fulfilled by immigrating to Türkiye?

What are your goals for developing yourself?

What may stop you from reaching your goals and becoming the person you want to be?

Where do you see yourself in 3 or 4 years?

- How do you imagine yourself in the future? Do you see yourself as a teacher of English or in another profession? If a teacher, what kind of teacher do you want to be? (any change in your teaching?)

Do you see yourself going back to Iran? How attached are you to Iran?

What could be the reason for such imaginations?

Diary prompts

Please report any classroom or out-of-classroom incidents that can be related to the following topic:

Anything related to your being 1) a foreigner, 2) a non-native teacher, and 3) an Iranian

- You doubted teaching as the right job for you
- You felt competent / incompetent because of being a foreigner

- You felt competent / incompetent because of being a non-native teacher
- You felt powerless in contact with a student, colleague, or manager
- You benefited from your native language or Iranian cultural background (anything you've gained in Iran and (re)used in your classes)
- Any feedback you've received about your performance
- Any instances that made you feel that integration into the Turkish culture is difficult

B. PARTICIPANTS' BIODATA

Maryam

Maryam immigrated to Türkiye in 2019 and started work at some private schools, but was not happy with the working conditions. She then enrolled in DELTA (Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults), applied to multiple schools, and finally landed a job in a prestigious private school in Ankara. Since then, she has been teaching at the school and has been satisfied with the work there. However, she may not continue staying in the teaching job mainly because of working conditions, her failure to establish rapport with the students, and the little motivation that students show in her classes. Although she has talked about dissatisfaction with the teaching job, she positively talked about the training courses and workshops that her school arranged for her. They all contributed to her professionalism.

Mina

Mina immigrated to Türkiye in 2021 with her daughter. Before that, she had taught adult classes at a language school in Iran and mainly took private classes to make a living. At the beginning of her time here in Türkiye, Mina experienced difficulties in finding a job since her academic degree was neither English nor teaching qualification, although she held a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults**)** as a teaching certificate. She managed to find work in an international school teaching secondary school students for a year. For the next year, she moved to the elementary department, teaching English to grades 1 to 5. She sees herself as passionate about both teaching and living in Türkiye. Her plans include learning Turkish and teaching at a university in Türkiye.

Soroush

Soroush came to Türkiye for the first time in 2021 and intended to stay there temporarily. Having heard about the situation, he decided to find a job as an English teacher. He first found a job in an evening school as a part-time teacher but then managed to secure a permanent job in one of the best schools in the city of Ankara. His stories about his time at that school are not quite positive. As he narrated, he put a lot of energy into helping students progress in English and accepted extra work beyond his responsibilities. However, after two years, he was asked to submit his resignation due to some internal policies about foreign teachers. After that, Soroush found a job at a university and has been working there ever since, and he is more satisfied with the situation. He intends to do a non-teaching job in the future, but for the time being, he still believes that he needs to get better at general English and teaching it.

Reza

Reza came to Türkiye in 2019 and started work as a part-time English teacher in a distinguished language school. He was not happy with the pay and decided to seek

better opportunities. He went for a teaching certificate known as TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), applied to some schools, and managed to find a job at a private school in Ankara. He was not quite happy with the way things were regulated regarding foreign teachers, so he applied to a more prestigious school and managed to land a job there. He has been a K-12 schoolteacher for the past 4 years and has been fed up mostly with the students' behavior, their motivation, and also their disrespect for the teacher. He has been studying for a master's degree at a university in Ankara in computer science and wants to continue working in this field. He views teaching as an attractive job with positive points, but he thinks it is not something that he is so passionate about.

Azar

Azar came to Türkiye in 2018 with her husband. She had been a teacher of general English in a prestigious language school in Iran. When she came to Türkiye, she started a job as a teacher in different schools, but she was not happy with the working conditions. She was either exploited financially or had to deal with a lot of disruptive behavior. She changed schools, and now she is working at a private school where she teaches very young students. She is not completely happy with the situation, owing to the different responsibilities involved in the job, but she believes teaching is her only option. She is not sure whether she wants to continue being a teacher or choose another field of work, but for now, she is not too happy with her job. She believes working at a university or a language school with adults can change her present attitude towards teaching.

