# *Transnational TESOL Practitioners' Identity Tensions: A Collaborative Autoethnography*

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## Abstract

In this paper, we, as three transnational TESOL practitioners (TTP), engage in a collaborative autoethnography (CAE) to examine our professional identity tensions. Theoretically, we follow the premise that the tensions we experience in our professional life can be productive experiences for identity-oriented reflection and, as we work toward resolving these tensions, we can explore and negotiate new dimensions of our identities. Methodologically, we explore the affordances of CAE in combining internal and community dialogues to make sense of our identities, which are situated at the nexus of the personal and the cultural. Each one of us describes and analyzes one major tension that has been part of our professional identity negotiation as TESOL practitioners in the US. Addressing our research question, we conceptually argued that tensions are inevitable in our identity work and found that border-crossing and in-betweenness predominantly characterized our identities as TTPs. We cross borders and carve out in-between spaces, identities, and voices for ourselves in our professional lives.
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# INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, the field of TESOL has been advancing with the contributions of such conceptual shifts as narrative, multilingual, social, and critical turns. In concert with these turns, TESOL practitioners have started engaging in self-narratives, memoirs, autoethnographies, and critical storytelling to explore issues in English language education through their own stories, narratives, and analytical voices (e.g., Canagarajah, 2012; Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006; Lin et al., 2004; Pentón Herrera & Trinh, 2021; Scholars, 2021; Yazan, Canagarajah, & Jain, 2021). The flourishing number of such methodological choices reflect the interest in opening up new exploratory spaces to make "the personal political" (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 765) and attend to critical issues in language education, particularly vis-à-vis race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and nationality. Amongst these methodological choices, autoethnography, in particular, has afforded language practitioners the lens to address the intricate relationship between 'the self' and 'the cultures/discourses' when narrating and analyzing their storied experience. Utilizing this lens, TESOL autoethnographers have so far examined teacher identity development (Canagarajah, 2012), teacher educator identity (Yazan, 2019a) and agency (Banegas & Gerlach, 2021), mental and emotional well-being (Pentón Herrera, Trinh, & Gómez Portillo, 2021), intercultural communication (Stanley, 2017), and transnational experiences (Solano-Campos, 2014). Building upon this line of autoethnographies, we present a collaborative autoethnography (CAE) in which we explore our experiences of identity tensions as transnational TESOL practitioners (TTPs).

Autoethnography emerged in the field of anthropology as part of ethnographic tradition three decades ago and has been an established research method that follows a qualitative paradigm in social sciences research (see for the history of autoethnography: Gannon, 2017; Hughes, Pennington, & Makris, 2012). It has been adopted and recognized in language education research since the early 2000s, but still in a nascent status with very low rates of publications in top-tier academic journals (Starfield, 2019) and with recent monographs (Choi, 2017; Stanley, 2017) and edited volumes in the last 5 years (Borjian, 2017; Yazan et al., 2021). Acknowledging the divergence in the conceptualization of autoethnography, we follow Chang's (2008) "triadic balance" amongst the parts of "auto," "ethno," and "graph" which requires autoethnography to "be ethnographic in its methodological orientation, cultural in its interpretive orientation, and autobiographical in its content orientation" (p. 48). Carried out collectively, CAE pursues a similar goal in a multi-researcher design with distinct "strengths of

self-reflexivity[1] associated with autobiography, cultural interpretation associated with ethnography, and multi-subjectivity associated with collaboration" (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013, p. 17).

We chose to use autoethnography because of its critical methodological affordances to (a) "break through the dominant representations of professional practice, creating new knowledges" (Denshire, 2014, p. 838) and (b) explore the complex relationship between identity, emotions, agency, and investment in our professional lives as TTPs (see Barkhuizen, 2017; De Costa, Rawal, & Li, 2018; Kayi-Aydar, Gao, Miller, Varghese, & Vitanova, 2019; Martínez Agudo, 2018). Relying on the methodologists of autoethnography (e.g., Gannon, 2017; Holman Jones, 2005; Hughes et al., 2012; Spry, 2011), we argue that autoethnography offers critical research methods to destabilize and decolonize the scholarly knowledge generation and confront "epistemological racism" (Kubota, 2020). It contributes to "a corrective movement against colonizing ethnographic practices that erased the subjectivity of the researcher while granting him or her absolute authority for representing 'the other' of the research" (Gannon, 2006, p. 475). Autoethnography reframes "silence as a form of agency" and positions "local knowledge as the heart of epistemology and ontology" in order to "break the colonizing and encrypted code of what counts as knowledge" (Spry, 2011, p. 500). Autoethnographers assert their agency as researchers and authors to narrate and analyze their *own* lived experiences in their *own* voice without allowing others to represent them (Canagarajah, 2012).

We situate our CAE at the juncture of scholarly conversations on teacher (educator) identity (Barkhuizen, 2021) and transnational communities, individuals, and spaces (Duff, 2015; Jain, Yazan, & Canagarajah, 2021). We identify ourselves as TESOL practitioners who have crossed the national borders physically and ideologically, maintain relationships in multiple countries, languages, and cultures, and engage in transnational spaces as part of our personal and professional lives. We position ourselves as practitioners to encompass our identities of language teacher, teacher educator, researcher, and administrator that we variably enact in settings of K-12, adult education, and higher education. We follow the premise that the tensions we experience in our professional life can be productive experiences for identity-oriented reflection, and we can explore and negotiate new dimensions of our identity as we work toward resolving these tensions

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[1] Self-reflexivity refers to autoethnographers' dynamic, evolving critical consciousness which involves recognition and interrogation of complex relationships between the self, others, and the culture as they analyze own autobiographical data to capture their sociocultural situatedness and write this analysis up to lead the reader to engage in critical reflexivity (see Gannon, 2017; Hughes et al., 2012; Spry, 2001).

(Canagarajah, 2012; Menard-Warwick, 2017). Because we cross, span, and traverse nation-state borders through our transnational experiences in in-between spaces, we are more likely to grapple with identity tensions. Therefore, to better grasp our ongoing, fluid, and multifaceted identity work, we center this CAE on our tensions as TTPs. More specifically, we address the following research question: *How do we, TTPs, navigate and negotiate tensions as we construct our professional identities?*

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Theoretically, our study relies upon the earlier scholarship on TTPs, language teacher identity, and identity tensions. Below we discuss the relevant theorizations in these three sub-strands of research.

