ORIGINAL ARTICLE

WILEY

Developing a comprehensive profile of professional development and identity for English language teacher educators

Ufuk Ataş[1] 🄲 | **Ayşegül Daloğlu**[2] 🄲

[1]Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Artvin Çoruh University, Artvin

[2]Department of Foreign Language Education, Faculty of Education, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

Correspondence
Ufuk Ataş, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Artvin Çoruh University, Office: 210, Çayağzı Mah, Şehir Yerleşkesi, Artvin 08100, Türkiye.
Email: atasufuk@gmail.comatas@artvin.edu.tr

Abstract

Despite the growing interest in researching English language teacher educators' (ELTEs) pedagogy, knowledge base, beliefs, and identity development, there is a lack of comprehensive frameworks that encompass these aspects holistically. This study attempts to develop a professional development profile for English language teacher educators by investigating how they define their profession, what professional characteristics and personality traits they possess, what roles and responsibilities they assume, and what constitutes the domains of a knowledge base. Additionally, it explores how they perceive their identities as educators and engage in professional development. The participants were 84 English language teacher educators from across Türkiye. Data were collected via face-to-face semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically. At the end of this study, an integrated professional profile of English language teacher educators is provided, which includes insights into their professional identities. The profile has implications beyond Türkiye and might contribute to the broader understanding and enhancement of professional development for language teacher educators globally. As the study addresses a gap in the field, its outcomes

are expected to contribute to the ongoing discussions and efforts to support teacher educators in their continuous learning and development.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The significance of teacher educators' professional development (PD) has been underscored across various global contexts and perspectives (Bates et al., 2011; Lunenberg et al., 2014; Swennen & van der Klink, 2009; among others). However, within the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), research on the professional development and identities of English language teacher educators (ELTEs) is relatively scarce, despite a growing interest in researching ELTEs on their pedagogy (Johnson & Golombek, 2020), knowledge base (Banegas, 2022), beliefs (Yuan, 2017), and identity development (Yazan, 2022). Against this backdrop, more attention is still needed about how ELTEs define the roles and responsibilities of their profession, how these shape and re-shape their professional identities, and how their professional identities bring about their understandings in and practices for professional development.

ELTEs are a unique occupational group as they actively shape the skills and perspectives of language teachers and teacher candidates (TCs). Their pedagogy, identity, and professional development are central to the work they do as educators. These core domains are significant in contributing to the knowledge base of language teacher education (Barkhuizen, 2021). However, the pathways to becoming an ELTE vary widely within language teacher education, encompassing transition to being a teacher educator after teaching languages in language classrooms, to non-traditional trajectories initiated through graduate studies, often with little to no classroom experience. In this sense, becoming and being an ELTE involves a complex process of professional identity development (Yuan & Lee, 2022). Acknowledging this complexity has prompted a call for more studies that conceptualize the lived experiences of ELTEs in diverse institutional settings. (Barkhuizen, 2017; Yazan, 2018). Therefore, this paper aims to portray a comprehensive understanding of a conceptual profile based on empirical data for the roles, responsibilities, and professional development of ELTEs. Within these perspectives, this paper explores the dimensions of professional development for ELTEs, working both in school-based and university-based contexts, through an in-depth examination of their experiences, understandings, beliefs, and practices that guide their profession. The following over-arching research question and its sub-questions guide the study: How do English language teacher educators' (ELTEs) roles, responsibilities, and professional development practices influence their professional identities? (1) What are the roles and responsibilities of ELTEs? (2) What constitutes the professional competencies of ELTEs? (3) What do ELTEs believe they should do for professional development?

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Language teacher educators and the importance of their identities

In the context of language teacher education, ELTEs are defined as teacher educators who teach about how to teach languages (Barkhuizen, 2021). They work in higher education institutions as faculty, teaching prospective language teachers and conducting research in language education and teacher education, and in schools as

experienced language teachers who prepare future language teachers (Yuan & Lee, 2022). While various definitions of teacher educators exist in the field of English Language Teaching, including academic teacher educators, supervisors, teacher trainers, mentors, and graduate teaching assistants (Barkhuizen, 2021; Yazan, 2019), in this study, we specifically define ELTEs as academics at universities (university-based teacher educators) and teachers at schools (school-based mentor teachers). ELTEs are those who prepare pre-service teachers (PSTs) for the profession and contribute to both the theoretical and practical aspects of their professional development.

From a sociocultural perspective, professional identity is situated in social and cultural practices, shaped by particular contexts and discourses, reflecting a teacher educator's meaning, values, attitudes, dispositions, and practices (Davey, 2013). Wenger (1998) addresses five dimensions of identity formation dependent on the macro, micro, individual, and group dynamics; identity as negotiated experience, community membership, learning trajectory, nexus of multi-membership, and a relation between the local and the global. For ELTEs, these dynamics of professional identity are shaped by pedagogy (of language teacher education), research, scholarship, institutional service and leadership, and community service and leadership (Barkhuizen, 2021). These multiple roles and identities are constantly negotiated as ELTEs try to balance their preferences. As Yazan (2022) mentions, understanding the dynamics of ELTEs' professional identity and identity construction provides insights into both the development and growth of ELTEs themselves, as well as enables teacher candidates' pedagogical knowledge, skills, and teacher identities to develop. In this sense, ELTEs' identities and professional development practices are inextricably linked, as their involvement in the communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) influences their practices. Professional development is then seen as the development of personal identities (Swennen et al., 2010). Such a conceptualization of professional development through the lens of identity development enables ELTEs to assert ownership of their ongoing self-development (Yazan, 2018), also positioning them as learners and reflective scholars (Peercy et al., 2019). Davey (2013) offers a descriptive framework which can be used to examine this link between identity and professional development through five lenses. These include 'becoming,' focusing on motivations and initial experiences; 'doing,' exploring perceptions of teacher education as a job or career; 'knowing,' delving into the professional knowledge base; 'being,' encompassing various roles and emotions; and 'belonging,' examining collective identity and affiliations with professional communities.