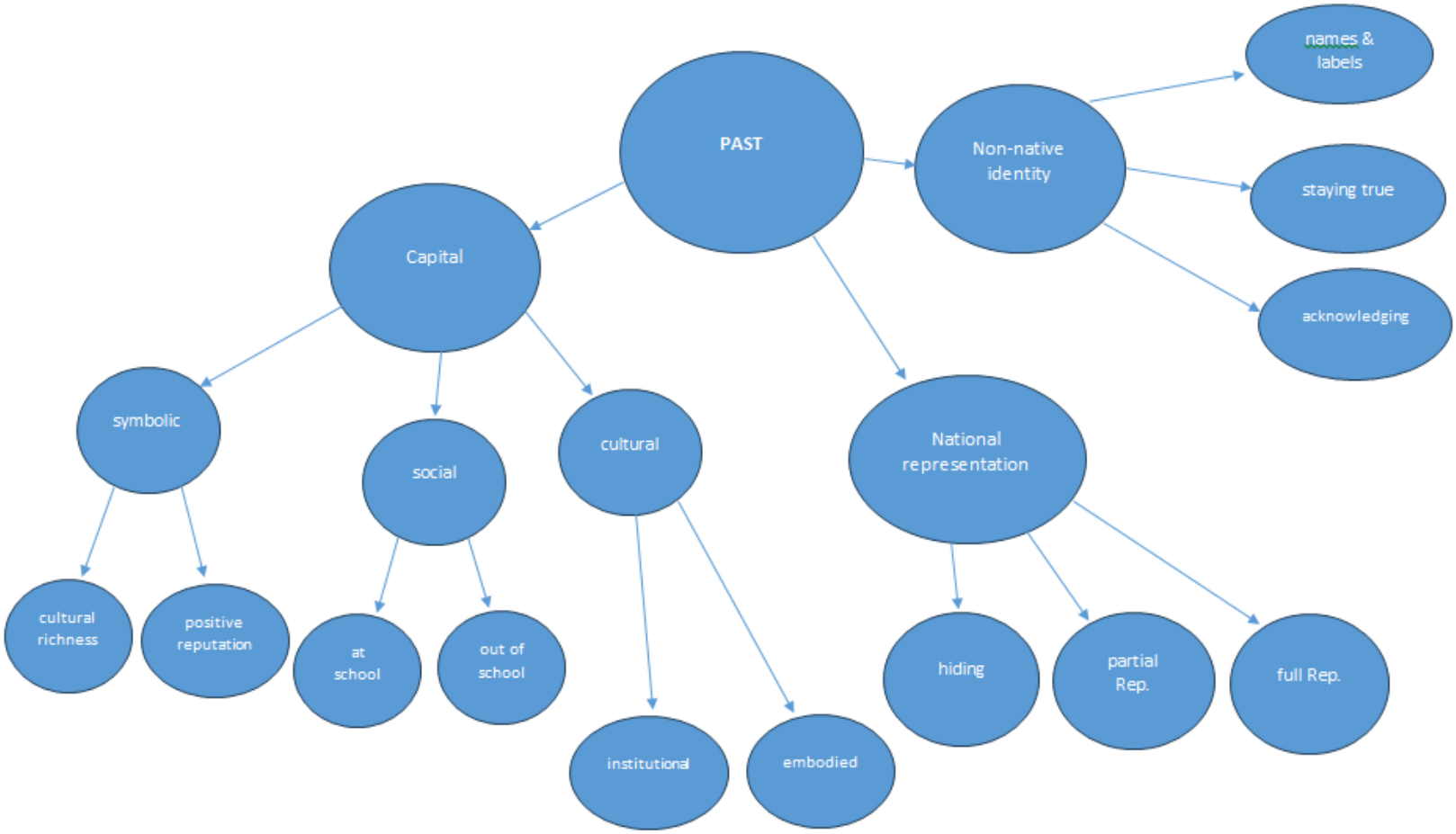
Niki

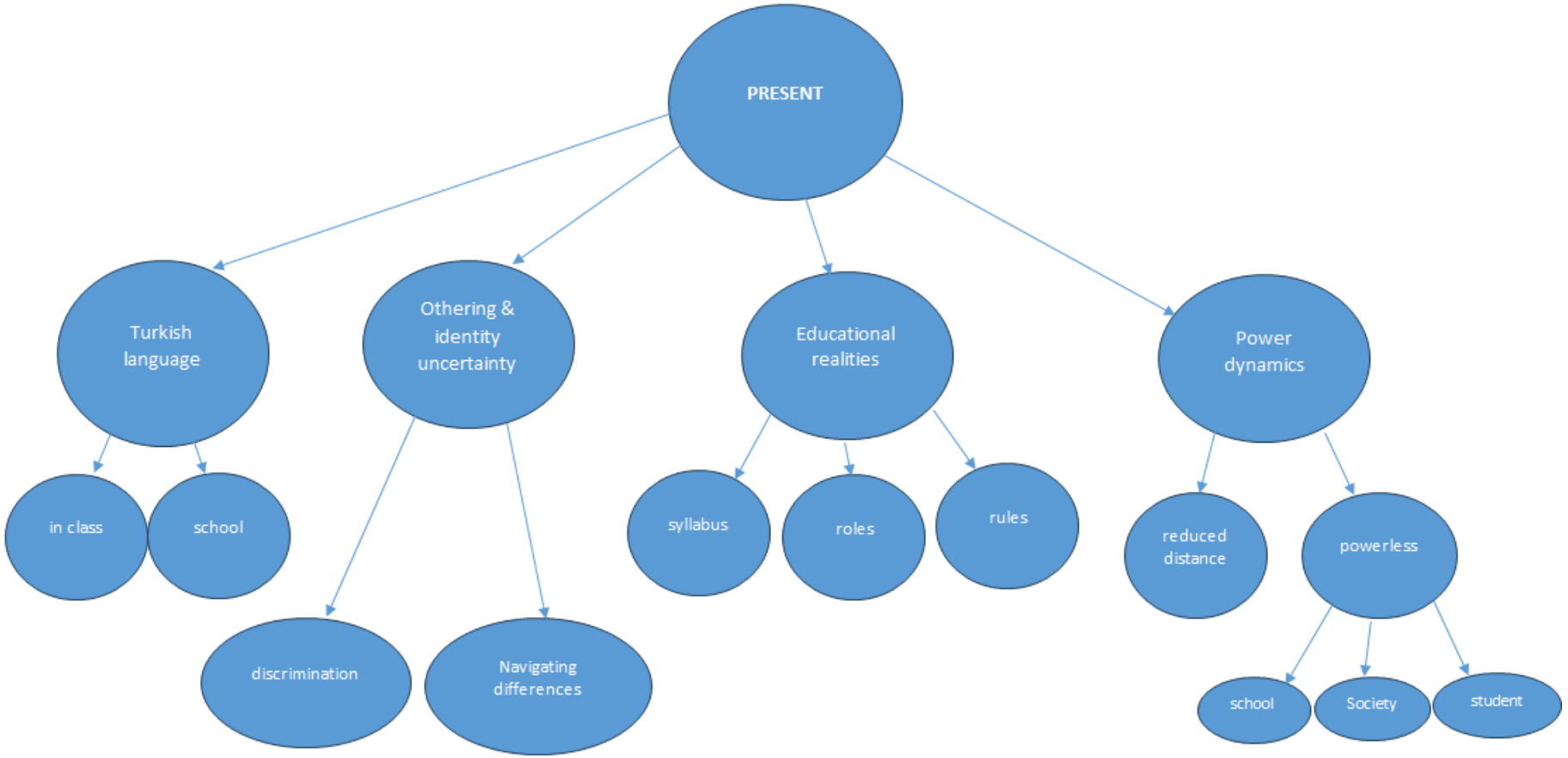
Niki is the youngest one among the participants in the study. She came to Türkiye to study English at a high-ranking university in Ankara. At the same time as her studies, she taught general English at a different language school in the city center. She then applied for a master's at the same university and was accepted. During her master's studies, she kept on working at language schools where she experienced a lot of different incidents, which shaped her identity as a teacher. Shortly afterward, she enrolled at DELTA, received the certificate, and found a job at one of the best schools. Having the opportunity to teach at high school, she did not seem too critical of work at school, although she plans to find a job at a university in Türkiye.

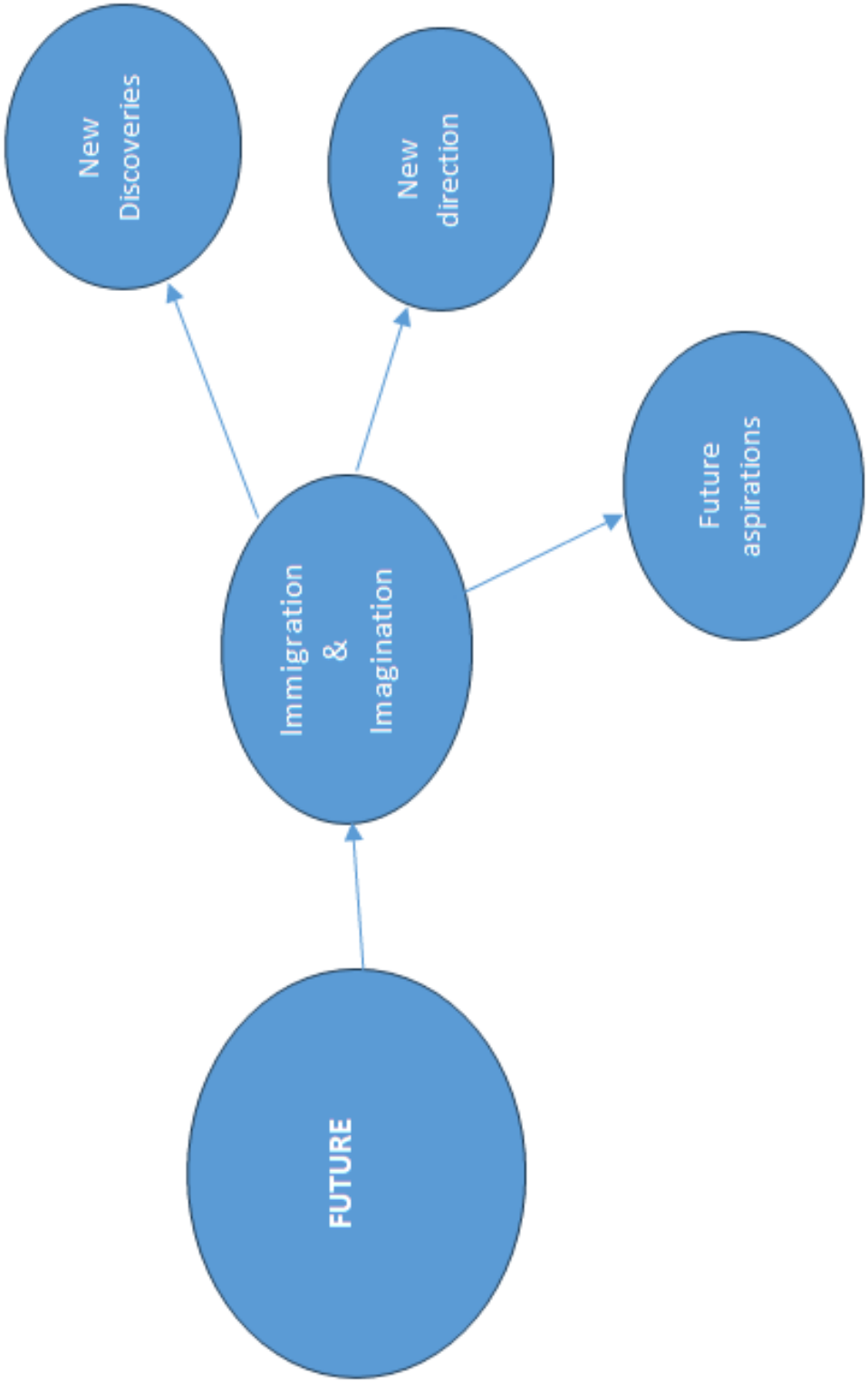
Niloufar

Niloufar came to Türkiye later than the other teachers (2022) and started work at a well-known K-12 school in Ankara. Despite her initial satisfaction with the school, she experienced unfair treatment from the management because of the limitations schools imposed on foreign employees. She was informed that her contract would not be extended for next year. After that, she took the CELTA course and enrolled at universities. The process of landing a job and switching her work visa from one employer to the other was so upsetting for her that she talked about it in the interview and referred to it as one of the biggest problems she had experienced. Since then, she has been working at a private university where she feels much happier than her previous school. She intends to stay in Türkiye, improve her teaching abilities and go for higher positions in teaching, such as teacher training.

