

Teacher Identity Development of Pre-Service English Language Teachers in Turkey

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Abstract – Although the English language teacher education program was evaluated extensively by many researchers from different perspectives in Turkey, the place of teacher identity in the program has not been examined thoroughly yet. The aim of this research was to investigate to what extent the current teacher education program contributes to teacher identity formation of pre-service English language teachers. For this purpose, seven teacher educators were interviewed in one-to-one standardized format to get their perceptions of the process of teacher identity development of their students throughout the program. In addition, the senior students in an ELT Department at a state university were given an open-ended questionnaire to see the impact of the program on their understanding and conceptualisation of teacher identity. The ultimate aim of the study was to raise awareness of the process of teacher identity formation which is a critical issue in training pre-service English language teachers. The results revealed that the most significant perceived roles of English language teachers were guiding and motivating students, being friendly and teaching language skills in an enjoyable way. On the other hand, the teacher educators agree that practical courses make contributions to teacher identity development more than other courses. It is also concluded that teacher identity needs to be an explicitly targeted and primarily focused issue rather than being a by-product one.

Keywords – Teacher Education, Teacher Education Program, Teacher Identity, Teacher Identity Formation, Practical Courses.

I. INTRODUCTION

English language teaching is a profession that requires obtaining a degree at least at bachelor level. It is a kind of occupation which can only be practised after long and vigorous academic study (Wallace, 1991). It is also believed that the process of envisioning the self as a professional is a crucial stage in developing an effective teacher identity, but this process is not fully researched (Thomas and Beauchamp, 2011). Moreover, the developmental course of a professional teacher identity is not understood adequately since it is assumed that on registration to a pre-service teacher education program, students are likely to have performed beliefs of what it means to be a teacher (Friesen and Besley, 2013).

According to Miller (2009), there is a high positive correlation between teacher knowledge and teacher identity. What teachers know and do is part of their identity work. Accordingly, reflection of teacher identity is embodied through teacher knowledge which is constructed during teacher training program to some extent. On the other hand, identity is a process of negotiation on the profile of a teacher and not only teacher knowledge but also teachers' past learning experiences, teacher educators' attitudes, school culture in the programme, and teachers' beliefs about learners, learning and themselves (Williams and Burden, 1997) all contribute to teacher identity formation. Kagan (2010) acknowledges that growth of teacher knowledge is based on teachers' experience in classroom. As teachers develop their professional knowledge, they form highly personalized pedagogies which is a reflection of their belief systems and identities that constrain their perception, judgment, and behaviour.

Although ELT teacher education programs are expected to have a positive influence on pre-service English language teachers' identity, it seems to require a more direct and explicit attention on this critical issue (Thomas and Beauchamp, 2011). As Pavlenko (2003) stresses, teacher education should offer identity options and by this way, teachers would imagine themselves as legitimate members of professional communities. This study aims to evaluate the current English language teacher education program in relation to its impact on teacher identity formation of pre-service English language teachers. The underlying reason is to explore how much attention implicitly or explicitly is paid to teacher identity in different courses within the curriculum of the program. The English teacher education program was evaluated with a focus on its effectiveness by Salihoglu (2012), on the methodology and practice components by Seferoglu (2006), on the recent restructuring by Yavuz and Zehir-Topkaya (2013). However, the program has not been evaluated from teacher identity perspective yet. Besides, teacher identity has not been researched extensively which might be due to its complexity. There are only three research studies in Turkish context. Yesilbursa (2012) explored professional identities of English instructors at universities using metaphors. Oruç (2013) observed initial identity development of a single student teacher in the practicum course throughout a year in a qualitative study. Very recently, Gumusok (2020) investigated professional identities of English language teacher trainers in her doctoral thesis. This research aims to fill this research gap and raise awareness of teacher educators and pre-service teachers in ELT Departments on this under-researched area. The following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent does the current English language teacher education program foster teacher identity development?
2. Which courses potentially contribute to teacher identity development of pre-service English language teachers within the program?
3. What other factors play important roles in developing pre-service English language teachers' identities?
4. To what extent do the senior students develop their teacher identities?

