

**REFLECTIONS ON TEACHER IDENTITY:  
A CASE STUDY OF NOVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

BY

SENA BALBAN

DECEMBER, 2015

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNIŐIK  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurten BİRLİK  
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Cendel KARAMAN  
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Betil ERÖZ TUĞA (METU, FLE) \_\_\_\_\_

Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Cendel KARAMAN (METU, FLE) \_\_\_\_\_

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melek ÇAKMAK (Gazi University, EDS) \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

Name, Last name: Sena BALBAN

Signature:

## **ABSTRACT**

### **REFLECTIONS ON TEACHER IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF NOVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

Balban, Sena

M.A., Program of English Language Teaching  
Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Cendel Karaman  
December, 2015, 135 pages

This study aimed to explore how three novice teachers viewed their teacher identity in their first of teaching and what prominent elements they related to these views in a higher education institution in Ankara, Turkey. In this sense, a qualitative case study was conducted by gathering data through two major tools: semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. During 22-week data collection period, 7 rounds of interviews (21 interviews around 400 minutes) were held with the participant teachers, which were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The participant teachers' classrooms were also observed for 4 times for per participant (a total of 12 observations) and extensive field notes were taken. The data were organized regularly in separate files and immense readings were done. Coding and defining themes followed this process. The findings revealed two themes for each participant's case. In Kumsal's case, rejection of the teacher identity and obsession with authority were the main themes emerged, while Ayla's case involved seeking constant approval and identity transition. Gamze's case was themed under age and professionalism, and despair and blaming self. Lastly, the participant teachers reported political capitals, student profile, workload, standardized tests and curriculum policy, and professional development opportunities were salient elements related to their teacher identity views.

Keywords: Novice teacher; first year of teaching; teacher identity

## ÖZ

### ÖĞRETMEN KİMLİĞİ DÜŞÜNCELERİ: MESLEĞE YENİ BAŞLAYAN YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETMENLERİ İLE DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

Balban, Sena

Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Dili Öğretimi  
Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. A. Cendel Karaman  
Aralık, 2015, 135 sayfa

Bu çalışma mesleğe yeni başlayan üç tecrübesiz öğretmenin mesleklerinin ilk senesinde Türkiye’de bir yükseköğretim kurumunda kendi öğretmen kimliklerini nasıl ele aldıklarını ve ne tür değişkenleri bu süreçle ilintili bulduklarını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, iki ana yöntemle, yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve gözlemler yoluyla, veri elde edilerek nitel bir durum çalışması yürütülmüş. Yirmi iki haftalık veri toplama süreci boyunca yedi tur sözlü görüşme (toplamda yaklaşık 400 dakika ve 21 görüşme) yapılmıştır ve tüm görüşmeler ses kaydı yapıp kelimesi kelimesine çözümlenmiştir. Katılımcı öğretmenlerin her birinin sınıfı 4’er kere gözlemlenmiş (toplamda 12 gözlem) ve kapsamlı saha notları alınmıştır. Veriler düzenli olarak ayrı dosyalarda düzenlenmiş ve detaylı okumalar yapılmıştır. Bu süreci kodlama ve ortaya çıkan konuları yorumlama yoluyla analiz izlemiştir. Bulgular her bir katılımcı için iki temel tema ortaya çıkarmıştır. Kumsal’ın durumunda ortaya çıkan temalar öğretmen kimliğinin reddi ve otorite takıntısıdır. Ayla’nın durumunda sürekli onay beklentisi ve kimlik geçişi temaları görülmüştür. Gamze’nin durumunda ise yaş ve profesyonellik ile çaresizlik ve kendini suçlama temaları yer almıştır. Son olarak politik güçler, öğrenci profili, iş yükü, standart sınavlar ile öğretim izlencesi ve profesyonel gelişim fırsatları katılımcı öğretmenler tarafından kendi öğretmen kimliği görüşleriyle ilintili bulunmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Tecrübesiz öğretmen; öğretmenliğin ilk senesi; öğretmen kimliği

**To my beloved parents**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Cendel KARAMAN for his continuous support, patience and facilitation of knowledge construction. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my study. Besides my advisor, I would like to extend my thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Betil ERÖZ TUĞA and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melek ÇAKMAK for their precious feedback and support during my study.

I would also like to thank all my professors in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University for encouraging me to find knowledge everywhere and for helping me to become a better person, learner and teacher.

My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Taner YAPAR, the director of the Department of Foreign Languages at TOBB University of Economics and Technology (TOBB UET) and Beril AYMAN YÜCEL who was always with me in every step I took in this process. I also thank my fellow colleagues, especially Hakan TARHAN, Özlem ÖZBAKIŞ, Begüm YENGEL, Seda Bahar YAVÇAN, Duygu Beste BAŞER and Özge MERTER for their endless encouragement and support during my research.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my father, Cengiz BALBAN, my mother Makbule BALBAN, my brother Murat BALBAN, my aunt Bahriye GİRİCİ and my life time supporter Ufuk POLAT for encouraging me throughout writing this thesis and for being there for me all my life.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

After graduating from my teacher education program, the teaching contexts I have served and the problems I have encountered as a novice teacher encouraged me to search ways to become a more effective teacher. However, the lack of guidance and professional assistance affected my enthusiasm and motivation to pursue my goal: becoming a better teacher.

Being a student in June and teaching Turkish in August as a foreign language teaching assistant in a state university in the United States as a Fulbright scholar helped me realize the necessity of professional cooperation and communication among language teachers to understand and be aware of my own professional self, especially as a novice teacher. I was provided with clear goals and responsibilities as a teacher, while an experienced teacher cooperated with me via observations and facilitative feedback sessions. In spite of the cultural and academic differences between Turkey and the United States, the professional support given by the university faculty fortified my understanding of self as a teacher during my first year of teaching.

However, after I came back to Turkey to teach English in language courses and universities in EFL environments, I was alone to face the difficulties and find solutions to them, which left me highly confused about the profession itself and my roles as a *teacher- learner* (Johnson, 2012). Frequently, I found myself questioning my effectiveness as a teacher, felt confused about my classroom practices and I felt like I failed at this profession. The monotonous routine of teaching, hectic work load of the institution I served and student misbehaviors were some of the unavoidable challenges in this process. Additionally, observing peer teachers experiencing similar challenges

persuaded me to explore facets of novice teachers' experiences and reflections on their professional identity.

Similar to my personal experience, the first years of teaching is a reality shock for novice teachers, since it is the time to experience real teaching environments after they complete their teacher education programs. However, changing the student role into a teacher role is not an easy transition. Although previous schooling experiences and nature of the teacher education programs mediate this period, socialization of novice teachers by teaching and interacting with others to be a part of the institutional culture is the main element shaping this transition (Farrell, 2009). Furthermore, as Kumaravadivelu (2012) stated "we cannot separate the teacher from teaching any more than we can separate the dancer from dancing" (p. 55). In this respect, novice teachers' success in their classroom practices is highly intertwined with their awareness of professional self which starts with the awareness in professional teacher identity. This recognition process enables teacher learners to provide contextually, socially and educationally appropriate opportunities to their students (Johnson, 2012). In other words, teacher learners' efficacy, their ability and motivation to face educational challenges and applying innovative practices in their classrooms are deeply concerned with professional teacher identity (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000).

Zembylas (2005) describes teachers as autonomous individuals who are constantly in need of interacting with other teachers in line with their "teacher identity". The notion of "teacher identity" has strong ties with experiences in classroom, besides beliefs, emotions, attitudes and values of the teacher. For this reason, identity "is not a preexisting, stable element that becomes disciplined through discourses and practices of emotion" (p.109), but "shifting, and in conflict by the same token it is transformational and transformative" (Varghese, Morgan, Johnson & Johnson, 2005, pp.22-23). Moreover, it is not "context-free but is crucially related to social, cultural, and political context- interlocutors, institutional settings" (p.23) and it is "constructed, maintained, and negotiated to a significant extent through language and discourse" (p.23). Similarly, Miller (2009) explains identity as "a way of doing things but is

influenced by what is legitimated by others in any social context” (p.173). In this aspect, she asserts that many variables; such as pre-service teacher education programs, institutional practices, socio cultural characteristics of students, working conditions of teachers or curriculum policy, can facilitate or hinder the dynamics of professional identity negotiation for teachers.

All in all, teachers’ success in their classroom practices depends deeply on their professional and personal knowledge as well as their understanding of the learners’ needs and motivations. However, to be able to apply these aspects into their teachings, teachers should be aware of their “self” which is blended in their teacher identities, beliefs and values (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). In other words, to be successful practitioners and to help learners attain the desired learning outcomes, it is vital for teachers to recognize their “personal disposition toward various aspects of their professional life” (p.55).

However, gaining this recognition of professional self is not an easy process for novice teachers due to the reality shock of being in a real classroom after graduating from the teacher education program and being overwhelmed with the complexity of a teaching environment (Farrell, 2008). Even though growing body of research explore the issues related to professional teacher identity and the difficulties of the first year of teaching (Beijard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Farrell, 2003; Flores, 2006; Hong, 2010), this process should be explored and addressed by systematical research (Ruohotie- Lythy, 2013). In this regard, this study aim to explore the reflection of novice language teachers on their teacher identities and elements they found notable in relation to these reflections.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Sociocultural Theory

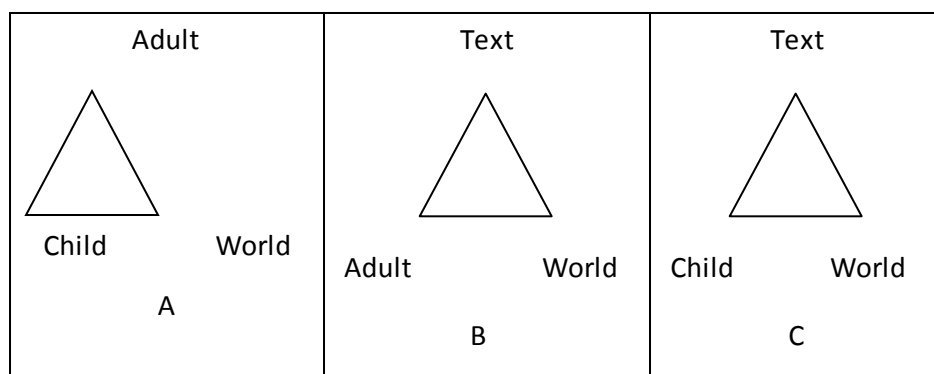
Learning has been accepted as a social process for the last 30 years with the works of a scientist; L.S. Vygotsky. His works have brought different perspectives on the issues related to human nature, child development, psychology, education, language and learning (McInerney, Walker & Liem, 2011). Especially, his theory underlining the eminence of understanding contextual characteristics in line with the individuals, social dynamics and activities impacted the field of education where teaching and learning are socially- complex in nature (Schoen, 2011). In other words, learning is deeply intermingled with individuals, social and contextual dynamics in terms of human thought and behaviors. In this respect, SCT (Sociocultural Theory) of Vygotsky (1978) contributes to the educational literature by exploring the multiple layers of a dynamic process and by enabling a holistic picture of it (Schoen, 2011).

SCT highlights the complex relationship among human mental functioning with cultural, historical and contextual situations as Wertsch (1995) is quoted in Johnson (2009). By being engaged with a social activity where *semiotic artifacts* such as symbols or materials are used, human mental functioning and development are carried to a higher-level of thinking, while this process is mediated by interaction, language and context (Johnson, 2009). During this mediation period, the meaning is constructed in the social group through the language and tools whose meanings are negotiated in relation to the group's culture and history. As a result, individuals and the social activity engaged go under a transformation depending on "[t]he sum of the individual's prior experiences, the sociocultural contexts in which the learning takes place, and what the individual wants, needs, and/or is expected to do with that knowledge" (Johnson, 2009, p. 2).



Although interaction is one of the keys in SCT, moving from biological developments to higher mental functions necessitates a more knowledgeable other for the mediation period. Since *the other* has already learned the targeted activity through the mediation of the cultural tools, the learner will be able to read those cultural tools and internalize the experience for herself. By this way, learning process will move from *interpsychological* phase defined as “between people” by Vygotsky (1978, p.57) to *intrapsychological* phase described as inside the learner (Smitd, 2009).

In this respect, it can be claimed that moving from social and individual to development requires mediation with the help of an experienced through interaction, language and tools for a novice to learn. Cole (1996) uses the following figures to illustrate to-be-coordinated systems of the mediation (Daniels, 2008). In these diagrams, A and B represents the experiences of the world for the learner mediated by the more experienced other and the text, respectively, while C is the development aimed.



(p.33)

Figure 1: The to-be-coordinated systems of mediation that exist when a novice begins to learn to read from an expert

Besides the emphasis on concepts like mediation, interaction and expert/more-experienced other/adult, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is another aspect of SCT. Lantolf (2000) talks about ZPD as “a metaphor for observing and understanding how mediational means are appropriated and internalized” (p.17).Vygotsky (1978)

defines ZPS as “ ‘actual development level as determined independent problem solving’ and higher level of ‘potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers’ “ (p.86). In this respect, Vygotsky underlines a learner’s potential to develop in collaboration rather than what s/he can do individually. For this reason, SCT gives a critical role to the language use within ZPD, since the mediation takes places via language, to provide learning opportunities to individuals for their potential of development in cooperation rather than unsupported performance (Johnson, 2009).

Sociocultural Theory, SCT, (Vygotsky, 1978) accepts learning environments as socially complex places where historical, cultural, financial and political dynamics are intertwined (Shulman, 1986). Similarly, from the sociocultural perspective of teacher education, emphasizing the social nature of teacher learning, learning to teach is claimed to take place within a dynamic process via participating in practices of a teaching environment by understanding setting, students, teaching program and community in relevant context. In these communities, teacher learners shape their knowledge, their beliefs about teaching and perception of themselves (Johnson, 2012).

Seeing teacher education through sociocultural lenses, the concept of “to be a teacher” has been transformed into “becoming a teacher”. In the early years of teacher education history, teaching was seen as a knowledge-based profession; however, since 1980s, procedural aspects of teacher education have been balanced with an individual-centered and on-going notion of teacher development (Freeman, 2009). Therefore, now teachers are “learners of teaching”, and socialization of the teachers in their relevant context is a must for teacher development. Johnson (2009) elaborates on the issue as the following:

[T]eachers’ knowledge and beliefs are constructed through and by the normative ways of thinking, talking, and acting that have been historically and culturally embedded in the communities of practice in which they participate (as both learners and teachers). This suggest that the normative ways of acting and interacting and the values, assumptions and attitudes that are embedded in the classrooms where teachers were once students, in the teacher education

programs where they receive their credentialing, and in the schools where they work, shape the complex ways in which they come to think about themselves, the activities of L2 teaching, and the L2 teaching-learning process (p. 17).

As it is seen, teachers' learning, according to SCT, necessitates interaction, socialization, and a more experienced other to mediate this process for their potential growth and development. Moreover, communities of practice interact deeply with teacher learners' knowledge and beliefs about teaching, learning and about themselves. For this reason, collaboration and communication of teacher learners act as substantial dynamics in teacher's learning, transformation, identity negotiation and perception of identity.

## **2.2 Defining Identity**

Identity has been an inviting concept to be explored and understood by many researchers in the field of TESOL in relation to sociocultural context, language learning and teaching (Miller, 2009). However, being a highly dynamic and transformational concept in the poststructuralist era, identity has been defined and categorized in differing ways under many subcategories. Block (2009) synthesizes the definitions of identity as "socially constructed, self-conscious, on-going narratives that individuals perform, interpret and project in dress, bodily movements, actions and language" (p.27). Moreover, individual's beliefs, values and practices can be mediated through conflictive and unequal power relations which can facilitate and/or constrain interaction patterns in socially and contextually differing communities of practice.

Similar to Block's (2009) synthesis, Miller (2009) presents common aspects of identity defined by a number of researchers (Gee, 2000, 2001; Johnson, 2003; Morgan, 2004; Norton, 2000; Vargese, Morgan, Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Varghese, 2006; Pennycook, 2001). These common patterns are stated as "*relational, negotiated, constructed, enacted, transforming and relational*" (p. 174). Furthermore, Miller (2009, p. 174) cited these researchers' definitions of identity in a table as the following:

Table 1: Definitions of identity

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“how a person understand his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future”	Norton 2000: 5
“ a constant ongoing negotiation of how we relate to the world”	Pennycook 2001: 149
“relational, constructed and altered by how I see others and how they see me in our shared experiences and negotiated interactions”	Johnson 2003: 788
(Re: teacher professional identities) “defined here in terms of influences on teachers, how individuals see themselves, and how they enact their profession in their settings”	Vargese 2006: 212
(Re: professional and personal identities) “instantiations of discourses, systems of power/ knowledge that regulate and ascribe social values to all forms of human activity	Morgan 2004: 173

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Table 1: Definitions of identity (Continued)

<p>“transformational, transformative, context-bound and constructed, maintained and negotiated via language and discourse”</p>	<p>Vargese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnson 2005: 21</p>
<p>“being recognized as a certain ‘kind of person’; identity is connected not to internal states but to performance in society. It is also ‘an important analytical tool for understanding schools and society’”</p>	<p>Gee 2000- 2001: 99</p>

As it is seen, the definitions of identity presented above embody dynamics such as a socially complex context, individuals along with their beliefs, values and activities, discourse, power relations and interaction patterns which are constructed, negotiated and/or maintained in and through time and space in conflictive, transformational, constraining and facilitative manners. In other words, identity is not a product given to individuals rather it is a process where negotiation is the principal tool as Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg (2006) claim.

In addition to the definitions of identity, types of identity are addressed by researchers. Block’s (2009) 7 types of identity can be reported as a notable example, which are constructed and co-constructed by the individuals or groups of people. These are national identity, migrant identity, gender identity, social class identity and language identity. In the table given below, baselines depending on each contextual identity construct are presented clearly (Block, 2009, p.43)

Table 2: Individual and collective identity types

<b>Ascription/ affiliation</b>	<b>Based on</b>
<b>Ethnic Identity</b>	Shared history, descent, belief systems, practices, language and religion, all associated with a cultural group
<b>Racial Identity</b>	Biological/ genetic make-up, i.e. racial phenotype
<b>National Identity</b>	Shared history, descent, belief systems, practices, language and religion associated with a nation state
<b>Migrant Identity</b>	Ways of living in a new country, on a scale ranging from classic immigrant to transmigrant
<b>Gender Identity</b>	Nature of conformity to socially constructed notions of femininities and masculinities, as well as orientations to sexuality and sexual activity
<b>Social Class Identity</b>	Income level, occupation, education and symbolic behavior
<b>Language Identity</b>	Relationship between one's sense of self and different means of communication, understood in terms language, or a dialect or sociolect, as well as multi modality

Given Block's (2009) identity types, it can be asserted that an individual's contextual disposition, values, beliefs and practices are also shaped by ethnicity, shared history, cultural group belonged, language, gender and economic and social class. Likewise, Illeris (2014) shed light on the structures identity around what he terms as *central* or *personal* identity and adds *part-identities* in relation to individuals' practices and attitudes. Work identity, family identity and interest identity are categories of part-identity based on practice, while national- cultural identity, religious identity and

political identity are categories of part-identities regarding attitudes. He asserts that part-identities may vary depending on the cultures, norms or people with differing kinds of practices as Block (2009) suggests and these identities can replace each other partly or fully. The following figures illustrate the general structure of identity and the interdependent relation within the identity structure by Illeris (2014, p.71, p.76):

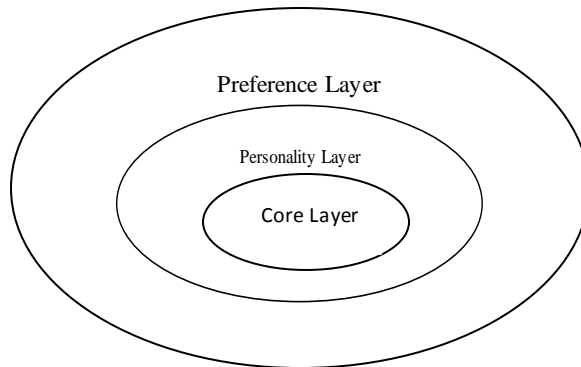


Figure 2: The general structure of identity

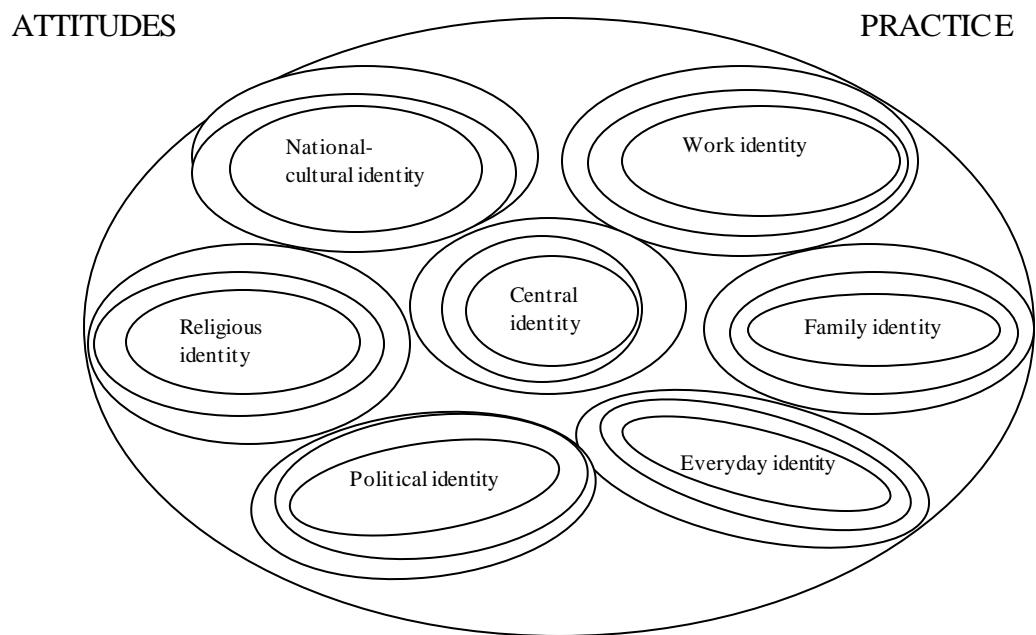


Figure 3: An example of the transverse identity structure

It is obvious to many people that individuals' work identity plays a central role for adults, since they spend most of their daily lives in a professional setting by socializing

and interacting with other people. However, work identity cannot be explored independent from individuals' total identity and their development as a whole and vice versa (Illeris, 2014).