C. THEMES AND SUBTHEMES




PRESENT
Turkish language
Othering & identity uncertainty
Educational realities
Power dynamics
in class
school
discrimination
Navigating differences
syllabus
roles
rules
reduced distance
powerless
school
Society
student


New Discoveries
New direction
Future aspirations
Immigration & Imagination
FUTURE

D. CODES

Theme 1: National Representation
Cultural differences limiting social interaction
Dealing with Stereotypes
Hiding one's Identity
Cultural mismatch between student and teacher
Challenges upon arrival to school
Overcoming negative views
Feeling isolated in discussions about religion
Having a different identity for safety
Views about Iran affecting professional identity
Positive views about Iranian teachers
Being careful in cultural representation
Undecided between accepting and resisting foreignness
Feeling responsible to combat stereotypes
Proudly presenting one's culture
Cultural misinformation about Iran
Navigating negative views about Iran
Striking a balance between culture in reality and represented
Feeling proud but uncertain about cultural heritage
Presenting the real culture with pride
Being proud of culture but having some embarrassment

Theme 2: Cultural, Social, and Symbolic Capital
Social Capital
Enjoying cultural discussion with students
Relationship with other foreigners
Feeling proud of one's culture
Positive points of cultural exchange
Enjoying discussions about culture
Finding cultural commonalities with colleagues
Using cultural sameness to bond
Using cultural discussion to engage with others
Cultural misunderstandings with a student
Appreciating student curiosity about culture
Preference for connection with Iranian community
Finding support in Iranian communities in Ankara
Common cultural elements creating bond
Using cultural comparison for teaching purposes
Cultural Capital
Comparing educational systems in Iran and Türkiye
Benefiting from class management strategies
Using experience at work
Thinking about noteworthy teaching strategies from Iran
Boasting about one's educational background
Getting positive feedback about teaching style
Getting positive feedback about pronunciation
Taking pride in teaching methods learned in Iran
Using caution learned in Iran in the new context.

Benefiting from lessons with teenagers
Benefiting from culture to have more effective lessons
Trying to adjust to various teaching cultures
Motivation grounded in childhood passion
Blending literature and knowledge of society in teaching
Using cultural comparison to boos teaching
Presenting one's culture in class discussions
Symbolic Capital
Feeling proud of one's culture
Thinking about one's culture with joy and pride
Feeling proud of culture
Representing culture with pride
Feeling Responsible for providing a positive picture of Iranian culture
Feeling thankful for recognition despite language barriers
Viewing positive elements in cultural exchange
Positive views of students towards the teacher's culture
Becoming multicultural before immigration
Positive views about Iranian teachers in Turkiye
Relying on proud feeling about culture in all challenging situations
Being proud of cultural identity
Keeping both professionalism and cultural identity in balance
Showing sensitivity towards balancing cultural differences
Culture being a sensitive topic in class discussions
Showing a realistic picture about culture
The influence of social media on culture

Connecting professional and cultural representation
Theme 3: Knowledge of the Turkish Language
Inability to connect with students
Experiencing alienation
Dealing with problems due to language barrier
Being thankful for having smooth interactions at work
Being left out because of language barriers
Emergency situation and language barriers
Lack of self-confidence in speaking Turkish in public
Feeling anxious when speaking Turkish in public
Feeling infantilized in while doing some paperwork
Identity tensions because of language barriers
Work meetings and language problems
Not connecting with the person of higher rank due to language
Language barriers impeding integration
Communication problems due to language barriers
Not socially integrated teacher because of language barriers
Challenges in managing class due to teacher's authority
Having difficulty in communicating with superiors
Experiencing problems in having a communication in Turkish
Dealing with language barriers in the classroom
Dealing with miscommunication due to language issues
Cultural misunderstanding with students

Theme 4: Othering and Identity Uncertainty
Experiencing Discrimination
Showing unhappiness toward country of origin
Feeling misunderstood by local people
Disrespect due to country of origin
Experiencing cultural insensitivity
Being discriminated
Exclusion at work
Feeling alienated when communicating with colleagues
Observing lack of equality between foreign and local teachers
Navigating Differences in and out of Class
Dealing with sensitive topics in class
Experiencing racism
Inability to manage sensitive issues
Dealing with stereotypes
Trying not to attract attention as a foreigner
Feeling isolated when interacting with colleagues
Inability to have boundaries
Passion for Integration and fear of misjudgment
Combating some stereotypes against Iranians

Theme 5: New Educational Realities
Prescriptive Syllabus
Teaching materials removing freedom
Prescriptive syllabus
Teacher feeling unappreciated by prescriptive materials
Challenges of having a fixed syllabus
Limiting creativity
Syllabus being too rigid
Restrictive teaching methods
Bureaucratic problems
Rules being inflexible
Not able to apply teaching techniques
Adapting into the new teaching context
Lack of appreciation for teacher creativity
Rules and Announcements
Heavy workload
Teacher observation putting pressure on the teacher
Adapting methods to different learning styles
Engaging students
Suiting oneself to class management strategies
Managing teenagers
Taking initiative to improve teaching
Feeling disappointed with many unnecessary rules
Unexplained work policies
Professional and cultural miscommunication
Sudden changes in the schedule
New Roles
Both teacher and counselor
Challenges related to identity at work
Doing *nobet* and losing one's value
Disappointment due to roles beyond teaching
Paperwork and administrative duties
New role as language arts teacher
Encountering students with mental

disorders
Mentoring another teacher

Theme 6: The Non-native Identity of teachers
Dealing with stereotypes as a non-native teacher
Negativity associated with Iranian names
Cultural obstacles in Türkiye
Fear of cultural Prejudice affecting job
Experiencing identity conflicts related to language
Prejudice from parents
Dealing with acceptance at work as a non-native teacher
problems with native like expectations
having internal tension over professional and cultural identity
Keeping confidence in light native / non-native dichotomy
Not preferring native or nonnative
Feeling inferior as a non-native teacher
Non-nativeness and finding comfort
Efforts to have near-native proficiency
Native and non-native teaching competence
Stereotypes in favor of native speakers
Keeping one's expertise
Seeing non-native teachers as better teachers
Having cultural integrity
Not pretending to be a native teacher

Theme 7: Dynamics of Power & Control
Reduced Power Distance
New realities about teacher-student relationships
Learning from the behavior of local teachers
Imagined differences in authority
Dealing with unwritten rules
Power imbalance at work
Dealing with unexpected social norms
New understanding about distance with students
Cultural misunderstandings regarding one's superior
Cultural differences at work
Differentness in how hierarchies are treated
Manager not respecting boundaries
Feeling Powerless
Difficulty in having rapport with students
Teacher authority and student resistance
Students favoring Turkish teachers
Feeling powerless when approaching a student
Staying professional despite cultural bias
Thinking about cultural differences when handling power
Feeling uncomfortable with authority and communication style
Not having authority in choosing teaching methods
Managing class and feeling powerless
Not standing up for oneself like locals
Language barrier and not connecting with authority
Management dismissing teacher's suggestions
Not able to change school rules
Having class management strategies

Being exploited due to being a foreigner
Dealing with feeling of secondary
Cultural shock in classroom management
Students' viewing their foreign teacher as different
Fear of Job Loss and less confidence
Comparison with Turkish teachers
Treating the person of higher rank

Theme 8: Immigration & Imagination
New Discoveries
immigration and work decisions
reaching career stability after immigration
future plans and job security
Immigration makes dreams come true
Immigration and personal growth
The important role of Turkiye in fulfilling dreams
Limited satisfaction with immigration
Thinking about the future of teaching
The role of teaching in self-discovery
Career development and motivation to continue
Expressing gratitude for opportunities
Future Aspirations
Plans to work for women's rights
Migration and reaching significant freedom
Valuing community and culture
The role of limitations in ambitions
Discovering different cultures
Being aware of limitations
Accepting current identity and planning for self-improvement
Including personal interest in teaching
Desire to continue into higher education
Desire to continue teaching despite obstacles
Self-improvement in teaching
Taking pride in students' fulfillments
Talking a New Direction
Seeking a job other than teaching
Desire to have teaching as a second job
Exploring areas of improvement in computer science
Plans to have a non-teaching job
Career aspirations and exploring new frontiers
Reaching satisfaction in a job beyond teaching
Professional pursuits in IT
Looking for a future beyond teaching

E. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name:
Nationality: Iranian
Date and Place of Birth:
Marital Status:
Phone:
email:

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	Kharazmi University	2011
BA	Hakim Sabzevari University	2008
High School	Ali-ebneabitaleb School	2004

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2021- Present	Atilim University, Ankara, Türkiye	English Instructor
2019-2021	DELI Firat Ilhan Schools, Ankara, Türkiye	English Teacher
2012- 2018	Safir Language Academy, Tehran, Iran	English Teacher

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Native Farsi, Fluent English, Basic Turkish

PUBLICATIONS

1. Ghyasi M, Gurbuz N (2023) Emotional labor and emotional capital: An interpretive phenomenological analysis of teachers of English. PLoS ONE 18(4): e0283981. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0283981

2. Ghyasi, M. (2023). Unpacking My Experience as an English Teacher in Turkey: An Autoethnographic Perspective. Interdisciplinary Studies in English Language Teaching, *2*(1), 71-88. doi: 10.22080/iselt.2023.25100.1047

3. Ghyasi, M., Salimi, H. (2020). Social Class as a Predictor of Pragmatic Competence: An Investigation of L1 and L2 Politeness Strategies Use in Light of Social Class Factors. Language Teaching Research Quarterly, Vol. 14, 35-52.

4. Salimi, S., Ghyasi, M. (2015). A Companion Guide to Writing Academic Research Papers. Rahnama Press. Tehran.

5. Safdarian, Z., Ghyasi, M. & Amini Farsani, M. (2014). How are Reading Strategy Use and Personality Types Related? Reading Matrix, 14(1), 121-135.

