

Teacher Identity (re)Construction in Collaborative Bilingual Education: The Emergence of Dyadic Identity

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Abstract

Teacher identity construction has long been investigated within the field of English language teaching. However, little is known about how particularities and demands of co-teaching language and content in bilingual education (BE) settings may lead to teacher identity (re)-construction, especially in preschool contexts. Therefore, we explored, through narrative inquiry, the identity (re)construction of one pair of English language and homeroom teachers in a preschool in Turkey. We gathered data through oral narratives, follow-up written accounts, and an online pair interview, which collectively provided insights into their induction into BE, collaborative teaching practices, and interactions with contextual factors. Findings show that external support (e.g., training, and sustained feedback by the trainers) alongside teachers' own experiences and reflections regarding BE and changing beliefs about their prior practice were among the factors which led to their transition into the role of BE co-teacher. Parallel to this transitioning process, a relationally mediated positional identity we label dyadic identity emerged between the teachers. We discuss the process of the teachers' transition to a BE co-teacher role and the emergence of dyadic identity, elaborating on the factors that facilitated this development. Implications for teacher identity research as well as bilingual program development are discussed.

doi: 10.1002/tesq.3168

INTRODUCTION

Bilingual education (BE) is an instructional approach in which language and content are combined and delivered in two languages with differing degrees of emphasis that range from a focus on integrating content into language learning to incorporating language learning in content instruction (Thompson & McKinley, 2018). When considered in the context of the field of English language teaching, BE could aim to foster specific subject knowledge (e.g., science, mathematics) and/or different language skills (e.g., L1 literacy skills) alongside English as an additional language by relying on meaningful interaction and learner participation (e.g., Turner, 2019). In several contexts worldwide, including that of the present study (Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2020), language and content teachers have recently become immersed in such teaching practices, adopting BE approaches where two languages are represented and enacted equally in course design and delivery and co-teaching is the norm (Wright & Baker, 2017). In the face of change as teachers adopt these new modes of practice, they may need to engage in (re)negotiation of their identities. This is because “Identities develop ... in situ, as one takes part in the practices of a community” (Kanno & Stuart, 2011, p. 240) and since entering a different form of practice demands developing new self-understandings in relation to who one is or needs to become professionally (Meijer, 2017). Specifically, change in teacher identity may occur in BE as developing new skills such as designing language-and-content-integrated syllabi, materials, and tasks as well as lesson plans for bilingual course delivery could require a good deal of adaptation in how teachers view their roles, position themselves, and are positioned by significant others such as peers, teacher educators, and other stakeholders (e.g., Morton, 2016). Therefore, these new pedagogies may, over time, lead to a reconstruction of teacher identity through adopting new *roles* and/or assuming or being assigned novel *identity positions* (see Section [Theoretical Framework](#) for the distinction between roles and identity positions). Co-teaching of language and content is another activity, which may impact teacher identity (re)construction through processes such as engaging in negotiation of different identity positions one desires to claim, resist, or assign in relation to the co-teacher or trying to understand one’s role in this regard (Davison, 2006; Trent, 2010).

Empirical research into teacher identity in BE (e.g., Ellis, 2016; Kayı-Aydar & Green-Eneix, 2019; Morton, 2016; Varghese, 2006; Zheng, 2017) has largely focused on the identity construction of language and/or content teachers who already are or are becoming

plurilingual (i.e., bilingual/multilingual) in developed countries. For example, Morton's (2016) research on a Spanish CLIL teacher's identity construction through discursive positioning revealed multiple, and at times contradictory, identity positions. In this study, the teacher alternated between the identity positions of language or content teacher when attempting to integrate content and language as well as language learner to meet the interactional needs of the students in English. Varghese (2006) collected data from four novice Spanish/English bilingual teachers in a marginalized Latinx community in the United States with the highest rate of poverty and the lowest income. Her data revealed, among others, a suboptimal environment for BE, where discrimination against this mode of practice (e.g., an atmosphere of intolerance toward BE and lack of quality teacher training), teachers and learners being marginalized language users, and unhelpful policies (e.g., BE defined as compensatory practice), made the teachers unable to construct uniform and dedicated BE professional identities. Therefore, this study sheds light on the professional and policy discourses that could impact BE teachers' identity construction in such contexts.

Some of this research has also investigated plurilingual teachers' identity within translanguaging pedagogy (i.e., where shuttling and alternating between and across two or more languages in creative or emergent ways is encouraged and facilitated to enhance meaning-making in communication; Turner, 2019). For example, Kayı-Aydar and Green-Eneix (2019) probed a music teacher's practice in a high school in Southwestern United States as to how he constructed bilingual and high-status bicultural identities with his minoritized students through engagement in and encouragement of translanguaging practices. A noteworthy finding was that, despite not being a language teacher, he developed a bilingual teacher identity and a commitment to BE practice in close connection with his students.

In contrast to research on plurilingual teachers in developed countries, studies on BE teachers in developing countries have seldom focused on teacher identity. Yet such research is important because teachers themselves may or may not be bilingual in these contexts, thereby making co-teaching a more salient mode of practice. In addition, BE programs may be the result of bottom-up initiatives run by schools rather than top-down policies (e.g., Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2020). These factors overall could create a different milieu for teacher identity construction. An exception is Dikilitaş and Mumford (2020) which, despite not being directly focused on BE teachers' identity construction, investigates the induction of three language teachers within a high-income preschool in Turkey that is largely favored by parents from privileged families (see Section [Narrative](#)

Inquiry). They observed teachers' development of BE competencies through adopting roles like "interactive communicator" and "translanguaging facilitator" (p. 5). Similarly, investigations into the possible connections between teacher identity and collaborative teaching in BE or related contexts remain rather limited. A couple of studies have indirectly focused on this issue among other topics. Tan (2011), for example, investigated the beliefs of mathematics, science, and language teachers working in an English-medium school in Malaysia. One finding was that collaboration between these teachers was hampered by issues such as outcome-based curricula. More importantly, however, it was discovered that content teachers only viewed themselves as content teachers and the English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher only positioned themselves as language teachers. Trent (2010) is probably one of the very few studies to explore this topic directly as its focus. He investigated four language and four content teachers' identity construction within collaborative practices in an English-medium secondary school in Hong Kong. He, too, found a divided role assignment between the language and content departments that led to identity conflicts in co-teaching, with the language teachers at the lower end of this co-teaching engagement.