In contrast to the relatively growing body of research on language teacher educators' identity and professional development on a global scale, there is a notable dearth of research in the Turkish contexts on ELTEs. Limited research on in-service teacher educators in Türkiye addresses the complexities of in-service school-based teacher educators' roles (O'Dwyer & Atlı, 2015); identity development of in-service teacher educators and their transitions from being teachers (Gümüşok & Seferoğlu, 2023); and identity tensions of in-service teacher educators (Eryılmaz & Dikilitaş, 2023). In summary, the limited research on ELTEs' professional development and identity construction in Türkiye positions them as "hidden professionals" (Livingston, 2014).

2.2 | A knowledge base for language teacher educators

Early frameworks discussed the knowledge base of teacher training and EFL (Britten, 1985a; Gower et al., 1983) mainly through critical issues that might be related to EFL teacher educators, such as roles of the teaching practice supervisors, preparing trainees for teaching practice, planning lessons, presenting and practising language. For instance, Britten (1985b) mentions knowledge of English and methodology as bases for teacher training in EFL. Though not many studies are available for a knowledge base for English Language Teaching (ELT) teacher educators, pedagogical knowledge of language teaching and learning processes (Freeman & Johnson, 1998), knowledge of the language and ELT theories (Moradkhani et al., 2013), and literature and culture (Yuan & Hu, 2018) are among the few that are available in the literature. Also, highlighting the lack of research on a knowledge base of language teacher educators, Yuan and Yang (2022) developed a heuristic, context-specific model of expertise shaped by the institutional and sociocultural environment. Their model emphasizes research-based and contextual knowledge, a

mindset for continuous learning, emotional intelligence, and willingness to participate in expertise communities. In a way, a knowledge base for language teacher educators is seen as "a complex, emergent, adaptive system which is constantly shifting and evolving" (p. 21).

2.3 | Professional development for teacher educators

The process of becoming an ELTE is not the same for all. While some ELTEs have considerable teaching experience and are confident in their subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, others might have limited language teaching experience or none at all as they take the non-traditional pathway, after completing a graduate degree (Barkhuizen, 2021). Therefore, they must constantly improve their understanding and practice by engaging in professional development activities (Smith, 2003a). A particular interest in investigating teacher educators' PD has been investments in strengthening their competencies through *standards* for professional development in various jurisdictions (Vanassche et al., 2021). Though standards are valuable as they define and determine what teacher educators should know and be able to do, they also present a predominant way of seeing professional development. Such a way of seeing fails to explicate the contextual nature of PD for teacher educators and focuses on a prescriptive nature of defining professional development.

Professional development frameworks such as those offered by the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) in the USA, the Dutch Association of Teacher Educators (VELON), the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), and the International Forum for Teacher Educator Development (InFo-TED) help contribute to mapping and understanding the professional development of teacher educators, and other stakeholders involved. In Türkiye, two rather old sources outline teacher educators' properties, roles, and responsibilities through a set of standards. The first source is the 1981 Law on Higher Education by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in Türkiye, which defines the duties of teaching staff without specific on-field or institutional specifications. Additionally, the National Education Development Project (1994–1999) for Pre-service Teacher Education, a collaboration between the CoHE in Türkiye and the World Bank from 1997 to 1998, presents two documents that specify the roles and responsibilities of institutions, such as the universities and teacher training schools, and teacher educators (Council of Higher Education in Türkiye, 1998; Sands et al., 1997; Sands & Özçelik, 1997). However, these documents fail to specify the current understanding and needs of teacher educators' PD and do not provide a specific profile for ELTEs. A PD profile has remained almost non-existing for language teacher educators in Türkiye.

3 | METHODOLOGY

3.1 | The study context and participants

Initial English language teacher education in the Turkish context is primarily conducted through four-year bachelor's degree programmes in English Language Teaching (ELT) departments at universities, governed by the Council of Higher Education in Türkiye (CoHE). These departments mainly provide a theoretical background in planning curriculum and instruction, delivered by university-based teacher educators (UBTEs). The practical aspects of teaching English and the connection between curriculum, materials, and assessment are given at primary and secondary levels at schools in the supervised practicum context, guided by school-based mentor teachers (SBMTs). The CoHE plays a major role in the recruitment processes of all academic staff, including UBTEs, alongside the universities whose senates define a list of competencies, skills, the number and quality of publications necessary for appointment as a UBTE. The universities communicate their needs for recruitment with these criteria to the CoHE. Based on the number of vacant positions and the strategic priorities,

the CoHE announces the positions, the candidates apply, and the universities process the applications. The final recruitment plans are then submitted to the CoHE for approval. UBTEs in Türkiye are required to have a minimum master's degree in language teaching to teach and supervise PSTs, many hold a PhD in language teaching or other related educational sciences. SBMTs are recruited among existing English language teachers at schools by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) based on their years of experience, educational background, and qualifications including attendance to professional development seminars on teacher education. SBMTs are also chosen in accordance with the UBTEs previous successful collaboration experiences at schools in supervised practicum. Despite the fundamental differences in the roles, functions, and identities of school-based teachers and teacher educators based in universities, particularly in their divergent conceptions of theory and practice, the UBTEs and SBMTs work in partnership to educate PSTs. They share responsibilities in observing, guiding, and assessing the qualities and skills of PSTs. In this sense, they are also considered teacher educators in the Turkish context, specifically responsible for the practical realities of teaching. This study, while presenting the perspectives of UBTEs and SBMTs separately, defines them as part of the cohort of English language teacher educators (ELTEs). For the purposes of this study, we use the term ELTE to refer collectively to both UBTEs and SBMTs. While UBTEs focus on the theoretical and research aspects of teacher education, SBMTs provide practical guidance and mentorship during the practicum phase. Using the term ELTE allows us to address the professional development of teacher educators in a comprehensive manner that integrates both theoretical and practical dimensions.