Given the various descriptions of identity above, this study focuses on beginning teachers' professional identity reflections of themselves, which is a social, context-based, co-constructed and dynamic process. As Alsup (2006) underlines teachers' understanding their teacher identity is substantial in terms of professionalism and education system due to the identity's complex ties with teaching practices. In this sense, in order to maximize teacher's satisfaction in their field, to reach fulfilling educational results and to improve educational system, increasing awareness in this area has critical importance.

### **2.3 Professional Teacher Identity**

Learning to teach and becoming a teacher is an on-going, complex and heavily demanding process containing multiple layers within itself. Besides the content knowledge and moral aspects of the profession, one's ability to adopt the culture of the work place and negotiate a position in this socio-cultural context requires certain forms of personal and professional development (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997).

Similarly, Danielewicz (2001) claims that to become a teacher, individuals need to adopt an identity to tackle with the complexities of the teaching process. These complexities embody the variables of a teaching environment such as students, knowledge, skills, texts and learner needs. Moreover, teachers also need to possess pedagogical knowledge to have empathy for learners and to have the ability of evaluating the teaching practices constantly. Additionally, when didactical aspects; such as, time management, leading the class and bureaucracy are added to this complex process, teaching is much more than going to class with books. On the contrary, as Danielewicz (2001) suggests "[t]eaching demands nothing less than identity to accomplish these tasks; this is more than just playing a role" (p.9).



In this sense, Danielewicz (2001) discusses the basic responsibilities of teachers and the necessity of constructing an identity. However, it is not a stable condition one can attain but it is dynamic and transformational, since “we are always actively being and becoming” (p.35). Given its complexity and interdependency on the contextual and individual factors, Davey (2013, p.19) presents a number of influences interacting with the professional teacher identity process. These influences can be intensely personal and internal as well as externally negotiated in and through socio-cultural and political dynamics. In this sense, they can be imposed and negotiated while they can be transformed over time. Therefore, this process involves knowledge, history and individual biographies.

Davey (2013) further comments that the process of professional identity negotiation embodies emotions and values, which can directly interact with effective teaching practices and pedagogical quality. For this reason, she asserts that teachers should be able go beyond from their reflective stories to embrace themselves as professional bodies. In addition to Davey’s (2013) evaluation, Miller (2009) provides more concrete factors besides contextual factors and teachers’ preservice education courses. These factors are “workplace conditions (Flores, 2011), curriculum policy (Cross and Gearon, 2007), bilingual language policy (Varghese, 2006), cultural differences (Johnson, 2003), racism (Miller, 2007), social demographics of the school and students, institutional practices, curriculum, teaching resources, access to professional development, and many other things” (p.175).

Given the significance of teacher identity which is deeply connected with teacher’s happiness in their profession as well as the educational results, this study dwells on the teacher identity reflections of novice teachers along with the elements reported by the participant teachers in relation to their reflections.

#### **2.4 Novice Teacher Experience**

Novice teachers can be defined as “teachers who have completed their teacher-education program (including the practicum) and have just commenced teaching in an

educational institution” (Farrell, 2009, p. 182), although the definition of a novice teacher is not clear-cut (Farrell, 2012). Being a vastly studied topic, novice teacher experience is still studied further to explore “the factors that would help to understand the difficulty or the ease with which individuals enter full time teaching and construct their professional identity” (Ruohotie- Lyhty, 2013, p.120).

The reason behind the first year’s being so challenging and problematic for the novice is the *reality shock* (Veenman, 1984) the novices go through after their teacher education programs due to their “[n]aive and idealistic perceptions of teaching (Hong, 2010, p. 1530) and the socialization process as well as power relations (Wang, 2011). Although this process can be mediated through three main factors, which are *the schooling experiences of the teachers themselves, the teacher education program they have attended and the socialization process of the novice in the institutional context* (Farrell, 2009), novices still face many problems, since they have difficulty in negotiating an identity of becoming a teacher (Miller, 2009). Moreover, novices’ being overly concerned about their own teaching ideals before experiencing the reality of teaching, which leads them to focus on classroom control rather than effective teaching, causes novices to question their capacity and self as a teacher (Farrell, 2008).

Çakmak (2013) illustrates the numerous problems faced in the initial years of teaching in her study exploring the thoughts of fifteen novice teachers from different fields in relation to teaching. She summarizes these major problems as “[t]ime management, student assessment, negative relationships with teachers, principals, lack of time (to plan, prepare, carry out administrative duties), establishing positive relationships with students, the need to establish authority, difficulties in aligning instructional techniques to the subject content evaluation” (p.56). In this sense, she suggests the first years in teaching nurture novices in terms of understanding problematic sides of teaching, realizing student needs, attempting to excel at teaching and developing themselves professionally.

Referred in Farrell (2008), Maynard and Furlong (1995) presents five stages that the novices go through during their first year of teaching. These stages are *early idealism*, *survival*, *recognizing the difficulties*, *reaching a plateau*, and *moving on* (Farrell, 2008, p.3). During the *early idealism* stage, novices identify themselves with their students not to be an old fashioned and not to be teacher who is not liked by the students, while *survival* stage is where they begin to feel the reality shock more and more every day. *Recognizing the difficulties* stage is when the novices gain more awareness about the realities of teaching and understand what they can successfully do or not in terms of the profession's limitations, during which s/he starts to question if s/he can actually become a teacher. Upon overcoming this stage, *reaching a plateau* follows the process which is highly associated with getting used to the teaching routines and sticking to them too much when the novices believe these routines actually work in a moderate level. Only after the second year or so, the novices can pass to the last stage, *moving on*, during which they learn to focus on learning outcomes rather than classroom management. However, throughout this transition period from the early idealism to moving on, novices should be provided with proper professional assistance with maximized cooperation and collaboration; otherwise, they would face with burn-out or drop-out (Farrell, 2008) since drop-out teachers go through emotional burn out highly (Hong, 2010). Another possible solution Farrell (2009) suggests is to raise the awareness of the first year reality shock in teacher education programs to smooth this transition.

Similar to Farrell (2009), Karaman and Karataş (2013) put forward a number of suggestions to reinforce novice teachers' feeling of confidence, safety and belongingness "[s]ince beginning teachers make decisions to either stay in the profession or drop out, instead of alienating novice teachers, educational leaders ought to organize collaborative opportunities with beginning teachers" (p.10). In their study, Karaman and Karataş (2013) report that the challenges novice teachers face have increased in today's world due to the changes in the expectations of knowledge and skills from teachers such as critical thinking and reflection on the changes in the world. Moreover, the challenges' being unique in nature depending on the contextual

characteristics and individual experiences, novices are in need of professional support even more. In this respect, *support*, *identity* and *pedagogy* are the three main themes Karaman and Karataş (2013) refer to where they underscore the importance of “[a]ddressing challenges faced in initial years of teaching” (p.10).

Beliefs of novice teachers are also a part of novice teacher experience. In this sense, Erkmen (2014) examines the beliefs of nine non-native novice EFL teachers in terms of teaching, learning and classroom practices. Erkmen (2014) claims that prior learning experiences and apprenticeship of observation are influential in novices’ choices of classroom practices although student expectations and programs required to be followed can constrain their choices. Erkmen further suggests that the first year of teaching is a learning period for novices and they are likely to adapt their beliefs and classroom practices in accordance with student needs. For these reasons, Erkmen underscores “[t]he necessity of giving novice teachers the opportunity to assess and/or reflect on their beliefs and practices to become more aware of their beliefs and practices, and thereby to improve teaching and learning” (p.110).

In addition to studies focusing on the challenges and beliefs of novices, learning school settings and work-related information are studied by Kim and Roth (2011) who asked 18 experienced participant teachers to reflect back on their initial years of teaching in terms of the information they acquired to “survive” in their new teaching environments. In this sense, Kim and Roth assume schools are places where novices learn to become a teacher and “[t]his informal learning begins when new teachers enter the building for the first time and begin to seek out work-related information that can help them perform their jobs” (p. 5). Furthermore, Kim and Roth (2011) claim that the work-related information can foster the process of understanding and becoming a part of the school culture and collaboration among colleagues.

When school setting and culture are taken into account, colleagues and mentors are integral parts of the socialization process. In that sense, Brannan and Bleistein’s (2012) study examining the beliefs of novice teacher’s perception of social support network

is a comprehensive example on the topic where the interaction between teachers' self-efficacy and type of support provider; such as colleagues, mentors and family, are addressed. The findings of the study reveal that novices are in need of both practical support to maximize their efficiency in their classrooms and affective support to be heard, since encouragement and affirmation ease their reality shock.

Likewise, Carter and Francis's (2001) study can be given as another example studying novice teachers' work place learning and mentoring. They suggest from practice teaching to teacher education program and mentoring practices, novice teachers as teacher-learners should be supported and guided systematically. Especially, the mentoring practices and school's induction programs should consider the role of the support given to novices by more experienced colleagues. Moreover, universities, schools and education systems should cooperate and collaborate to maximize effectivity of novices' classroom practices.

Başer and Karaman's (2015) study focusing on the experiences of a beginning teacher in a rural elementary school can be another example highlighting the criticality of school setting. The findings of this study indicate four main keys as "[a]ppreciation of rural life, passion for rural teaching, aspiration for teaching profession and readiness for teaching" (p. 128). In this respect, Başer and Karaman (2015) claim that if teachers lack aspiration for the teaching profession, the challenges of the initial years could not be overcome which may lead to losing idealism and sticking to the traditional methods.

When the studies addressing novice teacher experience are considered, the tendencies in the literature gather around the challenges novices face (Çakmak, 2013; Hong, 2010; Karataş & Karaman, 2013; Miller, 2009; Wang, 2011), stages novices go through (Farrell, 2008; Farrell 2009; Farrell, 2012; Maynard and Furlong, 1995; Veenman, 1984) beliefs about teaching (Erkmen, 2014), school setting and work place information as well as mentoring practices (Başer & Karaman, 2015; Brannan & Bleistein's, 2012; Carter & Francis, 2001; Flores, 2011; Kim & Roth, 2011). Moreover, the participants are usually pre-service teachers especially in teacher

identity research in Turkey (Taner & Karaman, 2013). In this sense, this study explore novices' teacher identity views of themselves and the elements they related to their views in their first year of teaching.

## **2.5 Theorizing Teacher Identity**

Language teacher identity, beginning and experienced teachers' professional identity negotiation and perception of professional identity have been an emerging subject of interest for language teacher education and for teacher development (Beijard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 1999; Duff, & Uchida, 1997; Pillen, Beijarrd, & den Brok, 2013; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnston, 2009; Xu, 2012) especially to shed light on this dynamic transformation process and to provide implications for the teacher-learners and teacher educators. Likewise, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnston's (2009) claim that teachers, their beliefs, knowledge and values should be understood in order to understand the classroom as a whole since it is the teacher who is "at play in the classroom. This line of thinking, then, sees teacher identity as a crucial component in determining how language teaching is played out" (p.22).

However, conceptualization of teacher identity has led researchers to explore different focus parts of the identity. Some studies examined teacher identity from a practical point of view where teachers try to understand themselves in relation to others and to the context, while others cover the issue with a theoretical perspective where teachers use analytical lenses to investigate the process of becoming a teacher (Pillen, Beijarrd, & den Brok, 2013).

Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnston's (2009) study drawing on three perspectives examining language teacher identity is an enlightening example presenting various focuses of identity. *Social identity theory* in which social categories of identity such as race and nationality was underscored (Tajfel, 1978), *theory of situated learning* where becoming a part of a community and level of participation was underlined (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and concept of *the image-text* in which daily practices of the institution and interaction were investigated (Simon, 1995) are the

three theoretical frameworks addressed in their study to present multiple aspects of teacher identity. In Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnston's (2009, p.35) study, three common themes found in the studies of language teacher identity and areas of interest are listed as follow:

[T]hree predominant themes in recent theoretical understandings of language teacher identity:

1. Identity as multiple, shifting, and in conflict;
2. Identity as crucially related to social, cultural, and political context;
3. Identity being constructed, maintained, and negotiated primarily through discourse.

[F]our substantive areas of interest in research on language teacher identity:

1. Marginalization;
2. The position of nonnative speaker teachers;
3. The status of language teaching as a profession;
4. The teacher–student relation.

Another further example examining novice teachers' professional identity transformation from teacher education programs to real teaching context is Xu's (2012) study. In this 3-year case study, Xu refers to identity with the terms of *imagined identity* and *practiced identity* by Anderson (1991) and Norton (2001). Imagined identity was described as constructed with imagination about the interaction of oneself, others, time and place without direct interaction, while practiced identity is shaped via available resources, social processes and everyday practices which refers to Wenger's (1998) communities of practice. To analyze the characteristics of imagined and practiced identity, Xu draw on the theory of social cognition representation by Moscovici (2000) as a theoretical framework which argues social cognition of professional identity has four components named as *rule based identities*; such as a police officer's professional identity determined by laws, *cue based identities* defined

by social entities like a hero, *exemplar based identities* driven by role models, or *schema based identities* guided by series of behaviors appropriate for certain contexts or situations (Xu, 2012, pp. 569- 570).

Similarly, Beijard, Verloop, and Vermunt (1999) argue that although conceptualization of identity is crucial in terms of maximizing teachers' practices in classroom, it is still not defined comprehensively. In this respect teachers' knowledge of their professional identity meaning how they view themselves as teachers, is another aspect of teacher identity research influencing teacher's development, besides their ability and investments to deal with educational challenges and applying innovations. For this reason, they examined teachers' perceptions of their own professional identity and factors interacting with this perception by referring to Atkinson, Smith and Hildegard (1987) assuming "teachers' perceptions of their professional identity reflect their personal knowledge of this identity" (p. 750). In this sense, teachers' professional identity is examined through three categories; *teacher as a subject matter expert* "who bases his/her profession on subject matter knowledge and skills" (p.754), *teacher as a pedagogical expert* "who bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills to support students' social, emotional, and moral development" (p.754) and *teacher as a didactical expert* "who bases his/her profession on knowledge and skills regarding the planning, execution, and evaluation of teaching and learning processes" (p.754).

When *teacher as a subject matter* is taken into consideration historically, they were thought to be the source of information and their roles were to transmit knowledge to the learners. However, in contemporary times, classrooms are accepted as dynamic places which include social and cultural features along with linguistic ones (Franson, & Holliday, 2009). This brought new roles to the teachers in the classroom such as being a guide, a manager or a facilitator for the learners learning opportunities (Beijard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 1999). However, it is still quite essential for teachers to have a deep understanding of the subject matter to develop effective contents and to



reflect on learners' understanding and misunderstanding, although social and cultural roles have gained more importance in current research agenda.

On the other hand, communication and socialization process are an integral role of *teacher as a pedagogical expert*. Especially, when modern teachers are taken into account ethical, social, emotional and moral concerns of teachers and learners become a big part of classroom interaction which have deep ties with the educational choices for the teachers and learning opportunities for the learners (Beijard, Verloop & Vermunt, 1999). Beijard, Verloop and Vermunt (1999) explain the issue further as follows:

[D]idactical side of teaching profession must be related to a pedagogical side with ethical and moral features. One such feature, for example, concerns a teacher's involvement in or engagement with students. This encompasses, among other things, what is going on in students' minds, ways of communicating with and speaking about other people, and personal or private problems students have. Pedagogical aspects like these are relevant to teachers' personal and professional role conception (Beijard, 1995, p.751).

While teacher as a subject matter expert and teacher as a pedagogical expert categories refer to the subjects taught and relationship with learners, *teacher as a didactical expert* describes their roles and their perspectives on their roles as a teacher (Beijard, 1995). Traditionally, these roles were limited with implementation of the class, evaluation of the learning outcomes and planning in general. However, with the rise of the contemporary constructivist theories toward learning and teaching, the main roles of the teachers transformed into "initiating, guiding, and influencing students' thinking activities, and gradually transferring control over the learning process from the instructor to learner" (Beijard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 1999, p.752) which directly influence teachers' perceptions of their own professional identity.

*Teaching context, teacher experience* and *teacher's biographies* are the three category groups placed under the influencing factors asserted by Beijard, Verloop and Vermunt (1999). Institutional culture, situational and contextual dynamics defining the way of interaction, everyday practices and the shared values of the institution are inseparable

parts of individual teacher stories as well as their perspective of their professional identity (Miller, 2009). Additionally, novice teacher's experience and their personal understanding for adaptation to institutional realities take their parts in influencing factors in teacher knowledge of their professional identities. Similar to Maynard and Furlong's (1995) 5-staged novice teacher experience referred in Farrell (2008), Kagan (1992) cited by Bejjard, Verloop and Vermunt (1999, p.753) introduces 4 stages for novice teachers differ while gaining experience as follows:

1. The way a teacher monitors classroom events
2. The degree of conscious effort involved in classroom performance
3. The degree to which performance is guided by personal experience and the to which the teacher can predict events accurately
4. The teacher's focus, as student work and academic tasks become the major organizing framework of instruction

As was stated above, teacher identity has been examined from a number of different perspectives based on the individual contexts and lenses of the researchers. In this study, as the data was accumulated, I visited it many times and gradually adopted framework to explore the novice teachers' knowledge of their own professional identity. The following figure can be presented as the schema of this framework:

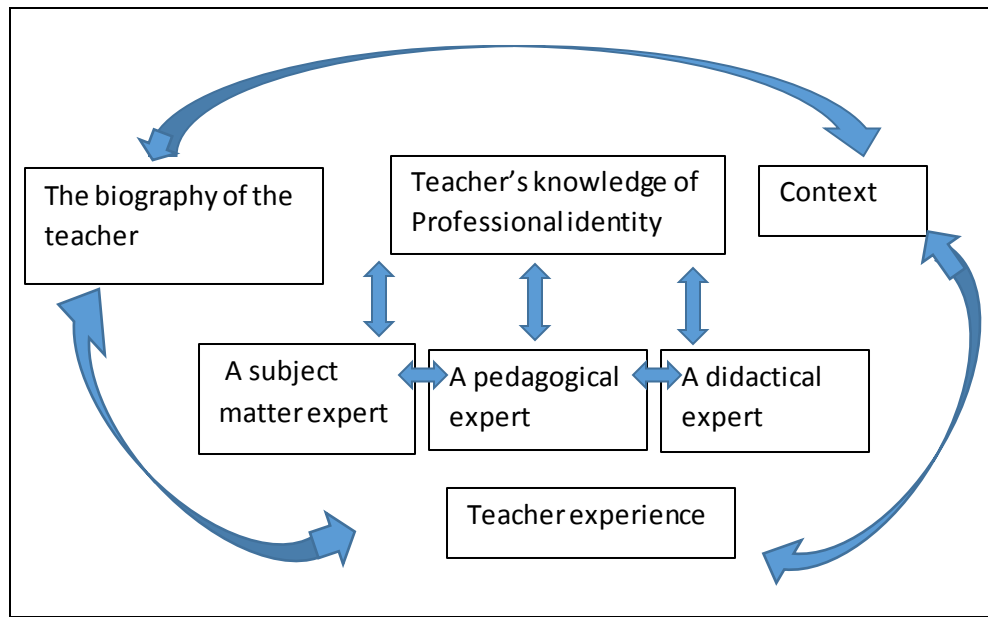


Figure 4: Teacher's knowledge of professional identity categories and influencing factors

## 2.6 Need for the Study

Although the relation between professional teacher identity, novice teachers and effective teaching in higher education institutions as well as teacher's practical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge have been gaining more attention in the Western World (e.g Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt 2000; Flores, 2006; Graham & Phelps, 2003; Ruohotie- Lyhty, 2013), few studies intend to shed light on how beginner teachers view their teacher identities. Moreover, the studies conducted in Turkey mostly focus on pre-service or in-service teachers' beliefs of teaching as well as rural contexts in primary and secondary schools (e.g Başer, 2012; Erkmen, 2010; Saban, 2004; Taner & Karaman, 2013). Given these reasons, a study uncovering the professional identity perception of novice teachers in a higher education institution is needed which may underline the importance of professional assistance and provide a number of practical implications.

The institution which is the case of this study, hires 3 to 5 beginning teachers every year; however, most of these novice teachers leave the institution after a few years, although they benefit from the social privileges of working in one of the biggest universities in Turkey as an English instructor. Additionally, gaining experience in the institution, the beginning teachers, graduating from the most prestigious universities of Turkey, usually pursue an academic career. Given these facts, the teachers working at the relevant context come to the positions where they can actually play an active role of shaping educational practices of English language teaching and second language teacher education.

Likewise, given the number of beginning teachers hired by the institution under the study, it is an explicit need to uncover the experiences and understanding of these novice teachers of themselves as teachers which is a question never addressed before in the institution. In this sense, the findings of this study can help the institution to form an effective professional development unit to raise the awareness of teacher identity and to provide the novices with the professional assistance and cooperation they need.

Moreover, the findings of the present study can be of great help for teacher educators to better understand the teacher identity knowledge of novice teachers to “establish an effective knowledge-base for language teacher education” (Farrell, 2008, p.1), while institutions teaching English can cater their novice teachers with professional assistance and mentoring practices needed.

Finally, this awareness can facilitate professional teacher identity negotiation process of novice teachers which help them to provide contextually appropriate educational opportunities to their learners.

## **2.7 Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

It is with this aim and to contribute to the field that this study refers to Sociocultural Theory (1978) and adopts Bejjard, Verloop and Vermunt (1999) teacher’s perception of professional identity as a theoretical framework to have an in-depth understanding

on novices' views of their own teacher identity. By exploring this dynamic process, I aim to understand how each participant novice teacher views her professional teacher identity in the institution under study and what salient factors the participant teachers express in relation to their views of themselves as a professional teacher. In that sense, the following research questions were addressed in the current study:

1. How does each beginning teacher perceive her teacher identity in the higher education institution under study?
2. What particular elements does each beginning teacher relate to her own professional identity views?