As mentioned, it has been argued that in educational contexts where teachers face the demands of plurilingual and/or collaborative teaching, the potential for identity reconstruction comes to the fore (Morton, 2016; Trent, 2010). However, the available empirical research depicts a more complex picture in which, faced with the particularities and requirements of bilingual (collaborative) teaching, language and content teachers engage in reconstruction of their identities to differing degrees. Factors such as differential views of their respective roles, the importance they assign to focusing on language or content (e.g., Kayı-Aydar & Green-Eneix, 2019; Morton, 2016; Tan, 2011), and/or their different status which may lead to conflict when they co-teach (e.g., Trent, 2010), necessitate a closer look at issues of teacher identity in BE. Because of the earlier mentioned dearth of research on these issues, especially in developing countries, this line of exploration could be particularly insightful where two teachers co-design their materials and courses, are simultaneously present in the classroom, and are engaged in integrated language and content practice. Therefore, to address this gap and shed new light on the complexity of teacher identity (re)construction in a collaborative BE context, we conducted the present study in Turkey, where such school-based initiatives for BE provision are emerging, with the following research question: *How does professional peer collaboration influence language and homeroom teachers' identity (re)construction in a BE context?*

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Teacher identity has been defined as a dynamic, multifaceted construct, which involves who a teacher is as a person and a professional engaged in practices of the teaching community (Barkhuizen, 2017; Pennington & Richards, 2016). It is constructed agentively in negotiation with significant others, including teacher educators, colleagues, administrators, students, and the wider professional community; therefore, it is both an individual and a social undertaking shaped by struggle and harmony and embedded in larger educational discourses (Barkhuizen, 2017). In the present study, we combine an overarching narrative view of teacher identity (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2016; Søreide, 2006) with the theoretical toolkit of the positioning theory (e.g., Davies & Harré, 1990; Kayı-Aydar, 2019), and the relationality principle (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) as applied to teacher identity (e.g., Reeves, 2009) to contribute to theoretical cross-fertilization so as not to “lose sight of the real-world complexity of [teacher identity construction]” (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005, p. 40). Specifically, positioning theory focuses on identity positions which are symbolic locations individuals can occupy that confer on them certain characteristics and rights and allow or constrain responsibilities (Davies & Harré, 1990; Kayı-Aydar, 2019). In this theory, there is also a distinction between roles (e.g., EFL teacher) and identity positions (e.g., experienced teacher, authoritarian teacher). Roles refer to rather fixed, often externally assigned senses of who one needs to be and what responsibilities they need to fulfill while identity positions concern who one is as constructed within more fluid storylines in negotiation with others (Kayı-Aydar, 2019). However, each role could manifest a constellation of related identity positions which Martel and Wang (2015) refer to as “role-specific identity positions” (p. 290). Through the act of positioning, such identity and role-specific positions are assigned to oneself (i.e., reflexive positioning) and to others (i.e., interactive positioning; see Kayı-Aydar, 2019). Furthermore, roles and role-specific positions are nested within the larger structure of teacher identity (e.g., Søreide, 2006). The more fluidly constructed identity positions, on the other hand, are temporary designations unless they accumulate over time to form more enduring *positional identities* which also become nested in the broader teacher identity (see Kayı-Aydar, 2019).

Such acts of positioning can be much better understood in the context of teachers’ narratives as it is “through the (co)telling of the stories that identities are constructed” (Barkhuizen, 2016, p. 2). Thus, teacher identity construction is essentially a narrative undertaking

because teachers personally engage in reflexive positioning within their stories of their professional lives through which they attempt to fashion their experiences into coherent stories of who they are (Barkhuizen, 2016; Elliott, 2005; Søreide, 2006). However, these stories are also social in nature because teacher identity is socially constructed through narratively mediated discourses of education (henceforth narrative discourses) that are built on the prevalent values, expectations, and practices in an educational system/setting (e.g., perspectives on BE taught during teacher education and reproduced/reinforced during practice; Søreide, 2006). Such social construction becomes possible, partly, as the narrative discourses present one or more roles that teachers are encouraged to adopt (Pennington & Richards, 2016; Søreide, 2006). Another social mechanism is the identity positionings by significant others who are in negotiation with teachers, through collective storytelling (Barkhuizen, 2016), over who they are (Varghese et al., 2005). This process, in essence, involves interactive positioning where teachers use stories told and retold among themselves about who they are or need to be to perform identity work.

These social processes connect to the relational nature of teacher identity, especially when situated within collaborative teaching contexts (see Trent, 2010). The principle of relationality views self-definition as acquiring meaning in close comparison and complementarity to who significant others are (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). For instance, when a teacher assumes the identity position of *more experienced*, this could, by implication, position their co-teacher as *less experienced* and thus different from them (see also Reeves, 2009). These social relations also bring forth the issue of agency as teachers' capacity to accomplish socio-cultural action (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) is created and tested in the power relations they establish and experience with others (i.e., Kayı-Aydar, 2019). The nexus of agency and positioning occurs when teachers actively rely on or distance themselves from the narrative discourses to construct personal identity positions in their stories (Søreide, 2006). In addition, faced with similarly constructed positions by significant others that attempt to define and redefine who they are, teachers agentively react either by identifying with such positions or by resisting or even rejecting them (Meijer, 2017; Reeves, 2009).