### Transnational TESOL Practitioners

The flow of people, information, ideas, and discourses across borders has been accelerated by technological advances and the displacement of people due to civil unrest and wars. Although border-crossing has led to connecting more people across the world and complexifying human interaction and multilingualism, this transnational flow has also posed unprecedented challenges in virtually all areas of practice and research. Education, and particularly language education, is one of those areas which is expected to reimagine its practices to address the needs of populations who are crossing borders physically or virtually (Duff, 2015; Warriner, 2007). Transnational relations and spaces have always been an important component in TESOL as English is a transnational language, having crossed borders for centuries. However, two developments have changed TESOL as the association, the field, and the practice, due to human mobility and digital communication. First, there is an increasing number of transnational practitioners and learners crossing linguistic, cultural, ideological, geographical, and political borders, and their unique positionality problematizes "bounded, static, and territorialized constructs and norms" regarding language, culture, community, and nation (Canagarajah, 2018, p. 41). These transnational practitioners and learners tend to demonstrate hybrid and complex language use, culture, identity, practice, and voice as they construct and engage in social spaces (physical or virtual) that are deterritorialized and liminal (Canagarajah, 2018). Second, conceptually, more research uses transnational lenses to grasp the complexity of these border-crossers' experiences and identities (Anzaldúa, 1987;

Duff, 2015; Yazan et al., 2021), which are located, negotiated, and constructed in transnational spaces (Canagarajah, 2018).

In this CAE, we identify as TTPs who have been engaged in relationships and affiliations that transcend the nation-state borders and ideologies. Our professional practice and identities are situated within transnational spaces, which are characterized by liminality and "sociocultural in-betweenness" (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 3). We view ourselves as border-crossers who traverse in liminal spaces. On the one hand, we feel free from the boundedness of restrictive norms and ideologies that patrol the borders and define the identity positions for the self and the other. On the other hand, we are cognizant that crossing borders involves intense identity work, which requires considerable emotional labor. We stand at a vantage point to destabilize the static constructs that define our professional practice and ourselves as practitioners, but we are in search of new, fluid constructs that afford us the conceptual power and flexibility to negotiate our identities. Emerging from this search, this CAE is both a space and a snapshot of our ongoing identity work as transnational practitioners, which includes navigating sociocultural in-betweenness and grappling with identity tensions.

## Professional Identity

The established research on identities of language teachers (De Costa & Norton, 2017; Lindahl & Yazan, 2019; Varghese, Motha, Park, Reeves, & Trent, 2016), teacher educators (Barkhuizen, 2021), and researchers (Norton & Early, 2011) has provided insights into the intricate relationship between identities, learning to teach/research, and practice as well as how emotions, agency, and investment influence this relationship (Barkhuizen, 2017; De Costa et al., 2018; Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019; Martínez Agudo, 2018). This research has used identity as a conceptual lens to capture the complexities involved in the preparation, growth, and continuous development of teachers, teacher educators, and researchers (Rudolph, Selvi, & Yazan, 2020). Therefore, we acknowledge that the process of professional learning and becoming is not the sole acquisition of a certain set of essential professional knowledge and skills. Involving contradictions, dilemmas, tensions, and corresponding emotions, this process is a complex identity negotiation, construction, and enactment in which TESOL practitioners assert agency toward their aspired identities and navigate the dominant sociocultural discourses. To capture this complexity, we weave Varghese's critically oriented theorization of discursive identity construction (Varghese et al., 2016) with Olsen's (2016) definition of teacher identity. Olsen defines teacher identity as:

the collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems (each itself a fluid influence and all together an ever-changing construct) that become intertwined inside the flow of activity as a teacher simultaneously reacts to and negotiates given contexts and human relationships at given moments. (p. 139)

We believe Olsen's definition is useful to theorize the identities of TESOL practitioners in general. His focus on "immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems" (p. 139) as integral in identity development is particularly significant for our CAE because we explore the interplay between our identities and the surrounding ideologies as part of our border-crossing experience. We present our current interpretations of prior experiences to make sense of the ways we socially position ourselves and are positioned by others within bordered meaning systems. Also, our CAE analyzes our transnational identity by unpacking our responses to and negotiations of "given contexts and human relationships" (p. 139) in our professional lives.

Additionally, we rely on Varghese's understanding of teacher identity development which complements Olsen's definition. She theorizes teacher identity as "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" (Varghese et al., 2016, p. 546). Her theorization helps us examine our identity negotiation, which involves grappling with those hierarchical categories and processes within and across communities whose borders are ideologically defined and patrolled. We unpack our relationship with these borders, which is fraught with tensions. As we make sense of our professional legitimacy, privilege/marginalization, and vulnerabilities as TTPs, we navigate the tensions that emerge at the personal-professional nexus. This navigation of identity tensions is a prominent part of our identity work.

## Tensions and Professional Identity Work

Tensions are an inevitable part of professional decision-making, practice, reflection, and growth, driven by ongoing attempts to reconcile multiple, often conflicting "voices" in identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Professional identity development involves navigating, negotiating, and trying to resolve or relieve tensions as practitioners

encounter ideologies that circulate in sociocultural and professional discourses. Tensions challenge practitioners' feelings, beliefs, values, and priorities about learning, teaching, and teacher education (Pillen, Den Brok, & Beijaard, 2013). Research on teacher (educator) identity has attended to the questions of what tensions teachers grapple with, how they work toward resolving them, and how tensions have the potential to be disruptive or productive (Alsup, 2006; Berry, 2007; Pillen et al., 2013). Scholars define identity tension as an internal struggle between professional/social expectations and personal beliefs and aspirations (Pillen et al., 2013) as practitioners negotiate their identities in relation to competing and conflicting ideologies (Alsup, 2006). Situated at the nexus of emotions and identity, the concept of tension can "capture the feelings of internal turmoil" practitioners experience in professional learning as they are "pulled in different directions by competing concerns," and the challenges they wrestle with "in learning to recognize and manage these opposing forces" (Berry, 2007, p. 32). Therefore, identity tensions could be both disruptive and productive— they are emotionally draining, part of everyday professional practice, and experienced variably by practitioners. Not being able to relieve identity tensions may propel practitioners to leave the profession. On the other hand, as practitioners engage in a reflective process to relieve identity tensions, they can open up, explore, and road-test new dimensions of identity.