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Methodological Review

##### 3.1.1 Qualitative Inquiry

In a study, research questions and design must go hand in hand, and the researchers are responsible for finding the most suitable approach in accordance with the aim of the study. Qualitative inquiry's key characteristics; such as naturalistic setting, research itself as a process, giving the researcher a main role to use interpretative lenses, complex reasoning, thick description to reach a holistic picture and interactive research design, (Hays & Singh, 2012), have encouraged me to adopt qualitative approach which is defined by Cresswell (2013) as follows:

Qualitative research begins with assumption and the use of interpretative/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of the participants, the reflexivity of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change (p.44).

Given the above stated research questions, this study aims to understand how the beginning teachers view their professional teacher identity in the related context and what kind of influencing elements are reported related to their understanding of themselves as a teacher. In other words, exploring the meanings constructed by the individual participants or by a social group in a setting where these meanings, feelings and beliefs are being experienced by the participants themselves, and analyzing the whole picture through interpretative lenses to attain a complex and detailed

understanding on the context, the participants and the process match my goals to address my research questions in the best way.

### **3.1.2 Case Study**

Case study is one of the most commonly used ways of conducting a research with qualitative inquiry (Stake, 2003). In a case study, “the focus of the research should be on a particular unit or set of units- institutions, programs, events, and so on- and the aim should be to provide a detailed description of the unit(s)” (Richards, 2003, p.20). Bromley (1990) describes case study as a “systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain phenomenon of interest” (p.302). Additionally, as Yin (2009) cited in Creswell (2013) “[C]ase study research involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting” (p.97) “[e]specially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p.18).

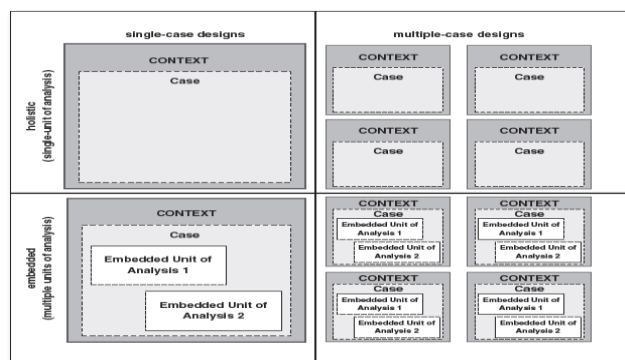
As it is understood, case studies aim to provide in-depth exploration and description of a case with inductive analysis via interpretation in a naturalistic setting to provide a holistic picture on a particular case rather than generalization.

Stake (2003) summarizes the major steps for a qualitative case researcher as follows while he underlines the most distinguishing side of the case study as the first step; selection of the case to study:

1. Bounding the case, conceptualizing the object of study;
2. Selecting phenomena, themes, or issues- that is, the research question- to emphasize;
3. Seeking patterns of data to develop the issues;
4. Triangulating key observations and bases for interpretation;
5. Selecting alternative interpretations to pursue;
6. Developing assertions or generalizations about the case.

(p.155)

Similarly, after defining the case, Yin (2012) adds another aspect to Stake's (2003) major steps: selecting a case study design out of four. According to Yin (2009), the researcher should decide if the case will be based on a *single-* or a *multiple-case study*, in the meantime, *holistic* or *embedded* subcases within a holistic case will be another option to choose, which results in 2X2 matrix 4 types of case study designs (p.7). The following is the figure illustrating the basic types of design for case studies:



SOURCE: COSMOS Corporation.

(Yin, 2012, p.8)

Figure 5: Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies

According to Yin (2012), there is a blurry line between the context and the case as it is shown in the Figure 2 with the dashed lines. She further states that adopting a holistic case would answer how& why questions on a holistic level, unless some other level of data included, which would carry the study to the embedded level. On the other hand, if the researcher conceptualizes the study in one context with variable data source, an embedded, single-case study would be the design. Finally, if the study is conceptualized in more than one context with differing data sources; such as additional data inclusion from a group of participants, it means the researcher chooses an embedded, multiple- case study design.

Being exploratory and descriptive in nature, case studies use multiple sources in terms of data collection. Direct observations of the context and the participants by the



participant observer, open-ended or semi-constructed interviews with the participants, archival records, documents and artifacts are the most frequently used sources listed by Yin (2012). These variable sources of data are also encouraged based on triangulation and to raise the trustworthiness of data. Moreover, the multiple data sources help the researcher to reach a complete picture of the case, by including differing participant perspectives and voices (Hays & Singh, 2011).

In this respect, an embedded, single case analysis was adopted, since this study aimed to present an in-depth understanding of a specific process, professional teacher identity perception, in one context which was the natural setting and the case. Additionally, since there were 3 participants, 3 units of analysis were included within the case. Finally, multiple sources of data collection; namely interviews, observations and field notes were used in line with the characteristics of qualitative inquiry and case study.

### **3.1.3 The Role of the Researcher**

Different from the quantitative inquiry, it is crucial for researchers to understand and report their roles and stands in a study when adopting a qualitative methodology since the researcher is the main means of data collection, analysis and interpretation. (Creswell, 2013). In this respect, Unluer (2012) reviews the roles a researcher can undertake by referring to Adler and Adler (1994), Breen (2007), Bonner and Tolhurst (2002), DeLyser (2001), and Hewitt and Taylor (2002). According to this review, a researcher's roles can vary from *an insider* which is defined as the researcher's being a member of the group or context under study, to *an outsider* meaning the researcher's being a complete stranger to the group or the context under study (Adler & Adler, 1994). In some occasions, these roles can show variations; the researcher can become an insider although s/he has started as an outsider, or the reverse case can take place (Punch, 1998).

Moreover, Unluer (2012) lists a number of advantages for the insider researchers. An insider can have a deeper understanding of the contextual culture under study, the flow

of the social interaction in the group or the context is natural, and having a shared intimacy “promotes both telling the truth and the judging of truth” (p.1). In other words; since the researcher is already familiar with the culture or with the flow of social interaction, which contains the politics and hierarchy of the institution in practice, s/he can easily describe what really happens in the study and how s/he can facilitate the rapport with participants.

Similarly, DeLyser (2001) and Smyth and Holian (2008) identify certain disadvantages of being an insider; such as *loss of objectivity*, *role duality* and *access to sensitive information*. Loss of objectivity can be defined as the researcher’s bias due to familiarity and the prior knowledge of the context or the group, while role duality is the struggle of the researcher to balance his/ her role. This struggle can also show itself in easy access to information related to participants or institutions, which can lead to problems in terms of the ethical concerns of the participants or the institution.

Given the roles of a researcher in a qualitative study as well as the advantages and disadvantages reported above, I was an insider researcher in the institution, which is defined as the case in this study. I, as the researcher, have been working in the institution for 2 years and it was possible for me to be in contact with the participants for their cooperation and to examine their feelings analytically towards the culture of the institution in relation to their experiences and views. As was stated, it was easier for me to know the participants closely and I have already had a greater prior knowledge about how everyday practices and social interaction really work in the institution. However, in order to maintain the trustworthiness and credibility of the data (see 3.4.1 for further explanation), member checking and peer review were conducted for this study. In other words, member checking and peer review helped me as the researcher to minimize my researcher bias towards the institution while the anonymity of the participants and institution were ensured by the comments made by the participants and the reviewer during the coding and data analysis process.

## **3.2 Research Setting and Participants**

### **3.2.1 Research Setting**

The school that the study was conducted is located in Ankara, Turkey. It is a private university and it was established in 2000s. It is one of the most well-known private universities in the country with almost 3000 students. The students are mostly from the upper class of the society, most of whom graduate from private high schools and are economically privileged. Additionally, a number of scholarship opportunities are offered to the students who cannot afford the school but academically quite noticeable. After the students of the university graduate, most of them start working in prestigious positions all over the country. For this reason, the university has a reputation of providing quality education and superior English skills compared to other universities in Turkey, besides its affinity with political and economic capitals in the country.

The school offers 3 semesters of education every year, lasting for 5 years including preparatory English education. The students enrolled to the university are required to take a proficiency exam at the beginning of the semester for the preparatory English year and pass an international and standardized proficiency exam to complete the program successfully. The students receive skill-based instruction categorized as “reading and writing”, “listening and speaking” and “main course” from 25 to 30 hours per week, Monday through Friday. Each skill categorized is taught by a different teacher, meaning that 3 teachers are responsible for each classroom. The students receive daily homework (via handouts or online assignments) and they take a weekly quiz every Friday from the unit covered during the relevant week.

There are almost 90 instructors serving at the foreign languages department. Each teacher is responsible for at least 20 hours of teaching hours per week, in addition to office hours, marking assignments, invigilation tasks, conducting speaking exams and translation of a number of written work.

With the help of the material development and testing units, the teachers follow a standardized curriculum for the relevant skill and level. Since each language skill, main course, reading& writing, listening& speaking, is taught by a different teacher, all instructors in the institution are responsible for teaching at least in 2 to 5 different classes. It means that each teacher has to collaborate with at least 4 other teachers for the classes taught, in addition to the material development and testing units responsible for the levels they teach. In doing so, the teachers have to be in contact with the co-teachers on a daily basis, while every Monday the teachers working on the same levels hold a meeting to discuss the materials for the week and share problems if they have any. Other than the meetings, e-mails are the main communication channels in the institution. Instructors are expected to follow their e-mails throughout the day to catch up with the changes in the program, to receive extra assignments or to substitute missing instructors.

A professional development unit has been found in the university recently. With the help of a professional teacher trainer, each instructor at the university has been observed in the class and provided with feedback. Additionally, experienced teachers were paired with novice teachers for classroom observation and feedback sessions.

An orientation program is applied by the administrative coordinators, curriculum development unit and testing unit to the newly-hired instructors to which the participants of the study attended for a week before the beginning of the first semester. The orientation program informs the new instructors about the structural processes of the institution as well as providing a number of teaching methods, which was found quite helpful by the participants.

The institution adopted as the case in this study is a private university known for its heavy work load and busy schedule due to its 3-semester-long education, its ties with the economic and politic capitals and demanding student profile. Because of the 3-semester-long education, the instructors at the institution work actively almost 10 to 11 months a year depending on time of the national or religious holidays. The number of the instructors' being insufficient for the number of the students enrolled each year

leads to unwilling extra teaching hours changing from 25 to 28 depending on the semester, substitute teaching and extra hours after working hours including weekends. Although the institution intends to hire more instructors to reduce the workload, the administration could not find qualified teachers who want to work with them. Moreover, each year 2 to 10 instructors leave the institution for other universities, which puts extra responsibilities to the remaining instructors.

Political and economic relations of the university are both an encouraging factor for the students and academics and a challenge to deal with. These relations and economic power made it easier to attract qualified academic staff to work in the institution and provide high-achiever students with abundant scholarship opportunities. However, this interrelatedness brings along top-down administration model, bureaucracy and obligatory-willing political meetings to attend especially for the academics. More specifically, the top-down administrative model compels the instructors at the institution and leads to decrease of the teacher autonomy both in class and out of the class in everyday practices of the school.

In terms of the student profile, the institution incorporate diverse achievement levels with numerous backgrounds. The scholarship opportunities appeal to high-achieving students who are the target profile of the school, while very low achievers can also attend the university by paying considerable amount of money. These non-achievers are one of the biggest challenges of the institution because of their misbehaviors in classes and their attitudes towards one another or towards their teachers. In the previous semesters, a number of occasions took place at the institution such as threatening instructors or fighting with peers in the class due to machismo.

In order to minimize student misbehavior and ensure the smooth operation of each element in the program without student or parent objection either behaviorally or legally, great number of rules are introduced to both teachers and students. For example, no student is allowed to be class late even for 1 minute, which can be tracked by the clocks hanged in the hallways. If the director of the department sees a student

coming late and let in the class by the teacher, s/he would enter the class and take this student out regardless of the teacher's opinion.

Aforementioned characteristics cause the institution to be a demanding work place. However, these features are not unique for the present institution but for most of the private universities in Turkey. Vatansever and Gezici Yalcin (2015, p. back cover) summarizes the academic personnel's working conditions and experiences in private universities in Turkey in their study as the following:

Being an academic is a so-called "prestigious" profession; those who start to be an academic follow both this prestige and their intellectual interests. They follow this route with "voluntary asceticism and devotion". However, in an academic profession (in private universities in Turkey), a heavy labor exploit and insecurity are observed. We see a labor process which corrodes the academics morally and leads them to feel insignificant.

### **3.2.2 Participants**

This qualitative case study was carried out with 3 beginning teachers. The participants were working in a private university in the central Anatolia in the Preparatory English School. The novice teachers were teaching English in the EFL context as their first year of teaching. They were all graduates of English Language Teaching departments from the two of the most famous and prestigious universities in Turkey. They studied for 4 years for their Bachelor's Degree and received classes related to advanced English grammar and language skills, literature, linguistics, translation, educational pedagogy as well as classes related to theories, methods and techniques of English language teaching. The programs they completed included practice teaching and they had the chance to observe real teaching environments in two different schools. Additionally, the two of the participant teachers had an exchange education experience for 6 months during their undergraduate studies which gave them a chance to compare and contrast educational systems between Turkey and the relevant countries.

The participant teachers were three of the novices among the newly-hired, experienced instructors at the institution. In this respect, criterion sampling strategy (Creswell,

2013) was adopted, which requires all participants to meet a criterion: being a beginning teacher at the present institution. Participation in the study was on voluntary base, and the participant teachers were given pseudonyms to protect their privacy and confidentiality in line with the ethical codes (Christians, 2011). The following table presents pseudonyms and educational background of the participant teachers:

Table 3: Pseudonyms and educational backgrounds of the participants

<b>Pseudonyms &amp; Gender (all female)</b>	<b>The Teacher Education Program</b>	<b>Practice Teaching 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> semester</b>	<b>Erasmus Experience &amp; Time Spent</b>
Kumsal	X university	In Poland- 1 <sup>st</sup> semester In Turkey, 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester	Poland, 6 months
Ayla	X university	Germany, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> semesters	Germany, almost a year
Gamze	Y university	Turkey, 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester	Not Applicable

### 3.2.2.1 Kumsal

Kumsal is a 22- year old novice teacher who started her first year at the teaching profession following her graduation from one of the biggest and most prestigious state universities in Turkey. She is from a small city in Turkey, and similar to the other participants, Ayla and Gamze, she graduated from a special type of high school called *teacher training high school* which was established to train qualified teachers for college education.

During her high school years, she wanted to specialize in mathematics department. However, because of the quota conducted on the Mathematics department due to the

excessive demand, she was sent to the English department. She was still focusing on mathematics classes along with English classes; however, she failed in the university entrance exam in the mathematics section and had to choose a department related to English in which she was quite successful for college.

She was able to attend one of the most well-known programs in Turkey on foreign language education which works with prestigious academics all around the world. However, she was quite unmotivated studying in the language department because, as she underscored many times in her interviews, she never liked the English language department and she studied it because she had to.

From the first year on in college, she started developing an interest for linguistics classes and participated in the linguistics conferences to help her professors and take part in research projects voluntarily. As she reported many times, these studies were very helpful for her to develop herself academically, since she thought linguistics was the “real” science in her field as it had a mathematical angle in its body rather than learning to do a simple thing which everyone can do: Teaching.

During the teacher education program she attended, a lot of classes were offered related to English language skills and teaching of English language besides literature, translation, linguistics and pedagogy. Kumsal stated that these classes had a deep impact on her knowledge of the world and personal development rather than on her teaching skills.

Additionally, the teacher education program also offered a number of opportunities for its students to go abroad and study or work there for a semester or two; such as, Erasmus, Comenius and Fulbright foreign language teaching assistance. Kumsal has been to Poland with the Erasmus program as a student and she had completed her first practice teaching class, while she did her second practice teaching in Turkey in a private elementary school.



### **3.2.2.2 Ayla**

Ayla graduated from the same type of high school, Anatolian teacher training high school, in another relatively small city in Turkey, like Kumsal. Additionally, she obtained her bachelor's degree from the same teacher education program at the same university with Kumsal. In this sense, except the non-departmental and departmental elective courses, Ayla shaped her undergraduate studies similar to Kumsal. However, English language teaching (ELT) was always her future direction to go and to excel at. For this reason, she took her elective classes related to this field.

Like Kumsal, Ayla has spent two semesters in Germany as an Erasmus student where she took pedagogical classes along with practice teaching classes. Her experience in Germany as a pre-service teacher was quite influential in terms of shaping her perspective towards language teaching and classroom atmosphere.

### **3.2.2.3 Gamze**

Similar to thousands of other students who can go to the top three language teacher education programs for college in Turkey, which is literally impossible in another way due to the examination and grading system conducted for the university entrance exam, Gamze graduated from a teacher training high school like Kumsal and Ayla. She received her undergraduate degree at the biggest state university in Turkey where medium of instruction is English and many prestigious academicians give education.

Like Kumsal and Ayla, during the first years of the program, Gamze's courses aimed at improving English language skills. Starting from the second year, pedagogy and field-specific classes started concentrating on the language teaching and learning theories. She was personally interested in psychology and ELT courses in which communication and human interaction are the base. The lecturers were the authority in the classes who organized their teachings around student presentations and discussions.

Gamze had not been to Europe or to the USA with the studying programs funded by the government unlike Kumsal and Ayla. She completed her practice teaching courses in public schools in one of the biggest cities in Turkey. In her interviews, she had never mentioned having a particular experience or feeling related to her practice teaching.

### 3.3 Data Collection Tools

Classroom observations, interviews and field notes of the researcher were data collection tools of this study. Each semester lasts for about 12 to 13 weeks at the institution and due to the time limitation, the data were collected for 2 semesters (within 22 weeks). The participant teachers were observed 2 times in each semester, at the beginning and at the end of the semester, for a contact hour. Interviews were held in every 2 to 4 weeks with the questions prepared by the researcher. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher in order to analyze the participants' statements thoroughly. The data were triangulated in order to be able to present in-depth and trustworthy findings captured from the dynamic process of identity perception.

Table 4: Summary of Data Collection Tools

<b>Time Span</b>	<b>Classroom Observations</b>	<b>Field Notes</b>	<b>Interviews</b>
- 22 Weeks	- 12 times in total	- 12 times	- 21 interviews
- December 2014- July 2015	- 50 min. each - 600 min. in total	- 6 pages in total	- 10 to 40 min. - 400 min. in total

### 3.3.1 Classroom Observations and Field Notes

The crucial role of observation in social sciences, which requires a systematic and formal orientation in research (Angrosimo, 2007), cannot be denied. In this respect, in order to have a command on the non-verbal presentations of the participants' feelings (Schmuck, 2006), observations and extensive field notes were used as a data collection tools in this study. I, as the researcher, conducted the observations by adopting an "*observer-as-participant*" role (Angrosimo, 2007) meaning "[t]he researcher is known and recognized, but relates to the 'subjects' of study solely as a researcher" (p.54).

The main purpose of the classroom observations was to relate and check the data accumulated through the interviews to understand the participant teachers' testimonies about themselves as a teacher further and to explore their feelings and experiences in the classroom as well as the characteristic of the relevant classroom (Hays & Singh, 2011). In other words, by comparing and contrasting the statements of the participant teachers of themselves in the interviews and their stand as a teacher in the classroom, I looked for the evidences of experiences in relation to the participant teachers' professional teacher identity perception. The classes of the each participant teacher were observed for four times during the 22-week data collection period. Table 4 given below shows the observation plan for each individual participant.

Table 5: Data collection summary for classroom observations

Second semester	Third semester	Total for per participant
Dec.2014-March 2015	April 2015- July 2015	
(12 weeks)	(12 weeks)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the beginning + at the end of the semester</li> <li>• 2 contact hours in total (100')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the beginning + at the end of the semester</li> <li>• 2 contact hours in total (100')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 times</li> <li>• 200 minutes</li> </ul>

During the observations, Creswell’s (2013) steps listed in his work were followed in order to minimize “the potential marginality of the researcher in a strange setting” (p.167). The first series of the steps were to select the *site* and asked for permission from the Institutional Review Board and the participant teacher. I adopted “*observer-as-participant*” role and designed a minute-by-minute observation protocol (see Appendix E). In the protocol, descriptive and reflective notes were included besides the time, place and date of the observations. For descriptive notes, classroom events were noted minute by minute. Simultaneously, I reflected on these behaviors and try to capture the feelings of the participant teacher in order to compare the data presented in the interviews. The focus of the observations was on the participant teacher’s feelings and experiences rather than the evaluation of teaching and learning activities and behaviors. During the observations, I was passive but friendly and I was introduced to the learners by the teacher. After each session, I “*slowly withdraw*” (Creswell, 2013, p.168) and thanked the learners and the participant teacher to let me access their classrooms. Finally, I started working on my *field notes* as soon as possible after the observations which are defined as “written records developed within an

observational period and continually expanded and revised after the observation has occurred” (Hays & Singh, 2011, p.228). In this respect, these *descriptive* and *reflective* (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) written records catered the data gathered in the observations by providing thick descriptions of the context and the participants.

### **3.3.2 Interviews**

Like observations, interviews play a crucial role in qualitative research tradition (Creswell, 2013), since they give a chance to researchers to better understand the meaning of behavior (Seidman, 2006). Among the three types of interviews; structured, semi-structured and unstructured, semi-structured interviews were held with the participant teachers in this study to capture the interviewee’s interpretation of his/her own experience, give him/her a chance to reflect on experiences and to capture a holistic picture of the context and the case (Hays & Singh, 2011).