As hitherto discussed, the plurilingual and collaborative demands and particularities of BE lead to changes in teacher identity to differing degrees. Thus, language and homeroom co-teachers' stories of their journey into BE could reveal whether and how identity reconstruction, which we define as transitioning to a new role (e.g., Meijer, 2017) and/or developing more entrenched positional identities (see Kayı-Aydar, 2019), has occurred for them.

METHODOLOGY

Narrative Inquiry

Narratives are not only tools teachers use to negotiate and construct their identities, but they can also be relied on by researchers as instruments for gaining insight into processes of identity (re)construction (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014). This is because narratives are built on temporal and logical axes and thus have an embedded process-oriented dimension which enables them to elucidate teachers' identity development trajectories over time (Barkhuizen, 2011). Narratives have also been argued to give coherence to teachers' experiences and provide richer and much more context-embedded accounts of their identity development (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Moreover, the act of narration itself may stimulate memory (Elliott, 2005) and help teachers present a more meaningful account of their personal positionality and relational associations. For us these affordances made narrative inquiry (i.e., collecting data predominantly in the form of stories and analyzing them to shed light on lived experiences and meaning-making practices of individuals; Bahrami, Hosseini, & Atai, 2022; Barkhuizen et al., 2014) an ideal choice for investigating BE co-teachers' identity (re)construction in a collaborative teaching process.

Context of the Study

Though socially multilingual, Turkey is politically a monolingual country with several minoritized languages. In line with international norms, English is widely taught as an additional language in this context without a systematic and structured system for heteroglossic pedagogic practices (Yüzlü & Dikilitaş, 2022). However, we conducted our study in a fee-based private kindergarten located inside a mid-sized school that is advertised explicitly as a bilingual school. Unlike other monolingual public schools which only dedicate a few hours weekly to teaching English as a subject, this school offers small class sizes and the simultaneous presence of two teachers in class who foster bilingual interaction. These teachers' salary is also relatively higher than those working in many other standard schools. Therefore, the school is expensive to attend although the parents usually have a high socioeconomic status (SES). They are also often highly educated, have had access to tertiary education, and prefer this school because of bilingual provision as revealed to the first author by the administrators and the teachers. The bilingual program was initiated at the behest of the

school administrators in 2017, serving children aged 4–6 who are taught in groups of 12–20. The administrators pursue a generally non-intrusive approach to recruitment and a nurturing one to development/retention of teachers who choose this career path because there are few other pre-trained BE teachers available in this emerging context.

Beginning in 2017, Turkish speaking EFL and homeroom teachers ($N = 20$) received a sustained mentoring program by their teacher trainers, including the first author, starting with pre-teaching training (i.e., nine sessions for 27 hours), which is also in contrast to other pre-schools that provide BE. During the training sessions, the teachers were encouraged to take notes and reflect on new input. As follow-up, the trainers also conducted weekly 45-minute observations to provide the teachers with feedback for 9 months. This program has continued each year to the present and its content covers current issues on bilingualism and BE (e.g., definition, principles, and practice of translanguaging pedagogy), syllabus/materials/task design, team-teaching, and communicative/interactional teaching issues and strategies (see Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2020 for more details) The pairs also develop a joint syllabus that is to be later implemented collaboratively based on the complexity and familiarity of the concepts (e.g., concepts familiar from prior teaching or concrete ones such as food are taught in English first). Furthermore, the activities would be designed in an age-sensitive manner based on homeroom teachers' expertise, and language teachers try to add to them based on their knowledge of appropriate activities that could facilitate interaction.

In a typical class, pairs of teachers co-teach to foster L2 listening and interaction (e.g., through encouraging and facilitating children's translanguaging) alongside conceptual learning. They follow an equally distributed interactional and conceptual teaching scheme, where their designed activities/tasks are jointly taught in a largely pre-determined order. The language of instruction is English for EFL and Turkish for homeroom teachers with smooth, largely pre-planned transitions between the two languages.

Participants

In the present research, we rely on the narratives provided by one pair of homeroom and language teachers out of the larger participant pool of eight. We chose this pair because they had both relatively recently entered BE, so they were more likely to possess fresh memories of their first encounters with BE and their journeys within it (Elliott, 2005). This was to secure sufficient depth for the stories.

Additionally, we chose to report their case as, during analysis (see Section [Data Collection and Analysis](#)), we observed indications in their data that they had reconstructed their identity within BE. These were Ceyda and Türkan (pseudonyms), BA holders in preschool education and English language education, respectively. Ceyda started working in the BE program 1 year earlier than her colleague Türkan although they both possessed almost 4 years of prior teaching experience. They were both female teachers because this is commonplace in preschools in Turkey. Male teachers are infrequently employed for these teaching positions because female teachers are seen as better able to care for and educate young children (see Şahin & Sak, 2016). Thus, males include only 5%–7% of the preschool workforce (Ministry of National Education, 2021). We observed the ethical principles of research by informing the participants of the overall objectives of our study and assuring them of confidentiality of their shared data and anonymity.