A. *What is 'Teacher Identity'?*

Identity is a term used broadly in many branches of social sciences such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology. From a single term, a number of categories have emerged in the literature. The literature uses various terms such as social identity, ethnic identity, cultural identity, linguistic identity, and socio-cultural identity (Miller, 2009). The focus of the present study is on teacher identity, particularly teacher identity formation of pre-service English language teachers.

Personal identity is a simple and fixed concept, explaining who a person is and how he/she differs from others based on his/her personal characteristics (Lee, 2013). However, Akkerman and Meijer (2011) stress that identity is not a fixed and stable entity, but rather shifts with time and context. Miller (2009) defines it as a way of doing things inflected by others in any social context. He also characterizes 'identity' as relational, interactional, constructed, and contextual. Identity is viewed in relation to discursive, social, cultural and institutional elements rather than as an entity.

Personal identity also refers to a sense of self-knowledge that emerges as the one explores his or her values and beliefs. It is hypothesised by Friesen and Besley (2013) that greater personal identity development would increase professional teacher identity. A teacher who has a sense of self-knowledge could consider the values

and roles of the teaching profession and begin to incorporate their personal identity into their social identity. Social identity here means viewing oneself as a teacher in relation to others such as students, colleagues, managers, and parents in a social context.

Teacher identity, on the other hand, is related to the ways in which teachers talk about themselves, their roles, and their practices. Besides, how teachers see and position themselves within the social, political, and historical contexts of their work is related to the images of teacher identity or identities in their minds (Lee, 2013). Teacher identity refers to the differing social and cultural roles student teachers enact through their interactions with lecturers and other students during the process of learning. Simply, it means knowing what it means to be a language teacher (Burns and Richards, 2009). Demirezen (n.d.) views professional teaching identity as a teacher's self-conceptualization associated with his or her teaching career role. Roberts (1998) argues that teaching identity develops through exchange between our personal theories and self-concept on one hand, and the demands of our social and occupational context on the other.

Johnson (2003) emphasizes the changing nature of teacher identity in relation with others. He emphasizes that our identity undergoes some changes when we are engaged with people such as learners or colleagues. Understanding who I am is relational, constructed and altered by how I see others and how they see me in our shared experiences and negotiated experiences. The relationship between teacher and students in which we change our roles as teachers and as people is one important facet of teacher identity because of moral dilemmas and values.

B. How to Promote Teacher Identity

Lee (2013) proposed important implications about what can be done for teacher identity formation in her study. Through reflection, teachers can explore and experiment with alternative ideas, and take active steps to deal with challenges which are all crucial to teachers' identity development. According to Miller (2009), the role of discourse in self-representation, the salience of sociocultural contexts, diversity and ethnicity, the native / non-native binary, and beliefs about standard language are critical issues that are to be taken into account for teacher identity. It means English language teachers need to raise their awareness of the impact of abovementioned elements on their professional identities.

According to Xu (2013), pre-service teachers need to be provided more opportunities to enable them to understand the teaching profession from a more realistic perspective rather than purely based on imagination. To exemplify the issue, in addition to the attention to the development of teaching skills, the course of practicum should also be utilized for enhancing the pre-service teachers' awareness of the institutional setting of teaching as well as their empathetic experiences of being a teacher. In this way, the transformation from the theory-based imagined identities into experience-based ones could be more straightforward.

The study by Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) suggests that metaphors can be a rich and stimulating way for new teachers to talk about the experience of their first year of teaching. Another realization is that the development of a professional identity does not automatically come with experience, and there should be some form of intentional planning and action to ensure that new teachers start their careers with the appropriate tools to deal with the challenges of first year.

Then, what can be used as appropriate tools for the development of teacher identity? Miller (2009) mentioned

personal histories as one of the effective ways of tracking novice teachers' identity development in the first few years. In addition, Lim (2011) researched concept maps of student teachers' autobiographical reflections on their professional identity formation. Autobiographical reflections can be fostered in other settings by making pre-service or in-service teachers keep journals in which they can narrate their own personal histories about their teaching experiences. As an example, Oruc (2013) used reflective journal writing as a method to track her student teacher's professional identity development in her study.

Another technique to promote teacher identity development is to put student teachers in pairs in their teaching practices. By this way, they may develop their professional identities in the collaborative setting (Anh, 2013). If this kind of partnership is strengthened with the collaboration of the mentors in the practising schools, the student teachers could more easily deal with the realities of the classroom such as large class size, time constraint, discipline problems which were found to be inhibiting factors in Lee's (2013) study. For a better teacher identity development, teaching practices for pre-service teachers in real classes need to be increased in the curriculum. Kanno and Stuart (2011) believe that it is really difficult for student teachers to take on the identity of a teacher without substantial classroom experience.