6. Ghyasi, M., Safdarian, Z. & Amini Farsani, M. (2013). Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies: A Triangulated Study. Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods 3(2), 15-29

7. Ghyasi, M., Yazdani, M. & Amini Farsani, M. (2013). The Relationship between Personality Type and Self-Regulated Learning Strategies of Language Learners. International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature, 2 (4), 74-82.

8. Ghyasi, M. (2011). Reading Comprehension Strategies in Relation to Personality Types of Iranian EFL Learners. Unpublished MA thesis. Kharazmi University, Tehran.

HOBBIES

Reading, Swimming, Movies

F. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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13 EKİM 2023

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof. Dr. Ciler Hatipoglu

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Majid Ghyasi ***"A Narrative Inquiry into the Identity of Iranian Teachers of English in Turkiye"*** başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek **0424-ODTUİAEK-2023** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

Prof.Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye

Doç. Dr. Ali Emre Turgut
Üye

Doç. Dr. Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye

Doç.Dr. Murat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

G. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Kimlik çalışmaları, özellikle öğrencilerin, öğretmenlerin ve hatta öğretmen eğitimcilerinin kimliklerine odaklanan araştırmalar aracılığıyla akademik alanda giderek daha fazla ilgi görmektedir. Bu çalışmaların tamamı, söz konusu grupların eğitim süreçlerinde karşılaştıkları en önemli sorunları anlamaya ve çözümlemeye yönelik girişimler olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Kimlik araştırmaları, öğretmenlerin kendi kimliklerinin farkında olmalarının mesleki performanslarını geliştirdiğini, daha kapsayıcı sınıf ortamlarının oluşturulmasına katkı sağladığını ve dikkat edilmesi gereken alanları belirlemelerine yardımcı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Kimliği incelemek amacıyla kuramsal bir çerçeve kullanıldığında, bu alandaki yaklaşımların felsefe, sosyoloji ve eğitim bilimlerinde yaşanan temel gelişmelerden önemli ölçüde etkilendiği görülmektedir. Postmodernizmin kimlik kavramı üzerindeki etkisiyle birlikte postyapısalcı kuramcılar, kimliği biyolojik ya da yalnızca yapısal temellere dayandıran önceki yaklaşımları sorgulamışlardır. Kimliği zaman içinde değişmeden kalan sabit ve değişmez bir bireysel özellik olarak görmek yerine, postyapısalcılar kimliği bağlamsal özelliklerin etkisi altında söylem içinde şekillenen akışkan bir olgu olarak ele almaktadır. Postyapısalcılığa göre kimlik, etkileşimler ve konuşmalar ilerledikçe oluşur; dolayısıyla dil de kimliğin oluşumunda belirleyici bir rol oynar. Ayrıca, iktidarın söylem içinde dağıldığı ve toplumsal aktörler arasındaki etkileşimlerin güç ilişkileri aracılığıyla şekillendiği düşünüldüğünde, bireylerin sahip oldukları güç de kimliklerinin oluşumunu etkilemektedir. Başka bir ifadeyle, bireyler söylem içerisindeki etkileşimleri sırasında otorite kazanabilir ya da otoritelerini kaybedebilirler.

Kimliğe ilişkin bu yaklaşım, dili yalnızca iletişimi sağlayan bir araç olarak değil, bireyin benliğinin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak gördüğü için, dilin kimlik oluşumundaki belirleyici gücünü de vurgulamaktadır. Kimliğin sürekli değişim hâlinde olduğu anlayışı, göç gibi önemli yaşam olaylarının kimliğin yeniden

inşasıyla sonuçlandığını ileri sürmektedir. Bunun nedeni, göçmenlerin sınırları aşarak yeni toplumsal ve kültürel pratiklerle karşılaştıklarında farklı söylemler arasında kimliklerini sürekli müzakere etmeleridir.

Öğretmenlere ilişkin çalışmalarda ise postyapısalcılık, öğretmenlere yönelik genelleyici anlatılardan kaçınmakta; öğretmeni, değişmez bilgi birikimine ve sabit kimliklere sahip bir birey olarak değil, iş yaşamındaki temel aktörlerle kurduğu etkileşimler aracılığıyla kimliğini inşa eden bir özne olarak ele almaktadır. Öğretmen kimliği araştırmaları, öğretmenin benlik algısı ile öğretmenin menşe ülkesi temelinde oluşturulan anadil konuşuru/anadili İngilizce olmayan öğretmen ayrımına dayalı ayrımcı sınıflandırmalar arasında bir ayrım yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu yaklaşımdan hareketle ve öğretmen kimliğine ilişkin güncel görüşleri dikkate alarak, göçmen öğretmenlerden oluşan bir grubun kimliklerinin nasıl yeniden inşa edildiğini incelemeyi amaçladım. Kimliklerin, kültür ve ırk gibi geleneksel kategorilerin de rol oynadığı bireysel tarihsel deneyimlerin bir ürünü olduğu kabulünden hareketle, öğretmenlerin geçmiş yaşantılarını da araştırmaya dâhil ettim. Burada geçmiş yaşantılardan kastettiğim, göç sonrasında şekillenen mevcut kimliklerinin oluşumunda göç öncesi yaşam deneyimlerinin sağladığı katkıdır. Bu doğrultuda araştırmanın ilk araştırma sorusu şu şekilde belirlenmiştir:

Türkiye'de görev yapan İranlı İngilizce öğretmenleri, göç öncesi deneyimleri ışığında kimliklerini nasıl müzakere etmektedir?

Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin Türkiye'ye taşındıktan, İngilizce öğretmeni olarak çalışmaya başladıktan ve farklı kültürel ile eğitimsel yeniliklerle karşılaştıktan sonra kimliklerinin nasıl yeniden yapılandığına odaklandım. Bu doğrultuda araştırmanın ikinci araştırma sorusu şu şekilde belirlenmiştir:

Türkiye'de görev yapan İranlı İngilizce öğretmenleri, göç sonrasında kimliklerinin dönüşümünü nasıl deneyimlemektedir?

Kimlik çalışmaları, aynı zamanda hayal gücünün kimlik oluşumundaki rolünü ve bireyin kimliğini nasıl şekillendirdiğini de ele almaktadır. Bu olgu, *hayal edilen*

kimlik (imagined identity) kavramı çerçevesinde incelenmektedir. Hayal edilen kimlik, bireyin gelecekte kendisini ait hissetmek ve özdeşleşmek istediği topluluğu ortaya koymayı amaçlamakta olup, bu tahayyül bireyin yaşam deneyimlerinden etkilenmektedir. Göç, öğretmenler açısından önemli bir yaşam dönüm noktası olduğundan, hayal edilen kimliklerinin de göç deneyimi tarafından şekillendiği varsayılabilir. Çünkü birey, kendi ülkesinin sınırlarının ötesinde bir gelecek tasavvur edebilmekte ve göç deneyimi bu geleceği yeniden hayal etmesi için güçlü bir zemin oluşturmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda araştırmanın üçüncü araştırma sorusu öğretmenlerin hayal edilen kimliklerine odaklanmıştır:

Türkiye'de görev yapan İranlı İngilizce öğretmenleri hangi tür hayal edilen kimliklere sahiptir ve bu kimlikler göç deneyimlerinden nasıl etkilenmektedir?

Deneyimlerini paylaşan öğretmenler, son on yıl içerisinde Türkiye'ye göç etmiş, eğitimlerini, mesleki yetişimlerini ve çalışma deneyimlerini ağırlıklı olarak İran'da edinmiş, ardından Ankara'daki okullarda İngilizce öğretmeni olarak çalışmaya başlamış İranlı İngilizce öğretmenleridir.

Aşağıda, takma adlarla tanıtılan bu öğretmenlere ilişkin kısa bilgiler sunulmaktadır.

Maryam, 2019 yılında Türkiye'ye göç etmiş ve çeşitli özel okullarda çalışmaya başlamıştır; ancak çalışma koşullarından memnun kalmamıştır. Daha sonra DELTA programına katılmış, birçok okula başvurmuş ve sonunda Ankara'da saygın bir özel okulda öğretmenlik yapmaya başlamıştır. O tarihten bu yana aynı okulda görev yapmakta ve genel olarak çalışma ortamından memnuniyet duymaktadır. Bununla birlikte, çalışma koşulları, öğrencileriyle güçlü bir bağ kurmakta yaşadığı güçlükler ve öğrencilerinin derslere yönelik düşük motivasyonu nedeniyle öğretmenlik mesleğine devam etmeme ihtimali bulunmaktadır.