In our CAE, we analyze our identity tensions through a critical, collaborative, and reflective writing process. Because of our experience traversing liminal transnational spaces, we faced identity tensions as we crossed borders, pushed back at essentializing categories, and negotiated identities in relation to conflicting ideologies that patrolled these borders. We follow Canagarajah's (2012) argument that tensions may not be entirely resolved in one's professional career, and explicit focus on identity tensions "can lead to forms of negotiation that generate critical insights and in-between identities" (p. 261). By demonstrating individual forms of such negotiation of our identities as border crossers, our CAE aims to contribute critical insights into what it means to be TTPs.

## METHODS: COLLABORATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

We used CAE as our methods to narrate and analyze our stories through internal and community dialogues, which are "self-focused, researcher-visible, context-conscious, and critically dialogic" (Chang et al., 2013, pp. 22–23). We aimed to accomplish "self-reflexivity associated with autobiography, cultural interpretation associated with

ethnography, and multi-subjectivity associated with collaboration" (p. 17). CAE allowed us to collectively explore the identity tensions we experience as TTPs in our respective contexts. Through deep individual reflection and group reflective dialogues, CAE helped us build a relationship of support, a community of practice,[2] and a deeper understanding of ourselves and each other. In conducting this collaborative autoethnographic inquiry (from June 2019 to December, 2021), we initially followed Chang et al.'s (2013) five steps in undertaking CAE: (a) formed a team, (b) decided research focus, (c) selected a collaborative model, (d) defined roles and boundaries, and (e) discussed ethical principles.

*First, we formed a research team.* Our team came together with Doaa's leadership and an invitation to a dialogue presentation for the 2020 TESOL International Convention on the multifaceted nature of language teacher professional identities. As we chose to move our presentation to the 2021 Convention, we decided to meet regularly in the meantime to work on a collective paper and we scheduled virtual meetings to formally continue the dialogue amongst the three of us. Initially, we scheduled bi-weekly meetings then, as we progressed in our project, we moved to monthly meetings and eventually communicated via emails and messages. Throughout this process, we used a Google folder that Doaa created to keep our meeting notes, maintain our collaboration asynchronously, and store the recordings of our synchronous conversations (five virtual meetings recorded, each about 90 minutes). *Second, we decided on a research focus.* The dialog presentation proposal was about our professional identities as TESOL practitioners, and we were originally planning to model reflecting on our identities and engage the audience in a conversation about the intricate relationship between their identities, teacher learning, and teaching practice. When we began to work on the paper, we started discussing CAE as a potential methodology with its affordances to explore the interplay between the personal and the cultural through community dialogue. We read methodological literature on CAE first (e.g., Chang et al., 2013) and then sample studies that used solo and collaborative autoethnography (e.g., Canagarajah, 2012; Hernandez, Ngunjiri, & Chang, 2015; Roegman, Reagan, Goodwin, Lee, & Vernikoff, 2020; Solano-Campos, 2014). In our meetings, we made sure we had a common understanding of CAE's procedures and discussed how we could follow them to collaboratively explore our professional identities by narrating and analyzing our stories.

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[2] Our use of "community of practice" is theoretically informed by Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal work, but here we mean a small-scale community of practitioners who support each other professionally and otherwise, work collectively toward a goal, and engage in professional learning and identity work through regular interactions.

As we talked about our trajectories of learning and teaching languages and our border-crossing experiences between our "home" countries and the US, transnationalism emerged as an important dimension of our identities. This identification directed us to the literature on transnational identities in language education (e.g., Duff, 2015) and made us realize once again that the personal and professional dimensions of our identities are very much intertwined and almost impossible to tease out for analysis. We then decided to write a summary of our educational and professional trajectory by focusing on experiences of language learning, teaching, and teacher education. We read each other's stories on Google documents and asked questions by using the 'comments' feature, which led us to engage in more collective critical reflections on our identity work. In these stories, we were "chronicling the past" with our current ethnographic lenses and creating an "autobiographical timeline" which is an essential component of "collecting personal memory data" (Chang, 2008, pp. 71–88). Moving forward, we needed to narrow our focus down to the data that we could rely on to explore our identities. We went back to our stories to select critical incidents that were significant identity influencing experiences for us. Doing this re-read, we also added more to our stories.

At this point, we began experiencing challenges common to qualitative research process. We were not sure about how to proceed with the data we had generated. We had our narratives and we needed an analysis strategy. Our conversations and further reading took us back to Chang (2008) who shares a caution about data analysis that "no strategy will bring about a quick and easy result in autoethnography" (p. 125). We needed to shift "our attention back and forth between self and others, the personal and the social context" (p. 125), so we generated analytical questions to approach our data (e.g., How do sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts define and confine who you can/should be and how you can/should think and act as a TESOL teacher?) (see Yazan, 2019b for a list of similar questions). Answering those questions, we kept writing more about experiences as transnational professionals in TESOL, and this writing involved intertwined processes of data generation and analysis. Reading each other's narrative accounts and analyses, we had an online meeting in which we summed up in the following list:

Patterns across our accounts:

1. We are transnationals, border-crossers.
2. We create/carve in-between spaces (third space, if you will) within which we operate as professionals.
3. Thereby, we tend to defy ideological norms and standards.

4. Border-crossing and being in in-between spaces generate tensions which we need to navigate and negotiate.
5. It involves/requires emotional labor.
6. This navigation is an important component in our professional life.
7. We can assert agency in our professional identity work by trying to understand how we negotiate these tensions.

One aspect in our stories that struck us was the tensions we have been grappling with as transnational practitioners who are seeking legitimacy and membership in the US context while maintaining relationships with our 'home' country context. This focus on tensions emerged as we engaged in a dialog in which we brought lived experiences into conversation.

As we read earlier research on tensions and identity (reviewed above), we crafted this research question: *How do we, TTPs, navigate and negotiate tensions as we construct our professional identities?* To address this question, we each went back to our stories and reflected on recent experiences to describe the tensions in our professional life. In the following two meetings, we shared our tensions and asked each other questions to analyze those tensions in relation to our professional identity. Then, in the interest of space in a journal article and keeping our study focused, we chose one major identity tension from the ones we discussed in our earlier dialogs. We had a conversation to ensure that the chosen tension is the most relevant one to our current identities as TTPs. We later wrote a narration and analysis of this tension with the related critical incidents. What we did in this writing was similar to Davies and Kinloch's (2000) critical incident analysis and our focus was on the examination of past experiences to make sense of current and imagined identities. We attended to these questions: *What is the tension? When and how has it emerged? What particular experiences best represent this tension?* The writing process was iterative; that is, each one of us read and commented on each other's tension at least twice, and each iteration resulted in revisions in the selection of illustrative experiences and the discussion of the identity tension. We also asked each other's support in understanding our own tensions and discussing them as clearly as we can in our analyses. In our autoethnographic writing process, we kept in mind Spry's (2001) argument for "convincing I" in ethnography: "good autoethnography is not simply a confessional tale of self-renewal; it is a provocative weave of story and theory" (p. 713).