B. Teacher Identity and Teacher Education Programmes

Instead of a targeted outcome, professional identity is developed as a by-product of teacher education programs (Franzak, 2002). As a result of this, students might be given false pictures of school reality during their teacher education like in the case of Taina (Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013). The products of a teacher education program without an explicit focus on teacher identity might be teachers with false and blurring teacher identities posing obstacles for their professional development. On the other hand, there is a positive correlation between then sense of professional identity and professional development (Cohen, 2010).

Another important fact is that there seems to be a widespread interest in teacher identity. For example, identity has become of the framing chapters in the Handbook of Research and Teacher Education. This movement goes beyond the tradition of only emphasizing teachers' acquisition of 'assets', such as knowledge, competencies, or beliefs as the professional development (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011). Increasing emphasis put on teacher identity suggests that teacher education programs might include more courses that foster teacher identity development in the curriculum.

According to Karacaoglu (2008), teacher competencies need to be determined for the accreditation of teacher training programs with the ones in the developed countries. The growing value of teaching standards and competencies at an international level had an impact on teacher education model in Turkey. Higher Education Committee (HEC, 1999) set standards for teachers with a list of teacher competencies which is applicable to teacher education programs. This list has four domains of standards and teacher trainees will be evaluated and educated within this framework. According to these general standards, a teacher trainee should be competent in the subject and pedagogic knowledge, planning, teaching, classroom management and communication, monitoring, assessment and reporting, and other professional requirements.

When quality of teacher education programs in training highly qualified teachers in the faculties of education became questionable and this was stated in the symposiums, panels, conferences organized by the Ministry of Education and NGOs, solutions and alternative ideas in terms of minimizing the drawbacks of the program were

put forward in the light of findings of scientific inquiries and experts' consultations. As a result of this, teacher education programs in faculties of education were restructured in 2006 and it was put into practice in 2006-2007 Academic Year (HEC, 2007). The primary innovations of the new regulations are as follows:

- Programs usually include 50% field knowledge and skill courses, 30% pedagogical content knowledge courses, and 20% general culture courses.
- Faculties of education were authorized to select 25% credits courses and opportunities for elective courses were increased.
- The percentage of 'General Knowledge' courses was increased.
- Within the framework of general knowledge, a new course called 'Community Services' was added to the program.
- The new program was designed in accordance with the ones in EU countries.

Increase of general knowledge and general culture courses might enhance pre-service teachers' knowledge of educational context and their roles and responsibilities expected by the society. New courses in the program such as 'Community Services' can help student teachers to understand and experience how they can serve the public as English language teachers. So, some of the changes in the restructuring movement in 2006 in the English language teacher education program might have influences on teacher identity development of pre-service English language teachers with a focus on their social and cultural roles.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The aim of the study was to understand the process of identity development of pre-service English language teachers from the perspective of teacher educators and the pre-service teachers themselves. To do so, a qualitative methodology was employed to investigate how teacher educators monitored pre-service English language teachers' progress in adopting teacher identity, the effect of the curriculum of the program on it, and to what extent pre-service English language teachers developed professional identities. Different sources of data (teacher educators, senior students, and documents) were brought together to ensure data triangulation in this study since the researcher can be more confident if the diverse kinds of data lead to the same conclusion (Nunan and Bailey, 2009). The research focuses on conceptualization of teacher identity by pre-service teachers and qualitative data can provide the researcher with rich and in-depth insight into their world (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) to enable him or her to capture an emic (insider) perspective (Nunan and Bailey, 2009). In a qualitative study, the researcher usually collects open-ended, emerging data with the aim of developing themes and patterns from the data in which multiple meanings of individual experiences are socially constructed (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, mainly qualitative data were collected from teacher educators and senior students in the Department of English Language Teaching in one-to-one standardized open-ended interviews and open-ended questionnaires to reflect the individual experiences of teacher identity development of pre-service English language teachers.