Data Collection and Analysis

We collected our data set through self-recorded oral narratives and follow-up written questions responded to by each teacher as well as an online pair interview. We elicited all the data in Turkish (the participants' L1) for the purpose of easy, comprehensive, and accurate interactions. Initially, we designed a list of questions about participants' prior teaching experiences, entrance into BE, teaching and collaboration experiences within BE, and the influence of stakeholders (i.e., school administrators, parents). The questions followed a clear temporal sequence from the past to the imagined future (Barkhuizen et al., 2014) and we took care to avoid introducing any negative or positive value judgments into them. We piloted these questions with a teacher working in another bilingual preschool and revised them based on the received feedback (see [Appendix A](#)). Then, we sent the questions to each participant, with instructions asking the teachers to draw on them and self-record to recount their stories as an oral narrative (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). We encouraged the teachers both verbally and in the instructions to the self-recordings to flesh out their narratives with details about their experiences prior to entering BE and their training and practice within BE and reassured them that their storied accounts were of crucial importance to our study (see Barkhuizen, 2011). This was because teachers could have misgivings about researchers' collection of narratives as a legitimate goal of research, and they may be reluctant to engage in storytelling (Bahrami et al., 2022). As a result of our instructions and encouragement, the received narratives were rich

because they were detailed and story-like and contained coherent and authentic lived experiences of the teachers.

We conducted data analysis through coding and thematic analysis of collected narratives (i.e., analysis of narratives; Barkhuizen et al., 2014). We began the process immediately after receiving the first oral narratives, whose average length was around 30 minutes, embarking on an iterative process of data collection and analysis (Patton, 2015). Accordingly, after transcription of the recordings in Turkish and translation into English by the first author, the co-teaching pair read the original and the translated transcripts and provided confirmation of their accuracy. Each researcher then independently relied on a combination of two first-level coding methods, namely *open coding*, and *structural coding* (where brief descriptive clauses are used to code segments of data such as “exposure to training in BE”; Saldaña, 2015). This process continued by discussions between us on areas of disagreement and reaching consensus (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). The iterative process gradually revealed the areas that needed more focus for each teacher and underpinned the design of follow-up written questions which we sent back to each teacher (see Appendix B for sample questions). We also conducted an online joint interview with the pair (60 minutes) as a complementary measure to the self-recordings and the written follow-ups to probe the dynamics and the nuances of their collaboration more specifically. The interview questions follow the abovementioned considerations in design and piloting (see Appendix C), and we applied the same processes of first-level coding here. Next, we subjected the overall final codes to a second-level coding method known as *pattern coding* (where the first-level codes showing similarities are collapsed into broader categories such as “BE training as presenting new role”; Saldaña, 2015) and based on the resulting categories we derived six overarching themes shared by the teaching pair (see Appendix D). In case of disagreement, we used mutual discussions and reached a consensus in this final stage as well.

To restore the logical and temporal order usually missing from the original account provided by the teachers, we relied on restorying (Creswell & Poth, 2018). More specifically, we organized both the overarching themes and second-level categories in a chronological order (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Then, we used the themes as a general scaffold for each teacher’s narrative and the categories to help with restoring the plot and the chronology within the scaffold. For instance, the theme “BE training led to discovery of potential for transition to new BE role” and its categories such as “BE training as presenting new role” and “BE training as providing joint work” helped us with emplotting and restoring the temporal sequence of the stories (e.g., Polkinghorne, 1995) in terms of their broader structure and

their more specific dimensions. Furthermore, because of reliance on thematic analysis (Barkhuizen, 2011), we were able to combine the two narratives into one story. This enhanced the process dimension and critical comparability of these narratives as they had been produced by co-teachers who worked closely together. This overall analytic process helped us piece together teachers' journey of identity (re)construction. We also drew on and combined the themes to create titles for each section of the joint story. We sent the resulting story to the pair for feedback (i.e., member checking; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014), and it was confirmed as accurate. Finally, we drew on the tools of positioning theory, which helped us to identify the reflexive and interactive positioning acts embedded within the story as well as the relationality principle that helped us notice the mutually constructive identity work performed by the teachers.

Researcher Positionality

It must be acknowledged that, although in a non-evaluative fashion—that is by informing the teachers they will not be graded or assessed based on their performance in the course—the first author acted as teacher educator to the participants to help them develop their knowledge and initial experiences of BE practice. Although this may have influenced his interactions with the teachers and the data later, it provided us with an emic perspective. On the other hand, relying on the etic perspective of the other author and the ongoing discussions between the two strengthened what Saldaña and Omasta (2018) call “reflexive analysis,” continuously revealing the interplay between participant–researcher study as well as contributing to our continued engagement with our subjectivities as researchers. We carried this out by continued co-reflection and discussions, for instance, about the context (with details provided by the first author) and about language teacher identity to elucidate our personal or shared subjectivities in these regards. Our approach to the data and participants thus reflects narrative knowledging (Barkhuizen, 2011) because we and our teachers were engaged in mutual meaning-making through the co-construction of their experiences of identity development by telling, sharing, and retelling of stories.

FINDINGS

In the following parts, we present the restoried narrative of Ceyda and Türkan to address our research question which concerns how

peer collaboration could affect language and homeroom teachers' identity (re)construction in BE. Specifically, their story is embedded in a program initiated by school administrators, where the trainers and stakeholders created and circulated narrative discourses of BE in terms of the primacy of collaboration, bilingual lesson delivery, new content and pedagogical knowledge, role-specific identity positions, and affordances of BE. They also had the opportunity to practice collaboration during training. Actual BE practice accentuated these discourses and experiences, influencing teachers' gradual break away from their previous traditional teaching toward collaborative BE. This was accompanied by a gradual reconstruction of their identity based on the BE co-teacher role by reflexive positioning and being positioned through these discourses. A related development was the emergence of a new, relationally mediated form of identity between them based on this foundation, which was captured within metaphors and referred to resonances between them as parts of a single functioning unit.