Against this backdrop, this research is designed as a qualitative case study (Creswell, 2013) to provide a holistic understanding of ELTEs' experiences and identities. Data were collected from 41 UBTEs and 43 SBMTs. These participants were located in 12 universities and 22 schools in 11 cities across Türkiye, chosen by maximum variation sampling (Given, 2008) covering all geographical regions to represent a coherent sample and a broad spectrum of ELTEs across Türkiye. University-based teacher educators consist of academics working at the ELT programs at state universities. There were five professors, seven associate professors, fifteen assistant professors, eight instructors holding a PhD degree, one research assistant with a PhD degree, and five lecturers with MA degrees. Their experiences as teacher educators varied between one to 37 years. School-based mentor teachers are ELT teachers who have been asked to mentor pre-service teachers in their practicum period. They work in different levels (primary, secondary, and high schools) and public and private schools. They have 1 to 21 years of experience as teachers and mentor teachers. The contextual specificity in this study, with its implications for international contexts, aligns with the inherent nature of a qualitative case study, which seeks to achieve a thorough understanding of ELTEs' professional roles and development situated in university and school contexts.

3.2 | Data collection and analysis

This study used semi-structured face-to-face interviews as the data collection method. The interview protocol was developed based on Davey's (2013) descriptive framework for investigating professional identity via the five lenses: *becoming* and *belonging* (teacher educators' intentions and motivations in becoming and belonging as teacher educators), *doing* (professional development practices), *knowing* (professional knowledge base and competences), *being* (professional roles, definitions, characteristics). This framework was selected because it establishes a crucial link between identity and professional development, allowing us to create a profile for ELTEs. While our primary focus is on professional development, we also aim to capture the multifaceted nature of identities. The interview questions included ELTEs' definitions of their work, roles, general characteristics and personality traits of being an ELTE, the competences and knowledge base of ELTEs, and how they defined and what their practices were in ensuring professional development and *doing* teacher education. Before the data collection, the interview questions were piloted with eight teacher educators at the home institution of the researchers to ensure they were clear, and representative of the research aims. Academic research ethics were

strictly followed in all phases of this study, following APA's ethical principles and code of conduct. Approval was sought by the Human Research Ethics Committee, and participant consent was sought for the interviews.

The interviews with UBTEs and SBMTs were conducted in Turkish ($n = 59$) and English ($n = 25$), based on their preferences. The interviews ranged from 13 to 65 min, with an average length of 30 min. Due to the tight teaching and research schedules of UBTES and SBMTs, some of the interviews were done in breaks, contributing to the observed variation in durations. Despite this variability, we opted to include these interviews to ensure a comprehensive representation of perspectives, prioritizing the rich insights shared by participants even within time constraints. The combined interview time amounted to 36 h and 52 min. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the Turkish interviews underwent translation. We utilized content analysis following Patton (2015) to derive codes and patterns. The coding process, following Saldana (2009), involved two primary phases: first-level codes, wherein the raw data was scrutinized to discern the general themes corresponding to each code, and second-level codes, where these coded utterances were revisited to undergo further coding, ultimately leading to the final codes. As an example, the statement "*I also think that they have to know a bit of psychology and sociology because they need to understand the mood of pre-service teachers doing practice at schools*" made by participant U10 underwent a two-step coding process. Initially, it was categorized under the broader theme of *competences*. In the subsequent coding cycle, it was further refined and placed under the more specific theme *knowledge base*. To ensure reliability, a second coder, an expert in the field, independently coded 10% of the data for the purpose of inter-coder agreement. The procedural steps comprised: (1) Verbatim transcription of data, (2) Initial reading for the development of first-level codes, (3) Systematic coding during re-reading for the establishment of second-level codes, (4) Reorganizing recurring patterns to identify overarching themes, (5) Data reduction with a focus on the research questions, (6) Development of themes, and (7) Presentation and interpretation of the results.

4 | RESULTS

The results of this study were presented in three primary themes that emerged in response to the sub-research questions: (1) ELTEs' professional definitions, and roles (2) ELTEs' expertise, and (3) ELTEs' professional development practices. The first theme discusses how ELTEs identified themselves, their motivations to become an ELTE, and their roles and responsibilities. The second theme presents results on a knowledge base of ELTEs and their skills. The last theme reports the results on definitions and practices of professional development for ELTEs (Table 1).

4.1 | ELTEs' professional definitions and roles

In delving into the professional identities of ELTEs, the first theme elucidates the distinct motivations and pathways of becoming and being a teacher educator influencing university-based teacher educators (UBTEs) and school-based

TABLE 1 Outline of themes.