*Third, we selected a collaborative model for our team.* Our team decided to collaborate fully and concurrently at all stages of the CAE project. We each contributed our autobiographical data including our

experiences of learning and teaching languages as well as teaching teacher candidates. We met virtually at scheduled times to discuss our progress, share our thoughts and reflections about our stories, and ask questions. Our virtual meetings also extended to data analysis, interpretation, and writing. We recorded our meetings as we viewed them to be source of data, to which we went back during the data analysis and writing. *Fourth, we spent time defining roles and setting boundaries.* We approached the discussion about defining roles and setting boundaries by talking about our communication styles, approaches to work, and preferences in taking on the lead in different roles. We shared a common interest in the topic, a desire to explore it methodologically, and a similar approach to transnational experiences. *Fifth, we discussed relevant ethical principles.* We discussed ethical concerns at the beginning and again when any other concerns arose. We considered relational ethics as they pertain to protecting the privacy of people implicated in our stories, whether they were portrayed positively or negatively, as the study progressed. Below we provide brief autobiographical information and then present our identity tension and discuss (a) how we navigate that tension in our professional lives and (b) how we negotiate our identities in relation to that tension.

Before moving forward, we would like to clarify that the parallel, sequential, and separate presentation of the analyses of our tensions is for organizational purposes, following the "analytical-interpretive writing" tradition (Chang et al., 2013, pp. 127–128). It does not imply discrete, isolated analysis that is uninfluenced by our longitudinal collaborative interaction, exchange, and interrogation. The analyses presented below are the outcome of a collective analytical process. They reflect our learning from the collaborative critical dialogue (through synchronous meetings and asynchronous comments and provocations in Google Documents) in which we challenged each other's thinking about the relationship between 'the self,' 'others,' and 'the culture' to make our personal stories political (Holman Jones, 2005).

## FINDINGS

### Introducing Ourselves
**Bedrettin.** "Bübbüyük değil, büsbüyük" [It's NOT 'bübbüyük'; it is 'büsbüyük] was the earliest correction that I remember my father suggesting in my Turkish. I had not started primary school yet, which would be my first introduction to literacy and schooling. I remember the frustration; why did "bübbüyük" not work? My friends would get it. Later on, in middle school, I was conscious when I received explicit

messages from my teachers about the 'correct' use of Turkish. One recurrent message[3] stuck with me and, even at that time, I could feel it was contentious: use 'pure' Turkish words, NOT the loans from Persian and Arabic, which was the Ottoman 'heritage.' *We* needed to repudiate anything and everything Ottoman to become the Republic of Turkey. This message resonated with the language reform implemented in Turkey's early years (the 1920s and 1930s) as a nation-state. The same message prevailed in my high school classes, too, especially in courses like Turkish Language, Literature, and Linguistics. I clearly felt the relationship between ideology and language back then, even identity: speak 'pure' Turkish to be a 'true' Turkish.

I grew up in a village of 1,000 people in Northwestern Turkey, speaking Turkish, which is the country's majority language, but I remember hearing Greek and Balkan Romani languages and being intrigued by them as a child. It was a multilingual context with the dominance of Turkish that has been marginalizing the minority languages in Turkey through formal language policy. I held the privilege of being a speaker of the dominant language. I became more aware of the linguistic inequity later in college, as many higher education institutions in Turkey served a huge variety of domestic and international students. I was not allowed to speak Turkish in English medium courses in college, which led me to empathize with the speakers of minoritized languages. I also heard emotional stories from college and dormitory friends whose first language was Kurdish or Arabic but had to learn Turkish in school with no support. These feelings and experiences have been interwoven into my identity as an English speaker, which became more prominent in the teacher education program in college and even more when I started teaching English. However, crossing the nation-state borders for the first time and moving to the US for my Ph.D. in 2009 was the start of a journey in which I engaged in more intense identity work, i.e., ongoing negotiation of identities as a language user, international student, emergent educational researcher, and teacher educator.

**Luis.** "Pi ppp-pi," I remember repeating these sounds in both confusion and frustration while I called my dad. At that time, I was 5 or 6 years of age, and I had difficulties with speech and with producing specific sounds. For example, instead of calling my dad "papá" (in Spanish), I would often stutter "pi ppp-pi" because the sound "pa" was particularly difficult for me. I do not recall many memories from those

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[3] Reading about this message in my bio, Luis asked me to discuss why this ideologically laden message was important for my early language identity, so the rest of this paragraph is my response to his suggestion.

early years back in Cuba when I was struggling with speech, but I do remember the complex emotions resulting from my stuttering. I felt frustrated and confused because I could not easily connect my thoughts with spoken words. These feelings would stay with me through adolescence, where my speech improved significantly, but my voice became noticeably high-pitch.

At the age of 16, I migrated to the US, where I graduated high school and joined the US Marine Corps. After honorably completing my military service, I returned to the civilian world and decided to pursue higher education. Eventually, I became a language teacher of both English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and Spanish and, in 2018, I earned my doctoral degree. While serving in the military and pursuing higher education, I began to acquire techniques to help me mimic adequate speech in English and lower the pitch of my voice. I acquired these techniques because, from experience, I have learned that anything but *adequate* speech and pitch reveals vulnerabilities, which affect how others position me and how I position myself. As a language teacher, I am conscious of how speech, fluency, and pitch affect how my students position me, and I do everything in my power to keep my speech in check. However, at times, I do make 'mistakes.'

Every now and then, I catch myself unconsciously closing my eyes while speaking as a coping mechanism to deal with stuttering; this behavior increases in frequency when I am nervous. When speaking English, in particular, at times I notice how my brain is multitasking with speaking and listening in a second language; correctly conveying my message in the target language; ensuring my spoken sentences are grammatically correct; monitoring my stuttering; all while keeping the pitch of my voice, speech, and fluency at adequate levels. This strenuous brain multitasking sometimes leads to 'incorrect' pronunciations, grammatical 'mistakes,' and alternating between languages, which reflects my multilingual experience. Depending on the days, speaking in English—and even in Spanish, my first language—could become a monumental task to accomplish.