Mina, 2021 yılında kızıyla birlikte Türkiye'ye göç etmiştir. Bundan önce İran'da bir dil okulunda yetişkinlere İngilizce öğretmiş ve geçimini büyük ölçüde özel ders vererek sağlamıştır. Türkiye'ye geldikten sonra, öğretmenlik sertifikası olarak CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) belgesine sahip

olmasına rağmen, lisans eğitiminin ne İngilizce alanında ne de öğretmenlik alanında olması nedeniyle iş bulmakta zorluk yaşamıştır. Daha sonra bir uluslararası okulda bir yıl boyunca ortaokul öğrencilerine İngilizce öğretmiş, takip eden yılda ise ilkokul bölümüne geçerek 1. sınıftan 5. sınıfa kadar öğrencilere İngilizce dersleri vermiştir.

Soroush, araştırmanın üçüncü katılımcısıdır. İlk kez 2021 yılında Türkiye'ye gelmiş ve başlangıçta burada geçici olarak kalmayı planlamıştır. Daha sonra koşulların değişmesi üzerine İngilizce öğretmeni olarak iş aramaya karar vermiştir. İlk olarak bir akşam okulunda yarı zamanlı öğretmen olarak çalışmış, ardından Ankara'nın önde gelen okullarından birinde kadrolu bir pozisyon elde etmiştir. Ancak bu okuldaki deneyimlerine ilişkin anlatıları genel olarak olumsuzdur. Kendi ifadelerine göre, öğrencilerin İngilizce gelişimine katkı sağlamak için büyük çaba göstermiş ve görev tanımının ötesinde sorumluluklar üstlenmiştir. Buna rağmen iki yılın sonunda, yabancı öğretmenlere ilişkin kurum içi bazı politikalar nedeniyle istifa etmesi istenmiştir. Görüşmeler sırasında bu okulda yaşadığı deneyimleri ve kendisine adil davranılmadığını ayrıntılı biçimde anlatmıştır.

Reza, 2019 yılında Türkiye'ye gelmiş ve seçkin bir dil okulunda yarı zamanlı İngilizce öğretmeni olarak çalışmaya başlamıştır. Ücretinden memnun olmadığı için daha iyi çalışma koşulları arayışına girmiştir. Bu süreçte TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) sertifikasını almış, çeşitli okullara başvurmuş ve Ankara'daki bir özel okulda iş bulmuştur. Ancak yabancı öğretmenlere ilişkin uygulamalardan memnun kalmadığı için daha prestijli bir okula başvurmuş ve burada görev almaya başlamıştır. Son dört yıldır K–12 düzeyinde öğretmenlik yapmakta olup, özellikle öğrencilerin davranışları, motivasyon eksikliği ve öğretmene karşı sergiledikleri saygısız tutumlardan rahatsızlık duymaktadır.

Azar, 2018 yılında eşiyle birlikte Türkiye'ye göç etmiştir. İran'da saygın bir dil okulunda genel İngilizce öğretmeni olarak görev yapmıştır. Türkiye'ye geldikten sonra farklı okullarda çalışmış; ancak çalışma koşullarından memnun kalmamıştır. Bazı okullarda maddi açıdan sömürüldüğünü hissetmiş, bazı okullarda ise yoğun düzeyde disiplin sorunlarıyla karşılaşmıştır. Daha sonra okul değiştirerek çok küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğrettiği bir özel okulda çalışmaya başlamıştır. Üstlendiği

farklı sorumluluklar nedeniyle mevcut işinden tamamen memnun olmasa da öğretmenliğin şu an için tek mesleki seçeneği olduğunu düşünmektedir. Gelecekte öğretmenlik mesleğine devam edip etmeyeceği ya da farklı bir kariyer alanına yönelip yönelmeyeceği konusunda kararsızdır; ancak mevcut koşullardan memnun olmadığını ifade etmektedir.

Niki, araştırmanın en genç katılımcısıdır. Ankara'da saygın bir üniversitede İngilizce eğitimi almak amacıyla Türkiye'ye gelmiştir. Eğitimine devam ederken şehir merkezindeki bir dil okulunda genel İngilizce dersleri vermiştir. Daha sonra aynı üniversitede yüksek lisans programına kabul edilmiştir. Yüksek lisans eğitimi süresince farklı dil okullarında çalışmaya devam etmiş ve burada yaşadığı çeşitli deneyimler öğretmen kimliğinin şekillenmesinde önemli rol oynamıştır. Kısa bir süre sonra DELTA programını tamamlamış ve sertifikasını aldıktan sonra Ankara'nın en saygın okullarından birinde öğretmen olarak göreve başlamıştır.

Niloufar, diğer katılımcılardan daha sonra, 2022 yılında Türkiye'ye gelmiş ve Ankara'da tanınmış bir K–12 okulunda çalışmaya başlamıştır. Başlangıçta okulundan memnun olmasına rağmen, okul yönetiminin yabancı çalışanlara yönelik uyguladığı sınırlamalar nedeniyle adil olmayan muamelelerle karşılaşmıştır. Kendisine sözleşmesinin bir sonraki yıl yenilenmeyeceği bildirilmiştir. Bunun ardından CELTA eğitimini tamamlamış ve çeşitli üniversitelere başvurmuştur. Yeni bir iş bulma ve çalışma iznini bir işverenden diğerine aktarma süreci kendisi için son derece yıpratıcı olmuş; görüşmeler sırasında bu süreci yaşadığı en büyük sorunlardan biri olarak nitelendirmiştir. O tarihten bu yana bir vakıf üniversitesinde çalışmakta ve önceki okuluna kıyasla kendisini çok daha mutlu hissetmektedir. Türkiye'de yaşamaya devam etmeyi, öğretmenlik becerilerini geliştirmeyi ve daha üst düzey akademik ya da mesleki öğretim pozisyonlarında görev almayı hedeflemektedir.

Katılımcıların özgeçmiş bilgileri incelendiğinde, Niki dışında tüm katılımcıların yükseköğrenimlerini İran'da tamamladıktan sonra iş bulmak amacıyla Türkiye'ye geldikleri görülmektedir. Katılımcılardan bazıları Türkiye'de CELTA ve DELTA gibi uluslararası öğretmenlik sertifika programlarını tamamlamıştır. Katılımcıların ortak özelliklerinden biri, ileri düzey akademik yeterliliklere sahip olmalarıdır.

Maryam, Soroush, Azar ve Niloufar, İran'da İngilizce Öğretmenliği alanında yüksek lisans derecelerini tamamlamış ve çeşitli saygın öğretmen yetiştirme programlarına katılmışlardır. Niki, İngilizce Öğretmenliği alanında yüksek lisans eğitimini tamamlamış; Reza ise Türkiye'de TESOL sertifika programını bitirmiştir. Ayrıca, Türkiye'ye göç etmeden önce İran'da uzun yıllar öğretmenlik yapmış olmaları nedeniyle tüm katılımcılar deneyimli öğretmenlerdir.

İran'da Azeri nüfusun bulunması ve Azericenin Türkçeye oldukça yakın bir dil olması nedeniyle, araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerden ikisi yerel dili konuşmakta herhangi bir güçlük yaşamamıştır. Buna karşılık, diğer katılımcılar açısından yerel dili konuşamamak önemli kimlik sorunlarına yol açabilmekte ve araştırma boyunca bu durum öğretmenlerin farklı kimlik konumlanmaları geliştirmelerine neden olmuştur.

Görüşmeler sırasında katılımcılara, İran'daki öğretmenlik yaşamları ve bu yaşamın göç sonrasında nasıl değiştiği hakkında sorular yöneltilmiştir. Bu sayede öğretmenlerin yaşamlarında İranlılık (*Iranianness*) unsurunun ne ölçüde yer tuttuğuna ilişkin yeterli veri elde edilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Katılımcılara ayrıca, anadili İngilizce olmayan göçmen öğretmenler olarak mevcut yaşamları, iş yerinde öğrenciler, meslektaşları ve yöneticilerle yaşadıkları günlük etkileşimler ile bu etkileşimlerin güç ilişkileri, anadil konuşuru üstünlüğü anlayışı (*native speakerism*) ve ötekileştirme süreçlerinden nasıl etkilendiğine ilişkin sorular yöneltilmiştir. Hayal edilen kimliklere ilişkin veri elde etmek amacıyla ise katılımcılara geleceğe yönelik istekleri ve hedefleri hakkında sorular sorulmuştur.

Örneklem seçimi, katılımcıların araştırma açısından gerekli bilgiye sahip oldukları ve bu bilgileri paylaşabilecekleri yönündeki değerlendirmelerime dayandırılmıştır. Ölçüt örnekleme (*criterion sampling*) olarak adlandırılan bu örnekleme yöntemi, araştırmacının bilgi bakımından zengin olduğu düşünülen, belirli yaşantıları deneyimlemiş ve bunları araştırmacıyla paylaşmaya istekli bireyleri seçmesine olanak sağlamaktadır. Katılımcılardan dördü hakkında önceden yeterli bilgiye sahiptim ve araştırmaya katılmayı kabul edeceklerini biliyordum. Diğer katılımcılar ise kartopu örnekleme (*snowball sampling*) yöntemiyle belirlenmiştir. Bu yöntem,

araştırmacının mevcut bağlantılar aracılığıyla yeni katılımcılara ulaşmasını mümkün kılmaktadır.