ELTEs' identities	Sub themes
1. ELTEs' professional definitions and roles	1.1 Who are they? 1.2 Motivations to become ELTE 1.3 Roles and responsibilities
2. ELTEs' expertise	2.1 Knowledge base 2.2 Skills
3. Professional Development (PD) Practices ELTEs	3.1 Defining PD for teacher educators 3.2 PD practices

mentor teachers (SBMTs). They particularly underscore the role of role-modelling and apprenticeship experiences during graduate studies, as evident in the accounts of university-based teacher educators who describe the academic pathway as 'a constant process of development and growth within a master-apprenticeship environment' (U40). In other words, they were conscious of their aspirations to become teacher educators. One experienced UBTE stated: 'at the age of 22, I said to myself that I would be a language teacher educator…I did all my studies and professional development activities not just as a teacher or learner of English, but as a teacher educator' (U2). On the contrary, practical reasons also seemed to play a part in their decisions to become a ELTEs as they 'see lots of people at the universities having their MA and PhD degrees' (U3) and decide to 'involve in the process' (U3). These conscious or practical choices in deciding to become a teacher educator are sometimes not seen in other participants who simply had to become a teacher educator due to requests from the department administrators. For example:

> 'I did not have my PhD degree when I took the students to the practicum experience, and my master's degree was in English literature. I only knew the basic concepts. At first, I objected a lot, saying I could not do this. I wasn't qualified. However, the then available conditions of the university and the department did not permit this, because everyone had a lot course load and student load, I was dragged into this'
>
> (U10).

It is important to note that there have been recent changes in mentor teacher assignments in Türkiye. Specifically, SBMTs now need to attend a certificate program to be assigned as one. The data collected for this study precedes these changes and reflects the conditions at the time of data collection.

SMBTs also recounted circumstances where they were randomly dragged into the profession: 'It is actually random. I, for instance, have six teaching hours per day. Pre-service teacher supervision is given to the ones who have six hours daily. My friend, for instance, has four hours, teaches less than me, and is not assigned' (S11). However, some others believed that they 'do not need any specific training to become teacher educators' (S5) since they are doing the same things as teacher educators that they do as teachers. These, however, also affect their sense of belonging as teacher educators because they do not believe that they contribute enough to the professional development of pre-service teachers: 'I do not fully see myself as a teacher educator because I do not think I have enough opportunities to criticize him or guide him' (S24). In other words, school-based mentor teachers' sense of belonging as teacher educators mainly focuses on educating, guiding, and sharing experiences with pre-service teachers.

Several UBTEs emphasized that *being a good role model* for pre-service teachers was critical: "Teacher educator is more like a muse, more like an inspirational fairy… very much like, a literary person" (U28). In addition to guiding pre-service teachers, they felt it essential to consistently engage in academic activities such as writing articles, participating in conferences, and reviewing/editing materials to meet the demands of their profession. Furthermore, they emphasized the importance of disseminating research findings. Teaching courses, delivering lectures, and guiding graduate students were also highlighted as significant aspects of their roles. This diversity of roles and responsibilities was highlighted by one teacher educator as follows:

> "One identity is, of course, a teacher. I also monitor the practicum; my identity is the teacher educator. I see myself as a guide to my students. I was an Erasmus coordinator for two years in another role. Also, I am a researcher. I am the MA and PhD advisor. Also, the Institute of Education asked me to give a course for the other departments"
>
> (U19).

SBMTs mentioned *guiding/supervising pre-service teachers and facilitating professional development* as their only role. One mentioned: 'It is more important that they see us instead of the model presented by the academicians'

(S5), emphasizing the importance of their role-modelling over the UBTEs. Teacher educators believed that pre-service teachers were to be treated as future colleagues and prospective teachers, as stated by one university-based teacher educator: 'It is especially beneficial to treat the students as younger colleagues. The students care about this because they will be teachers next year. It is crucial to treat them as adults, not students' (U34), highlighting the importance of considering pre-service teachers as professionals in the making.

4.2 | ELTEs' expertise: knowledge base and skills

The analysis yields a key theme regarding how ELTEs shape their expertise; *how* they construct a knowledge base and *what* domains were included in this knowledge base. UBTEs noted that their knowledge base is formed through a combination of experience, academic studies, research, and apprenticeship. Notably, this construction is largely attributed to individual efforts, as expressed by one participant: "Unfortunately, this is learned *en route* due to the lack of circumstances in our country" (U34), referring the non-traditional pathway of becoming an ELTE through graduate studies, without necessarily having prior experiences in teaching English in language classrooms. In contrast, SBMTs primarily rely on experience, both as teachers and mentors, for building their knowledge base as ELTEs. There is a distinct emphasis on the absence of formal training for mentoring pre-service teachers. One participant emphasized this by stating, "I have not taken any training for this" (S36), relying instead on their past experiences as a mentee to inform their role as a teacher educator.

The results pertaining to the domain of a knowledge base for ELTEs revealed five main categories: knowledge of content and pedagogy; knowledge of learners and learning; knowledge of curriculum and assessment; knowledge of policy, system and society; and knowledge of research. Both UBTEs and SBMTs identified *pedagogical content knowledge* as the most crucial domain of ELTEs' knowledge base. While UBTEs prioritize the theoretical aspects of knowledge about learners and learning, such as understanding what learning is, how people learn, how language is acquired, and exploring various approaches to learning, SBMTs predominantly focus on practical dimensions. This includes aspects like adapting behaviour to different learner groups, understanding student psychology, and mastering classroom management. Underlining the varied nature of language classrooms, one UBTE emphasized that teacher educators 'should understand what goes on in the language classrooms' (U2), pointing partly to a possible lack of experience caused by the non-traditional pathway.

UBTEs highlighted two crucial aspects of knowledge within the domain of curriculum and assessment: familiarity with teacher education curricula at the university and English language curricula at schools. This knowledge is seen as vital for connecting theory and practice in educating pre-service teachers. As one UBTE emphasized, "We should also have a good knowledge of the curriculum, to see how things are done in our country, be able to connect the theory and practice" (U8). While UBTEs stressed the importance of understanding the education system, SBMTs underscored the significance of cultural awareness, language planning, and comprehending policy. In the domain of research, ELTEs mentioned multifaceted components. Classroom research was explicitly highlighted as an essential component, adding depth to the understanding of research in teaching English in language classrooms.