**Doaa.** I learned English as a 'foreign' language in middle school for 3 years, followed by another 3 years in high school. The language requirement in Egypt also included an additional foreign language in high school. In my case, it was French. At first, I struggled with learning English and felt lost in class. My dad's friend, who had a passion for teaching English, tutored me along with two other kids. His instructional approach focused on both structure and meaning. As we had ample time to practice the language, the progress we made at this small group transferred to my experience and built my confidence in

class. Although I loved learning French and English equally in high school, I favored English. I would watch all the TV shows in foreign languages, sometimes, read aloud to hear myself speak in a foreign language, and volunteer to help my classmates studying for English exams. That was when I developed an interest in teaching English, which later became my career.

Standardized test scores (university entrance exam, similar to SAT in the US) qualified me to join the School of Education in Alexandria University, where I received my B.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The courses focused on teaching methods, linguistics and phonology, English grammar, educational psychology, and assessment. We also had courses in drama, fiction, and poetry. I remember analyzing literary works by Shakespeare, Dickens, Austen, among others. English was the language of instruction in all English major courses, which was a change from middle and high school classes where English was taught as a subject.

After graduation, I taught English in public schools for about 8 years. One major change I experienced was the shift from 'British' English, which I was taught as a student in middle and high school, to 'American' English, as a teacher. I also taught in a language school where English was the language of instruction. I have always been aware of how growing up in a small town influenced my chances of exploring new career options and experiences. However, learning English opened doors that otherwise would have remained closed. Also, it changed my worldviews and outlook. Learning languages came easy to me after initial struggles and provided me with opportunities to travel to the US as a teacher in professional development programs with the Egyptian Ministry of Education and the Fulbright.[4] The influence of learning another language continued with me when I moved to the US for graduate studies, and it became my career in higher education.

## Exploring Tensions

**Bedrettin: navigating contexts as a transnational TESOL teacher educator.** When I decided to move to the US to pursue my doctoral studies at the University of Maryland (UMD) in 2009, I was in the first year of my Ph.D. program in English literature at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, Turkey, and had been

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[4] "Led by the United States government in partnership with more than 160 countries worldwide, the Fulbright Program offers international educational and cultural exchange programs for passionate and accomplished students, scholars, artists, teachers, and professionals of all backgrounds to study, teach, or pursue important research and professional projects" (Online, n.d., https://eca.state.gov/fulbright)

teaching English at an intensive English program of a university in the outskirts of the same city for about 5 years. Although in different regions of Turkey, rural and urban, my education from primary school to Ph.D. was in the same education system. I went to a teacher training high school where I knew I was going to become a teacher of English and received pedagogy courses, and this training led me to study in one of the strongest English language teaching (ELT) programs in the country. I received my diploma to teach English in Turkey from METU, and my original plan was to teach English to K-12 students in Turkey. My main dream and passion were to work with underserved and underprivileged populations all around Turkey. However, graduate studies steered me away from this goal. I think that when I decided to apply for Ph.D. in language education, this goal re-emerged and evolved into preparing teacher candidates to serve minoritized and marginalized populations. My identity tension emerged when I started working with teacher candidates as part of my graduate assistantship (GAship) at UMD, which helped me start envisioning myself as a future teacher educator. In the first two semesters of my doctoral studies, my GAship involved serving as a teaching assistant (TA) for two professors who positioned themselves as teacher educators. Their mentorship and supervision prepared me for the course I was assigned to teach in my third semester, for which I was not sure if I was entirely ready.

Fall 2010 was the semester when for the first time, I was solely responsible for teaching a teacher education course to undergraduate students at UMD, called Cross-cultural Communication for Teaching English Language Learners, for which I was a TA in the previous semester. I was happy that the TESOL program assigned me to teach this course, which positioned me as a legitimate candidate for an emerging teacher educator. However, I was nervous about working with teacher candidates who were learning to teach emergent bilinguals in US K-12 schools. Despite the support from the program coordinator, the adjunct professor, and fellow doctoral students, I feared making 'mistakes' and not having the adequate set of knowledge and skills which would make me a 'good' teacher educator. My reflections during this semester and the following semesters of teaching at UMD until 2014 involved the identity tension, which mostly centered on the concept of context. That is,[5] I was coming from an entirely different social, historical, cultural, and educational context, but I was preparing teachers to educate emergent bilinguals in the US context. I was not

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[5] Originally, my discussion here ended with the earlier sentence. However, Doaa and Luis asked me to further unpack in order to demonstrate my identity tension better. I responded to their question in one of our Zoom meetings and then summarized my reflection in the ensuing sentences in this paragraph.

only unfamiliar with the context of university-based teacher education, but also with the context of K-12 emergent bilingual education. I was aware that every context has its intricacies, and I had a lot to learn about policies and practices of teacher education, broadly in the US and particularly in the state of Maryland, as well as policies and practices of educating emergent bilinguals in K-12 schools.

When I crossed the national borders of Turkey to move to the US, I knew I had brought my identity as a language teacher and emergent researcher with me. However, the new context brought about new challenges. Although I did not explicitly articulate it to myself in my reflections, I think I was wondering whether I needed to construct a new identity as a teacher, teacher educator, and researcher in the US context. And if yes, did that mean that I needed to leave my prior identities behind? Would my prior identities have no currency in this new context? Would I have to build everything from scratch? Starting the PhD program, I was developing a new identity as an educational researcher, and I was institutionally identified as a graduate assistant, international doctoral student, and instructor. The coursework I was working on was supporting my educational researcher identity, and the assistantship was more geared toward my institutionally assigned identities. My teacher educator identity was not as visible in this list of identities I held at that time, but I was conscious of the fact that I was teaching teachers, which would make me a teacher educator, or at least a candidate. These reflections on educational contexts, my border-crossing, identities, and institutional positioning also interacted with my doctoral coursework about teacher education, education policy, and educational research in general.

Being introduced to the scholarly conversations on the knowledge base of language teachers, I remember discussing with my fellow classmates these questions: what is the knowledge base for language teacher-educators? How are language teacher-educators prepared? What degree is required for somebody to teach teachers? Is there (supposed to be) any coursework in our program that prepares us as language teacher-educators? Teaching a course for teacher candidates, I was asking myself if I had the professional preparation that was required of me to become a language teacher-educator and what this preparation would look like for me. Shortly, how can I become a language teacher-educator? Similar to the questions about my identity, would any of the knowledge I 'brought' from Turkey be relevant in this context? How would I know what is *relevant* and what is *not*?