In this respect, a number of interviews with differing purposes were included in this study. Firstly, initial interviews were conducted at the beginning of the study to learn about the participants’ backgrounds and to establish rapport with the participants. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were held with the participant teachers by relating the data gathered through observations and field notes to reach an in-depth understanding of the experiences, behaviors and feelings of the relevant weeks in the class and in the school. Thirdly, a follow-up interview was conducted to make sure the researcher’s understanding on the data is in line with what participants want to express. Lastly, a final interview was done to reach the final remarks of the participants about the whole process. The following is the table to present the time, type and the purpose of the interviews:

Table 6: Time, Type and Purpose of the Interviews

<b>Week of the Interview</b>	<b>Type of the Interview</b>	<b>Purpose of the Interview</b>
1.Week	Initial Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To learn the participants’ backgrounds</li> <li>• To establish rapport with the participants</li> </ul>
5. Week	Semi-structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have an in-depth understanding of the participants experiences and feelings</li> <li>• To elaborate on the data gathered via observations and field notes</li> </ul>
8. Week	Semi-structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have an in-depth understanding of the participants experiences and feelings</li> <li>• To elaborate on the data gathered via observations and field notes</li> </ul>
11. Week & 14. Week	Semi-structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have an in-depth understanding of the participants experiences and feelings</li> <li>• To elaborate on the data gathered via observations and field notes</li> </ul>

Table 6: Time, Type and Purpose of the Interviews (Continued)

17. Week	Follow-up interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To check the researcher's understanding is in line with the participants' expressions</li> </ul>
20. Week	Semi-structured Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have an in-depth understanding of the participants experiences and feelings</li> <li>• To elaborate on the data gathered via observations and field notes</li> </ul>
22. Week	Final Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have an in-depth understanding of the participants experiences and feelings</li> <li>• To elaborate on the data gathered via observations and field notes</li> <li>• To get final remarks</li> </ul>

Open-ended interview questions were prepared by the researcher and the interviews were in Turkish to encourage the participants express their feelings better, without a language barrier. The interviews lasted for about 10 to 40 minutes depending on the experiences the participants had been through in the relevant weeks and around 400 minutes were recorded to be transcribed verbatim. All of the interviews were done in an appropriate site and time for the participants, and the data were stored in a safe computer protected by a password only known by the researcher to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Back-up copies of the recordings were assured

digitally and anonymity of the participants was protected by masking their names in the data (Creswell, 2013).

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Based on Yin's (2012) 2x2 matrix of case study (see 3.1.2), the case is adopted as the institution under study, while multiple units of analysis function as each participant. In other words, in relation to the research questions, I looked at each participant's views of professional teacher identity of their own as the unit of analysis and the institution as a case. Below is the Yin's (2012) related matrix and the adopted figure of this study:

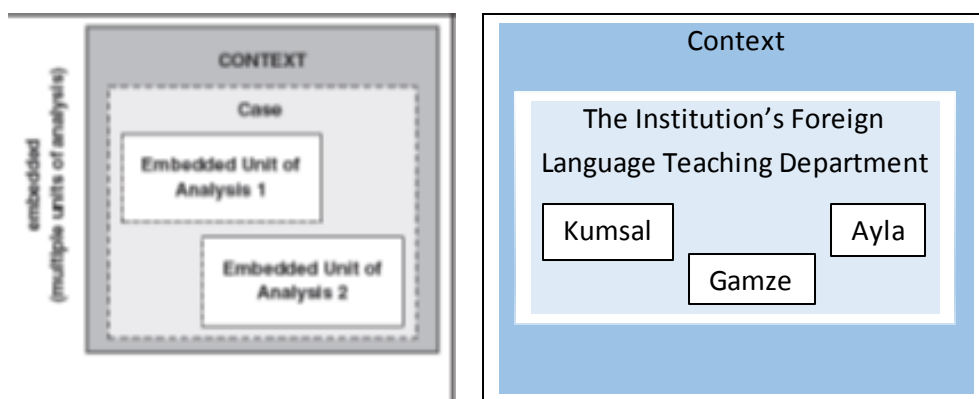


Figure 6: Yin's (2012, p.8) and the present study's case study model

In his work, Creswell (2013) examines the spiral steps of data analysis; namely, organizing the data, reading through the data, coding and organizing themes, representing the data and forming an interpretation of them, which were followed in this study. Following is the figure presented by Creswell (2013, p. 183) to further visualize the steps:



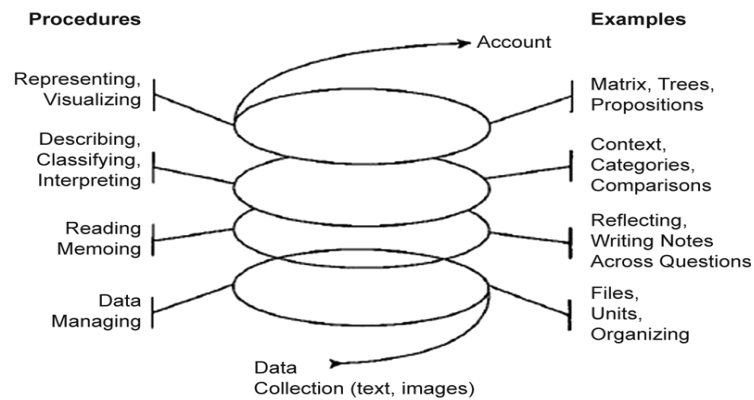


Figure 7: The spiral steps of data analysis

Having collected the data, I transcribed the interview recordings verbatim and did immense reading to see the whole picture in the data. Verbatim transcription of the data was crucial in terms of finding evidences of the views of the participant teachers parallel with the research questions as Seidman (2006) emphasizes “[e]ach word a participant speaks reflects his or her consciousness” (p.114).

After all of the transcriptions of the participants were filed separately based on the weeks of the interviews, detailed reading process was completed for each participant. Being able to see the whole data, the coding process started followed by immense reading in relation to the research questions.

Descriptive coding process was adopted by using nouns or noun phrases to summarize the topic of the relevant data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Descriptive coding type was applied to the data since it is useful for the researchers when a number of data collection tools are used for one study; such as interview transcriptions and field notes (Saldana, 2011). Moreover, as Saldana (2011) stated “descriptive codes not only help categorize but also index data corpus’ basic contents for further analytic work” (p.104).

It is worth mentioning that the data was coded systematically by a software program. After the initial analysis, descriptive codes which are related content-wise were pieced together to form categories in the second cycle of coding process to define recurring

themes on the basis of the grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which is described by Saldana (2011, p.115) as follows:

[a]n analytic process of constantly comparing small data units through a series of cumulative coding cycles to achieve abstractions and a range of dimensions to the emergent categories' properties. In other words, you're looking carefully at the small details to get to the bigger picture- a picture composed of a central *idea*, its defining or essential elements, and their variable qualities.

In this respect, constant comparison method was adopted by moving back and forth in data to place under the themes. Finally, an overall analysis was held to further explore the professional teacher identity perception of the participant novice teachers (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In the data analysis process, codes and categories were sent for peer review for the reliability of the data.

#### **3.4.1 Ethical Issues and Trustworthiness of Data**

Validity and reliability are the terms paid close attention and care in the positivist quantitative research referring to the replicability and accuracy of the measurement (Saldana, 2011). However, the constructs of *credibility* and *trustworthiness* take the place of aforementioned terms in the qualitative paradigm when researchers collect data, analyze it and present the results. In this respect, Saldana (2011) defines credibility as the believability of a qualitative study and lists a number of strategies for researchers to conduct their studies sound and convincingly. These strategies are *indicating data analytical methods employed, collaboration with the participants* and the *triangulation of the data*. Similarly, Creswell (2013) specifies additional steps such as *prolonged engagement and persistent observation, peer review, clarifying researcher bias, member checking* and *rich, thick descriptions*. In this respect, I explained how I maintained trustworthiness of the data for the relevant study in relation to the strategies mentioned above.

Firstly, I applied to the Institutional Review Boards from the two relevant universities to conduct the study at the related institution. Having received the approvals, I contacted to the participant teachers and informed them about the aims of the study

and data collection tools to get their approval through consent forms. In the consent forms, I informed the participant teachers one more time and assured them that their privacy and confidentiality were maintained. Then, I started gathering the data parallel with the construct of prolonged and persistent observation by “[b]uilding trust with the participants, learning the culture and checking for misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by the researcher or information” (Creswell, 2013, pp-251-252).

Being an insider researcher, I was able to understand the case in depth and as a whole which helped me provide rich and thick descriptions of the setting and the participants. Moreover, working in the same institution with the participants made it easier for me as the researcher to conduct member-checking to minimize the researcher’s bias and to make sure that I was elaborating what the participants were really explaining. Likewise, I found a peer reviewer from the same institution who is experienced in qualitative inquiry and who can examine the coded and categorized the data critically, since he was familiar with the institutional culture and the participants as well.

Triangulation of the data is another strategy to cater the trustworthiness of the data (Saldana, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2013). In doing so, researchers can use multiple and different sources of data, methods, investigators or theories to provide evidence for the results (Creswell, 2013). Although triangulation of the data collection tools were planned for this study with interviews, field notes of the classroom observations and weekly reflective diaries to have an in-depth understanding of the participant teachers’ views of their professional identity, weekly reflective dairies could not be included to the study due to heavy work load of the participant teachers. In order to overcome this problem, the number of the interviews was increased and member checking with the participants were applied to ensure that the case under study is reported properly and deeply. Additionally, excerpts from the interview transcriptions were provided with the findings as the illustrative examples.

### **3.5 Limitations**

Time limitation and the workload of the participant teachers and the researcher at the institution was the biggest limitation of the present study. As this study was conducted to fulfill the requirement of a graduate program, deadlines of the present work caused me to limit the data collection process. Since identity negotiation and views of the participant teachers of their teacher identities require a longitudinal study, collecting data for a longer period of time would have been more comprehensive for this study. Moreover, due to the workload of the institution, I had to cancel gathering weekly reflective dairies from the participant teachers as a data collection tool in order to avoid putting extra responsibilities and load on the shoulders of the participant teachers. Having a tool helping me to gain a deeper and weekly reflection would have contributed to the present study substantially.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

In this part of the study, findings are presented under each participant's case on the basis of the two research questions. For each case, the participant teacher's views of her own professional identity and elements related by the participant teacher's teacher identity views are revealed along with the discussion.

#### 4.1 Kumsal as a Case

When Kumsal's case was taken into account, two main themes occurred in relation to her views of herself as a professional teacher. Below, these themes are presented in depth.

##### 4.1.1 How does each beginning teacher perceive her teacher identity in the higher education institution under study?

###### 4.1.1.1 Rejection of Teacher Identity

*"I do not like being a teacher"*

For Kumsal, being a teacher was more than going to the classes with the books taught and talking about the units one by one. Being a guide for students who could see each learner as an individual and being able to address their academic and personal needs were the main roles of a professional teacher for her. Rather than a teacher who was an expert on the knowledge, she idealized teachers as pedagogical and didactical experts. She explained her idealized teacher as the follows:

What I am doing as a teacher is not just go to class and tell the students that this means that and that means this. I think, I do things right because I am able to see my students as individuals and I am able to address their individual needs as well. I may not be able to teach grammar well, and I may not be able to teach writing or reading skills well. However, because I was in their shoes some time

ago, I can show them the path I walked through. Being a teacher means being a guide rather than teaching things by heart.

However, being a pedagogical expert was not an easy role for her to adopt. She needed to know and understand her students well since she did not only teach English to them but introduced them the world. As she stated many times in her interviews, she learned a lot from her own teachers who did not come to class out of an obligation but with passion to provide knowledge in different areas of life such as academic, cultural, political or sociological. Moreover, Kumsal's practice teaching experience in Poland and in Turkey endorsed her perspective asserting that teaching is a matter of devotion.

According to Kumsal, everyone can teach if they really want this job, no matter what their diploma says. She further elaborated on the topic by comparing the teachers she observed in Poland and Turkey. The Polish teacher whose classes Kumsal observed during her practicum was a graduate of a department related to tourism and she was in her 50s, while the Turkish teacher graduated from a big university's English language teaching department and she was quite young. Kumsal was expecting the Turkish teacher to be an excellent expert on teaching, while the Polish teacher to be passive and dull in class. However, their departments and ages did not come out in line with Kumsal's expectations and these elements did not play a role in their success in the classroom. The Polish teacher loved her profession and she was quite enthusiastic and energetic in class with her students. On the contrary, the Turkish teacher was very boring according to Kumsal, as she was always complaining about how hard her job is. Despite her young age, the Turkish teacher was unmotivated and unsuccessful at teaching.

These experiences had a deep impact on Kumsal, as she observed that she was right thinking passion for teaching and the personality of the teacher were the keys in this profession. In this respect, Kumsal's personality to offer knowledge and guidance to her students mattered deeply. Her position and disposition as a pedagogical expert helped her a lot because she could not rely on experience on this matter. She elaborated on the issue as in the following excerpt:

In fact, rather than my experience, my personality was standing in the class. I did not know anything about teaching. I did not have any experience and I did not have anything in my hand. 25 young adults are looking at you. You have a program to catch up and certain linguistic knowledge in your mind. For this reason, you are standing there just as an individual.

In Kumsal's opinion, her personality differed from other teachers in terms of her perspective towards being a teacher. She thought that she could offer her students a different world; however, nourishing the program with such knowledge was caused due to her "unprofessionalism" since being a professional teacher meant having no emotional attachment with the job she was doing. If she had been a professional teacher, she would have gone to the class and talked about the book solely. She expressed her so called "unprofessionalism" as follows:

Rather than just presenting the rules about the language, I thought I could present them a different world. For this, I was teaching them linguistics! In other words, while I am teaching grammar, instead of writing "subject-verb-object" on the board, I was drawing syntax trees. I don't know, maybe I take this issue from an emotional point of view due to my lack of experience. If I were a professional, I would just teach the things I am supposed to. Maybe the idea of becoming a teacher is not set in my mind.

No matter how much she tried for her students, was satisfied with the feedbacks given by them or her efforts to become the idealized pedagogical expert for them, she kept refusing seeing herself as a teacher. Due to a number of reasons; such as the prestige of the profession in the society or top-down administrative approach in the educational institutions, the profession of teaching was a taboo for Kumsal. On one hand, Kumsal kept underscoring her efforts she put for the profession in her interviews and I could see the very-gently-formed rapport between she and her student in the observations. She was enthusiastic and always very well-planned. On the other hand, she was extremely unhappy to be called as a teacher. She never wanted to choose this field. She felt like she was stuck in this job because she did not have enough authority to change the system. In this respect, in order not to contradict with her dreams to be a prestigious linguist in a well-known university which really does change the world, she did not want to accept and embrace her professional identity as a teacher. The

following excerpt explains Kumsal's critical perspective to the teaching profession with which she did not want to be referred:

This is my first professional job and I never wanted to do it. Normally, I should have been abroad doing my graduate degree now. My whole life changed at the last minute. I stayed in Turkey and applied to this job. I was accepted...I still do not like it. It is a monotonous profession which refuses change in all manners. Everyone I see is fed up with this profession including the students. These things affect me negatively. I realized that I was right not wanting this job... Perhaps, I do not want to be a part of the present system in Turkey. We are forced to obey certain rules. For example, I do not want to teach two units from the book for each week. This is against my perspective towards language teaching. My students can only command one unit in one week. I will never accept these rules even if they offer me more money. This profession is managed with strict rules. You always have someone superior than you are even if you are the head of the department.

For Kumsal, accepting her teacher identity meant accepting that she was a boring grown up with responsibilities in this monotonous profession. On the contrary, Kumsal wanted to feel that she was still a student who can disobey the rules and follow her dreams. For this reason, she felt like she was not a professional teacher and she would never be one. The following statement explains her perspective towards the rejection of her teacher identity:

When I first come here, I still felt like a student. I would go back to school and follow my dreams. I still want to have a master's degree but I feel like I am a grown up now...I think, I do not have a command on the field of teaching. I do not like this profession and I do not have concerns to command it actually. For now, I really try for this profession, but I will never say that I am great at this job...If I want to specialize in this field, I can be a professional, but I do not have such a purpose. I would need to devote myself to this profession which does not seem possible in my life.

Moreover, being a teacher made Kumsal felt that she wasted her educational life. From her point of view, teaching was a profession that everyone could do; therefore, Kumsal did not want to be in it. As she emphasized many times, teaching was quite monotonous and conservative in terms of novelty. In this sense, she felt that she was wasting her abilities which was too much for the teaching profession. She expressed her feelings on the matter as given below:



First of all, I graduated from a department I never liked. I feel like my educational life is wasted. English language teaching is not an appropriate field for me. Social sciences are not for me. I always thought in this way. Every day, I come here at eight thirty and stay here until five pm to teach. It is very boring. I think, I blocked my own development... Everyone can do this job. They may not be great teachers, but they still can be one. It is not really a satisfactory job. At least, for me, I cannot do it in the long run.

In addition to the lack of autonomy and dissatisfaction Kumsal feels towards the profession of teaching, she possessed concerns related to the status of the teaching profession in society. Teaching was an appropriate job for a woman who can take care of her family and enjoy her leisure time at the same time. It also meant that you have a standard life in which you are not “someone”. This point of view caused Kumsal’s family to encourage her for more, rather than “just becoming an ordinary teacher”. In this respect, Kumsal chose to reject her identity as a professional teacher, although she never stopped working hard to become the pedagogical expert she idealized. Kumsal expressed the following ideas in terms of the status of teaching in society:

You are a guide for people; however, in this country being a teacher is seen as an easy job, which disturbs me a lot. For example, my family views teaching from this perspective. They think that I have a job, I am comfortable and I have standard life. They do not understand that I could ask for more. This is not what I want... But they still insist on this perspective. They are full of questions such as “what is going to happen to your graduate degree?”, “Will you go abroad?” or “What is going to happen to your life?”. I can say that I am very confused. On the other hand, teaching is not a prestigious job for the society. I do not think we get what we deserve. That’s why nothing satisfies me in this profession..

As it can be seen from her statements, Kumsal was quite confused about her perspective towards the profession and her teacher identity. She was working hard to become a pedagogical expert and protecting her idealism to present a different world to her students. However, she was also refusing to understand and embrace her teacher identity due to her desire for prestige which was not granted to the teaching profession by society. Moreover, the boring routine of teaching and the top-down administration of the schools also influenced Kumsal’s views of her own identity, since she felt that teachers cannot develop themselves professionally under such circumstances.

#### 4.1.1.2 Obsession with Authority

*“I guess I am obsessed with authority”*

As was discussed in the literature, novice teachers’ putting excessive focus on the classroom management was reported and observed in Kumsal’s case. During the observations, Kumsal could not tolerate any kinds of misbehavior which would overshadow her authority in class. She was annoyed when the students smiled to each other or asked questions to each other even if the questions were related to the topics discussed. She sought for full control in the participation of the students into the discussions, completion of in-class activities and the interaction patterns of students with each other. She stated the following to emphasize the importance of her authority:

If I teach in a class, they have to listen to me because they erode my authority. When they look at each other and smile, I feel like they do not listen to me and this makes me annoyed. This applies to the students who sleep in the class. I warn the students even if they yawn. I guess I am obsessed with authority. This may be an evidence that I am not professional enough... I mean, I behave with an authoritarian manner and try to keep control of everyone.

Although her disposition was usually serious and her classes were noise-free, she would smile at the students from time to time and made jokes about them. Her smiling or making jokes were something prominent to note down for me as the researcher during the observations because she reported many times that the relation between a student and a teacher should be “professional” meaning “emotion-free” in her point of view. This perspective of professionalism was crucial for her to maintain their “authority”. She explained her ideas in this issue as follows:

Students do not have to like me. They have to understand this first. I started my first semester from this point of view. I was very serious and disciplined. If you want to make sure that students understand this, you need to start being serious from the very first week. You need to emphasize from the beginning that I am a very serious person, I am here to teach you something and you have to learn it. If you make them understand this, they take the responsibility to study.

Even if Kumsal seemed like she underscored her professionalism and encouraged her students to take responsibility for their own learning process, she was confused about the distinction between dictating and forcing students for learner autonomy and encouraging and motivating them for it. Additionally, teacher as the mother of the students role or the nurturing-teacher model disturbed her deeply due to emotions within these concepts. For this reason, she attributed her success as a teacher which meant to be loved by the students and increasing their grades, to her tough-teacher model. The following statement explains her perspective:

You have to push the students. If you say “I will do it for you” or “oh, you do not want to read! Okay! I will read it for you”, they think that the teacher does everything, so they can just relax. Maybe because I was pushing them, I was successful in the first semester. Even if they were reluctant, I made them do the activities by forcing them. I would say “you have to do it” and wait. They were doing it eventually. For example, I would instruct them to read something and they would say they do not want to. If they didn’t, I would make them leave the class. I was serious and very disciplined from the very beginning. If we were there, they had to do something. I would say if we are here spending time and effort, you have to do it.

Although Kumsal was quite assured that her discipline was a facilitative way to encourage student authority, she possessed certain concerns related to student resistance which would eventually erode her authoritarian disposition in the class. In order to elaborate on her fear of student resistance she gave a salient example. In one of her classes, she required two of the most dominant and spoiled students of the class, as she described them, to stand up at the corner of the classroom for two hours. The students rejected their “punishment” at first; however, seeing her determined on what she asked for made them actually stay standing for the relevant hour of teaching. Kumsal was worried that the students would show reaction to their punishment or come to have a word with her considering that they were teenagers at the age of 18; nevertheless, nothing happened. This incident reinforced Kumsal’s opinion of discipline and authority as the key characteristic of a successful teacher. Moreover, she acknowledged that even if she crossed the lines, her students cared for her as well. The following was her expression on the issue:

One of my students asked me how I managed to be loved in spite of my excessive discipline and authority. I did not know the answer; but I knew that I was serious since I cared for them. I like being in this way, on the other hand it is quiet crucial for me that they learn something from me or they can achieve something. I know that they do not have to like me; however, they respect me and they are aware of the fact that I do these for them. At least, this motivates me in terms of this job.

Kumsal utilized another example to illustrate her students' respect and love for her. One of her students was stalking her since they were very curious about her personal life as a class and her former students kept talking about her positively. The student noted many things related to her life such as her educational background, her family, friends and relatives. This incident did not bother Kumsal as she preferred to be stalked rather than not being cared about. The following is her experience of the stalking incident:

The student said I was not very serious as I looked like. He knew the activities I participated and the voluntary jobs or projects I took part in. It was interesting when I asked him why he did that. He said you are different from the other teachers and you are standing out in this way. I did not quite get what he meant. But this incident is not a bad one. I mean, rather than to be the teacher they do not care, I like being the one who they are curious about.