BE Training and Discovery of the Potential for Transition to a New Role

When Ceyda and Türkan entered the BE school, the prospect of working in this new educational system with a co-teacher created many questions for them. Türkan was drawn to BE because “I wanted to go beyond my comfort zone, and I wondered what it would be like instructing with a co-teacher, using two languages” (self-recording henceforth SR). Yet Ceyda initially “kept wondering how we would collaborate and develop mutual understanding. It was a different system” (SR). Fortunately, before entering BE practice, the school gave them relevant training which provided answers to their questions. This training had some distinctive characteristics, firstly, because it assigned to them the new role of *BE co-teacher*, creating an alternative to their pre-BE role of solo, monolingual education (ME) teacher. Importantly, this new role positioned language teachers as also responsible for content and content teachers for language as a substitute for the more conventional compartmentalized division of labor between these teachers in BE (see Trent, 2010 for more discussion on BE teachers' conventional roles). Ceyda recounted:

I learned that, in BE, co-teachers in two languages direct the children to communicate while teaching them pre-school content [as well]. We were presented with the idea that even though we each represent one language; we should work closely together. We were told this required

a lot of planning and dividing the lesson to equally shared portions. This was a lesson that we were to both achieve. (SR).

Similarly, Türkan narrated:

When I was being introduced to BE, I thought about how it would be like instructing as co-teachers using two different languages. How we would be able to support development in two languages simultaneously. I realized that we both serve the same purpose in different languages. (SR).

The new role was thus embedded within the overarching narrative discourses of BE which positioned them as co-teachers who were supposed to complement each other's practice in two languages and they also set up for them a shared goal. Evidently, this positioning was constructed in relationally equal terms which the co-teachers were encouraged to adopt. Ceyda reflected further on these narratives and their influence on her understanding of her teacher identity:

In the training period, we learned about giving the children the chance to communicate and that the two languages are equally important in acquisition ... The system was built on activating children's interaction potential. Considerations such as abstractness of the topics to be taught or their familiarity were to influence our decision to whether present in Turkish or English. For example, since the concept healthy/unhealthy meals is encountered in everyday life, we could present this concept in English and conduct a related activity in Turkish. All these issues started to influence my stance as a teacher (written follow-up henceforth WF) ... [here] we could live many possibilities as teachers (interview).

Seemingly, the new pedagogical and content knowledge that was being communicated as part of the narrative discourses of BE had begun presenting possibilities for teachers' reflexive positioning. In other words, learning about teaching as a means of creating chances for communication/interaction and the possible contributions of a bilingual mode of instruction to it provided ingredients for gaining awareness of new positioning possibilities. Thus, before discovering that they can supersede a monolingual, sole teacher practice, they were limited in their ability to position themselves in an alternative BE way and attempt to reconstruct their teacher identity.

Opportunities for practicing joint work was another distinctive feature of their training. In this regard, Türkan narrated her and Ceyda's experience of co-developing a syllabus and relevant materials:

During [the training] period, we spent a great deal of time together and started to develop our BE syllabus and materials, discussed how we

could implement them, and negotiated our lesson delivery. Without this coordination, it would have been very difficult to teach in the actual classroom . . . We started to have many conversations about the bilingual system of teaching and processes like translanguaging which also helped us get to know each other . . . To keep designing joint lesson plans and materials we had to know each other in different ways. So one of the initial impactful experiences for me was grasping the meaning of being a team. (interview).

Clearly, this opportunity for practicing collaboration affected their view of their identity because it provided a space for them to begin bonding and understanding who they could become as team members. Thus, after a period of being exposed to the narrative discourses of collaborative BE, coupled with pre-course hands-on collaboration, the teachers began to engage in developing a new “stance” (Ceyda) and novel understandings of their role based on “being a team” (Türkan). These experiences created for Ceyda and Türkan the potential for transitioning to the BE co-teacher role and a preliminary awareness of new possible role-specific identity positions. This was so since, as mentioned, without a realization of alternative positioning possibilities, these teachers would have been very limited in their ability to envision themselves in a BE role and position themselves and their co-teacher accordingly.

BE Practice and Beginning the Transition to New Role

Entering actual BE practice provided these teachers with a venue for the real life enactment of the BE co-teacher role. As a result, they appeared to be gaining increasing awareness of and reflecting on the contrasts between their prior and new role and practice. Ceyda recounted:

Before I became a BE teacher, frankly, I was a single brain in the classroom. The whole class dominance belonged to me, [and] I did not think of Turkish as a very useful resource for teaching either. [However,] when my experience as a BE teacher started, at first, I had a hard time because of the habitual way of addressing the children as ‘my group’ and ‘my children’, which I realized I had given up later since, in BE, the class no longer belonged to me. As there were two teachers in the classroom, I [for the first time] had the opportunity to observe students and see that taking responsibility for their own learning helped them develop. I started to become student-oriented as a result. Also, because I needed to communicate with them in Turkish, just like Türkan communicated in English, I came to value Turkish as an instructional resource. (SR).

Türkan agreed by stating:

Before BE, I had to do everything and think about everything in the classroom. I did everything only in English. Although I see myself as open to innovations and new challenges, my previous teaching lacked innovation too: I used flash cards and [had] the students memorize words and only occasionally [had] them play games with the new words. [Yet] in BE I no longer worked alone and shared everything with my co-teacher. We now created learning spaces for the children in the classroom, gave them more responsibility, kept them interacting, and helped them discover. I came to value using two languages in the classroom, and I no longer treated the children with rigid rules because I adopted a more flexible stance. (SR).