I believe that this tension, largely stemming from my border-crossing experience, has mostly been productive and led me to reflect on my identity, knowledge, and practice as a transnational language teacher-educator. This tension also contributed to my becoming more

self-reflexive about my positionality and situatedness in various educational contexts. After having taught for about 7 years as a faculty member whose job description explicitly includes teacher education, I still feel that tension in my professional life, but more like a driving force than a stumbling block. I am consciously working toward immersing myself in the new educational context and taking the time to guide my learning and education intentionally with this goal of immersion. I have learned how to navigate the educational context in the US, but I approach every new situation with the idea that there might be something in every particular context I need to know, which might help me better understand that situation. I have also learned to frame myself as a transnational teacher educator who is actively connected to multiple national contexts. This framing allows me to justify the idea that I can still be a successful teacher educator in the US context even though I had no former K-12 teaching experience in that context and the majority of my educational trajectory, as a learner and teacher, was based in Turkey's educational context.

**Luis: tensions arising from (self)legitimacy and speech.** Speech has proven to be a struggle for me for as long as I can remember, even in my first language (Spanish). As a result of this, as a former English learner (EL), I sometimes grapple with identity tensions of what not sounding '*native* enough' or making 'mistakes' while speaking means to me as a language teacher-educator at the university level and to my students who, many times, are *native* English speakers studying to become ESOL educators. *Do I belong in this space? Should 'native' English-speaking professors be teaching these courses instead of me?* I often wonder about these and similar questions without acknowledging the rigorous preparation I have undergone to become an ESOL teacher, TESOL teacher educator, and a better speaker. *Are having speech-related challenges and making 'mistakes' when speaking every now and then more important to my career than my content-knowledge expertise and experience?* This is another question I often confront when I explore my positionality now as a TESOL teacher educator who understands listeners may make ideological assumptions,[6] based on my speech, about my professional competence.

Since I was young, people have used my speech and voice to challenge me and my (cap)abilities. For example, in my home country of

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[6] Initially, the discussion of my tension focused mostly on my personal experiences in relation to my identity and emotions. Bedrettin's and Doaa's questions and suggestions (e.g., how do you think this self-positioning has been shaped by the existing ideologies in this educational context?) during the collaborative process led me to make my personal stories more political by framing them within the dominant ideologies of 'standard' language and 'nativeness.'

Cuba, my peers often used my speech and high-pitch voice to challenge my masculinity and intelligence. In the US, my speech has often been used to challenge my abilities and my qualifications to belong in different professional spaces. While serving in the US Marine Corps, I would experience contemptuous looks from officers and high-ranking military personnel who could not believe that I, someone who spoke 'broken' English, had the intelligence needed to be knowledgeable of my military occupation (Pentón Herrera, 2021). Looking back, I can say that these life experiences have not defined me in any way. However, I do acknowledge that they have stayed with me in the form of inner voices creating discord in my identity construction, in my sense of belonging, and in how I view myself as an individual and professional.

As a bilingual speaker of Spanish and English, my language repertoire is distinct from the idealized 'native' speaker norms. The ideologies of 'standard' language would position my language use in English as divergences, rather than unique translingual performances. As a former English learner, I always felt confident teaching English to younger learners in K-12 because my story of being an immigrant and learning English would inspire them. To this day, I like to think that my stories inspired my students and that every time they thanked me for my storytelling, they were taking a meaningful lesson with them. I would often encourage my older high school newcomers by telling them, "if I was able to learn English at 17, you can do it, too; there is no excuse." During my time teaching K-12, I always felt confident in my abilities as an ESOL teacher and rarely, if ever, doubted my professional legitimacy and credibility. The trust and appreciation I received from my students energized me and kept my teaching focused on them and their needs; I rarely worried about my speech when I was in class with them where I was positioned as 'authority' in language. However, when I transitioned to teaching in higher education, I was confronted with tensions and corresponding emotions related to my speech that I had not experienced in my tenure as a K-12 language educator.

I felt such tension recently when I was teaching an MA-TESOL course. We began our first class with introductions and an icebreaker activity. One of the students mentioned that he had taken a class in the previous term with a well-liked professor at that institution. I excitedly shared, "I have big shoes to fill *in*!" I saw some of my students' faces drop in response to my exclamation; then, I quickly realized that I had 'mistakenly' added *in* at the end of that idiom. I digressed from the 'norm.' I became aware that my deviation from 'standard' or 'correct' English automatically positioned my speech, in my students' eyes, as deficient and in need of remediation, which made me

hyperconscious of my hierarchical positionality as a 'non-native' English speaker in our classroom. The undesired emotions developed by my 'mistake' and my perception of teacher candidates' reactions kept affecting my speech that evening. For the remainder of the course, I closely monitored my speaking, fluency, and accent while struggling with tensions of legitimacy and credibility because of that initial 'error' I made when using the idiom.

As a TESOL teacher educator, I find myself wondering if my teacher candidates feel the same way as other people felt about my speech. *Does it matter if my students think more or less of me based on my speech? Does it matter if they want to challenge my professional competence because I'm not a 'native' speaker of English?* I ask myself from time to time, not knowing the responses to these questions. I grapple with the prevalent, idealized notion ingrained in me throughout my time as a student in high school and higher education about the importance of speaking the 'perfect' English or sounding like a 'native' English speaker. These struggles are ever-present in my identity construction as a scholar and professional, and also lead to feelings of estrangement and insecurity as I am faced with the pressure of what not sounding 'native' or 'perfect' enough may mean for me as a TTP. With every passing year, I become more aware that my previous history with speech has greatly contributed to those feelings in academia, and are further compounded by my personal beliefs and contextual experiences. The unceasing coexistence of the personal-professional-contextual dimensions creates tensions, reveals my vulnerabilities, and affects my self-perception as a former EL and a TESOL teacher educator in academia.