ELTEs also highlighted a range of skills, including modelling teaching, establishing effective communication, conducting research, reflecting on practices and developing professionally, observing and reporting on learning, modelling language use, and investigating and solving problems as a teacher educator. Both UBTEs and SBMTs reported modelling teaching and establishing practical communication skills as the most critical skills of an ELTE as 'the ability to communicate with others, both with student teachers and teachers at schools, and society' (U8). Conducting research, mentioned only by UBTEs, was another highlighted skill. They reported that having good research skills would enable them to develop contextual knowledge related to their problems. Another frequently mentioned skill was *observing and reporting on learning*, in which emphasis was made on observing the practicum process, providing detailed feedback on what is good and what needs improving, and thus, reporting on the

learning process. One SBMT mentioned that 'they need to be aware of why they are doing what they are doing' (S19). Additionally, they emphasized that a teacher educator's role was to serve as a language model, exhibiting pragmatic competence and effective use of language in different social contexts.

In examining the construction of ELTEs' knowledge base, UBTEs and SBMTs demonstrated distinct approaches. UBTEs emphasized individual efforts, often stemming from non-traditional pathways, while SBMTs relied on practical experiences, revealing a gap in formal training. Both prioritized pedagogical content knowledge, with UBTEs focusing on theoretical aspects and SBMTs on practical dimensions, acknowledging the diverse nature of language classrooms. This finding underscores the dynamic interplay between theoretical foundations and practical applications in ELTEs' expertise.

4.3 | ELTEs' professional development practices

Data from UBTEs and SBMTs were analysed separately and then integrated to identify common themes and unique insights. For instance, UBTEs provided in-depth knowledge on academic competencies, while SBMTs highlighted practical implementation strategies. This dual analysis ensured that the professional development profile was comprehensive and well-rounded. As the analyses revealed in exploring the professional development practices of ELTEs, it is evident that their reported strategies for PD encompass a range of activities, including research, collaboration, participation in professional learning events, and a strong emphasis on reflective practices. In detailing the PD practices, a general distinction arose between UBTEs and SBMTs. While UBTEs mainly mentioned research, SBMTs mentioned professional learning activities that contributed to their professional development. One UBTE summarized these practices: 'I attend conferences and try to learn from them, and I try to read a lot' (U23). SBMTs mostly referred to research to develop their classroom practices by reading academic publications, especially in areas they believed needed development. One mentioned: 'I search on the internet. Specifically, I read articles related to the problems I encounter. I read about classroom management' (S9).

Another significant professional development practice for teacher educators was reported to be collaboration. SBMTs reported that collaborating with pre-service teachers for their practicum experience helped them develop. One mentioned: 'We also learn from pre-service teachers. We say, "Why haven't I thought about this?" They can also see what we're missing when teaching' (S30), underscoring the reciprocal nature of this collaboration with a highlight on a mutual learning process, where both ELTEs and pre-service teachers contribute to each other's professional growth.

The third sub-category for professional development practice was engaging in professional learning activities such as attending and giving training courses, following technology, doing graduate studies, doing field experience in schools, and even going abroad. Though many SBMTs questioned the content of seminars organized by the Ministry of Education, they believed those were essential practices to improve oneself: 'There are training sessions, conferences, seminars outside the school, not only at school. I also attended many seminars about teaching English' (S19), highlighting the recognition among SBMTs that these seminars are essential for their personal and professional improvement.

Lastly, a highly frequently mentioned practice was reflection. Some noted how they questioned their practices: 'I put myself in the shoes of the students... How should I be? How better shall I be? How do these teacher candidates benefit to the full extent?' (U30). A school-based teacher educator mainly referred to their practices when observing pre-service teachers: 'In a boring lesson, time does not flow when I sit in the kids' place. There were moments when I thought about what I was doing when the students were bored' (S2). With this mindset, teacher educators reported that they were to constantly reflect on their practices, find what was missing and try to develop these. In summary, the professional development practices of English ELTEs revealed a diverse range of strategies, with distinctions between UBTEs and SBMTs. While strengths in research, collaboration, and

reflection are evident, a more balanced integration of these elements was missing that could enhance the adaptability of ELTEs to the evolving challenges in language teacher education.

5 | DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to explore the professional identities of English language teacher educators by investigating their roles, responsibilities, and professional development practices. Additionally, the study aimed to formulate a comprehensive profile specifically designed for language teacher educators. This profile encompassed their professional definitions of the job, the essential professional competencies they require, and the most effective professional development practices that can support their growth and effectiveness in the field.

As Davey (2013) mentions, there are mainly two p to becoming a teacher educator: academic and practitioner. Though becoming a teacher educator by taking the academic path is common in Türkiye, the study revealed that the pathways to becoming a teacher educator varied between UBTEs and SBMTs. It was observed that UBTEs followed different trajectories in their journey to becoming teacher educators. Some UBTEs chose the academic path immediately after graduating, pursuing a career as a teacher educator. On the other hand, some others gained experience by teaching as first-order practitioners (Murray & Male, 2005) and later transitioned into the academic pathway as teacher educators or second-order practitioners (Murray & Male, 2005). For SBMTs, the process of becoming a mentor teacher was found to be more complex. Typically, SBMTs were English teachers at schools who took on the role of supervising pre-service teachers on an ad-hoc basis. They were not explicitly trained or guided in pre-service teacher education. Despite this lack of formal training, SBMTs continued to teach English in addition to their mentoring responsibilities, thus following the practitioner pathway. Taking on the role of supervising pre-service teachers without formal training caused them not necessarily to view themselves as teacher educators. This reluctance to consider themselves teacher educators stems from lacking formal training in teacher education. Britten (1985a) underscores that merely possessing teaching experience does not suffice for one to be recognized as a teacher educator. Teacher educators typically require specialized training and knowledge in the field of teacher education, which goes beyond teaching in the classroom, as reported in this study. Nowadays, SBMTs are required to attend a certificate program to be assigned as mentors. This change aims to provide explicit training and guidance in pre-service teacher education, addressing the previous lack of formal preparation for these roles.