These positive reflexive positionings by relying on BE role-specific identity positions (e.g., “student-oriented” teacher, innovator, BE teacher, interaction facilitator vs. authority, traditionalist, monolingual teacher, rigid teacher) were, in essence, based on Ceyda and Türkan’s identification with the narrative discourses they had been exposed to during their training and its concomitant BE teacher role. This, coupled with their favorable reference to their collaborative practices and, especially the replacement of first-person pronouns with the more inclusive *we* (see Davison, 2006) showed that, during BE practice, the transitioning of these teachers to their new role was indeed underway.

The teachers’ agentive identification with, as opposed to resistance toward, the BE narrative discourses, and the co-teacher role appeared to be the possible result of two factors. One was their reflections on and a developing belief about collaborative BE, in contrast to their prior practice, as being greatly beneficial for children’s learning. Ceyda narrated:

Here, we clearly saw children’s communicative progress. I think it is related to the way we were teaching in two languages. We started seeing incredible results in children, which were clearer and faster learning of the pre-school content, and then you couldn’t believe it when you heard it in Turkish-English mixtures. The BE system is a very effective system in terms of the development of children. This system clearly works. (SR).

Türkan also had a similar belief:

Back then [i.e., before BE] I was telling myself how much the children would have been able to learn if we could have spent more time with them, and this was confirmed with this new BE experience. With communication in two languages, we found that we energized them to be active in the classroom and communicate (WF) ... A bilingual mode of instruction is one of the key approaches for learners to acquire a

foreign language in classroom environment. I can't think of a better option. (SR).

This indicates that the bilingual system continued to position the teachers as students of teaching and observers of learning, instruction, and bilingual language use, which helped them further question their previously developed teacher role. Therefore, observing and reflecting on the success of BE practice contributed significantly to their belief in the efficacy of BE and the decision to continue positioning themselves as BE co-teachers, thereby resolving the role conflict they were facing, to a great extent.

A similar factor that contributed to the progression of their transitioning to the new role was the positive feedback from the stakeholders/significant others, which acted to reproduce and reinforce the BE narrative discourses in terms of the affordances of BE and the necessity of collaboration. Ceyda expressed that.

BE has been a rewarding experience and it is great to hear this also expressed by others. When we got feedback from the parents, they found us very harmonious, and they usually told us we were making a difference in their child's development. I think the school administrators like the relationship between us too. (SR).

Similarly, as Türkan related.

the positive evaluation of the other teachers who, when observing us together in and beyond classroom, characterized us as a great team as well as the trainers, administrators, and parents who often expressed that we were efficiently working together and liked the relationship between us showed us that we had developed a valuable and effective practice. (SR).

Therefore, the opportunity to enact the BE co-teacher role drove them toward actualizing the potential for professional self-discovery they first encountered during their training by beginning the transition from their older role. This occurred as BE practice kept accentuating the contrasts between their previous role as teachers and who they could become professionally. What gradually convinced them to progress substantially in their "transition ... to a new chapter in [their] professional career" (Türkan, SR) was their reflections and changing beliefs about BE practice and its affordances which were borne out as they taught and observed their co-teachers and success of the learners. Meanwhile, positive feedback from the stakeholders was also motivating their process of identity change. This indicates the intertwined nature of the teachers' hands-on BE experiences and contextual milieu with their positioning behavior. In other words, the narrative discourses of BE with

which Ceyda and Türkan positively identified during their identity reconstruction provided them with shared goals and a strong framing that encouraged them to view themselves as BE co-teachers (as opposed to language and content teachers). Their later observation of the success of collaborative BE in practice, accompanied by reinforcement of these discourses by significant others seemingly inclined them more toward positioning themselves and their co-teacher in BE terms.

Building on the BE Co-Teacher Role

Ceyda and Türkan were in the process of constructing a strong foundation for their teacher role in BE when they also began to build on and transcend this role. Particularly, this occurred because, by virtue of being a novel experience, BE co-teaching required a great amount of moral and practical support from the co-teacher and therefore the teachers' need for close and harmonious collaboration grew in strength. Türkan maintained that.

it was comforting to know that you have your teammate to work with. This [i.e., teamwork] made it easier for us to support each other. No one was under a heavy burden because it was clear what everyone would do. Working so closely every day created natural bonds between us. The BE program helped me learn to work together, distribute the workload, and embrace my new role as team player. (interview).

Ceyda agreed:

If you get along well with your partner, everything will go so well and nothing you do is hard. Sometimes I had difficulties, but it didn't worry me because I knew my partner would close my gap. So I didn't have any problems with sharing the same class and with authority sharing ... Türkan has had a lot of support for me on these issues. I personally think we are very successful partners within the class, and I think I have developed this new stance with Türkan. (interview).

Such "embracing" of a collaborative role-specific position (i.e., team player) and further "development of a new [collaborative] stance" with co-teacher can be juxtaposed to another significant indicator of their relational identity co-construction. This was their selfless interactive positioning of the other party as an essential component for successful collaborative practice (see Davison, 2006). Ceyda related that

Türkan is a practical person. She could move and adapt very flexibly. She could easily make changes to the program and reshape it very

quickly. I think our children are very good at English language development, and I can say that Türkan has had a big part in this... I think she was the best chance for me this year. (SR).

Similarly, Türkan recounted that

in the beginning of the course, when children had emotional problems, I was not able to comfort them easily because of the language barrier. Using Turkish, Ceyda would successfully calm them down. She was good at making them feel positive and happy even with her body movements and tone of voice. She is a great teacher for this age group. (SR).