Despite these examples Kumsal gave, she was underlining the importance of the distance between a teacher and students. She strongly believed in the power of formality in her relations with her students. Moreover, Kumsal suggested this distance should be supported by the management of the department via stronger rules even if the institution has already had a number of quite strict ones related to use of cell phones, coming to class on time and having the books with them constantly. She elaborated on her suggestion as follows:

Some teachers are very close with their students. However, I am a person who strongly believes in the power of formality. Even if it is not extreme, "you are a student and I am a teacher, so you cannot cross this line" rule is valid for me. As I said this formality should be balanced between "being aggressive" and "being friendly". I think the administration should be stricter on this issue. For example, you want to send a student out of the class and the student rejects to leave. Maybe, students should be reminded by administration regularly that if they do not obey, they should leave the class. Even if you are the teacher of the

class who is the one in control of the authority, students do not understand this clearly.

Given the evidences presented above, despite her concerns related to student reaction, Kumsal gave her authority, discipline, strict rules and formal attitude full credit for her success and effectiveness. She asserted that these strategies were influential for her students and she sought for support from the administration to justify her identity as the tough teacher. The following statement is her final remarks related to the issue:

I always initiate my interaction with the students with a distance. Naturally, they hold themselves back from me, but we always finalize the semester in good terms. I can really see that they are happy with this. At least, I have a well- established rapport with them. I really care about them, maybe more than a regular and usual teacher.

As it can be seen clearly, no matter Kumsal's distance, formal attitude and excessive discipline in class, her students appreciated her efforts. These positive feedbacks from the students encouraged Kumsal to maintain her strict disposition as a pedagogical and didactical expert.

#### **4.1.2 What particular elements does each beginning teacher relate to her own professional identity views?**

Kumsal reflected on a number of the elements in relation to her teacher identity. These elements were the influence of political capitals on the foreign languages department, hectic work load, standardized test and curriculum policy and the professional development opportunities.

One of the most preeminently referred factors in relation to Kumsal's, Gamze's and Ayla's perspective of their own teacher identity was the institution's enforcement of the instructors and the students to participate in political meetings and rallies. Given the institution's founders' active roles in politics in the country who provided the fund to establish the university and who can play an active role in the process of recruitment, attending to a number of the political meetings as academics was inevitable. It was compulsory to attend these meetings for both academics and students in some cases,

and only for students in others which meant to be an unscheduled interruption in education. Members of the department and the students were taken to such rallies in order to maximize the number of the people when there was not enough participation.

During the data collection period of this study, two of such meetings took place. In the first meeting, all of the academic staff of the university along with the whole students of the foreign languages department were asked to leave their classes at a given time to take shuttle buses to go to the place of the meeting. Then the students were given flags and assigned to the seats. The meeting lasted for 4 hours in total and both academics and the students could not leave the saloon until the closure of the meeting.

Kumsal summarized her perspective for the meeting as the following:

The ceremony was completely irrelevant for us. We were like the slaves of the institution. We did nothing and we understood nothing. It was quite meaningless for me to be taken there by force. Moreover, the students were taken there by force as well. As far as I am told, they were handed flags and told to clap. They were not happy at all and we were not either. Although we are a private university, this is nothing to do with education. Okay, maybe we (teachers) are under their command and they control us; however, we are not their slaves. They have to understand this.

Kumsal was quite critical about this incident as she felt that her autonomy as a professional and as an individual was restricted evidently since she was kept there just because she had to. As she underlined many times, she felt like a slave who had no right to put her ideas forward. Moreover, since Kumsal had already been experiencing confusion in terms of embracing her teacher identity, such meetings and the enforcement of political involvement intensified her critical stance against the profession.

*“I feel tired”*

Another element Kumsal reported in relation to her own teacher identity views were the work load at the institution. The system based on helping learners to pass a standardized test brought along a loaded program as well as hectic teaching routine and work load on the shoulders of the participant teachers. Besides teaching for 20 to

28 hours of contact hours per week, the participant teachers were expected to attend meetings some of which were political rallies while others were regular gatherings in the institution. Invigilation duties assigned at least once per week, grading many papers each week and conducting speaking exams twice for each level in a semester (10 times in total in 12 weeks) were regular responsibilities of an instructor at the institution. Moreover, instructors were responsible from the invigilation duties even if they were on the weekend or after the working hours without payment.

Kumsal emphasized many times that this work load was quite demanding for her. Although she was expecting to work more compared to the instructors serving at state schools, she did not know the work load would be as much, that is why she was quite critical about it. Since she had already been coping with the reality shock of being in a real classroom and felt confused and challenged in relation to her pedagogical expert roles, the work load of the institution fostered her burn out and her critical perspective. Kumsal commented on her feelings as follows:

My motivation and enthusiasm are decreasing every passing day and I feel tired. Because of this, I started to fed up with this job. We were told that our work load was going to be lessened. Nothing happened. Maybe, this job is not right for me. Maybe working here is a mistake for me... During the first semester, I was working for 6 days because I had to teach the departmental English classes on Saturdays. For this reason, my battery died at the very beginning of the year.

*“We put the students in a machine and take them out after a while”*

The programs Kumsal, Ayla and Gamze followed weekly designed around the “big” internationally standardized test which was another aspect of the busy routine of teaching at the institution. As was mentioned in the methodology section, the institution where the participant teachers work conducts an international test at the end of the year to evaluate the students’ proficiency level of English. Although Kumsal did not feel the pressure of this exam during the first semester, during the second and especially the third semester, she was under the stress of the exam which interacted with her views of teaching and understanding of the teaching profession deeply.

The roles this program and exam imposed on Kumsal and the other participant teachers made their teaching processes mechanic and contradicted with their views of their own teacher identity. As was frequently expressed by Kumsal, she felt like a robot, a parrot or a slave under the command of the test and the program. She could not enact her classes as she thought or idealized as an autonomous teacher which included aims like encouraging autonomous learners who had the skills to question and reflect on their own learning process and who could master the target language along with the culture to be a better person. These idealized targets of education was only possible for Kumsal by being a sophisticated pedagogical expert who could have a deep understanding on her students' needs by being a guide, a model or a facilitator. However, instead of these roles, the students were being standardized due to the mechanical teachings which lacked any sorts of discussion and interaction in class. In this sense, Kumsal felt the huge gap between her idealized teacher identity roles and the current roles attained to her by the program. She reflected on the issue as follows: "The institution has an education policy: the students should pass their classes and the exam. We put the students in a machine and take them out after a while. The teachers here are the workers doing this job."

The final element Kumsal mentioned during the interviews in relation to her teacher identity was the passion for professional development. Although the experiences she gained and the positive feedbacks she received from her students encouraged her to follow her idealized view of teacher identity as a tough and strict pedagogical and subject matter expert at the same time, she was fearful about wasting her educational background. In other words, Kumsal had rigid concerns over wasting her skills and abilities as an individual by being a teacher rather than becoming a scientist or a "real" academic personnel with a title who conducted experiments and wrote papers. In this respect, Kumsal felt that she was actually productive as a teacher for the first time when the institution organized and hosted a conference on teacher training. To Kumsal, this conference gave her a chance to feel better about her profession while it fostered the communication and cooperation among the instructors at the institution. She elaborated on the issue as follows:



Being a part of this conference is great for me because everything is getting boring in here. At least, we will work on something more academic and we will produce something concrete. However, we are like actors applying already made products to the students while we are teaching... We can improve ourselves professionally in this way. We will communicate with instructors working in different universities. It creates a positive atmosphere and makes you feel good. At least, you see yourself doing something good.

Kumsal underlined the positive impact of the conference and in-service training sessions in relation to her views of teacher identity. She thought the cooperation and collaboration among instructors at the institution was fostered via these activities. The ingrained and hectic routine of teaching was enriched and she was given the chance to develop herself as a professional. Moreover, seeing the common concerns of the fellow instructors assisted her to understand she was not alone in this journey of becoming a better teacher as a teacher learner.

#### **4.1.3 Discussion on Kumsal as a Case**

When Kumsal's reflections were examined, her pedagogical and didactical expert identities were dominant in relation to her subject matter identity as Beijard, Verloop and Vermunt's model (1999). Although she was a knowledgeable teacher as a subject matter expert and she acknowledged the substantiality of this aspect, the observations and her reflections indicated that Kumsal clung her identity as a pedagogical expert in her everyday practices. She was always very well prepared and enthusiastic in class. By presenting her personality in class as a teacher and by addressing the needs of each individual student, she advanced her rapport with the learners and broadened their horizons as a contemporary academician.

On the other hand, Kumsal was rejecting to embrace her teacher identity due to the unprestigious state of teaching in society as was claimed by Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnston (2009). She claimed the top-down administrative models and lack of autonomy caused the teaching profession to be dull, unchallenging, monotonous and conservative which fostered the rejection of her teacher identity. Moreover, her idealized personal objectives to be a successful academician as a

linguist and her desire to have an impact in her field as “someone” rather than “just another teacher” intensified her stance. Especially her previous schooling experiences and the practicum (Miller, 2009) encouraged her to believe that teaching should be done by devoted people who have aspiration for this profession which was also found by Başer and Karaman (2015).

Additionally, Kumsal reported possessing an obsession with autonomy. When the classroom observations were taken into account, Kumsal smiled very rarely and she was quite distant from the students since she believed in the power of formality. She wanted to possess the total control of the classroom and she directed the interaction patterns among the students. In some cases, she did not refrain herself from punishing the students although she had concerns of facing student resistance. Being respected by the students rather than being liked by them was her expectation from students. In this sense, she put an excessive focus on classroom management and discipline which is referred frequently in novice teacher experience (Farrell, 2008).

When the elements interacting with Kumsal’s view of her teacher identity were considered, political capitals, work load, teaching to the test and curriculum policy and passion for professional development opportunities were emerged. Being taken to the political rallies compulsorily damaged Kumsal’s authority as a teacher and as an individual and she felt like a worthless “slave”. Moreover, teaching for “the big test” rather than learning outcomes and the heavy work load as a part of the institutional context (Miller, 2009) caused Kumsal’s teaching practices to become more mechanical which was contradictory with Kumsal’s pedagogical expert roles (Beijard, Verloop & Vermunt, 1999) since she could not present her personality in class.

In this pessimistic image, Kumsal’s passion for professional development as a teacher-learner and her motivation for collaboration as Johnson (2009) claims were the only elements that motivated her. With these opportunities, Kumsal thought that the boring and monotonous routine of teaching was broken and she was actually taking part in something that she could be proud of. With such conferences and/or in-service training

sessions, Kumsal was able to actualize her potential in cooperation as Vygotsky (1978) asserts. The following figure can be given as a summary for Kumsal's teacher identity view and elements reflected in relation to her views.

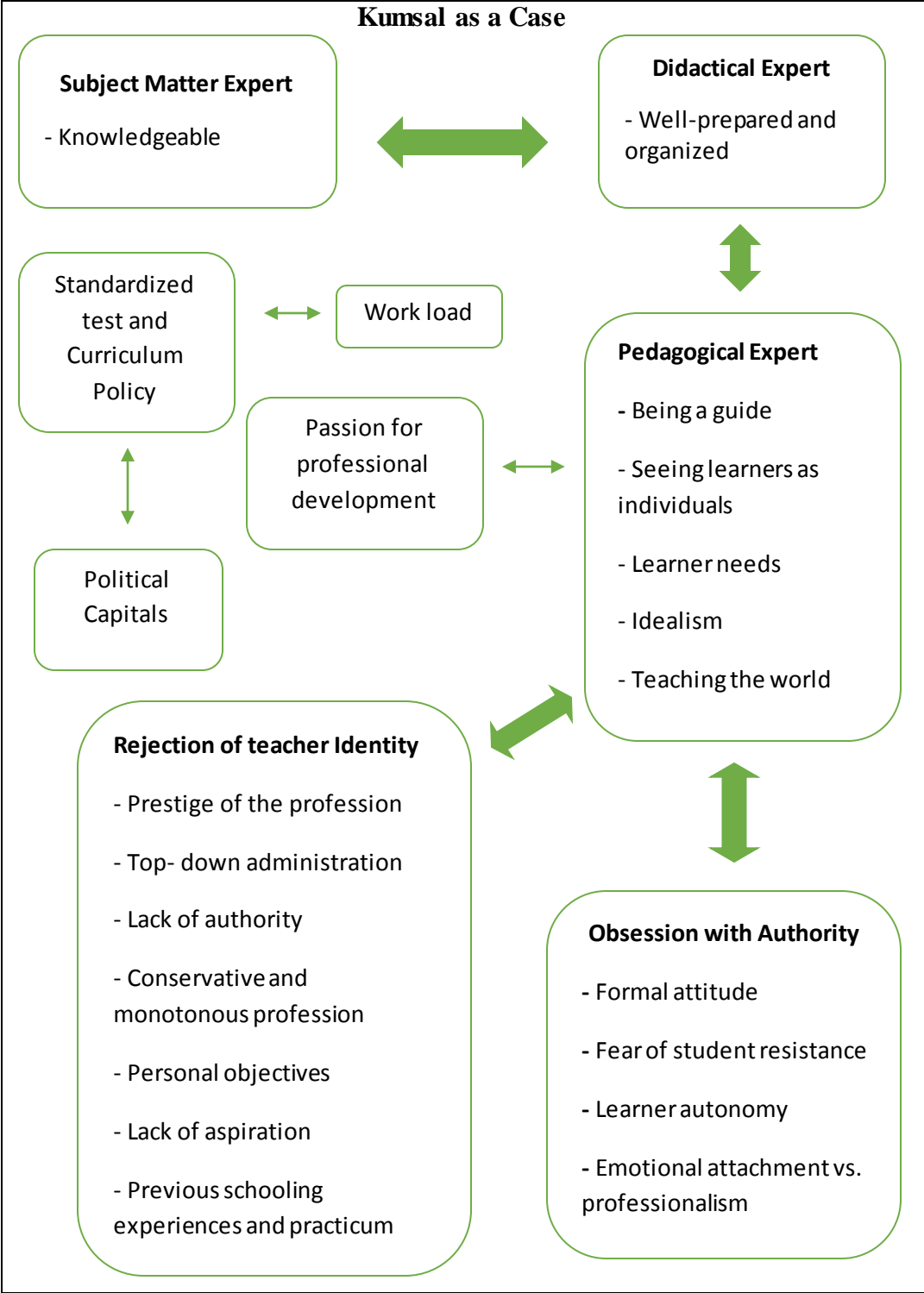


Figure 8: Kumsal’s views of her teacher identity and elements in relation to her reflections

## **4.2 Ayla as a Case**

In Ayla's case, two emerging themes are presented below in relation to the first research question.

### **4.2.1 How does each beginning teacher perceive her teacher identity in the higher education institution under study?**

#### **4.2.1.1 Seeking Approval from Students**

*“I lay myself out to make the students like me!”*

From Ayla's point of view, teaching meant guidance and initiating learning opportunities which learners can question critically and apply to their lives actively. In this respect, Ayla expressed that the teacher she was attempting to become was a combination of a teacher as a subject matter expert, a pedagogical expert and a didactical expert, all of which should be present moderately. During the observations, Ayla was seen to embrace these identities. She was encouraging the students to be the authority in the class while conducting the classes with her identity as a subject expert. She was always quite friendly during her classes and she made use of humor and acting during her classes to facilitate her rapport with the learners to be able to implement her expertise as a pedagogical expert and didactical expert. Ayla described herself as a teacher further as the following:

I am someone who can control the classroom without dictating. I guide my students and I know how they can learn the best. I am a teacher who can share her knowledge in a nice, effective and interesting way. However, I think we should not let our emotions into the classes, because after you form deep relations with them, they do not take things from a professional perspective. In this case, you become their sister rather than their teacher.

Ayla had been to Germany with the Erasmus program to study for two semesters which took almost a year. In Germany, she focused on classes on ELT and on German language which had a great impact on her while shaping her perspective towards teaching and learning. When she compared the program in her native country and in

Germany, she realized that teaching can also be flourished by providing positive classroom atmosphere and discussion rather than just listening to a lecture talking about an article assigned. Moreover, for her, these discussions were encouraging to reflect on the practical implications of teaching theories in differing teaching environments. As she underlined during her interviews, she realized that by sharing and discussing various ideas, teachers can find better ways to maximize learning outcomes. I could see during the observations that Ayla was trying to create such an atmosphere in her classes. She was always very friendly and she always encouraged her students to share ideas with each other to foster the learning environment.

However, as Ayla reported, she had challenges balancing her pedagogical roles due to her personality which was referred as the teacher's biography in the literature. She expressed many times in her interviews that she disregarded the institutional rules or the rules she identified herself for the sake of being liked by the students more. She behaved in this way due to her belief suggesting that students learn better when they like the teacher. This case took place during the classroom observations as well. Although the administration of the institution strongly forbade the students to go into to the class when they were late even for one minute in order to minimize the interventions during the classes, Ayla accepted late-comers to her classes even after 5 minutes the class started. Additionally, assignments submitted after the deadlines were not allowed to be accepted by the instructors. However, Ayla did not mind accepting those assignments. Later in the interviews, Ayla stated that she broke these rules mainly because she wanted the students to like her besides her personal tendency of not liking strict rules. She commented on her attempts to be liked by the students further as follows:

The main cause is my habit...my tendency to be accepted by people. Even if they are temporary in my life or even if I would see these students only one hour in my life, I want them to have a positive idea about me. For this, I do my best and this wears me out. In short, I lay myself out to make the students like me. This is very tiring psychologically. I spend time and effort on people whom I may never see again. This is quite tiring.

Although Ayla underscored a number of times that spending extra time on the human relations was a demanding process for her, she also claimed that behaving in this way was a strategy for her to excel at the classroom management. When she did not mind accepting the late-comers in the class or the late- homework assignments after the deadline, her students embraced her as a teacher more and she could avoid students resistance which was something quite overwhelming for her to deal with. She suggested that this strategy worked for her and for her classes effectively while she was not sure if it was applicable for other teachers or not. The following was Ayla's perspective on the issue:

Students like the teacher better when the teacher is tolerant and easy-going. When you dictate the students strongly to bring homework on Monday, it raises contradictions and resistance. I do not make it a problem when they do not bring their weekly homework on Monday and classroom management is easier for me now. When I ignore the problem, they ignore it, too. I cannot suggest that this is the ideal thing to do but it worked for me.

As her comments suggested, Ayla's excessive focus on student relation was a part of her biography. She was aware of her own perspective related to become an expert which can moderately embrace the expertise of subject matter, pedagogy and contemporary didactical teacher identity; however, she chose to compromise with the students in order not to face resistance and to be accepted more. Ayla justified her choice as to be the teacher liked as the following:

I cannot say that the students learn better in this way. From my point of view, when there is no controversy in class, the communication gets better. I cannot say this facilitates learning. It goes on as it is. The students who are motivated to learn something progress anyhow, while the unmotivated ones do not. I am not really in a position to evaluate this situation.

As it was previously stated, Ayla's Erasmus experience and personal biography directed her to pursue pedagogical expert roles in the classroom. However, breaking the institutional rules or abolishing the rules she set herself caused Ayla to find herself in a vicious circle where she was constantly seeking approval from her students. This circle also encouraged her students to push the limits; therefore, Ayla could not restore

her authority after this point and she chose to maintain the “peaceful” atmosphere in class to avoid student resistance.

#### **4.2.1.2 Identity transition: Still a student or a teacher?**

*“I remember myself sleeping at the back of the class 8 months ago.”*

When the field of research examining novice teachers’ experience is taken into account, novice teachers’ putting great focus on empathy with their students has been come across frequently (Farrell, 2008). This empathy is nurtured by the confusion of feeling like a student rather than a professional teacher during the first months of teaching in “real classrooms” rather than the modelling of teaching in idealized environments in the teacher education programs. Ayla’s emphasis on student relations rather than teaching outcomes was an example of this as well. She possessed superfluous empathy with her students to prove that she was a contemporary teacher who could understand the students well, rather than one of the old-school teachers. These were observed in Ayla’s classes as well as in her statements during the interviews. In addition to her efforts to prove herself as a like-minded and friendly teacher to her students, Ayla’s confusion in her feelings in relation to her position as a teacher was another point underscored. In often cases, Ayla still felt like a student rather than a teacher; for this reason, she was extra tolerant to the students who did not follow the institutional and classroom rules. Ayla expressed her confusion about her feelings as follows:

I realized that I have some weak points in terms of classroom management because I still feel like a student rather than a teacher. I understand them because I remember myself sleeping at the back of the class 8 months ago. When this is the case, I cannot warn them appropriately. When I warn them, I feel guilty because there were times I did the same.

Her hesitation to embrace her identity as a teacher caused her to face classroom management problems since she was not consistent in her decisions related to it. Moreover, when the classroom management problems and the ambivalence started to



nurture each other in a vicious circle, Ayla could not find any solutions to end this process but let things go as they were. Ayla commented on this issue as the following:

Since I still feel like a student and remember the things I have been through, I cannot act heartlessly toward them. I think about the reasons why they act in certain ways. Maybe they are sleepy or maybe they are bored. They should listen to me because what I am teaching is crucial for them; however, maybe they are so bored that I should let them play with his phone. This is how I think about the things. Of course, this causes me to be tolerant on many things and one tolerance follows the others endlessly.

As Ayla stated, the more tolerant she was, the more tolerance she had to show. This situation raised other issues in Ayla's case because she was driven by her feelings in class as an individual with intermingled interaction patterns rather than with a professional rapport as a pedagogical expert. For this reason, she started to have favorite students in class and gave subjective decisions in favor of them. The following was Ayla's stance on the issue:

I do not think I act in a professional manner with my students since there is so much emotion involved in our relation. This leads to inequality in class because I tolerate some students more than others. I need to be more objective in class...I have so much to learn on being fair and treating to each student objectively. Unfortunately, no matter how much I try, there are some favorite and some lost students in my class. Sometimes I tolerate the favorite ones more while I am having short fuse with others. I need to balance my feelings and treat each student equally.

When Ayla's case was examined, her views of herself as a teacher was ornamented with confusion related to her teacher identity which was followed by classroom management and objectivity problems. She wanted to put her identity as a pedagogical expert forward; however, she ended up trying so hard to make students like her. Moreover, her excessive empathy with the students due to her feeling more like a student rather than a teacher made it even harder for her to balance her stance as a professional in class.

#### **4.2.2 What particular elements does each beginning teacher relate to her own professional identity views?**

When Ayla's reflections on the elements interacting with her teacher identity views were taken into account, four main elements; namely, political influences, student profile at the institution, standardized test and the curriculum planned around the test and professional development events were found.