The findings of this study affirm that teacher educators have diverse roles and responsibilities, which is not surprising given the multifaceted nature of the profession. These results align with previous studies in the literature, as defining the precise scope and label of 'teacher educator' presents challenges due to the multitude of roles and titles encompassed within it (Ben-Peretz et al., 2010; Davey, 2013; Lunenberg et al., 2014), such as teachers and researchers (Smith & Flores, 2019), model pedagogues (Ben-Peretz et al., 2010). As ELTEs constantly negotiate multiple roles, including pedagogy, research, scholarship, institutional service, and leadership (Barkhuizen, 2021), understanding the implications of these negotiated roles is crucial for comprehending the professional development needs and practices of ELTEs. In this sense, developing an identity as an ELTE involves two interconnected processes: learning to teach and developing a teacher educator identity (Yazan, 2022).

This study identified a knowledge base for ELTEs on five distinct domains: knowledge of content and pedagogy; learners and learning; curriculum and assessment; policy, system and society; and research. As Russell (1997) mentions: "becoming a teacher educator (or teacher of teachers) has the potential (not always realized) to generate a second level of thought about teaching, one that focuses not on content but on how we teach" (p. 44). The current research reports that the knowledge domains overlap with pedagogical knowledge, contextual knowledge, and social and sociological knowledge discussed by Goodwin and Kosnik (2013) and knowledge of research by Kosnik et al. (2015). Also, teacher educators reported discipline-specific knowledge, such as knowing about language acquisition and how language learning takes place. The SBMTs recounted

that they shared the same knowledge base as ELT teachers and mentor teachers. This is an interesting finding considering that the literature identifies a distinct knowledge base for mentor teachers (Brooks & Sikes, 1997). This might be because mentor teachers believe they are not teacher educators; instead, they see themselves as teachers of English, just helping pre-service teachers when they come to their classrooms. SBMTs heavily relied on their experiences when guiding pre-service teachers. As proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), the concept of participation emphasizes that learning occurs through engagement and immersion in the culture of practice. Thus, being part of a community of practice is crucial for the development of ELTEs. Novice teacher educators could greatly benefit from an apprenticeship process, where they learn from the experiences of more experienced teacher educators. Furthermore, we suggest that the certificate program, now required for mentor teachers in Türkiye, is a crucial step towards ensuring that SBMTs become effective educators. Many SBMTs expressed dissatisfaction with their previous lack of information and training in guiding pre-service teachers. This additional training can equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fulfil their roles as teacher educators.

The third research question of this study revealed the dimensions of professional development for ELTEs. The findings suggest that teacher educators conceptualize professional development as shaped by their identity and expectations (Dengerink et al., 2015; Smith, 2011). The results also indicate that while UBTEs are involved in *research* primarily, SBMTs are engaged in professional learning activities such as conferences and seminars. Similar results have been obtained in the literature on teacher professionalism in different contexts. Teacher educators mostly conduct and benefit from research and attend conferences, seminars, symposiums, workshops, and training sessions (Karagiorgi & Nicolaidou, 2013; Smith, 2003b). Research-based and contextualized knowledge about teaching seems to be an essential factor in PD practices (Yuan & Yang, 2022). These insights into how ELTEs perceive professional development, shaped by their identities and expectations, have broader implications for the development of language teacher education. Understanding these dynamics could inform the design of more tailored and effective professional development initiatives, ensuring that they align with the diverse needs and roles. Furthermore, recognizing the distinct pathways of UBTEs and SBMTs sheds light on the varied ways of becoming and being and ELTE, calling for contextualized approaches in preparing ELTEs for their roles.

6 | CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the diverse pathways and roles of ELTEs, emphasizing the need for specialized training and knowledge beyond teaching experience. The identified knowledge domains and professional development dimensions underscore the complexity of the profession, advocating for contextual approaches to better prepare ELTEs for their multifaceted roles.

Based on the findings reported by ELTEs, this study offers an integrated professional profile of English language teacher educators (see Appendix A). The profile identifies three sections: professional definitions (professional characteristics and personality traits of teacher educators), professional competencies (knowledge base and skills of teacher educators), and professional engagement. The sub-headings under Professional Definitions (A1, A2, A3) come from the first research question in this study, which focuses on the defining characteristics of teacher educators. Under the Professional Competencies profile (B1, B2), the profile addresses the second research question, which emphasizes the essential competencies required by teacher educators. These sub-headings outline the necessary knowledge base and skills that teacher educators need to be effective in their roles. Likewise, the last section in the profile, Professional Engagement (C1), represents the results of the third research question, characterizing dimensions of professional development for teacher educators.

It is important to note that the profile presented in this study is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather, it serves as a comprehensive framework that highlights the multifaceted nature of the professional roles and

responsibilities of ELTEs. By offering this profile, the study aims to provide a structured yet flexible guide that can be adapted to various contexts and needs. The profile is designed to stimulate reflection, discussion, and further research among educators and policymakers, encouraging them to consider how these professional attributes, competencies, and engagements can be nurtured and supported within their specific educational settings.