A. Setting and Participants

The context of the current study was the ELT Department at Canakkale 18 Mart University in Turkey. The participants consisted of seven teacher educators and twenty-seven senior students. The teacher educators hold

PhD degrees in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and their teaching experience ranged from 10 to 28 years. A convenience selection of participants was applied and it also depended on willingness of them. The senior students in the ELT department were included in the study to see the impact of the program on their conceptualisation of teacher identities. Seven of them were males and twenty of them females and their GPA means was 2.71 out of 4.

B. Data Collection Instruments

The most common data methods for data collection in a qualitative study are observation, interviews, and document analysis (Lynch, 1996). In this study, techniques of interview, open-ended questionnaire and document analysis were used to ensure triangulation. A standardized open-ended interview was conducted with teacher educators to elicit their views and evaluations of the impact of the current program and courses on teacher identity formation of their students. The interview questions were piloted with two teacher educators. Later on, its revised version was cross-checked by two experts who had associate degrees in ELT for its credibility and the necessary changes such as restating, reframing, extending and exemplifying the interview questions were carried out before its implementation.

Senior students were given an open-ended questionnaire to get their understanding of teacher identity. Due to the abstract nature of the concept, the students were guided with directive questions in the open-ended format of the questionnaire. The interview questions were also cross-checked by an expert holding associate degree in ELT iteratively for its credibility and some question items were eliminated, added and reformulated. Document analysis was conducted to examine general teacher education competencies, foreign language teacher education program, its history, stated goals and the recent changes, to underscore the philosophy of foreign language teacher education program. Documents of the English language teacher education program that explains program descriptions and program characteristics were obtained from the website of Higher Education Committee (HEC).

C. Data Analysis Procedures

There are certain steps to follow for qualitative data analysis suggested by Lynch (1996) as follows: focusing, organizing the data, coding the data, and classifying and reducing the data. A similar procedure was followed to be more systematic. When the data was collected, it was organized to construct categories. After coding the data, it was reduced by identifying the recurring themes. In addition, document analysis of the stated program descriptions, content of courses and program goals was done to understand the intended and unintended outcomes related to teacher identity in the curriculum of the program.

In order to be able to represent the most important evaluation questions to be answered in an interview, Lynch (1996) suggests developing a thematic framework as a useful way of doing this. The prepared thematic framework (See Table 1) was sent to the participants to get feedback to make modifications. By this way, there was a consensus on the themes to be discussed in the interview.

Table 1. Thematic Framework: COMU Department of English Language Teaching.

1. Teacher Educators' Opinions about the Focus of Identity in the Program
2. Teacher Educators' Perceptions about the Contribution of Courses to Teacher Identity

3. The Effect of Context of Practising Schools on Teacher Identity
4. The Effect of Teacher Educators' Attitudes on Teacher Identity
5. How to Promote Teacher Identity Within the Current Curriculum
6. Curricular Reform for a Better Teacher Identity Development
7. Senior Students' Teacher Identity Conceptualization

For data analysis, the interviews were transcribed first and read line by line for coding stage. The open-ended questionnaires were subjected to content analysis. Then, the most frequently uttered patterns in both interviews and questionnaires were identified. The codes were used to reduce and classify the data. The code system used in the study is below:

Table 2. Codes for Teacher Identity Development of Pre-Service English Teachers.

FTIP: Focus of Teacher Identity in the Program.
CCTI: Contribution of Courses to Teacher Identity.
ECPS: Effects of Context of Practising Schools on Teacher Identity.
ETEA: Effects of Teacher Educators' Attitudes on Teacher Identity.
PTIC: Promotion of Teacher Identity in the Program.
CCII: Curricular Changes for Teacher Identity Development.
SSTI: Senior Students' Teacher Identity Conceptualization.

D. Quality Check of Research Design

Due to the fact that the study was a qualitative one, alternative actions rather than statistical analysis need to be taken for increasing the quality of the data. Traditional measures of validity and reliability were replaced with some other terms as follows: “credibility” rather than internal validity, “transferability” rather than external validity, “dependability” rather than reliability, and “conformability” rather than objectivity (Guba and Lincoln, 1982).

For credibility of the present study, it was ensured to have a prolonged engagement. It means that the evaluator has built a rapport and trust with program participants to understand their perceptions. For dependability, a thick description of the whole process of evaluation together with the analysis was provided for the future researchers to make more in-depth evaluation of the current case. There were also member checks in which data were confirmed from the participants after transcription.