**Doaa: what is in a 'foreign' name? Crossing borders.** My name is دعاء (Doaa), a name that starts with the /د/ or /do-du/ sound with the short vowel /o/ that does not have a corresponding letter in Arabic, but I add it in English. The second Arabic letter is the /ع/ sound that does not exist in English and, therefore, does not have an equivalent letter in the English alphabet. The third sound /ا/ can be pronounced /a/, and the last sound is /ء/, which sounds like a glottal stop, and it does not exist in English either. The combination of /ع/ /ا/,/, and /ء/ has created an uncomfortable first impression every time I had to introduce myself, which would lead to a series of questions such as *would you say it again? What? How do you spell it?...* to name a few. I am a woman with Latinx-looking features, which is why people tend to mistake me for a person of Latinx descent, and, in some instances, I have been called "Dora." In the end, most encounters lead to "I will call you Doaa," a decision that usually eliminates the need to pronounce the two non-English sounds: /ع/and /ء/. Gradually, I had

to oblige. I consider myself a translingual language teacher and teacher educator with an 'accent,' a transnational with over 18 years of teacher training and teaching experience in both Egypt and the US. You may call me Doaa, but if you are up for a challenge, you can learn to call me دعاء.

I approach the topic of tensions as a transnational language teacher, teacher educator, and later a scholar. The reason I see transnationalism as having the greatest impact on my professional and personal identity development is that, as I reflect on my early professional experiences in the US, I find that it shaped other tensions in my career journey. For instance, introducing myself seems to frame all subsequent conversations in all contexts that usually bring to light three characteristics that compose my identity: race, gender, and religion. Most people view Egypt as a country in the Middle East, which makes me an Arab female Muslim. Race, gender, and religion are three characteristics that, in synergy and intersection, are part of who I am as an individual and professional, and it is difficult to separate one from the other. At the same time, these three characteristics have transcended life-work boundaries, creating tensions between my personal and professional spaces. For example, on numerous occasions, I had to answer coworkers' inquiries about why I do not wear a headscarf, how my family feels about my decision of not wearing a hijab, or if I made this decision after I moved to the US. Some conversations are more personal than others, and I oftentimes feel as if I am expected to portray an image that is always seen in the media about oppressed women in the Middle East.

As I storied and analyzed my experience as a female Muslim TTP in the US, Luis's and Bedrettin's questions helped me push my thinking about my identity. Our conversations circled back to the question of how Islam and the Muslim identity are perceived in the US, which might be partly influenced by the increase of anti-Muslim discourses during the last 2 years of the Trump Administration. For example, Luis asked clarifying questions about being "Arab female Muslim" in the US and how I think my identity could be perceived in the professional circles of which I have been part. He also asked whether I took inquiries from students and colleagues differently. Reflecting on that question, I wanted to add that colleagues' inquiries about my religious background made me feel uncomfortable, while inquiries from students seemed to encourage me to share more about religious and cultural practices that may not seem clear to them. I think my students view me as a source of information, while I feel that colleagues should have known better or at least framed their inquiries differently.

Later on in this conversation, we discussed what it means to be a Muslim situated within the post-9/11 US sociopolitical discourses that were exacerbated during Trump's time in office. I shared that my professional interactions with colleagues and students tended to conclude with me saying that "I'm not very religious." Bedrettin responded by sharing an observation that the Muslims he interacted with in the US often prefaced the description of their religious practices and beliefs with phrases such as "I'm not so religious," "I'm a moderate Muslim" or something along those lines. He believes that such hedging in discursive identity construction might aim to distance individual Muslims from the 'undesirable' 'feared' Muslim identity in current dominant US sociopolitical discourses. His observation made me question if I am also feeling that obligation or pressure to hedge my identity when explaining the meaning of my name and its directly Islamic connotations and describing my religious practices and beliefs. I do not argue that this specific dialogic reflection led me to shift my thinking and self-positioning, but since I engaged in this community dialogue, I began feeling more comfortable to share my name and its meaning in Islam without worrying too much about how I would be perceived by others. However, in that dialogue, we also acknowledged that Bedrettin, as a male Muslim, has the privilege to conceal his identity at will since he does not have to make his identity immediately visible due to gender-based clothing expectations in Islam. In my case, whether I wear hijab or not, I would receive questions and commentary about my dressing preferences in relation to my Muslim identity.

My racial, gender, and religious identities have always been subjects of inquiry as to where and how I grew up, what I was taught, and how I managed to become who I am. Uninvited inquiries like these reflect a lack of real understanding of life in a place like Egypt. In those encounters, my colleagues and students seem surprised that a woman from a small town in Egypt turned out the way I did. Such inquiries often revolve around questions pertaining to women's education, driving rights, and marriage, and women's freedom in the Middle East. When I would try to explain, I found that people do not want to hear the 'other' side of the story. I felt pressured to conform to their assumptions about my culture, which is an example of how "orientalism" operates (Said, 1978).

As I remember those inquiries and the feelings that resulted from them, I realize that I had naïve assumptions and expectations about my experience in the US. I have always been aware of the complexity of my racial heritage, gender, and religion. I have learned (or I thought I have) how to navigate the complexity of the demands posed by those three intersecting dimensions of identity on my life. Growing up in a small town in Egypt in a relatively conservative family, I was

always reminded of certain behaviors and presentations that a young woman was expected to abide by, not only because of who I am, but also because of how my behavior would reflect on my family. What I did not expect coming to the US was having to navigate the same complexity, but in reverse, especially in professional and academic settings. For example, instead of being asked to dress more conservatively while in Egypt, I am now asked why I am not wearing a headscarf in the US. That is, I have been grappling with the way a Muslim woman is ideologically positioned in the US and feeling the pressure to fit my identity into that position. Also, as I mentioned earlier, whenever I talk about my religious identity, I feel the necessity to convince the listener/reader that I am a 'moderate' Muslim, not a 'fanatic' one, so that they feel 'safe' around me.

Inquiries continued during my teacher education career as my students had the same curiosity about my identities: gender, race, and religion. As a teacher educator, my students were interested in topics such as dating conventions in the Middle East, socializing among opposite sexes, girls' education rights, among others. All of these topics were beyond the scope of our TESOL courses and assumed one universal culture across the entire Middle East. I found those curiosities from my students to be expected as they always referenced how Muslim women from the Middle East are depicted in Western media. However, on many occasions, students made a point of comparing Christianity to Islam and trying to convince me to convert to Christianity. After one of those conversations, a student gave me a book that should "help me decide." Similar to my colleagues, I found my students look for and expect answers that conform to what they expected to hear, instead of being open to listening to my truth.