The profile is unique as it explicitly addresses ELTEs and includes teacher educators' professional characteristics and personality traits, which others do not emphasize. Overall, the findings of this study have implications beyond Türkiye and can contribute to the broader understanding and enhancement of professional development for language teacher educators globally. Therefore, the profile needs to be seen as a *glocal* attempt, emerging from the local context that could potentially contribute to the quality of language teacher educators' practices in global contexts.

While our study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The data were collected using interviews and open-ended surveys, which may not capture the full breadth of ELTEs' professional experiences. Future studies could benefit from employing mixed-method approaches to triangulate data and provide a more comprehensive understanding. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable in examining how professional identities and development practices evolve over time. Additionally, expanding the research to include a more diverse and larger sample could enhance the generalizability of the findings.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

We, as the authors, report no potential conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Though the participants were ensured that their anonymity would be protected, larger transcripts could be provided upon request to the authors.

ORCID

Ufuk Ataş https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8171-8334
Ayşegül Daloğlu https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9274-5952

REFERENCES

Banegas, D. L. (2022). Teacher educators' funds of knowledge for the preparation of future teachers. *RELC Journal*, *53*(3), 686–702. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220973083

Barkhuizen, G. (2017). *Reflections on language teacher identity research*. Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315643465

Barkhuizen, G. (2021). *Language teacher educator identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Bates, T., Swennen, A., & Jones, K. (2011). *The professional development of teacher educators*. Routledge.

Ben-Peretz, M., Kleeman, S., Reichenberg, R., & Shimoni, S. (2010). Educators of educators: Their goals, perceptions and practices. *Professional Development in Education*, *36*(1), 111–129. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415250903454908

Britten, D. (1985a). Teacher training in ELT (Part I). *Language Teaching*, *18*(2), 112–128.

Britten, D. (1985b). Teacher training in ELT (Part II). *Language Teaching*, *18*(3), 220–238.

Brooks, V., & Sikes, P. (1997). *The good mentor guide: Initial teacher education in secondary schools*. Open University Press.

Council of Higher Education in Türkiye. (1998). *Faculty-school partnership and school experience*. Bilkent University.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Davey, R. (2013). *The professional identity of teacher educators: Career on the cusp?* Routledge.

Dengerink, J., Lunenberg, M., & Kools, Q. (2015). What and how teacher educators prefer to learn. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *41*(1), 78–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2014.992635

Eryılmaz, R., & Dikilitaş, K. (2023). *Identity tensions of in-service teacher educators: A narrative inquiry*. Language Teaching Research. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688231216816

Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *32*(3), 397–417. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588114

Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopaedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage.

Goodwin, A. L., & Kosnik, C. (2013). Quality teacher educators=quality teachers? Conceptualizing essential domains of knowledge for those who teach teachers. *Teacher Development*, *17*(3), 334–346. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2013.813766

Gower, R., Walters, S., & Phillips, D. (1983). *Teaching practice: A handbook for teachers in training*. Macmillan.

Gümüşok, F., & Seferoğlu, G. (2023). Developing new professional identities: From in-service teacher to in-service teacher educator. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *49*(4), 680–694. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2022.2133599

Johnson, K. E., & Golombek, P. R. (2020). Informing and transforming language teacher education pedagogy. *Language Teaching Research*, *24*(1), 116–127. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818777539

Karagiorgi, Y., & Nicolaidou, M. (2013). Professional development of teacher educators: Voices from the Greek-Cypriot context. *Professional Development in Education*, *39*(5), 784–798. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.746719

Kosnik, C., Menna, L., Dharamshi, P., Miyata, C., Cleovoulou, Y., & Beck, C. (2015). Four spheres of knowledge required: An international study of the professional development of literacy/English teacher educators. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *41*(1), 52–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2014.992634

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.

Livingston, K. (2014). Teacher educators: Hidden professionals? *European Journal of Education*, *49*(2), 218–232. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12074

Lunenberg, M., Dengerink, J., & Korthagen, F. (2014). *The professional teacher educator: Roles, behaviour, and professional development of teacher educators*. Sense.

Moradkhani, S., Akbari, R., Ghafar Samar, R., & Kiany, G. (2013). English language teacher educators' pedagogical knowledge base: The macro and micro categories. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(10), 123–141.

Murray, J., & Male, T. (2005). Becoming a teacher educator: Evidence from the field. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *21*(2), 125–142. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2004.12.006

O'Dwyer, J., & Atlı, H. (2015). A study of in-service teacher educator roles, with implications for a curriculum for their professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(1), 4–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2014.902438

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (4th ed.). Sage.

Peercy, M. M., Sharkey, J., Baecher, L., Motha, S., & Varghese, M. (2019). Exploring TESOL teacher educators as learners and reflective scholars: A shared narrative inquiry. *TESOL Journal*, *10*(4), e482. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.482

Russell, T. (1997). Teaching teachers: How I teach IS the message. In J. Loughran & T. Russell (Eds.), *Teaching about teaching: Purpose, passion and pedagogy in teacher education* (pp. 32–47). Falmer Press.

Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.

Sands, M., & Özçelik, D. A. (1997). *Okullarda uygulama çalışmaları: ortaöğretim*. Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu.

Sands, M., Özçelik, D. A., Busbridge, J., & Dawson, D. (1997). *Okullarda uygulama çalışmaları: ilköğretim*. Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu.

Smith, K. (2003a). Teacher educators' professional knowledge: how does it differ from teachers' professional knowledge. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL, April 21-25.