*"You are not only a teacher but also a toady!"*

Similar to Kumsal's case, Ayla's feelings towards the political meetings and interruptions caused by these gatherings were critical. Ayla was not happy being there because she thought she could have spent those particular hours doing something meaningful for herself or for her job. The meetings were a waste of time for her and she felt like she was a toady rather than a teacher just to make the powerful ones happy. Ayla's feelings on the meeting were reported below:

To be honest I felt like I was someone there to fill a gap. They needed a crowd and thought how they could gather that crowd: Let's take those teachers over there! Sit down there and clap, by this way, we will make "them" happy...I was not a teacher there but someone who needed to clap...I thought If you work in such kind of an institution, you are not only a teacher but also a toady!

As was clearly seen from what the participants expressed in the interviews on this particular event, politics was worth to report in terms of Kumsal's and Ayla's views of themselves not even as a teacher but as a so called "slave" as Kumsal felt, or a "toady" as Ayla reported. Although only two such rallies were organized in one semester during the data collection period, they were enough to make Kumsal and Ayla to feel worthless individuals and professionals even if the students' perspectives varied on the matter.

Another aspect underscored by Ayla related to her teacher identity views were the student profile and misbehavior. Ayla's expectation of finding an idealized classroom atmosphere and conducting educationally nourishing classes with her autonomous

learners were damaged by the student profile she experienced. This reality shock Ayla went through was one of the biggest challenges against her pedagogical expert identity and she felt desperate from time to time.

To overcome the reality shock, Ayla preferred putting the blame on her language education programs and the gap between theory and practice. She thought undergraduate teacher education programs should enrich their curriculum by providing the teacher nominees with more opportunities to experience a variety of educational contexts. Furthermore, she suggested that there should be classes related to possible student misbehaviors in the curricula of teacher education programs. She commented on her suggestions as follows:

First of all, I realized that 70% percent of the theories I learned in college does not work. The perfect lesson plans we prepared are failures. Therefore, most of the things I learned at school are inapplicable...I always thought, as long as I master my field, everything is going to be perfect. It was not perfect, not in real life... I think the problem is my teacher education program. Teaching practice classes were not genuine and real enough for us. If I had experienced more classrooms, it would have been easier for me to face the reality... If we had had a class which helped us to go to differing teaching environments, we could have started our careers as teachers in a more equipped and prepared way.

One of the most prominent examples leading Ayla to face reality was threats to her by the students during an invigilation duty in an exam. This event not only shocked Ayla but also other instructors at school in terms of seeing what students could do when they were not happy. Ayla drew up a report for three students during an exam since they were cheating. After the exam, three of the students broke into her room and started yelling at her. Fellow teachers tried to control the students; however, they went on threatening Ayla saying that they would take their revenge from her outside of the school. After an investigation was conducted on the students, they received a written warning. The following was Ayla's expression of her shock on the event:

I was shocked and frozen because I would never expect something like that to take place at a university. Personally, I would never take part in a fight. I cannot even raise my voice to anyone. Three students walked up to me and threatened me. I was speechless... For the first time in my life I received such threats

saying they would sue me because their fathers were “big”. They were asking what kind of a person I was to destroy their life and they asked me to use empathy to understand how I would feel if they destroyed my life as a teacher...Then the event was investigated. I just wanted everything to be over because nothing can change such students’ mentality...If I were to talk them again, they would threaten me more which would scare me.

Unfortunately, this event was followed by a number of similar cases in one of which a student tried to hit his teacher. Even if the institution tried to intimidate the students by starting investigations on misbehaved students, student fights did not stop in and out of the classes. Such cases influenced Ayla’s views toward her institution, her students and her profession negatively. While she was experiencing the shock of being a teacher and trying to balance her roles as a pedagogical expert, the feeling of being insecure was added to her confusion.

Ayla’s pedagogical expert roles were also challenged by the curriculum policy which aimed to prepare learners for the standardized test at the end of the year. Ayla’s desire to flourish learning outcomes with classroom discussions and other types of interactive activities were blocked by the weekly program followed; therefore, she possessed a very critical stand towards the applications of the exam on her teacher roles. She felt like she was doing a robotic job which did not require any sorts of sophistication or educational background since she could not have effective interaction patterns with the learners. Moreover, Ayla’s perspective toward teaching and learning was shaken because her only role was to solve questions in assigned tests and to read the answer key to learners. She was supposed to provide the learners with quick tips of grammar because this was what the students expected from her throughout the final term since the exam was approaching. In this sense, she felt disappointed and insufficient as an educator because these roles were not what she wanted to become as a teacher. The following was Ayla’s comments on her experience:

This semester I was just a robot. The students did not want to learn more or practice communicatively. They wanted to solve more questions every day. Therefore, my duty was to answer questions with them and to give quick tips. I wanted talks, discussions and real life materials in class. Instead, I read answer keys... They only wanted things to memorize. I was not a teacher. I was more like

a parrot answering questions saying this is this and that is that... For this reason, my perspective to teaching changed parallel to the student expectation. I wanted them to be active learners while they wanted me to be an old-school teacher.

Ayla criticized the system centered around the exam for these roles. She was able to understand why students expected from her to adopt these roles; however, the program and the administration was the source of these contradictions in her teacher identity as a pedagogical expert because the pressure of the exam shaped the student needs and the program. She commented on the matter as follows:

Of course, I understand that there is an exam at the end of the semester. There are topics that need to be covered until the exam. It has a huge impact on our teachings. The program we follow has a huge one too. They (the administration) ask us to follow the program and teach strategies for the exam. They (the administration) have a role in this process too. They may want us to ignore everything else and focus on the exam because the system was built around this test. For this reason, student perspectives and expectations are shaped accordingly.

Similar to Kumsal, the final element Ayla referred in terms of her teacher identity views was the professional development sessions and the conference. For Ayla, the first year of teaching was busy and challenging. From time to time, she felt weary and disappointed due to giving up on her idealized perspective towards teaching and learning to address the needs of the teaching system and students. She could not pursue becoming the ideal teacher as a pedagogical expert in her mind rather she ended up becoming the friendly and easy going subject matter expert as her students desired her to be. However, this process was educative for her at the same time. As a teacher-learner, she thought she gained invaluable experiences which would help her in her second year at the institution. She thought she would be more comfortable and would feel more secure while forming her relations with her students. In this respect, the conference hosted by the foreign languages department served as a great motivation for Ayla as a teacher-learner. It helped her to break the boring routine of teaching since she took active roles in the conference community which helped her to realize that the busy preparation period was not a burden on her but something encouraging as a professional. Ayla expressed her feelings as follows:

My job here as a teacher was to take attendance and go to the classes. However, finding a chance improve myself as a professional teacher in this routine was great. I want to be involved with such organizations more and I want to make most of them for myself as a teacher because one day I want to be the one hosting and organizing a conference. I do not want to settle for just being a regular teacher. I want to develop myself as a professional.

As it is seen, the organization duties of the conference helped Ayla to understand she wanted to be involved in such events to become a better expert in her field as a teacher-learner and her work load at the institution was not an excuse for it. In other words, being involved with academic gatherings encouraged Ayla that she could still follow her idealized teacher identity by being a part of academia and real classrooms at the same time.

#### **4.2.3 Discussion on Ayla as a Case**

Although Ayla acknowledged a professional teacher should incorporate subject matter and didactical expert identities in moderation, her dominantly idealized teacher to become was a pedagogical expert as presented in Beijard, Verloop and Vermunt' s model (1999). In line with her pedagogical expert identity, Ayla pursued the goals of exceling at understanding students' needs and interests while being able to form effective communication patterns to incorporate them into her classroom practices as claimed by Erkmen (2014) that novices are likely to apply classroom practices in accordance with student needs.

However, Ayla's personal tendency to spend effort to be liked by the students challenged her pedagogical expert identity. She attributed too much value on the views of students on herself; therefore, she could not manage to balance her stand as a teacher. She broke the rules she set herself and compromised with her learners for the sake of avoiding resistance. This was also highly related with the need of professional practical assistance referred by Brannan and Bleistein (2012) and lack of opportunities for Ayla to reflect on her beliefs and classroom practices (Erkmen, 2014).

Additionally, Ayla possessed excessive empathy with the learners. She felt extremely confused sometimes because she felt like a student in class rather than a teacher (Miller, 2009). As mentioned by Farrell (2008), Ayla wanted to prove her learners that she was not an old-school teacher, but one of them in class who could understand them and share their feelings. In this *early idealism* stage as Farrell (2008) suggests, Ayla was mainly driven by her feelings and felt confused about her disposition in class as a professional language teacher due to her identity confusion as a novice teacher as discussed by Miller (2009). Moreover, as Hong (2010) suggests, Ayla's idealistic and naïve perception of teaching and expectations from this profession constrained her teacher identity negotiation process.

The elements Ayla referred interacting with her teacher identity views involved the political influence, student profile, testing and curriculum policy of the institution and professional development opportunities. Like Kumsal, Ayla found the impact of politics on her profession unprofessional and spending teaching hours at a political rally compulsorily made her feel like an insignificant "toady" which alienated Ayla from the feeling of belongingness to her institution as Karaman and Karataş (2015) claim in their study. Additionally, the student misbehaviors Ayla personally experienced advanced her insecurity and reality shock (Veenman, 1984) with which she was struggling.

The foreign languages department's assessment and curriculum policy was another aspect Ayla reflected. This policy hindered Ayla's pedagogical expert roles which is underlined by Miller (2009) as contextual factors. However, besides all the constraining elements, Ayla had the aspiration for her profession (Başer & Karaman, 2015) and she was motivated to improve herself professionally as a teacher-learner (Johnson, 2009). In this sense, the following figure presents Ayla's professional teacher identity views and elements in relation.

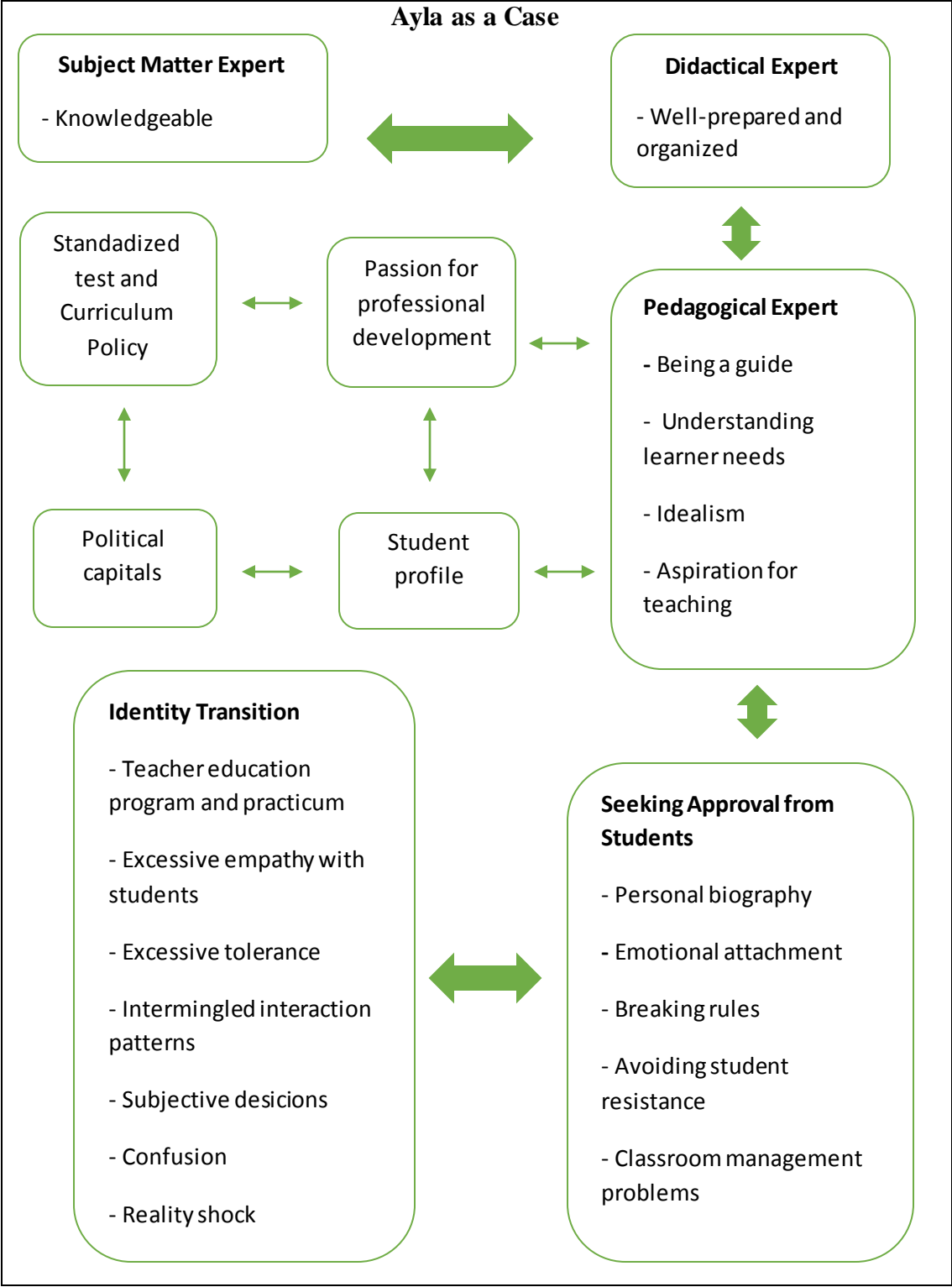


Figure 9: Ayla’s views of her teacher identity and elements in relation to her reflections



### **4.3 Gamze as a Case**

“Age and professionalism” and “despair and blaming self” are the two main themes discussed below in terms of Gamze’s teacher identity views of herself.

#### **4.3.1 How does each beginning teacher perceive her teacher identity in the higher education institution under study?**

##### **4.3.1.1 Age and Professionalism**

*“I am too young! “*

For Gamze, a professional teacher should have an advanced command of the field of English and language teaching. Being a subject matter expert was not the only identity she embraced. Designing teaching activities around the needs and the interests of the students which would have deep ties with real life applications, a teacher should also be a pedagogical expert who could form balanced and professional interaction patterns with learners. Moreover, collaboration and cooperation with colleagues and being able to adapt teaching programs in relation to changing circumstances were other aspects a teacher should take into consideration as was stated by Gamze.

Besides her own comments, during the classroom observations, Gamze was monitored to be a teacher just as she idealized to be in her interviews. She was always very prepared and multi-directional as a subject matter expert. The students were never hesitant to comment in the class or to ask questions to her. She was so patient in the class that she was able to solve the problems in class with her stand as a friendly pedagogical expert. Gamze referred to her expertise of subject matter and pedagogical expert as follows:

First of all, a professional teacher should master the field. Also, the relations with students should have certain limits. It does not mean that your limits will send the students away from you. It means that the teacher should balance respect and affection in her relations with students to be more beneficial for them. Similarly, it is important to have a cooperative and collaborative

atmosphere with colleagues based on respect and tranquility. These features are who I try to become as a teacher.

However, Gamze's pedagogical expert identity was a challenging role to adopt due to Gamze's and the institution's concerns related to the age of her besides the other beginning instructors. During the orientation program, the newly-hired beginning teachers were "kindly" asked not to answer questions related to their age. Moreover, they were told to dress up in a professional way which would help them look older than they were. Furthermore, they were warned many times not to share that they were new graduates who had no experience. In other words, Gamze was encouraged to act as if she had been an "experienced" teacher and showed this to her students via her outfit and explanations related to herself. Gamze explained this warning as in the following excerpt: "When we came here for the orientation, we were told that we should never tell the students that we are new graduates and we should never let them feel this. They suggested us to dress up in a way that would help us to look more mature".

Having been advised as was stated above, Gamze started to worry about her age and felt nervous answering the questions of the students. She thought she should look more mature and experienced than she was; otherwise, her students would not respect her and she would not be able to become the pedagogical expert she wanted to. Gamze's point of view was nurtured by the stereotype suggesting that experience means professionalism. In other words, if you are young and unexperienced, you are not a professional; therefore, you are not worth listening to or to be respected. The following is Gamze's feeling related to the issue:

Students see my mistakes in the class as a reason to question my professionalism. They think that sometimes I make a mistake because I am a novice and young teacher. There is a huge difference for them between my mistakes now and the same mistakes in a couple years. For this reason, I feel like I need to make them feel that these are nothing to do with being unexperienced. I think I need to act on this issue in a more political way.

As Gamze underlined many times during the interviews, she was beating around the bush when students asked questions in relation to her age. Usually, she addressed these

questions via jokes by saying that she was so old that she had to use a walking stick to come to the class. Although she managed to face this problem, she felt the stress about “lying” by not sharing the truth. Additionally, Gamze feared that she would have problems related to the student misbehavior or classroom management which are one of the most commonly concerned topics for beginning teachers. She commented on the issue further as follows:

We always have problems related to the age issue. For example, Ayla had to go through a legal process because some students were trying to cheat in the exam and she wrote a report on the cheating event. After that, the students came to her room and started shouting at her. I was there and heard everything myself. They were saying “How old are you? Why do you think you can write a report about us at this age?”...For this reason, I feel like I need to look older than I am and more experienced than I am.

Moreover, she was sad about lying and acting like a person she was not. In this respect, she wanted the time pass quickly to be honest, to be older and to be more experienced in order to feel comfortable and to be respected as a professional who she truly was.

The following is Gamze’s final remarks on her experience and age:

During the first weeks of school, I was very enthusiastic and motivated thinking that I would do nice things. It does not mean that I lose my motivation towards being a teacher; however, I feel nervous because I am too young! My students are only 5 or 6 years younger than I am! Maybe, with some of them the age difference is even less. Due to their age, they feel like they can have a closer relationship with the young teachers and they can shape this relation as they want it to be. I feel nervous also because we were told not to say anything about our experience as a teacher or let them feel this...I usually look younger than I really am, and I feel very bad lying about my age...Sometimes, I wish the years pass quickly so that I can be honest to the students about myself.

As was previously stated, Gamze’s age was one of the biggest challenges against her identity as a pedagogical expert which requires a deep and professional understanding between her and her students. Gamze felt anxious since she thought the students would want to cross her limits and take over the control in their relation. Additionally, since age and experience are usually associated with professionalism stereotypically, Gamze perceived her young age as a threat to her teacher identity.

#### 4.3.1.2 Despair and Blaming Self

*“A treasure map with codes”*

Studies addressing novice teacher experience refer to beginning teachers' enthusiasm and idealism at the beginning of their working years frequently (Farrell, 2008). This process is often accompanied with a reality shock (Veenman, 1984) when novices realize the gap between ideals in mind and reality in a class (Hong, 2010). In this study, Gamze had been through a similar shock during her first year.

She started her first year of teaching after graduation with high hopes and idealism. She thought she was going to make a difference in people's life and contribute to her country and humanity by becoming a great teacher. The way to do this was obvious for her. By being a subject matter expert, she was going to nurture her students with knowledge to help them learn science and world culture. Moreover, by being a pedagogical expert, Gamze was going to guide her students to find the truth for themselves and question everything. However, when it came to reality, Gamze was confused and she felt lost from time to time while she was enacting her teacher identity roles as a subject matter and pedagogical expert.

Gamze's students were reluctant and unmotivated not only to search for knowledge but also to communicate. These did not discourage her and she tried differing methods to attract her students' attention further. She used humor and found authentic and interesting materials to win them as was observed in her classrooms. Furthermore, she tried to communicate with them individually to motivate them to study and learn more to become a better individual. However, none of her strategies worked. In this respect, Gamze felt that there was problem that she could not understand and she was the reason of the problem rather than the students. She expressed the following to explain her feelings on the issue:

In the second semester, the students were very unmotivated and I felt guilty. I thought I was the problem because I was not able to do things right that is why they were like this. I was very disappointed because I was not able draw their

attention. I felt like I was insufficient as a professional teacher and I was very upset. On the other hand, when I saw my students from the first semester, they were very happy seeing me and saying very nice things. I questioned this many times. If I was a competent teacher last semester and my old students still come and talked to me, why I am a bad teacher this semester?... I feel like I cannot do my job appropriately. I think cannot teach well, that is why they do not understand anything. But when I think about the first semester, I did not have this problem. I am the same person. I teach in similar ways. They (the students from the first semester) understood everything. But this semester, they look at me with a distance in their eyes. I repeat the same things by using different examples but nothing changes.

Early idealism was fading away for Gamze when she saw her students did not attempt to learn. For this reason as a subject matter expert, she felt inadequate and started to blame herself. To overcome this problem, Gamze decided to communicate with experienced teachers in the institution to receive advice on the matter. Although these sharing sessions eased Gamze's critical stand for herself as a teacher, Gamze continued to feel bad for some more time. The following shows her confusion on the matter:

Their disappointment influenced me. There were some students who did not know how to act in a classroom. These things discouraged me. I did not feel like a professional teacher because I thought the problem was about me. However, it was not. I talked to my teacher-partner and understood this was nothing personal. But I could not stop taking it from a personal perspective. I believed they did not study because of me. I thought I could not answer their questions and I was the problem. I could not draw their attention. They were playing with their phones and sleeping in class. These were all about me. Then I realized experienced teachers were experiencing the same problems as I was. I never saw a teacher who did not suffer from these problems.

Gamze's observation of teachers around her and talking to other teachers raised an awareness in her feelings of confusion and self-blame as a teacher. Although it took a certain time for Gamze to change her perspective, she eventually decided to examine the situation with a different point of view. She came to realize that the problem was not her personally, but this was the reality of actual classrooms. In this respect, she decided to do her best as a pedagogical expert to encourage the students as much as possible; however, if they resist, she decided to let them act in the way they wanted. In other words, Gamze was determined not to take over all the responsibility for the

learning process alone for the students, but to motivate to them to be autonomous learners in this process. Following was Gamze's reflection of her perspective:

There was a problem and I was trying to figure it out. I felt bad because I was not happy to go to the class...When I tried hard to attract the students, I started losing my enthusiasm by seeing their indifference. Their insistence of doing nothing caused me to lose my motivation because I was trying different things all the time. Then I started observing other teachers around me and exchanging ideas on the issue. Finally, I decided that I should follow a different path. Students need to be willing to learn and to study for themselves. It is their decision now, although I felt like I needed to wear myself out for the students to study at the beginning. I needed to take care each of them individually and I actually did it all.