Veri toplama süreci başlamadan önce katılımcılarla zaman geçirerek onlarla iletişim kurdum ve araştırmanın amacını ayrıntılı biçimde açıkladım. Kendilerinden sınıfta yaşadıkları olayları hikâye biçiminde paylaşmalarını istedim. Olayları gerçekleştiği şekliyle aktarabilecekleri, ancak okullarının paylaşılmasını kısıtladığı bilgileri rapor etmeyebilecekleri belirtildi. Ayrıca, paylaştıkları anlatıların tamamen gizli tutulacağı ve üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmayacağı konusunda kendilerine güvence verildi.

Öğretmenlerden üç buçuk ay boyunca günlük tutmaları ve sınıflarında yaşanan olaylara ilişkin anlatılarını her hafta bana göndermeleri istendi. Bu anlatılar, İranlılık, yabancılık ve anadili İngilizce olmayan öğretmen kimliğiyle ilgili yaşadıkları her türlü deneyimi kapsamaktaydı. Katılımcılara yol gösterici nitelikte bazı yazma yönergeleri verilmiştir (Ek 1); ancak benzer nitelikteki diğer deneyimlerini de özgürce paylaşabilecekleri özellikle vurgulanmıştır. Bunun nedeni, araştırmanın amacının sınıf olaylarına ilişkin resmî raporlar toplamak değil, öğretmen anlatılarını derleyerek bu anlatılardan temalar ortaya çıkarmak olmasıdır. Öğretmenler ayrıca yaşanan olaylara ilişkin düşünce ve duygularını da paylaşmaları konusunda teşvik edilmiş; tereddüt yaşadıkları durumlarda ise kendilerine yönlendirici ipuçları verilmiştir.

İkinci veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden yararlanılmıştır. Bu görüşmeler, öğretmenlerin yaşanmış deneyimlerine ilişkin daha ayrıntılı veri elde etmek ve günlük kayıtlarında yer alan noktaları açıklığa kavuşturmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerde katılımcılara geçmiş yaşamları, okullarındaki ve Türkiye'deki güncel deneyimleri ile hayal edilen kimlikleri hakkında sorular yöneltilmiştir (Ek 1). Her görüşme yaklaşık bir ila bir buçuk saat sürmüş ve katılımcılara diledikleri takdirde Farsçaya geçebilme özgürlüğü tanınmıştır.

Verilerin analizinde Braun ve Clarke'ın (2013) tematik analiz yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Analiz süreci, verilerin tekrar tekrar okunarak mümkün olduğunca kapsamlı biçimde anlaşılmasını içeren veriye aşinalık kazanma aşamasıyla

başlamıştır. Ardından kodlama aşamasına geçilmiş; bu aşamada her veri parçası kısa, açık ve anlamını yansıtan ifadelerle özetlenmiştir. Braun ve Clarke'ın (2013) kodlama ilkeleri doğrultusunda, her kodun seçilen veri bölümünün anlamını açık ve özlü biçimde yansıtmasına özen gösterilmiştir.

Tüm veriler kodlandıktan sonra kodların bir araya getirilmesi ve kategorilere ayrılması aşamasına geçilmiştir. Bu süreçte bazı kodlar elenmiş, bazıları birleştirilmiş ve çok sayıdaki kod daha yönetilebilir kategoriler altında toplanmıştır. Son aşamada benzer kodlar bir araya getirilerek temalar oluşturulmuş ve her temaya ilgili kod grubunu açık biçimde yansıtan bir ad verilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda aşağıdaki sekiz tema belirlenmiştir. Tema ve alt temaların ayrıntılı listesi Ek 3'te sunulmaktadır.

- Tema 1: Ulusal Temsil
- Tema 2: Kültürel, Sosyal ve Sembolik Sermaye
- Tema 3: Türkçe Dil Yeterliliği
- Tema 4: Ötekileştirme ve Kimlik Belirsizliği
- Tema 5: Yeni Eğitsel Gerçeklikler
- Tema 6: Öğretmenlerin Anadili İngilizce Olmayan Kimliği
- Tema 7: Güç ve Kontrol Dinamikleri
- Tema 8: Göç ve Hayal Gücü

İlk araştırma sorusu, öğretmenlerin kültürel ve mesleki geçmişlerinin Türkiye'ye göç ettikten sonraki mevcut kimliklerine ne ölçüde katkıda bulunduğunu ortaya koyan anlatıları incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin kimliklerini yeniden şekillendiren önemli unsurlardan biri, ülkelerini doğru bilgiler sunarak, nezaket ve saygı çerçevesinde temsil etmeleri ve kendi kültürlerini tanıtmaları olmuştur. Bu kapsamda, öğretmenlerin İran ve İran kültürü hakkında yöneltilen sorularla karşılaştıkları durumlar ele alınmıştır. Öğretmenler, ülkelerine yönelik olumlu ve olumsuz algıları dikkate alarak kimliklerini gizleme, gerçekleri kısmen paylaşma ya da kimliklerini tamamen görünür kılma arasında bir denge kurmak durumunda kalmaktadırlar. Örneğin Azar, öğrencileriyle yaşadığı bazı etkileşimlerde, karşılaştığı olumsuz tepkiler nedeniyle ülkesini açıklamamayı tercih ettiğini ifade etmiştir.

Bu tema tartışılırken, kimliğin belirli bağlamlardaki etkileşimler yoluyla şekillenmesi nedeniyle bireysel kimliğin akışkan yapısı vurgulanmıştır. Başka bir ifadeyle, söylem öğretmenden, dili ve kültürel göstergeleri kullanarak ülkesini olduğu gibi temsil etmesini, kimliğini gizlemesini ya da yalnızca kültürünün olumlu yönlerini öne çıkarmasını talep edebilmektedir.

İkinci tema da öğretmenlerin geçmiş yaşantılarının göç sonrasındaki kimlik oluşumundaki rolüne ilişkin önemli veriler sunmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin anlatıları, kimliklerinin kendi ülkelerinde edindikleri kültürel, sosyal ve sembolik sermaye aracılığıyla nasıl şekillendiğini göstermektedir. Çalışmada, İranlı göçmen öğretmenlerin İran'da edindikleri bu üç sermaye türünden nasıl yararlanabildikleri ve bunları göç sonrasındaki bağlamda nasıl kullanabildikleri ortaya konmuştur. Benzer şekilde, yabancı öğretmen kimliği de öğretmene belirli bir sermaye kazandırmakta ve bu durum öğretmen kimliğinin şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Örneğin öğretmenler, İran'da edindikleri sınıf yönetimi becerilerini kullanarak sınıf üzerinde otorite kurabilmiş ve bunu önceki mesleki kimliklerinden güç alarak gerçekleştirmişlerdir.

Katılımcılar ayrıca, yabancı öğretmen kimliğinin öğrencilerle daha yakın ilişkiler kurmalarını sağladığı durumları da anlatmışlardır. Bu durum, sosyal sermayenin bir göstergesi olarak değerlendirilebilir. Bunun yanı sıra, öğretmenlerin İranlı kimliklerinden yararlanarak yeni ilişkiler kurdukları ve böylece sosyal sermayelerini güçlendirdikleri örnekler de belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada ayrıca sosyal sermayenin kültürel veya ekonomik sermaye gibi diğer sermaye türlerine dönüşebildiği durumlara da yer verilmiştir. Katılımcılar, Türkiye'de İranlı öğretmenlerin çalışkan ve alan bilgisi güçlü bireyler olarak tanındıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu durum, sahibine saygınlık ve prestij kazandıran ve kültürel ya da ekonomik sermayeye dönüştürülebilen bir kaynak olması bakımından sembolik sermaye olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Öğretmenin anadili İngilizce olmayan kimliğini ele alan altıncı tema da birinci araştırma sorusuna ilişkin önemli bulgular sunmuştur. Çünkü bu kimliğin, öğretmenin menşe ülkesiyle yakından ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. İranlı

öğretmen açısından anadili İngilizce olmayan kimlik, Türkiye'ye göç ettikten sonra belirgin hâle gelmiş; bu nedenle söz konusu tema, öğretmenlerin geçmiş yaşantılarının katkısı kapsamında değerlendirilmiştir. Bu kimlik etiketi İran'da öğretmenlik yaptıkları dönemde önemli bir mesele oluşturmazken, göç sonrasında dikkate alınması gereken bir unsur hâline gelmiştir.