III. FINDINGS

A. Senior Students' Teacher Identity Conceptualization

In the open-ended questionnaire, the senior students were asked how they described themselves as a teacher and more specifically as an English language teacher. The results revealed that eighteen students envisaged themselves as friendly teachers, ten of them as ideal and easygoing teachers, and nine of them as funny and disciplined teachers. As English language teachers, seventeen of them defined themselves as motivators, sixteen of them as guide and organization-leaders, seven of them as facilitators and five of them as language experts,

error correctors and activators. In parallel to the abovementioned responses, the most frequently perceived teacher roles by the respondents were guiding students (N = 7), being friendly (N = 5), motivating students (N = 4), being a role model (N = 4), teaching language skills in an enjoyable way (N = 4) and being a source of knowledge (N = 3).

The senior students were also asked about what probable difficulties they could experience as novice teachers in their first year in teaching English after graduation. They identified classroom management and dealing with unmotivated learners as the most serious challenges they might face in their early career. In addition, negative attitudes towards learning English, low level of learners and teaching pronunciation were expressed as other contextual constraints they may have to deal with. The findings of the questionnaire also revealed an order of importance (from 1-the most important to 7-the least important) in instructional and professional issues. Accordingly, the perceived most important educational activity was lesson planning and preparation. The perceived second most vital teacher role was classroom management and organization. The third place was opted for selecting and using appropriate materials and the fourth place was for use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The least attention was given to testing and evaluation student learning by the respondents.

Finally, the senior students were invited to use metaphors to describe English language teacher identity. A wide range of metaphors (N = 18) were elicited each of which is related to a fundamental aspect of teaching English as a profession. The most frequent and the most inspirational ones were stated here as samples including their justifications for their selection. Three respondents described English language teachers as ‘queen bees’ as they guide learners to adopt the best way for learning. Two students described English language teachers as ‘orchestra chefs’ since they mix the sounds in harmony and lead all learners like in an orchestra. One student viewed English language teachers as ‘mothers’ because teachers should be patients and love their learners. Interestingly, another student described an English language teacher as a ‘door’ as he/she opens the funny English room consisting of more than grammar rules. English language teachers were resembled to clowns by one respondent emphasizing the fact that they employ various roles, whatever comes to mind, sing, act, etc. The true nature of a teacher identity in general, dedication and enthusiasm, was reflected using ‘candle’ by one student based on the reasoning that it consumes itself to light the way for others.

B. Focus of Teacher Identity in the ELT Program and Contribution of Courses

The content analysis of the interviews with the teacher educators revealed a general consensus of a lack of direct focus on teacher identity development of pre-service English language teachers in the ELT program. It was stated by one of the participants that the teacher identity issue was not defined clearly, so it stayed as an unaddressed issue. Another respondent indicated that it is not specifically dealt with in any course; however, implicitly the whole program is geared towards developing teacher identities of trainee teachers. Similarly, one teacher educator put forward that he intuitively cares about teacher identity in his classes.

In terms of the contribution of the courses, the teacher educators mostly agree that practical courses promote more teacher identity development of pre-service teachers. It was clearly expressed that through methodological courses, student teachers take first step towards teaching, particularly in micro teaching activities, develop ability to teach, assess their strengths and weaknesses. As a result of this, they develop an image of being a teacher. Furthermore, in School Experience and Practicum, they have context, time and space to practise

theoretical knowledge; they start to feel themselves as real teachers since they see models (mentors) and plan, teach, face difficulties and develop teacher identities on the condition that they receive appropriate feedback from the mentors at schools and the supervisors at universities.

One participant emphasized that in the course of Community Services, student teachers go to schools to make observations and teach some courses. By this way, they get first-hand experience of teaching and becoming a teacher. Another respondent drew attention to the fact that it is really different to teach Science than to teach English to the same students since they have different methods and techniques. So, field-specific pedagogical content courses help the trainee teachers to develop their teacher identities better. In sum, the courses in which theory is put into practice, particularly in real context with real students, provide the pre-service teachers with the best opportunities to develop their teacher identities.