Gamze was conscious that this process was quite crucial for her in terms of her own understanding of becoming a teacher. She was putting a lot of effort to understand the dynamics of her teaching context to come up with the most applicable solutions as much as possible. She underscored many times during the interviews that her most outstanding realization in this process was the need to empower her skills as a pedagogical expert. She decided that mastering the subject matter was not enough to become a guide and facilitator for the learners because communication with them and understanding their profile, needs and interests were the keys to maximize their learning. She commented on this realization as follows:

To be honest, it was a quite dynamic process for me. People graduate from college with idealized teachers in mind. They think they will do very nice things and apply various different methods in class. We have a lot of glamorous ideas in mind. After we start the profession, we realized that there are some external factors in relation with this process which limits your framework and ideals...I never thought teaching was an easy job, but I experienced that it could be extra difficult due to these external factors. I saw that limits matter as well as the target student profile...I realized that a teacher should be very careful while interacting with teenagers. Also, sometimes the source of the problem is not the teacher but the students. After I graduated, I thought if I find interesting materials, I could draw their interest and could have a great class. But how students feel matter. I never thought communication and the feelings of the students would be so crucial...At this point, I realized that not only mastering your field but also connecting with the students are essential.

During the final interview, Gamze was even more aware of herself as a teacher. She learned to see herself as a teacher by reflecting on the dynamics of her classrooms. She was able to evaluate her strengths and weaknesses to develop professionally. She knew that her rapport with learners and encouraging student autonomy and motivation were the next steps for her to improve. To illustrate her perspective further, Gamze used a metaphor by using a treasure map as follows:

My perspective of myself as a teacher changed throughout the year, and eventually I realized that student motivation influences my motivation as a teacher. I think we (teachers) are like a treasure map with codes. If the person possessing the map is willing to receive the treasure by discovering it herself, she can achieve this via the map. However, if the map is only a piece of paper and the codes are not worth to spend effort, she cannot be successful. Then I thought about the kind of map I want to be. If my codes are too hard, I may cause them to be fed up with this process. However, If my codes are encouraging for the next step, I can be very helpful. This is what I think about myself as a teacher.

In summary, Gamze's disappointment of realities of classrooms, despair, self-blame and confusion directed her to seek ways for cooperation as a teacher-learner. Sharing her experiences with colleagues eased her despair. In the end, Gamze's reflections on her teacher identity and classroom practices guided her to motivate her students as autonomous learners rather than self-blame for student failures.

#### **4.3.2 What particular elements does each beginning teacher relate to her own professional identity views?**

Like Kumsal and Ayla, Gamze found the political influence, work load, student profile, testing and curriculum policy and professional development opportunities related to her teacher identity views.

In terms of the political influence, Gamze approached the issue from a similar perspective to Kumsal and Ayla since she thought the political meetings were irrelevant to her responsibilities as a teacher. Taken to the meetings obligatorily, Gamze felt like she was no one there but any other person whose responsibility was to

make the meeting looked like it was crowded. The following is Gamze's reflection of her feeling towards the meeting:

This week we were taken somewhere just because our "head" should be there physically. They wanted the academics there. One of the teachers had a case to solve and it was delayed. I do not really know. Did we have to be there? The schools were introduced and they were pampered. We just sat there and looked around. I did not think the meeting was relevant and necessary for us...I found it quite annoying since we were expected to be there no matter what.

Different from Kumsal's students, Gamze's students felt happy to be taken to the meeting because they felt like "someone" as Gamze put it. For the first time in their lives, they had a tag where their names were written and they would see a number of politicians who had crucial responsibilities in the parliament. However, Gamze did not feel that way. In contrast, she felt like she was unvaluable as an individual and what happened there was not professional. Gamze commented on the issue further as follows:

I think this is a saddening situation. I could justify what happened to some extent. The meeting was related to the students' departments and they had the chance to see a president of a country. This could be a very good opportunity for them to learn politics. However, when experiencing something is forced, it is not educating. What happened there was not nice. We took attendance there with lists in our hands! I think taking us and them to the meeting was not something professional.

Moreover, Gamze possessed concerns related to catching up with the weekly program since her students were rather distracted during her classes as they started taking pictures and texting related to the meeting. Gamze was concerned about the interruption of her classes which could be a big problem in terms of following the program assigned for each week due to the hectic routine of the institution.

With regard to the work load, Gamze reported that the hectic routine of the institution leads her to feel the burn out from the very first year at the teaching profession. She claimed that teaching was already a demanding job that could not be completed within working hours. For her, teachers spend a lot of time out of the classroom both for preparation and feedback sessions. Moreover, she felt the need to be appreciated for



working so much rather than being reminded many times that this was how this job was in its nature. The following was Gamze's reflection on her feelings:

I do not know why but there is always an unnecessary intensiveness in this institution. After the classes, we run to meetings. After the meetings, we run to somewhere else to grade papers. However, what upsets me most is not receiving any appreciation for this.

However, these were not the only tasks to be fulfilled. The newly-hired teachers were sent some translation work to be completed for the next day without being asked for their consent. These papers to be translated belonged to academics working in the departmental teaching positions at the institution. In other words, instructors working in the foreign language department were driven to translate the works of other academic staff in the institution whose work contained a heavy field-specific formal language. Especially Gamze was assigned this translation tasks for a couple of times. She thought that forcing instructors to do translation work was completely unprofessional because it was not the instructors' field as a professional and it was not their responsibility to fulfill it either. Gamze felt both desperate and angry about spending her time on this challenging tasks rather than spending it to prepare for her classes as a subject matter expert. Moreover, she felt offended and worthless as an individual, since she was "kindly" forced to do the task. The following was Gamze's feelings in relation to the extra translation task:

I felt bad to be forced to do this job. They (the academic staff) thought that they do their research and the instructors can translate it for them. As if we had nothing to do, we are forced to do errands for hierarchically superior academics...To be honest, this is something very unprofessional. A translator should do this job under professional terms. If the institution needs to address such demands, they can hire someone for this job. ..This job took such a long time from me that I could not read my students' essays.

In addition to the work load, when teacher's knowledge of their own identity is taken into account, teacher's biography, personal experience and context are one of the most frequently referred points found in the studies. Similarly, when the context is examined deeply, features such as students, colleagues and educational policies of the institution stand out. In this respect, context and the profile of the students in the institution were

mentioned quite often by Gamze which were thought to have intermingled relations with her views of teacher identity of her own.

*“Can you please turn the volume down”*

The school’s reputation due to its ties with political and economic capitals and its stand claiming to offer one of the best language education draw various students from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds as was mentioned in the methodology section. Moreover, the diversity of the student profile reinforced via the scholarships offered to the high achievers in the university entrance exam. For this reason, when student profile of the institution was examined, the gap between the high achievers and low achievers were great. This gap was underlined many times by the participant teachers in this study since the participant teachers tend to see themselves through the eyes of the students and their views of their teacher identity changed deeply each semester depending on the classroom profile they were exposed to.

Kumsal was lucky to teach in classes with high achiever students or relatively high achiever students with whom she did not face many problems. Moreover, the identity she embraced as a tough and strict pedagogical expert helped her in this process. Kumsal’s views of her own identity were challenged by herself rather than the students, as she was rejecting her identity as a teacher. However, Gamze felt confused and fed up due to the student misbehaviors. She was upset about being a “failing” pedagogical expert because she thought she could not manage to form an effective rapport with her students. The students were sleeping in class, or playing with their phones or they were rude or disrespectful to her. Gamze tried a number of strategies to overcome this problem. Preparing extra activities in accordance with the students’ interest and trying to utilize authentic media to show the applicability of their classes into real life were some examples which she expected to draw students’ attention and strengthen her rapports. However, the students did not change their behaviors and Gamze decided to follow a different path in this sense.

Gamze's disturbance of student behaviors caused her to question her proficiency as a teacher in terms of her communication skills as a pedagogical expert. She was sure that she mastered English when she compared the student behaviors and feedbacks from the first semester with the student behaviors and feedbacks from the second and third semesters. After blaming herself as the source of the problem for student behaviors, her decision to talk to other teachers convinced her that the students were ones who were problematic. Eventually, Gamze decided not to wear herself out for the students but do her best to encourage them if the students were willing to learn. However, it was not easy for Gamze to stop blaming herself and this ambiguity fostered her feelings of being lost and confused. The following was Gamze's comments on the issue:

My students from the first semester were better. I was able to encourage them for better learning. I was able to use humor and everything helped me to feel "enough" as a teacher. However, I felt the opposite in the second semester. I could not communicate with the students in my classes...I go to the classes and they do not even look at me. Nothing makes them happy. I felt desperate.

As the semester proceeded, Gamze's feelings got even more complicated because the student behaviors worsened. Gamze was getting used to the idea of students' using their cell phones or sleeping in class because she thought if they were reluctant to learn, there was nothing more to do. However, the number of the students coming to the class dropped to 8 from 20. The students started listening to the class in turns. While a group of students was listening to the class, others were sleeping on the top of desks put together and covered themselves with their jackets. As Gamze puts it, the students were there to spend time to sleep rather than sleeping at home and failing due to absenteeism. Gamze explained her experiences as follows:

My students in the repeat class were strongly rejecting the idea of learning... They were sleeping as soon as they came to the class because they were there just not to fail due to absenteeism... Everything has gotten even more interesting towards the end of the semester. They put three desks together, cover themselves with a jacket and start listening to the class in turns. Let's say, one of them wakes up and attends to the class for the first hour. Then he would say to the other students "one of you needs to wake up, since it is my turn to sleep". One day, only one student was listening to me and there were 5

of them. The rest was sleeping, of course. We were doing a listening activity... Everything was ready and I clicked on the play button. One of the sleeping students woke up and said "Can you please turn the volume down" with his drowsy voice and went on sleeping!

These experiences encouraged Gamze to question her idealized views of teaching and the reality of an actual classroom. She found the solution in letting the students decide for themselves as young adults; however, she also found the standardized test and curriculum policy as the source of the problem since these policies assigned her certain roles in line with the student expectations.

Gamze expressed the roles imposed by the testing system and curriculum policy were quite tiring, demanding and stressful both for the teacher and the students. She thought her teachings turned into a rush compiling new grammar and vocabulary items in itself. Therefore, she was not able to conduct interactive activities such as educative games, discussions or presentations but listing everything one after another. This caused learners to be confused rather than enlightened. Moreover, her confusion in relation to her efficacy as a teacher reinforced the conflicts in her mind which were also intensified by the student behaviors. Gamze reflected on this process of as in the following statement:

There were times that I felt under pressure. For example, there were things that I wanted to do in class which would help me to nurture the communication with my students. These activities would also help me to raise their motivation; however, we had a very dense program and there were no alternatives but to follow it strictly. I felt under pressure a lot because I was worried about not being able to complete the week properly. I feared of the possibility of not emphasizing a topic which might be covered by other teachers. Moreover, I felt like we were being monitored constantly and worried about being late to my classes even for 2 minutes. These things put extra stress on my shoulders.

As was seen clearly, while Gamze was tackling with the reality shock and student misbehaviors, the pressure of the "big test" and the students' expectations asking for mechanic classes minimizing the pedagogical expert identity roles of Gamze which resulted in more pressure on her shoulder. Gamze's feelings of conflict and overwhelm were nourished by the exam and by the busy and inflexible program.

*“I am not alone”*

On the other hand, although most of the time Gamze felt desperate, tired and lost in her journey due to the constraints discussed above, she was expecting the coming semester promising in terms of its being open to discoveries,. In her own words, she was like a lost wanderer who felt meaningless and lonely. Additionally, the conference hosted at the institution where Kumsal and Ayla took parts actively, was a great chance for Gamze at the same time to contribute to herself professionally and to share her ideas with colleagues working all over the country. In other words, similar to Kumsal and Ayla, the conference enabled Gamze to realize her desire and enthusiasm for professional development as a teacher learner and she was not alone facing problems. The following remarks were Gamze’s ideas on the conference:

I was not a part of the conference community; however, I attended all the sessions and learned many things related to my field. The session on student motivation especially helped me to understand that I am not alone. We all go through similar problems as teachers.

As it is seen, the picture drawn by Gamze’s reflection on the elements in relation to her teacher identity views were not substantially different from the pictures of Kumsal and Ayla. Although Gamze described her first year of teaching as a weary journey due to the elements involved in this process, she was rather passionate and enthusiastic for professional development, cooperation and collaboration as a teacher learner.

#### **4.3.3 Discussion on Gamze as a Case**

Gamze’s idealized teacher identity sheltered professional cooperation and collaboration as a teacher learner as Johnson (2009) claims in addition to her emphasis on the pedagogical expert identity presented in Beijard, Verloop and Vermunt’s model (1999). For Gamze, communication with more experienced teachers played a crucial role in the way she perceived her teacher identity as a teacher-learner (Johnson, 2009).

Parallel with the stages defined by Farrell (2008), Gamze’s *early idealism* was followed by *survival* stage where Gamze felt the reality shock every passing days.

Along with this process, Gamze's pedagogical expert identity was challenged by the institutions and, for this reason, her own concerns related to her age and her being novice. Gamze was worried about being labelled as young and inexperienced because her students would not respect her as an expert under such circumstances. Her feelings were reinforced by the stereotype associating age with experience and professionalism as well.

Additionally, Gamze's anxiety of her age was followed by her insecurity due to student behaviors. She felt inadequate as a subject matter expert (Beijard, Verloop & Vermunt, 1999) because her students were constantly failing and she also felt insufficient as a pedagogical expert because she could not guide and motivate her students to be successful. After blaming herself for a long time, Gamze realized she was not alone experiencing such problems. Eventually, she decided to overcome her confusion and self-blame by improving her expertise as a pedagogical expert who underlined student autonomy by understanding their needs. In other words, Gamze's reality shock, disappointment and despair decreased with her reflection and understanding of actual teaching environments and school setting as Kim and Roth (2011) claim in their study.

Political influence, work load of the institution, student profile, testing and curriculum policy of the institution and professional development opportunities were the elements reflected by Gamze interacting with her teacher identity views. Similar to Kumsal and Ayla, the meeting were signs of unprofessionalism shaking Gamze's feeling of belongingness to her institution as Karataş and Karaman (2013) refer in their study.

Moreover, contextual factors listed by Miller (2009) such as work load, student profile and assessment and curriculum policy were also influential advancing Gamze's despair and reality shock (Veenman, 1984). These constraining contextual elements also hindered Gamze's actualization of idealized pedagogical expert roles (Beijard, Verloop & Vermunt, 1999).

On the other hand, Gamze's aspiration for teaching (Başer & Karaman, 2015) and her investments in terms of professional development via cooperation and collaboration

as a teacher- learner (Johnson, 2009) encouraged her to reflect critically on her teacher identity and classroom practices to become the idealized pedagogical expert she desired. In this regard, the following figure can be seen as a summary of Gamze's professional teacher identity views and elements in relation.

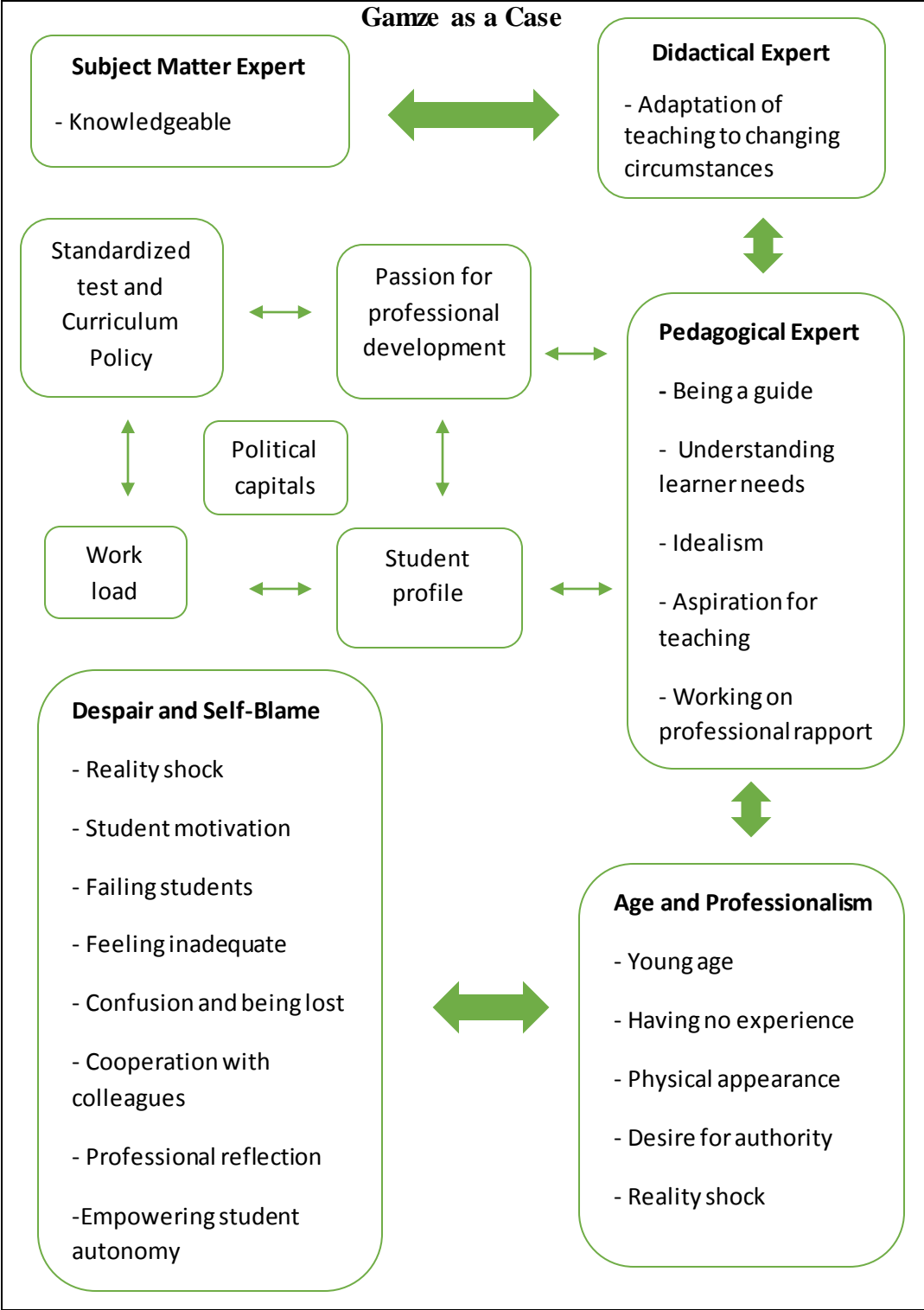


Figure 10: Gamze’s views of her teacher identity and elements in relation to her reflections



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

In this section, summary of the findings, practical implications for the field and the institution and suggestions for future research are reported.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study aims at addressing the following questions to shed light on the reflections of novice teachers on their own professional teacher identity and notable elements reported by each participant in relation to these reflections:

1. How does each beginning teacher perceive her teacher identity in the higher education institution under study?
2. What particular elements does each beginning teacher relate to her own professional identity views?

The findings of the present study suggest that each participant teacher attempted to embrace their identities as a teacher around the expertise of subject matter, pedagogy and didactical roles (Bejjard, Verloop & Vermunt, 1999). Kumsal, Gamze and Ayla were all aware of the importance of themselves as the knowledgeable one. They did not doubt themselves in terms of their language abilities and felt efficient, confident and secure when their subject matter expertise was the focus.

However, being a graduate of language teacher education program and following this path with personal enthusiasm and motivation, the participant teachers idealized the teaching profession for being more than a subject matter expert. Kumsal, Gamze and Ayla targeted to become a contemporary teacher who could do more than teaching language skills, but being a guide for their students who introduce them to a different world where culture of many countries and diversity emphasized. They intended to

present their pedagogical expert roles with modern language teaching methods which they planned to be convenient in a higher education institution. However, these early ideals in relation to their pedagogical expert roles were challenged with various perspectives.

When the elements which the participant teachers relate to their own teacher identities were examined, a number of categories were found. The undeniable involvement of the institution with political capitals and the reflections of these capitals into everyday practices were reported by Kumsal, Ayla and Gamze. As discussed by Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnston (2009), teacher's identity negotiation is "[c]rucially related to social, cultural, and political context" (p. 35). In this sense, attending to the political meetings with colleagues and students compulsorily caused the participant teachers to feel like a "slave" and "toady". They found such practices unprofessional and taken to political gatherings caused them to feel "unvaluable" individuals and professionals.

Being a novice and experiencing real teaching environments for the first time, the participant teachers possessed the tendency to evaluate their effectiveness as subject matter and pedagogical experts by looking at the student success or experiences with their students which was claimed by Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnston (2009) as one of the four substantive areas of interest in research on language teacher identity (p.35). Given the sociological and economic diversity of the student profile, Ayla and Gamze felt desperate and lost from time to time and got confused about their pedagogical identity roles. Characteristics of *the survival stage* (Farrell, 2008) was especially dominant in this process where Ayla and Gamze realized the gap between idealized theories and realities of a classroom.

In addition to the student profile, the curriculum policy (Miller, 2009) planned around the standardized proficiency test challenged the participant teachers. Rather than applying communicative techniques, which Kumsal, Ayla and Gamze claimed foster their rapport with the learners; therefore, their pedagogical expertise, they felt like a "parrot", "robot" or "slave" of the weekly program who had no authority in classroom

practices. They thought teaching under the shadow of the “big test” was tiring, stressful and demanding since their role was to be an “answer key” rather than contemporary academics.

Moreover, the hectic and unfair workload (Flores 2011) was also highlighted by Kumsal and Gamze which killed their enthusiasm and brought along burn out with itself. Especially, since the institution did not appreciate the novice participants’ efforts and did not provide the needed guidance and professional support in this hectic schedule, the feeling of confusion and despair were intensified.