Language programs at US universities involve transnational spaces which are populated by language learners, practitioners, and administrators hailing from varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Mostly reflecting the macro-level dominant US ideologies, these programs are also where transnational individuals face the pressure to select from the identity positions ideologically made available for them. My colleagues and students seemed to have formed a certain opinion about what Arabs and Muslims should and can be, do, and feel, which creates tensions with the realities and opinions I share with them. I am also a teacher educator from this Arab Muslim culture, and I feel that my students should be informed about this and other cultures if they were to teach English. I was also cautious not to say anything that may jeopardize my job. These tensions have made me conscious of the fact that I, as a teacher and teacher educator, have to be careful approaching those sensitive conversations so that I am not viewed as being defensive.

## REALIZATIONS AND 'FINAL' THOUGHTS

The journey of interrogating our transnational lived experiences through collaborative storytelling brought us closer by allowing us to explore our personal and professional identities in a safe and supportive as well as intellectually stimulating and challenging space. We have engaged in this dialogic storytelling over the last 2 years, which led us to explore how we negotiate and respond to "immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems" (Olsen, 2016, p. 139) in our TTP identities. This extended dialog has been transformative for us to better understand our sociocultural situatedness in the current context. Addressing our research question, we conceptually argued that tensions are inevitable in our identity work and found that border-crossing and in-betweenness predominantly characterized our identities as TTPs. We cross borders and carve out in-between spaces, identities, and voices for ourselves in our professional lives.

Crossing borders, we make ourselves vulnerable to tensions that challenge our beliefs and priorities in our practice with exhausting emotional labor, but we experience those tensions variably. Our tensions emerged as a direct interaction among who we are (i.e., our personal selves—race, gender, religion, etc.), what we bring (i.e., our professional selves—specialized knowledge, linguistic repertoire, etc.), and institutional and individual expectations patrolling the borders (i.e., contextual factors— assumptions about who we are and how we should act, etc.). For example, Bedrettin's tensions of navigating contexts as a TTP speak to the struggles that professional border-crossers experience in new teaching contexts. Arriving in a new professional context with a different knowledge base may prompt TTPs to question their preparation and ability in this new setting. In Bedrettin's case, the tensions arising from his professional border-crossing experience contributed to a productive self-reflection about his positionality and situatedness. Bedrettin's tensions remind us that border-crossing for TESOL practitioners is a complex, multilayered process requiring continuous personal and professional investment, agency, and emotional labor (De Costa et al., 2018; Duff, 2015; Rudolph et al., 2020; Solano-Campos, 2014; Varghese et al., 2016), which may also require the recontextualizing of their existing knowledge to make it applicable to this new context.

The tensions experienced by Luis in academia are connected to his previous experiences of how others have positioned him and his (cap) abilities based on his speech. Especially in the context of higher education, the ideology of 'nativeness' became more visible to him as he

juxtaposed his linguistic identity with his students. This ideological positioning percolates into his present practice and often reminds him of his status as a speaker of English with a linguistic repertoire that is distinct from the idealized 'native' speaker norms. At the same time, as a TTP, Luis grapples with the prevalent, idealized notion of 'perfect' English, or sounding like a 'native' English speaker, which is conflated with his sense of professional competence as a teacher educator. He is experiencing identity tensions since, in his current teaching context, his linguistic identity does not seem to 'fit' the ideologically laden identity position for English language teacher-educators. Navigating conflicting 'voices' in his professional identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011), he keeps reflecting on his positionality and searching for ways to self-regulate unwanted emotions that stem from his identity tensions.

For Doaa, identity tensions reside at the intersection of how others position her as a transnational Arab female Muslim and how she asserts agency to position herself. Her emotional labor becomes more intense as she deals with that positioning in her professional life due to "[t]he ambivalence from the clash of voices" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 78). Due to her multilayered, complex identity, she receives a line of uninvited questioning that points to the complex nexus between personal and professional lives. She experiences tensions as an Arab female Muslim in the US professional settings where colleagues and students attempt to define her and place their ideological expectations onto her. She is pushed into identity positions whose parameters and borders are ideologically maintained. As she encounters those ideological borders, she struggles to position herself and feels pressured in a liminal, borderland space, which in her case led to disruptive feelings of internal turmoil. Doaa feels as if she is being "pulled in different directions" (Berry, 2007, p. 32) as she grapples with whether she should conform to the expectations of those around her, choose (or not) to respond to uninvited (and at times disrespectful) questions, or tactfully clarify misinformed beliefs to avoid being viewed as hurt or defensive.

Closing this article, we would like to share two take-away ideas that emerged for us during this CAE process and corresponding future goals of research and practice. First, in recounting and analyzing our identity tensions as TTPs, our main focus was to examine tensions in our professional identity work. We attended to ideological borders (of language, culture, gender, and religion) to make sense of our situatedness in the US context. This examination also led us to reflect on the interplay between our identities and dominant ideologies in the 'back home' context before the border-crossing experience began: What ideological borders (have) existed at 'home' and how (have) they

attempted to define us 'then' and 'now'? Therefore, future studies can explore how we re-remember and re-write past experiences, in research and practice, by using our current critical approaches to privilege/marginalization after becoming transnationals. Second, in our collaborative analysis and writing endeavor, we engaged in self-reflexive and critical analysis as part of our autoethnographic methods. Such analysis was not completely new to us, but we needed to conduct it collaboratively with the purpose of encouraging each other to push the proverbial envelope further in our critical analytical perspective. CAE provided us with the experiential and discursive space to engage in a "constant questioning of the normative assumptions" in TESOL (Pennycook, 2001, p. 10), both individually and as a community. In our future practice and identity work, we will consciously seek ways to maintain that criticality and self-reflexivity in our autoethnographic approach. When reflecting on new critical incidents, we will ask such questions: "How would I analyze that incident if I included it in my CAE? How is my emotional response to this incident informed by my TTP identity?"

We plan to maintain our community of practice in which we will keep narrating and analyzing current critical incidents we experience. Even if we do not share all our collaborative analyses through publications, our community will continue to be a significant part of our professional lives. We will have an ongoing autoethnographic 'reflecting/writing' to which we will add as we carry on navigating and negotiating existing and new identity tensions. We believe that ours is not the only example of such communities of practice amongst TESOL practitioners. However, they should increase in number and use collaborative autoethnography to advance criticality and self-reflexivity by challenging the dichotomous relationship between the researcher and the researched (Hughes et al., 2012) in approaching knowledge generation in/for TESOL. Such collaborative knowledge generation that is grounded in and stemming from the professional lives of diverse TESOL practitioners could be an important step in the direction of involving all voices in ongoing professional discourses and addressing the disconnect between research and practice in the field of TESOL.

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