C. Effects of Context of Practising Schools and Teacher Educators' Attitudes

Whether or not school contexts where the student teachers firstly experience teaching have impact on their teacher identities was also investigated in the present study. Some of the teacher educators interviewed underlined the fact that the practising schools provide the trainee teachers with a real context where they see real aspects of teaching process, witness act of profession and as a result, get an idea of what a classroom and students are really like. The second dominant issue raised by the respondents is the lack of standardization in the school contexts. In other words, quality of students, quality of teachers, population of classes and attitudes of the school administration change from school to school. It was highlighted that it is a matter of chance to meet well-prepared mentors and supporting school cultures. While practicum course is given high value in some schools, in others they may not care enough for the mentees.

Secondly, the teacher educators were asked about their own roles in shaping teacher identities of pre-service English language teachers. A group of respondents focus on theoretical and knowledge-based role of teacher educators. According to them, teacher educators are responsible for providing relevant information with reference to literature and theoretical information.

One teacher educator admitted that they need to meet the mentors at schools regularly. Another teacher educator mentioned about his own applications such as directing their student teachers towards specific goals, forming supportive atmosphere in his office, motivating and encouraging them. It was also stated by one interviewee that they take careful records of progress of student teachers, hold individual meetings to inform student teachers about what goes right and wrong and make further suggestions.

Finally, the effect of the modelling behaviours of the teacher educators on identity development of student teachers is summarized by one teacher educator interviewed in his own words below:

They see the teacher educators as role models. Good role models shape their identities in a positive way. We are supposed to be punctual, prepared for lessons and be consistent in our evaluation. They imitate teachers they see during their education.

D. Promotion of Teacher Identity in the Program and Curricular Changes

As the followers of the program, the teacher educators were invited to reflect on probable actions to take to foster better teacher identity development within the current curriculum. According to some of the respondents,

the preliminary contributing factor could be raising awareness of importance of building up teacher identity through giving real-life examples and talking about teacher roles explicitly. Some other teacher educators interviewed believed that providing more real practice opportunities could make them feel like teachers. Last but not least, it was stated that pre-service teachers could be exposed to focus on teaching scenarios to reflect on what they would do in particular teaching situations.

As for the last phase of the evaluation of the current ELT Program, the necessary curricular changes for more effective teacher identity development of pre-service English language teachers were investigated. One of the recommendations was to include a special course for teaching theoretical side of teacher identity. In addition to making lessons more practice-based and interactive through videos and conferences of successful teachers from the Ministry of Education, the teacher educators believed that credits of the course of practicum need to be increased. Furthermore, it was emphasized that the course of School Experience should be introduced in the first year rather than third year since pre-service teachers need to meet school realities earlier in the program. Finally, it was stated practice hours in methodological courses like teaching young learners and teaching language skills are to be devoted to put theory into practice at real schools with real students.

IV. DISCUSSION

Pre-service English language teachers defined themselves as friendly, easygoing, funny but at the same time disciplined teachers in general in the current study. This is in line with the findings of the research by Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013) in which the first year teacher goals were identified as a good relation with pupils, treating pupils as pupils and cooperation with pupils, colleagues and authority. In addition, guiding and motivating students, being a role model and a source of knowledge were the most important teacher roles they perceived. It can be concluded that humanistic characteristics of being a teacher is prioritized with an explicit focus on classroom organization by the participants. On the other hand, it was assumed that English language teachers should be knowledgeable in their content and be able to guide and motivate their students which refer to the significance of content and pedagogical content knowledge attached by the pre-service English language teachers. Demirezen (n.d.) also associated professional identity with subject matter knowledge of the related field.

It was stated in Xu's (2013) study that the pre-service English language teachers have their imagined teacher identities as language experts, facilitators and spiritual guide. However, the imagined identities were transformed into practised identities as language attrition sufferer, routine performer and problem analyzer. Within this study, the participants identified classroom management, unmotivation, negative attitudes and low level of learners as the most challenging potential problems awaiting them as novice English language teachers after graduation. It can be inferred that their perceived practised teacher identity overlaps with language attrition sufferer dealing with managerial, motivational and attitudinal problems of their students in the future. This finding is also in accordance with the results of Bilican's (2016) doctoral thesis in which novice English language teachers were perceived to be incompetent in classroom management by themselves, teacher educators and particularly schools principals.