Katılımcılar, öğrenciler ve veliler tarafından anadili İngilizce olmayan öğretmen olduklarının kendilerine sık sık hatırlatıldığı deneyimlerden söz etmişlerdir. İran'da ciddi bir sorun teşkil etmeyen bu durumun, Türkiye'de belirgin bir kimlik meselesine dönüştüğü görülmüştür. Bu kapsamda, öğretmenlerin anadil konuşuru üstünlüğü anlayışına dayalı yanlış kabullerle mücadele etmek zorunda kaldıklarını gösteren anlatılar tartışılmıştır. Anlatılar, bu üstünlük algısının katılımcıların da zaman zaman benimsedikleri yanlış inanışlarla yeniden üretildiğini ve böylece ortadan kaldırılması gereken bir söyleme istemeden meşruiyet kazandırıldığını göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, anadili İngilizce olan ve olmayan öğretmenlerin etkililiğini karşılaştıran çalışmalar yerine, İranlı öğretmenlerin eğitim kurumlarına ve öğretmen topluluklarına sağladıkları katkıları inceleyen araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulduğu savunulmuştur.

İkinci araştırma sorusu ise öğretmenlerin Türkiye'ye göç ettikten sonra kimliklerinin nasıl yeniden yapılandığına ilişkin anlatıları incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Günlükler ve görüşmeler aracılığıyla elde edilen anlatılar incelenmiş ve yeni bağlamsal koşulların etkisiyle ortaya çıkan kimlik değişimlerine ilişkin göstergeler araştırılmıştır. Postyapısalcı yaklaşım, sınır aşan göç deneyiminin bireylerin mesleki uygulamalarında küçük ya da büyük dönüşümler yaratabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Bu dönüşüm; kuruma bağlılık, öğrenciler ve meslektaşlarla kurulan ilişkiler, kurumsal işleyişe katılım ve göçmen, anadili İngilizce olmayan bir İngilizce öğretmeni olarak toplumsal davranışlara ilişkin bakış açıları tarafından şekillenebilmektedir.

Üçüncü tema, öğretmenlerin Türkçe bilgisi eksikliği nedeniyle yeni kimlik konumlanmaları geliştirmek zorunda kaldıkları durumları ortaya koyarak bu dönüşüme ilişkin önemli bulgular sunmuştur. Dilin kimlik oluşumunun temel

araçlarından biri olduğu kabul edildiğinde, Türkçe bilgisi öğretmenler açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır. Öğretmenin mesleki ya da gündelik yaşamında yer alan temel söylem topluluklarının bir parçası olamaması, çocuklaştırılma ve toplumsal izolasyon gibi sonuçlara yol açabilmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, yerel topluluklarla bütünleşemeyen ve dil engelleri nedeniyle kendisini toplumdan uzak tutmayı tercih eden öğretmenlerin yeni bir kimlik olarak toplumsal dışlanmışlık geliştirebildiği ileri sürülmüştür. Bununla birlikte, öğretmenin yeni söylem topluluklarına katılmasının en temel koşulu yerel dili öğrenmesidir. Önceki araştırmalardan hareketle, öğretmenin bu temel kimlik unsuruna sahip olmaması durumunda yeni bir benlik inşa edemeyeceği ve bunun da güç kaybına yol açacağı tartışılmıştır.

Türkiye bağlamında kimliklerin yeniden yapılandırılmasına ışık tutan bir diğer tema ise ötekileştirme ve kimlik belirsizliğidir. Öğretmenlerin, çoğunlukla öğrencilerin disiplin kurallarına uymak istememeleri nedeniyle geliştirdikleri tepkiler sonucunda, milliyetleri ve diğer uluslardan farklılıkları üzerinden incitici söylemlere maruz kaldıkları belirlenmiştir. Örneğin Niloufar, bir öğrencinin Türk olmamasını gerekçe göstererek talimatlarına uymaması nedeniyle sınıftaki bazı disiplin sorunlarını kontrol altına almakta zorlandığını ifade etmiştir. Bu tür deneyimler öğretmenlerin yalnızca eğitimci değil, aynı zamanda farklı toplumsal roller üstlendiklerini fark etmelerini sağlamaktadır. Ancak yabancı olmanın getirdiği dezavantajlar ve içinde bulunulan durumun yeniliği, öğretmenlerin bu olaylara profesyonel biçimde tepki vermelerini güçleştirebilmektedir. Bu tema, öğretmenlerin güncel dünya meseleleri hakkında bilgi sahibi olmalarının ve güvenilir bilgi kaynağı rolünü üstlenmelerinin önemini ortaya koymuştur. Aksi hâlde öğrenciler, güvenilir olmayan kaynaklardan edindikleri yanlış bilgiler doğrultusunda yabancı öğretmenleri ya da sınıf arkadaşları hakkında önyargılı değerlendirmelerde bulunabilmektedir.

Yeni eğitsel gerçeklikler teması kapsamında ise öğretmenlerin eğitim ve bürokratik sistem içerisinde kendilerine yer edinebilmek için mevcut kimliklerini çözümleyip yeniden inşa etmek zorunda kaldıklarını gösteren anlatılar belirlenmiştir. Bu süreç; okullardaki çok sayıdaki ve zaman zaman gereksiz görülen kuralları kabul etmeyi, ayrıca materyal geliştirici, ölçme-değerlendirme uzmanı ve hatta kültürel temsilci gibi yeni roller üstlenmeyi kapsamaktadır. Katılımcılar, okul kültürü ve genel

toplumsal kültür hakkında yeterince bilgilendirilmedikleri için bazı durumlarda nasıl davranmaları gerektiğini bilemediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Bu tema altında tartışılan bulgular, postyapısalcı yaklaşımın temel varsayımlarını desteklemektedir. Buna göre kimlikler yeni bağlama değişmeden taşınmamakta; aksine uygulama içinde yeniden şekillenmekte ve yeni bağlamın gerektirdiği kimlikler önceki kimliklerin önüne geçmektedir. Bulgular ayrıca, bireyin eyleme kapasitesini (agency) kullanamamasının özgüven kaybına ve düşük düzeyde bir özneleşme/eyleyicilik algısına yol açabileceğini göstermektedir.

Foucault'ya (1984) göre güç her yerde bulunur ve söylem topluluklarının üyeleri arasındaki söylem ve etkileşimler aracılığıyla işlerlik kazanır. İkinci araştırma sorusuna ilişkin veri sağlayan son tema kapsamında, öğretmenlerin sınıf içi disiplin sorunlarıyla karşılaştıklarında, okul müdürüyle iletişim kurmaları gerektiğinde ya da öğrencilerle toplumsal normlar üzerine konuşurken kendilerini güçsüz hissettikleri durumlar ele alınmıştır. Katılımcılar bu güç kaybının temel nedenini kültürel farklılıklar olarak görseler de, Hofstede ve arkadaşları (2010) tarafından geliştirilen Güç Mesafesi İndeksi (Power Distance Index-PDI) bakımından İran ve Türkiye'nin oldukça benzer değerlere sahip olduğu ileri sürülmüştür. Dolayısıyla güç kaybının temel nedeni kültürel farklılık değil, öğretmenin yabancı statüsüdür. Öğretmenlerin ülkedeki yasal statülerini sürdürebilmek için işverenlerine bağımlı olmaları, yerel meslektaşlarında gözlemledikleri hareket alanına sahip olmalarını engellemektedir. Bu durum, kurumsal kurallara itiraz edebilme ve gerektiğinde bunlara karşı çıkabilme özgürlüğünü de sınırlandırmaktadır.

Bu tema kapsamında ayrıca yakın güç mesafesi alt teması da belirlenmiştir. Bu alt tema, öğretmenlerle öğrenciler ve öğretmenlerle okul yöneticileri arasındaki daha yakın ve samimi ilişkileri konu almaktadır. Katılımcılar bu tür ilişkiler hakkında farklı görüşler dile getirmiş; bazıları öğretmenliklerinin ilk yıllarında bu samimiyete uyum sağlamakta zorlandıklarını ifade etmiştir. Göç sonrasında karşılaşılan bu yeni durumlar, öğretmenlerin kimliklerinde önemli dönüşümlere yol açmıştır. Her ne kadar katılımcıların büyük bölümü yeni kültürel ve eğitsel bağlama uyum sağlamayı başarmış olsa da, geleceğe ilişkin değerlendirmelerinde farklı ve zaman zaman çelişkili duygular taşıdıkları görülmüştür.

Üçüncü araştırma sorusu, araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin hayal edilen kimliklerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu doğrultuda katılımcılara geleceğe ilişkin hedefleri ve bu hedeflerin altında yatan nedenler hakkında sorular yöneltilmiştir. Çalışmada, göçün öğretmenlere geleceklerini yeniden tasavvur edebilme imkânı sunmadaki önemli rolü tartışılmış; bu bağlamda göç deneyiminin, bireyin hayal edilen kimliğinin şekillenmesinde belirleyici yaşam deneyimlerinden biri olduğu ileri sürülmüştür. Öğretmenler, okullarından gördükleri desteğin, Türkiye'de elde ettikleri istikrarın ve göç sürecinde kazandıkları deneyimlerin geleceğe yönelik hayallerini şekillendirdiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Katılımcıların gelecekte ait olmak istedikleri topluluklar arasında öğretmen eğitimciliği ve uluslararası düzeyde tanınan sınavlarda sınav değerlendiriciliği gibi mesleki roller yer almaktadır. Bazı katılımcılar ise kadın hakları savunuculuğu gibi toplumda daha etkin roller üstlenmeyi ya da aile bireyleri için örnek alınan kişiler olmayı hedeflediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin mesleklerini bırakarak eğitim dışındaki alanlarda kariyer yapmayı hayal ettikleri anlatılar da belirlenmiş ve bunlar geleceği yeniden tasavvur etme alt teması altında değerlendirilmiştir. İki öğretmen açısından bunun temel nedeni yeni keşfettikleri ilgi alanlarını takip etme isteği iken, diğer katılımcılar açısından bu durumun başlıca nedeni öğrencilerin sergilediği yoğun disiplin sorunları, mesleğin aşırı iş yükü ve maruz kaldıkları adaletsiz uygulamalardır.