In addition, the ability (Davison, 2006) and willingness (Peercy & Martin-Beltran, 2012) to solve conflicts between co-teachers without becoming threatened or confrontational is the mark of a very congruent collaboration. Both teachers referred to disagreements, yet this never became threatening for them or jeopardized their relationship. Ceyda maintained that

there were times when our ideas didn't fit. But we only respectfully commented on each other's views. This didn't bother me because we trust each other, and I believe in the end we are going to produce a better activity out of these disagreements. (interview)

Confirming this, Türkan mentioned that

we haven't argued at all but negotiated constantly to produce fine-tuned activities. For example, when I came up with an idea for an activity and my partner disagreed or had a better idea, she reformulated it in another way without fully rejecting my idea. She added to it and helped me see it from a different perspective. We have worked towards this goal without taking issues personally or prioritizing our individual interests. We therefore guide each other very nicely. (interview)

Developing such congruent collaboration and discovering the benefits and necessity of co-teacher support and even the co-teacher herself in BE eventually led these teachers to position each other in complementary ways and their team as a single functioning unit. Ceyda and Türkan both used metaphors to construct strong relational identity positions along these lines. "We are like a *married couple*" mentioned Ceyda, which likens their relationship to a domestic one. Complementing this, Türkan stated:

We created these [positions] ourselves over time. When I [taught] the English segments, I [didn't] treat the children very rigidly but in a flexible, *motherly* fashion. However, Ceyda is more like a *father* who secures the in-class discipline by communicating in Turkish as they could better understand it. (interview)

In traditional Turkish culture, mothers are supposed to be more flexible and tenderly and assume the role of homemakers while fathers are supposed to keep the in-house discipline, be strict, and provide for the family (see Bozođlan, 2015). The culmination of this relational positioning can be captured in Ceyda's statement:

I have collaborated in different settings before but working for such a close and common goal [gradually] led us to act as *one body*. Collaborating to run a bilingual program in the same classroom was not the same as collaborating as a colleague at the same school ... I am happy, enjoying our lessons more than ever since it is more collaborative and less monolingual than it was in the past. I [saw] that we do everything together at any moment; like *one brain in two bodies*. (interview)

Türkan complemented these points by stating:

Without Ceyda I would feel vulnerable and unprotected; I would feel naked and lack confidence and support. When something unexpected happened in the classroom, we got together right away, but when it is alone, it feels like *a limb is missing*. (interview)

The final metaphor indicates the perceived necessity of the co-teacher akin to a part of one's own body. Overall, these positionings the teachers engaged in stemmed from a shared goal and the new teacher role that had originally been introduced through the narrative discourses of BE and later enacted, a sense of moral duty (teaching the children successfully), and a right (e.g., the right to contribute the BE model; Davies & Harré, 1990) that they both internalized and worked toward, which brought them together. Thus, they engaged in concordant reflexive and interactive positioning acts that were not in conflict, and they became selflessly focused on the other party as time progressed. This congruence led to the emergence of a cluster of relational identity positions between them, which were captured through metaphors, helping them assign strongly positive characteristics to each other and define themselves in almost complete relationality to their co-teacher. We label these accumulated identity positions which became entrenched within their co-teaching relationship over time (i.e., a positional identity; Kayı-Aydar, 2019) as *dyadic identity*.

The Future

About her future as a teacher, Ceyda stated that "I would love to continue my career as a bilingual co-teacher. If I ever must leave my institution, I would like to work in a bilingual school again" (interview). In unison, Türkan shared her future plans with Ceyda:

I have had a fantastic year, and I would like to continue with a bilingual program. It would not be nice to return to the old ways after seeing such a successful program in practice. We are writing the first plans for the new year, and I am eager to make this year better with my experience from the last period. Our priority is to create a class in both languages where students are active and fluent. (interview)

Therefore, BE had acquired a key place in their future career plans which is an additional piece of evidence, suggesting the reconstruction of their teacher identity both personally and relationally. Taken together, alongside a more general process of transitioning from a solo, ME teacher role to the new BE co-teacher role, these teachers agentively “tailored [these] roles to [themselves]” (Türkan, SR) and developed a dyadic identity, which collectively indicate their teacher identity reconstruction.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, we investigated a pair of language and home-room teachers’ storied experiences of collaborative BE and discovered their identity transition to a new role (i.e., BE co-teacher). This occurred as the participating teachers actively tried to reorient themselves from the solo ME narrative discourses, previously defining their teacher roles to the new collaborative BE narrative which communicated to them a new role during training and was reproduced by the stakeholders during teaching. Thus, in contrast to prior research showing that negative discourses of marginalization and lack of resources weaken coherent teacher identity construction in BE (Varghese, 2006), introduction and reproduction of positive discourses, especially when aided by better socio-economic conditions of a school and teachers, could have the opposite effect. Teachers’ agentive identification with the new narratives and the concomitant role depended largely on their reflections on BE practice and their observations of its success (e.g., in terms of increasing reliance of the learners on translanguaging to express thoughts and meanings; see Pennington & Richards, 2016) in contrast to their prior practice. These factors were influential as they led to substantial changes in teachers’ beliefs about who they needed to become professionally. Such a finding generally reflects arguments as to how changes in teachers’ cognition could strongly influence changes in their identity (e.g., Barkhuizen, 2016). Our overall findings are also in line with previous research, showing that real change in teacher identity is more likely to occur after experiencing actual teaching because it could lead to, as in our case,

tangible improvements in instructional skills, (co-)development of expertise, and a sustained experience of learning in these areas (e.g., Kanno & Stuart, 2011).