The pre-service English language teachers used metaphors, 'queen bees' and 'orchestra chefs' focusing on teacher roles of guiding and leading all learners for best way of learning, 'mothers' emphasizing teacher characteristics of enthusiasm and patience, and 'clown' and 'candle' drawing attention to entertaining and dedicating nature of English language teachers. The metaphors of the teachers as queen bee, mother, and entert-

-ainer were also reported in some other research studies (Saban et al., 2007; Farrell, 2011; Yesilbursa, 2012).

Nearly all the teacher educators interviewed agreed that there is not a direct focus on teacher identity in the ELT program, rather it is an unaddressed issue and not dealt with clearly in any course. As one teacher educator concluded, implicitly the whole program is geared towards developing teacher identities of trainee teachers. This contextual realization is also identified by Franzak (2002) who expressed that professional identity development of student teachers is considered to be a by-product of teacher education programs rather than a targeted outcome. However, Thomas and Beauchamp (2007) noted that identity development of pre-service teacher cannot be taken for granted but it needs to be dealt with more specifically with over attention. As for the necessary curricular changes for promotion of teacher identity development, the participants of this study are also of the opinion of including a specific course for teaching theoretical base of teacher identity with a more explicit focus.

As for contribution of courses to teacher identity development, practical courses such as teaching young learners, school experience and practicum were perceived to help student teachers see themselves as teachers. It is clear from this finding that the more the pre-service teachers act as teachers especially in real contexts with real students and raise their awareness of classroom realities, the more correct teacher identities they will develop. As Kanno and Stuart (2011) acknowledge, student teachers might have problems in taking on the identity of a teacher smoothly in their first year right after graduation if they do not arrive with substantial classroom teaching experience. This is because identity and practice shapes one another in turn. Supporting this view, the teacher educators interviewed in the current study believed that providing more real practice opportunities could make student teachers feel more like teachers. Therefore, their recommendations for restructuring the current ELT program for a more effective teacher identity development of pre-service English teachers were: increasing the credits of practicum, introducing ‘School Experience’ earlier in the program not in the 3rd year but in the 1st year and having methodological courses in real school contexts. By this way, as Xu (2013) suggested, the transition from the theory-based imagined identities to experienced ones could be more straightforward.

Finally, as the implementers of the teacher education program with the recent improvements, the teacher educators admitted that they have critical roles both as theoreticians and facilitators and their modelling behaviours shape teacher identity development of pre-service teachers. Their preliminary role is to be well-prepared practitioners of their own courses possessing a motivating and encouraging manner in general. In other words, teacher educators need to be role models since role models are considered by Franzak (2002) as one of the sources of impact on the pre-service teachers’ self-conception.

V. CONCLUSION

The very general and overall conclusion of this research is that the current ELT teacher education program fosters teacher identity development of pre-service English teachers to some extent, but not at a satisfactory level. As mentioned in the findings, there is not a direct focus and the content of the courses offered in the program do not target on this critical issue explicitly. Therefore, teacher identity as a significant component of teacher education program should be a targeted outcome and receive the primary focus, rather than being a by-product one. Otherwise, pre-service teachers may not be prepared to meet the challenges of the work and have difficulties in adapting to school reality when they pass to professional life.

The sequence and proportion of the courses does not provide student teachers with a smooth and gradual conceptualization of being a teacher in general, more specifically an English language teacher. It is clear that methodological and practical courses contribute to teacher identity development more directly since student teachers get chances of experiencing the teaching profession first in micro teaching sessions in front of their own friends and then in practicum in a real context. Therefore, teacher identity needs to be signified and can be placed in the curriculum as a specific subject or as a criterion for the assessment of pre-service teachers particularly in practicum. Opportunities such as more teaching practice in various schools at different levels and observing different teachers might be offered to student teachers for a more effective identity development based on school realities.

Finally, the modelling behaviours, supervision and competencies of the teacher educators critically influence teacher beliefs, teacher knowledge, teaching skills and teacher competencies of pre-service teachers as the products of the program. More particularly for the course of practicum in which most teacher identity development is expected to occur, taking a proactive role and having a close cooperation with mentors and school administration of practising schools, teacher educators can eliminate many of the contextual constraints such as differing quality of students, teachers and population of classrooms. Doing so, they could get optimum gains from the ELT teacher education program for a more effective teacher identity development of pre-service English language teachers.

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