Bu çalışma, postyapısalcı kurama, araştırma desenine, anlatı araştırmasına ve uygulamaya yönelik çıkarımlara önemli katkılar sunmuştur. Öncelikle, öğretmenlerin farklı özelliklere sahip öğrencilerle etkileşimlerinde sınıf içinde birden fazla rol üstlenmek zorunda kaldıkları ve Türk meslektaşlarına ya da meraklı öğrencilerine ülkelerini tanıtırken farklı kimlik konumlanmaları benimsedikleri durumlar ortaya konmuştur. Bu bulguların, postyapısalcı yaklaşımı desteklediği ve kimliğin akışkan doğasına ilişkin anlayışı daha da güçlendirdiği ileri sürülmüştür. Bulgular, kimliğin bireye atfedilen ve farklı bağlamlara değişmeden taşınan sabit bir özellik olmadığını; aksine anlık etkileşimler içerisinde sürekli yeniden şekillendiğini göstermektedir.

Araştırma deseni açısından ise anlatılar, katılımcıların yaşanmış deneyimlerini ortaya çıkarmada etkili bir veri kaynağı olduğunu göstermiştir. Anlatılar, katılımcıların seslerini duyurmalarına olanak sağlamış ve öğretmenler açısından etkili bir yansıtıcı

uygulama niteliği taşımıştır. Bu süreç, öğretmenlere sınıfta yaşadıkları günlük olaylar üzerinde düşünme, bunları yazılı hâle getirme ve araştırmacı tarafından dinlendiklerini hissetme fırsatı sunmuştur.

Araştırmanın uygulamaya yönelik çıkarımları açısından, çalışma öğretmenlerin sahip oldukları kaynakların farkına varmalarına katkı sağlamakta ve öğretmenleri, anadili İngilizce olan öğretmenlerin üstün olduğu yönündeki yanlış inanışı sorgulamaya teşvik etmektedir. Bunun yerine, anadili İngilizce olmayan öğretmenlerin de öğretim sürecine önemli katkılar sağlayabilecek niteliklere sahip olduklarının fark edilmesi gerektiği vurgulanmaktadır. Bu niteliklerin farkına varılması ise, günlük uygulamalarını düzenli olarak kayıt altına alan, kendi araştırmalarından ve hakikati arama çabasından yararlanarak mesleki uygulamalarını sürekli sorgulayan yansıtıcı öğretmenler sayesinde mümkün olacaktır.

Son olarak, araştırmaya katılan göçmen öğretmenlerin Türk toplumu içerisinde kendilerine yer edinerek ve yerel söylem topluluklarında sağlam bir kimlik konumlanması geliştirerek sosyal sermayelerini güçlendirmeleri önerilmektedir. Söylemin öğretmeni güçlendirmedeki rolü dikkate alındığında, katılımcıların dışlayıcı konumlar benimsemek yerine yerel topluma uyum sağlamaya çalışmaları teşvik edilmektedir.

Öğretmen yetiştirme programlarına ilişkin olarak bu çalışma, eğitim programlarının tasarlanmasında bağlamsal farklılıkların mutlaka dikkate alınması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Bu durum özellikle, dünyanın farklı ülkelerinde aynı içerikle uygulanan ve yeni bağlamların sunduğu çeşitlilikleri yeterince dikkate almayan uluslararası öğretmen yetiştirme programları açısından önem taşımaktadır. Daha da önemlisi, bu programların öğrencilerinin kültürel geçmişlerini bilen, kendilerini farklı kültürel ortamlarda nasıl konumlandıracaklarının farkında olan ve hassas konuları uygun biçimde ele alabilecek kültürel farkındalığa sahip eğitimciler yetiştirmesi gerekmektedir. Ayrıca bu farkındalık, öğrencilerin öğretmenlerinden doğrulamasını bekleyebilecekleri güncel küresel gelişmeleri de kapsamalıdır; çünkü öğretmenlerin bu konulardaki açıklamaları öğrencilerin bakış açılarını kolaylıkla etkileyebilmektedir.

Eğitim kurumları açısından ise, yerel olmayan öğretmenlere yönelik işe alım ve istihdam politikalarının daha şeffaf olması gerektiği ileri sürülmektedir. Araştırmada öğretmenlerin, istihdamlarını düzenleyen kuralların adil olmaması veya açık biçimde belirtilmemesi nedeniyle yaşadıkları memnuniyetsizlikleri ortaya koyan çok sayıda anlatıya yer verilmiştir. Önceki araştırmalarda sunulan öğretmen anlatılarından da hareketle, eğitimin toplumda eşitliği teşvik etmedeki rolü tartışılmış; bunun, eğitim kurumlarının anadili İngilizce olmayan veya göçmen öğretmenlere nasıl yaklaştığını da kapsadığı vurgulanmıştır. Dolayısıyla eğitim kurumlarının, kendi bünyelerinde hâkim olan söylem ve uygulamaların belirli bir grubu kayırmadığından emin olmaları gerekmektedir. Bu yaklaşım, daha kapsayıcı ve daha adil eğitim ortamlarının oluşturulmasına katkı sağlayacaktır.

İranlı öğretmenlerin Türk eğitim sistemine önemli katkılar sunduğunu ortaya koyan bulgulara rağmen, araştırmanın bazı sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle, araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerin Türkiye'de üstlendikleri görevler, İran'daki görevleriyle tamamen örtüşmemektedir. Katılımcıların bir kısmı İran'da yalnızca yetişkinlere eğitim verirken, Türkiye'ye geldikten sonra çocuklarla çalışmaya başlamıştır. Bu durum, kimliklerinin yeniden şekillenmesini etkilemiş olabilir. Çünkü üstlendikleri yeni roller ve sorumluluklar yalnızca yabancı olmalarından değil, aynı zamanda mesleki görevlerindeki değişimden de kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalarda, göç öncesi ve göç sonrası mesleki roller arasında uyumsuzluk bulunmayan daha homojen katılımcı gruplarının seçilmesi önerilmektedir.

Araştırmanın bir diğer sınırlılığı, yalnızca okul öğretmenlerini kapsamasıdır. Bu tercih, araştırma bağlamının ayrıntılı biçimde betimlenebilmesini sağlamıştır. Bununla birlikte, Türkiye'de farklı eğitim kurumlarında görev yapan çok sayıda İranlı İngilizce öğretmeni bulunmaktadır. Gelecekte yapılacak çalışmaların daha geniş bir öğretmen grubunu kapsaması, bu öğretmenlerin yaşadıkları sorunların ve kimlik yeniden yapılanma süreçlerinin daha kapsamlı biçimde anlaşılmasına katkı sağlayacaktır. Hatta araştırma kapsamı daha da genişletilerek farklı ülkelerden gelen yabancı öğretmenler de inceleme konusu yapılabilir.

Bunun yanı sıra araştırma, öğretmenlerin Türkiye'de göreve başlamalarından itibaren yaklaşık üç ila beş yıllık bir dönemi kapsayan sınırlı bir zaman diliminde yürütülmüştür. Kimlik gelişiminin daha uzun süreli süreçlerde daha sağlıklı biçimde izlenebileceği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, gelecekte gerçekleştirilecek boylamsal araştırmaların alan yazına daha güçlü katkılar sunacağı düşünülmektedir.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışmanın, Türkiye'de görev yapan İranlı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin karşılaştıkları önemli sorunları ele alan sınırlı sayıdaki araştırmalardan biri olduğu düşünülmektedir. Çalışmada, öğretmen kimliğinin şekillenmesinde etkili olan geçmiş yaşantılar, mevcut bağlamsal gerçeklikler ve hayal edilen kimlikler gibi temel unsurlar birlikte ele alınmıştır. Gelecekte yapılacak araştırmaların bu unsurlardan her birine ayrı ayrı odaklanarak ilgili süreçlerin daha ayrıntılı biçimde incelenmesine katkı sağlayacağı değerlendirilmektedir. Bu çalışmanın, mütevazı bir girişim olarak, akademik alanda sesi bugüne kadar yeterince duyulmamış bir öğretmen grubuna yönelik daha kapsamlı araştırmaların başlangıcını oluşturması en büyük temennimdir.

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