One new finding, on the other hand, was that the teachers' stories also revealed a parallel process of identity co-construction, which built on the foundation of the BE co-teacher role. This foundation provided the teachers with a framing or vision of BE as an essentially collaborative process and themselves as co-teachers. Such visions, as research shows, are a decisive factor in creating the highest levels of teacher cooperation (Peercy & Martin-Beltran, 2012) and crucial for a critical awareness of the connection between one's identity and pedagogy (Zheng, 2017). Access to this foundation, coupled with mutual support in a relatively uncharted area and a developing sense of appreciation for the necessity of their co-teacher were thus potent catalysts for constructing equal relational positions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). These positions were constructed in the stories in the form of "congruent metaphors" (e.g., married couple, parents), which have been shown to denote highly successful levels of teacher partnership (Davison, 2006, p. 465). According to positioning theory, metaphors play a significant role in affecting one's perceptions based on the identity position(s) they have taken up as their own (Davies & Harré, 1990). As a result, the teachers had, over time, come to view themselves as part of a single functioning unit, co-teaching for the same cause: children's development of bilingualism/content knowledge. Thus, in congruence with the definition of positional identities as built on accumulation of more fleeting identity positions (Kayı-Aydar, 2019), Ceyda and Türkan used the mentioned emergent relational identity positions for interactive positioning which, over time, clustered together (see also Søreide, 2006) to form an interpersonally achieved type of positional identity in their co-teaching relationship or a dyadic identity. Therefore, in contrast to previous research revealing a divided sense of teacher identity (Tan, 2011) and a lower status for language teachers (Trent, 2010), we found a shared sense of identity because the pair came to consider themselves as BE teachers rather than as strictly a language or content teacher. This could be regarded as evidence of relational identity construction, which was also evident in Kayı-Aydar and Green-Eneix (2019), although in that study the teacher combined the cultural and linguistic repertoires of himself and the marginalized, lower SES students to construct relational identities that elevated their perceived roles and status.

A point worth mentioning is although formation of a dyadic identity may be possible in ordinary co-teaching, it was greatly facilitated by the affordances of BE, especially in the way it was implemented in this context, with continued educator and stakeholder support.

Zheng's (2017) research has also shown that if teachers experience contextual support, they are more likely to reconstruct their identity. Moreover, practicing cooperation through co-development of syllabi and materials and, later, observing each other in the classroom and discussing/sharing opinions, and almost seamlessly combining differing areas of expertise allowed for deeper teacher collaboration (Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015) and probably better relational dynamics. Finally, transition to a BE co-teacher role, especially as it involved a dyadic component, led to formation of "vivid" imagined futures as BE teachers. This finding provides the intriguing possibility of relating dyadic identity to discussions of how possible selves could bring about professional development for teachers (Hiver, 2013). This is because a strong dyadic identity could prevent teachers from looking backward and keep their perspectives on future goals as only vivid future selves might have sufficient motivating power to lead to change (Kubanyiova, 2012).

Considering these findings, we incorporate into the social dimensions of our adopted identity framework an interpersonal/relational dimension where dyadic identity emerged. This perspective shares some assumptions with post-structural/interactionist identity approaches (e.g., Varghese et al., 2005) as the teachers juggled multiple identity positions, were in constant interaction with each other and the stakeholders, and were experiencing identity change. Yet, as Reeves (2018) maintains, identity (positions) could have variable degrees of stability and, in line with this view, we found both stability and change in teachers' process of identity reconstruction. Both teachers stated their belief about their transition to BE as a journey which led to new ways of being and working and expressed disenchantment with their previous role. They also explicitly expressed no interest in returning to this role and related practices. Thus, as a result of this transitioning, the role of a BE co-teacher had become seemingly well established within their teacher identity (see Kanno & Stuart, 2011 for an empirical example of well-established teacher role transition). Dyadic identity, on the other hand, should be considered much more variable because even though the need for being and having a co-teacher was strongly emphasized in the case of these teachers, teachers in general would need to renegotiate and reconstruct it with a new partner. Moreover, it is not guaranteed that every co-teaching experience would lead to such an emergent, relationally mediated positional identity, especially in the absence of discourses which frame co-teaching as a collaborative achievement and introduce shared goals for teachers as well as encouragement and feedback by outside parties.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Our analysis led to the observation that the participating teachers gradually transitioned to the BE co-teacher role and developed a dyadic identity. As Meijer (2017) maintains, studies on teacher identity rarely ask the question “what type of colleague are you becoming?” (p. 216). Yet, our study addressed this question by relying on the interpersonal dimension and dyadic identity. Our findings also offer a critical practical implication. They indicate that when supportive structures are in place in BE programs to provide an educational system that encourages collaboration (through joint planning, delivery, practice), assigns equal teacher roles as opposed to the subordination of one to the other (Davison, 2006), and effectively combines differing areas of professional expertise (Peercy & Martin-Beltran, 2012), teachers are more likely to reconstruct their professional identities without conflicts which have been documented in previous research (see Bahrami, Hosseini, & Atai, 2019; see Dale, Oostdam, & Verspoor, 2017 for a review). Particularly, this was evidenced in our study by their transitioning to a new role and then co-constructing a dyadic identity on this foundation. Therefore, a BE program which may position teachers as BE co-teachers rather than language or content specialists could lead to the legitimization of their respective roles and complementary combination of their areas of expertise.

Nevertheless, sustained external support is not usually available in other bilingual schools in Turkey (Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2020) or other countries (Tan, 2011; Varghese et al., 2005) because of financial shortages, lack of access to mentoring resources, or lower status of bilingual programs. Therefore, future research is needed to explore the dynamics of teacher identity in BE within un/underexplored contexts and examine the perspectives of stakeholders in BE programs such as administrators and parents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful to our anonymous participants who provided continuous support during data collection and the member-checking process. We deeply appreciate the critical insights and comments of the editorial team of the journal as well as the meticulous review of the reviewers.

FUNDING STATEMENT

Our research received no grant from any funding agency.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

No conflict of interests to disclose.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article:

Appendix S1 Supporting Information