Smith, K. (2003b). So, what about the professional development of teacher educators? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *26*(2), 201–215. https://doi.org/10.1080/0261976032000088738

Smith, K. (2011). Professional development of teacher educators. In E. Baker, B. McGaw, & P. Peterson (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of education* (pp. 681–688). Elsevier.

Smith, K., & Flores, M. A. (2019). Teacher educators as teachers and as researchers. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *42*(4), 429–432. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1648972

Swennen, A., Jones, K., & Volman, M. (2010). Teacher educators: Their identities, sub-identities and implications for professional development. *Professional Development in Education*, *36*(1–2), 131–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415250903457893

Swennen, A., & van der Klink, M. (2009). *Becoming a teacher educator: Theory and practice for teacher educators*. Springer.

Vanassche, E., Kelchtermans, G., Vanderlinde, R., & Smith, K. (2021). A conceptual model of teacher educator development: An agenda for future research and practice. In R. Vanderlinde, K. Smith, J. Murray, & M. Lunenberg (Eds.), *Teacher educators and their professional development: Learning from the past, looking to the future* (pp. 15–28). Routledge.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge University Press.

Yazan, B. (2018). TESL teacher educators' professional self-development, identity, and agency. *TESL Canada Journal*, *35*(2), 140–155. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v35i2.1294

Yazan, B. (2019). An autoethnography of a language teacher educator: Wrestling with ideologies and identity positions. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *46*(3), 34–56.

Yazan, B. (2022). Language teacher educator identity. In J. Liontas (Ed.), *TESOL encyclopaedia of English language teaching*. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt1025

Yuan, R. (2017). 'This game is not easy to play': A narrative inquiry into a novice EFL teacher educator's research and publishing experiences. *Professional Development in Education*, *43*(3), 474–491. https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2016.1182936

Yuan, R., & Hu, Y. (2018). Teachers' views on the qualities of effective EFL teacher educators. *ELT Journal*, *72*(2), 141–150. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccx032

Yuan, R., & Lee, I. (2022). *Becoming and being a TESOL teacher educator: Research and practice*. Routledge.

Yuan, R., & Yang, M. (2022). Unpacking language teacher educators' expertise: A complexity theory perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, *56*(2), 656–687. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3088

APPENDIX A

AN INTEGRATED PROFESSIONAL PROFILE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATORS

Integrated professional profile of English language teacher educators

Professional definitions			Professional competences		Professional engagement
A1. Professional Characteristics	A2. Personality Traits	A3. Roles and Responsibilities	B1. Knowledge Base	B2. Skills	C1. Professional Development Practices
A1.1. Trained, experienced and competent in teaching and teacher education	A2.1. Respect pre-service teachers and show empathy	A3.1. Guide and supervise pre-service teachers and facilitate their professional development.	B1.1. Knowledge of content and pedagogy – know the content related to discipline and how to teach it	B2.1. Model teaching that makes theory explicit in an enjoyable way employing efficient time and classroom management strategies, using a variety of methods and materials	C1.1. Research – follow publications, attend and present at conferences, and conduct research
A1.2. Model teaching that facilitates professional development	A2.2. Create a supportive and encouraging learning environment	A3.2. Teach courses, give lectures, and supervise graduate studies	B1.2. Knowledge of learners and learning – know about the nature of learning, language acquisition, classrooms and how learning takes place in other learning environments	B2.2. Use technology and integrate it into teaching	C1.2. Collaboration – observe and cooperate with pre-service teachers, colleagues, schools, universities, and other educational administrators
A1.3. Pursue a mature, intellectual and ethical stance towards the profession	A2.3. Be motivated, passionate and self-confident in the profession.	A3.3. Conduct and disseminate academic research in teaching and teacher education	B1.3. Knowledge of system, policy, and society – have a comprehensive understanding of the education system and its practices, outcomes, and possible changes, language planning, as well as needs of society and culture	B2.3. Establish communication and collaboration with pre-service teachers, colleagues, administrators, and society	C1.3. Professional learning – follow new trends and developments, go abroad, do fieldwork, learn about target language culture and literature, and improve language proficiency skills
A1.4. Reflect on practices and engage in professional development	A2.4. Be friendly, approachable, patient and tolerant towards pre-service teachers.	A3.4. Assume administrative roles and duties in and out of the institution	B1.4. Knowledge of curriculum and assessment – have comprehensive knowledge about teacher education and school curriculum, as well as testing, assessment, materials design and evaluation in ELT	B2.4. Read, localize, conduct and share academic research in teaching and teacher education	C1.4. Reflect on actions and be open to developing with the changes, constantly updating teaching styles and course materials, as well as teaching new courses to new levels

Integrated professional profile of English language teacher educators

Professional definitions		Professional competences	Professional engagement
A2.5. Be open-minded and open to criticism	A3.5. Enable cooperation between schools, universities, community, and educational authorities.	B1.5. Knowledge of research –know how to read, design and conduct studies, and localize research findings in teacher education at a theory and practice level in forms of classroom research	B2.5. Observe, guide, provide feedback, evaluate and report on pre-service teacher learning and teacher education practices
A2.6. Be honest and democratic			B2.6. Model proficiency in language use and promote its development
			B2.7. Analyse unexpected situations, act promptly and have the pre-service teachers gain problem-solving strategies

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Ufuk Ataş is an Associate Professor of English Language Teaching, currently working in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Artvin Çoruh University, Artvin, Türkiye. His general research focuses on teacher education, particularly pre-service/in-service teacher education, professional development, teacher identity, and teacher education programmes/curricula. He is a member of the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE).

Ayşegül Daloğlu is a Professor in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Türkiye. Her areas of professional interest include curriculum development and programme evaluation, teacher education, and testing and assessment in English language education. Her work has been published in various journals.