Although Kumsal, Ayla and Gamze labelled their first year as a professional teacher as “challenging”, “weary” and “disappointing”, they appreciated the institution’s in-service trainings, the conferences hosted and permission for the graduate school which fostered their motivation as teacher-learners (Johnson, 2009). Such opportunities given to the participants for professional development were “motivating”, “encouraging” and “productive” as they put it. Since these sessions helped the participant teachers to break the routine of teaching and fostered the cooperation and communication among the colleagues as sociocultural theory suggests (Johnson, 2009). Moreover, they thought their identities as subject matter, pedagogical and didactical expert were developing thanks to these “learning”, “sharing” and “cooperation” sessions.

## **5.2 Practical Implications**

The findings of the present study indicated that all participants were aware of the importance of the subject matter knowledge and they improved their target language skills with the classes they attended during their teacher education program. Moreover, the pedagogy classes the participant teachers received and practice teaching experiences during their undergraduate studies helped them to gain a comprehensive perspective towards language education as well as professional responsibilities of an academician/teacher. However, the perfectly-formed theories studied during this period of time encourages pre-service teachers to dream of idealized classrooms. Upon graduation, these teachers suffer from the reality shock in various degrees, some of

which end up with drop out. Bearing these in mind, it is important for teacher education programs to prepare the pre- service teachers for realities classrooms. In other words, teacher candidates should be aware of characteristics of real teaching environments and should be presented with the stages they may go through to be prepared more realistically for classrooms.

Moreover, the novice participants started serving at the institution with a-week-long induction program where the teaching and testing practices of the institution was presented as well as the facilities of the university. Additionally, various teaching activities were discussed in groups and comprehensive lesson plans were prepared. Although the participant teachers found the induction program useful, they were not informed about the problems they might face in classes in relation to the student profile. When the participants experienced challenges in class, they felt shocked and desperate since they did not expect it. In this respect, working on already-experienced problems at the institution and acquainting the novice teachers with the student profile can be of great help for them in case they face such an issue themselves.

The participants of this study felt lost and desperate occasionally. Especially Gamze were blaming herself for her students' failures and feeling confused in relation to her expertise. Additionally, the novice teachers did not have the motivation and encouragement to ask for guidance from the administration. This situation encouraged the novice teachers to reflect on their teacher identities through the eyes of the students and student behaviors which fostered their feeling of confusion. In this respect, developing a mentoring system which provides regular and constant guidance and assistance can help beginning teachers to overcome the reality shock in a smoother manner. In other words, by assisting the novices to have a clearer idea of classroom realities and their teaching self can increase their awareness on the matter.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Future Research**

For the future research concerning the experiences of novices and their perceptions of themselves in relation to teacher identities, longitudinal studies can be designed in

order to collect data for a longer period of time to capture a more holistic picture of this dynamic and challenging process. Similar studies can also be designed at state universities in order to understand perspectives of beginning teachers towards their own teacher identities in relation to differing contexts and influencing factors. Moreover, studies addressing teacher identity negotiation can be designed both with pre-service and in-service teachers to maintain the collaboration between academy and school environments. Finally, more studies can be conducted to understand and to improve professional support networks provided to novice teachers for smoother transition from teacher education programs to teaching environments as well as the professional development opportunities.

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## APPENDICES

### A. Initial Interview Questions

1. Bana üniversite eğitiminizin içeriğinden bahsedebilir misiniz? Nasıl dersler aldınız? Bu dersler nasıl ve genel olarak hangi metotlarla işlendi?
2. Mesleğe yeni başlayan bir öğretmen olarak, bu kurumda çalışmaya başlamadan önce öğrenme, öğretme ve öğretmenlik sizin için ne ifade ediyordu? Lütfen örneklerle açıklayınız.
3. Mesleğe başlamadan önce ne tarz problemlerle karşılaşacağınızı düşünüyordunuz? Lütfen açıklayınız.
4. Mesleğe yeni başlayan bir öğretmen olarak, geçtiğimiz bir kaç hafta içinde neler hissettiniz& tecrübe ettiniz? Bu hisler& tecrübeler öğrenme, öğretme ya öğretmenlik ile ilgili düşüncelerinizi nasıl etkiledi? Lütfen örneklerle açıklayınız.
5. Mesleğe yeni başlayan bir öğretmen olarak kurumunuzda ya da sınıfta ne tarz problemlerle karşılaştınız? Bu problemleri nasıl çözdünüz? Lütfen örneklerle açıklayınız.
6. Kurumunuzda ya da sınıfta bir problemle karşılaştığınızda meslektaşlarınız ve koordinatörleriniz size nasıl yardımcı olurlar? Lütfen örneklerle açıklayınız.
7. Meslektaşlarınız ve ya koordinatörlerinizden aldığınız yardımlar çalışmalarınız nasıl etkiliyor? Sizce bu yardımlar etkili mi? Neden & nasıl? Lütfen örneklerle açıklayınız.
8. Öğretmen olma süreci hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Sizce siz profesyonel bir İngilizce öğretmeni misiniz? Neden? Lütfen örneklerle açıklayınız.
9. Meslektaşlarınızla, öğrencilerinizle ve koordinatörlerinizle kurduğunuz ilişkiler kendinizi bir öğretmen olarak tanımlamanızda nasıl rol oynar?

## **B. Initial Interview Questions in English**

- 1.** Can you please talk about the content of teacher education program? What kind of classes did you take? What kind of methods were used by your teachers? Please give some examples.
- 2.** As a novice teacher, how can you define learning, teaching and being a teacher? Please explain with some examples.
- 3.** Before you start teaching, what kind of problems were expecting to face? Please explain with some examples.
- 4.** As a novice teacher, what did you experience in the last couple of weeks? How did you feel in relation to these experiences? Is there any changes in your feelings & ideas in terms of your views on learning, teaching and being a teacher? Please explain with some examples.
- 5.** What kind of challenges did you face in your institution? What kind of challenges did you face in your classes? How did you solve these problems? Please explain with some examples.
- 6.** When you face with a problem, how do your colleagues and coordinators cooperate with you? Please explain with some examples.
- 7.** How does the cooperation you receive from your colleagues and coordinators help you? Do you believe in their effectivity? How? Why? Please explain with some examples.
- 8.** What do you think about being a teacher? Are you a professional English language teacher? Why? Please explain with some examples.
- 9.** How is your communication with your students, colleagues and coordinators related to your views on your professional teacher identity?

### C. Semi- Structured Interview Questions

1. En son görüştüğümüzden beri nasıl bir hafta geçirdiniz?
2. .... size nasıl hissettirdi?
3. Olumlu anlamda yaşadığınız herhangi bir deneyim, bir duygu hatırlayabiliyor musunuz bu haftaya dair?
4. Bu haftayı daha kritik bir gözle değerlendirirseniz, sizce başarılı bir hafta mıydı? Sizin açınızdan, öğrencilerin açısından ve idarenin perspektifinden değerlendiriniz.
5. Okulda ve sınıf içinde neler yaşadınız? Örneklerle açıklayınız.
- 6.....sizin için niçin önemli?
- 7.....öğretmenlik mesleğine karşı bakış açınızı nasıl bir ilişki içinde?
8. Sınıf dışında, meslektaşlarınızla ya da ofis arkadaşlarınızla nasıl bir hafta geçirdiniz?
9. Sınıf dışında, birim görevlileriyle nasıl bir hafta geçirdiniz?
10. ....bu haftaki performansınız ile nasıl bir ilişki içinde?
11. Kendinizi yine profesyonel bir merceğe altına alırsanız. ....sizi nasıl bir öğretmen yaptı?
12. .... ilgili herhangi biriyle görüştünüz mü? Bir düşünce ya da fikir alışverişi yaptınız? Niçin?
13. ....ile ilgili kendinizi gözlemlediğinizde, profesyonel olarak, hissiyatınızda nasıl değişiklikler oluyor ?
- 14..... sebebi nedir?
15. Niçin .....size endişe veriyor?
16. Olumsuz olduğunu düşündüğünüz, sizi negatif etkilediğini düşündüğünüz bir şeyler yaşadınız mı?
17. ....hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
18. Bu problemle nasıl başa çıktınız?
19. ....üzerine düşünürsek bunun sebepleri neler olabilir?
20. Hangi derslere, hangi sınıflara giriyorsunuz? Ayrıntılı olarak bahsedebilir misiniz?
21. Sizce çalıştığınız kurumda öğretmen nedir?
22. Böyle bir öğretmenlik rolü size ne hissettiriyor?



#### **D. Semi- structured Interview Questions in English**

1. How has been your week since the last time we talked?
2. How did you feel about .....
3. Can you think of any facilitative experience or feeling in relation to this week? Please explain with some examples.
4. If you think about this week with a critical perspective, was a successful one for you considering your students and administration? Please explain with some examples.
5. What did you experience in your classes this week? Please explain with some examples.
6. Why is ..... important for you? Please explain with some examples.
7. How does ..... interact with views your views of your teacher identity?
8. What kind of experiences did you have out of the classroom with your colleagues?
9. What kind of experiences did you have out of the classroom with your coordinators?
10. How does ..... interact with views your performance in this week? Please explain with some examples.
11. If you think about your critically as a professional teacher, what kind of teacher does ..... make you?
12. Did you talk about ..... with anybody? Why?
13. What kind of changes take place in your teacher identity views when you think about .....
14. What can be the reason of .....
15. Why does ..... worry you?
16. Can you think of any constraining experience or feeling in relation to this week? Please explain with some examples.
17. What do you think about .....

- 18.** How did you deal with the problem of .....
- 19.** If you think about ....., what can be the reasons?
- 20.** Can you please talk about your program for this semester? What kind of classes are you teaching?
- 21.** What is the definition of a teacher in your institution?
- 22.** How do you feel about your ..... role as a teacher?

## E. Follow-up Interview Questions

1. Genel olarak mesleğe başladığımız günden bugüne değerlendirdiğinizde mesleğinizle ilgili ve kendini algınızla ilgili neler hissediyorsunuz?
2. Sizce öğretmenlik mesleğinin temel amacı ne?
3. Mesleğe başlamadan önce bu meslek hakkındaki görüşünüzle mesleğe başladıktan sonraki görüşünüz arasında fark var mı? Neden?
4. Sınıf içinde sık sık yaşadığınız problemler nelerdir?
5. Bu problemle nasıl başa çıkıyorsunuz?
6. Sınıf dışında yaşadığınız problemler nelerdir?
7. Genel olarak geçirdiğiniz dönemi analiz ederseniz neler söyleyebilirsiniz?
8. Mesleğe başladığınız ilk günden itibaren bu güne sence neler değişti?
9. Yeterli olmak ne demek sizin için?
10. Sizce, profesyonel bir öğretmen demek ne demek? Bana profesyonel bir öğretmeni tanımlayabilir misiniz?
11. Siz profesyonel bir öğretmen misiniz? Neden? Örneklerle açıklayınız.

## **F. Follow-up Interview Questions in English**

- 1.** When you think about your perspective towards being a teacher, what has changed in relation to your views on teaching and on your teacher identity?
- 2.** What are the basic purposes of teachers?
- 3.** Is there any difference in your views about teaching between you as a preservice and you as an in-service teacher?
- 4.** What are the most frequent challenges you face in class?
- 5.** How do you deal with ..... Problem?
- 6.** What are the most frequent challenges you face out of the class?
- 7.** When you think about this semester critically, what can you say?
- 8.** What has changed since the very first day you started this profession?
- 9.** What is the meaning of being a successful teacher?
- 10.** Can you describe a professional teacher?
- 11.** Are you a professional teacher? Why? Please explain with examples.

## G. Final Interview Questions

1. Nasıl bir dönem geçirdiniz? Neler hissediyorsunuz?
2. Bu dönemde size olumlu hissettiren deneyimler nelerdir?
3. Bu dönemde size olumsuz hissettiren deneyimler nelerdir?
4. Üçüncü dönemi çalıştığınız diğer dönemlerle karşılaştırdığınızda neler düşündünüz? Neler hissettiniz?
5. Metaforlar üzerinden ilerlersek, henüz çalışmaya başlamadan önce bir öğretmenin görevleri nelerdi sizin için?
6. Bu sistemin içinde, bu etkileşimin içinde sizce hissettiğiniz en büyük zorluk ya da başa çıkmanız gereken en büyük problem neydi? Neden? Örneklerle açıklayınız.
7. Bu süreç içerisinde ne tarz etkileşimlerde buldunuz? Bu sıkıntıların üstesinden nasıl geldiniz?
8. Bir seneyi geride bıraktık. Öğrenciler, iş yükü, takip etmeniz gereken program, meslektaşlarınız ve koordinatörleriniz... sürecin tüm değişkenlerini düşündüğünüzde siz profesyonel bir öğretmen misin? Neden?
9. Bu süreç öncesinde ve içinde neler yapılsaydı sizin için kolay ve daha akışkan olurdu?
10. Öğretmen olarak size bu süreçte nasıl yardımcı olabilirler?
11. Bu bir senenizi bana birkaç sıfatla anlatırsanız bu sıfatlar ne olur?
12. Bu süreç içinde hissettiklerinizi bana birkaç sıfatla anlatırsanız?
13. Sizce gelecek size ne tür deneyimler ve duygular getirecek?
14. Birinci dönemi göz önünde bulundurursanız ne gibi bir metafor kullanırsınız?  
Ne gibi rolleriniz ve sorumluluklarınız vardı?
15. İkinci dönemi göz önünde bulundurursanız ne gibi bir metafor kullanırsınız?  
Ne gibi rolleriniz ve sorumluluklarınız vardı?
16. Üçüncü dönemi göz önünde bulundurursanız ne gibi bir metafor kullanırsınız?  
Ne gibi rolleriniz ve sorumluluklarınız vardı?
17. Sizce siz artık profesyonel bir öğretmen misiniz?

## **H. Final Interview Questions in English**

1. How was your semester? How do you feel about this semester?
2. What were the experiences that made you feel happy this semester?
3. What were the experiences that made you feel upset this semester?
4. When you compare the last semester with the first two semesters, what can you say? How did you feel?
5. What were responsibilities of teacher for you before you started this profession? Please explain with metaphors.
6. What was the biggest challenge for you in this profession? Why? Please explain with examples.
7. Did you cooperate with your colleagues or coordinators related to this problem? How did you solve this problem?
8. You have been teaching almost for a year now. When you think about all the elements of this process, are you a professional teacher now?
9. What could have been done to make this process smoother for you?
10. What kind of assistance would you like to receive?
11. If you describe your first year of teaching with adjectives, which adjectives would you use?
12. If you describe your feelings during the first year of teaching with adjectives, which adjectives would you use?
13. How do you feel about the coming year? What do you expect from it?
14. When you think about your first semester, what kind of metaphors would you use? What were your responsibilities and roles as a teacher?
15. When you think about your second semester, what kind of metaphors would you use? What were your responsibilities and roles as a teacher?
16. When you think about your third semester, what kind of metaphors would you use? What were your responsibilities and roles as a teacher?
17. Are you a professional teacher? Why? Please explain with examples.

### I. Observation Protocol

<b>Participant's Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Classroom Number</b>
<b>Minute</b>	<b>Teacher Activity</b>		<b>Students' Activity</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
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**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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## **J. Initial Code List**

1. Personal information
2. ELT education content
3. Erasmus experience
4. Practice teaching experience
5. ELT in Turkey and Germany
6. Definition of a professional teacher
7. Definition of teaching
8. Definition of learning
9. Professionalism
10. Interaction& communication with colleagues
11. Hierarchy with the experienced teachers
12. Units in the institution
13. Influence of external factors (private life)
14. Positive perspective of the teacher
15. Teacher's personality
16. Enthusiasm for professional development
17. Passion for academia
18. T-plus conference
19. Boring routine of teaching
20. Changing perspective of teaching
21. Anxiety of a new class
22. Feelings described with adjective
23. Assumptions of coming years
24. Student motivation
25. Lack of autonomy (students)

26. Trying to motivate students
27. Excessive focus on relations with students
28. Seeing self through student success
29. Influence of the students' English levels
30. Student misbehavior
31. Avoiding student resistance
32. Influence of the exam on student perspective
33. Theory vs. practice (reality shock)
34. Student profile
35. Classroom management
36. Feeling like a student vs. classroom management
37. Unequal treatments to students
38. Initial ideas about student profile
39. Student misbehavior (cheating and threats)
40. Teacher-learner
41. Not knowing the answer
42. Preparation for the classes
43. Feeling insecure
44. Looking for approval
45. Looking for assistance
46. Sticking to rules
47. Feeling valuable
48. In-service training
49. Being a tough teacher
50. Commands and manners
51. Feeling less hardworking

52. Feeling unvaluable
53. Confusion in feelings
54. Working despite health issues
55. Losing idealism
56. Coordinators
57. Hectic and unfair workload
58. Age difference with students
59. Problems related to the strict rules
60. Institution's concern about the instructors' age
61. No teacher autonomy
62. Desire for teacher autonomy
63. Influence of the exam on teaching practices
64. Influence of politics
65. Working as a sub-teacher
66. Frustration of being a sub-teacher
67. Never-solved problems of the institution
68. Burn-out
69. Drop-out

## K. Turkish Summary

### ÖĞRETMEN KİMLİĞİ DÜŞÜNCELERİ: MESLEĞE YENİ BAŞLAYAN YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETMENLERİ İLE DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

#### Giriş

Basitleştirilmiş, bireysellikten ve durumdan uzak bir bakış açısı benimseyen pozitivist bilgi felsefesinin aksine, Sosyo-kültürel teori (Vygotsky, 1978) öğrenme ortamlarının tarihsel, kültürel, ekonomik ve politik dinamiklerin iç içe olduğu sosyal olarak karmaşık yerler olarak ele almaktadır. (Shulman, 1986). Benzer bir şekilde, bu teori öğretmen eğitiminin sosyal doğasını ve öğretmeyi öğrenmek şeklinde ele alır. Bu bağlamda, öğretmen-öğrenciler durum, ortam, öğrenciler, takip edilen programlar ve mevcut kurumda görev alan insanlarla ilişki içinde bulunarak kendi bilgilerini, bakış açılarını ve kendilerini algılarını şekillendirirler (Johnson, 2012).

Öğretmen eğitimi programlarını tamamlayan ve öğretim kurumlarına geçen mesleğe yeni başlayan tecrübesiz öğretmenler için ilk sene bir “ gerçeklik şoku” dur, fakat öğrenci rolünü bir kenara bırakıp öğretmen rollerini üstelenmek kolay bir geçiş süreci değildir. Edindikleri eğitim deneyimleri ve öğretmen yetiştirme programları bu süreci yumuşatsa da, tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin sosyalleşme süreçleri ve kurumsal kültür ile olan iletişimleri bu süreci şekillendiren temel unsurlardan biridir (Farrell, 2009). Dahası, Kumaravadivelu'nun (2012) da belirttiği gibi “ Dansı ve dansçıyı birbirinden ayrı ele alamadığımız gibi öğretmeni de öğrenmeden ayıramayız” (s.55). Bu anlamda, mesleğe yeni başlayan öğrencilerin sınıf içi pratikleri profesyonel kimlikleri ve profesyonel öğretmen kimliği farkındalıkları ile derinden ilintilidir. Bu farkındalık öğretmenlere öğrencileri için sosyal, kültürel, eğitimsel ve durumsal olarak uygun öğrenme fırsatı sunmalarına yardımcı olur. Bir başka deyişle, profesyonel öğretmen kimliği öğretmen-öğrencilerin yeterliliği, yetenekleri, güçlüklerle yüzleşme

motivasyonları ve sınıf içinde yenilikçi uygulamaları benimsemeleri ile derinden alakalıdır (Beijaard& Verloop& Vermunt, 2000).

Zembylas (2005) öğretmenleri “öğretmen kimliği” ile paralel olmak üzere diğer öğretmenler ile sürekli bir etkileşim içinde bulunan otonom bireyler olarak tarif eder. “Öğretmen kimliği” kavramının sınıf içi tecrübeleri, inançlar, duygular, tutumlar ve değerler ile kuvvetli bağları vardır. Bu yüzden kimlik “ önceden belirlenmiş sabit bir element değildir” (s.109), aksine “değişken ve değiştiricidir” (Varghese, Morgan, Johnson & Johnson, 2005, s.22-23). Dahası, kimlik “ortamdan bağımsız değildir, aksine önemli bir şekilde sosyal, kültürel, politik ve ortam değişkenleri ile bağlantılıdır” (s.23). Benzer bir şekilde, Miller (2009) kimliği “ herhangi bir sosyal ortamda başka insanların onayladığı ve onlardan etkilenecek bir şeyleri yapış yöntemi” olarak açıklar (s.173). Bu anlamda Miller (2009) bir takım değişkenler ortaya koyar. Bunlar öğretmen eğitimi programları, kurumlar pratikler, öğrencilerin sosyo-kültürel yapıları, çalışma şartları ve müfredat politikasıdır. Bu değişkenler öğretmenlerin profesyonel kimlik oluşumu sürecinin dinamiklerini engelleyici ya da geliştirici etkiler gösterebilir.

Özetlemek gerekirse, öğretmenlerin sınıf içi pratiklerindeki başarı onların profesyonel ve kişisel bilgileri ve öğrencilerinin ihtiyaç ve motivasyonlarını anlamalarıyla bağlantılıdır. Bununla birlikte, bu yönlerin öğretme pratiklerine uygulanması “öğretmen kimlikleri” ile harmanlanmış inançlarının, değerlerinin ve “kendi” lerinin farkında olmalarıyla sağlanabilir (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Bir başka deyişle, başarılı eğitimciler olmaları ve öğrencilerinin istenen öğrenme sonuçlarına ulaşmalarına yardım edebilmek için öğretmenlerin “profesyonel hayatlarının değişken yönlerine karşı kişisel duruşlarının” farkında olmaları hayati önem taşır (s.55). Bununla birlikte, öğretme ortamlarının karmaşıklığı ve gerçek bir sınıfta olmanın şokunu yaşayan tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin sözü edilen profesyonel kimlik farkındalığını kazanmalarını kolay bir süreç değildir (Farrell, 2008). Profesyonel öğretmen kimliği ve öğretmenliğin ilk senesi konularını anlamayı amaçlayan birçok araştırma olmasına rağmen (Beijard, Meijer, &Verloop, 2004; Farrell, 2003; Flores, 2006; Hong, 2010),

bu süreç sosyal ortamlar ve bireysel farklılıklar gözetilerek sistematik olarak araştırılmalıdır (Ruohotie- Lythy, 2013).

Bu anlamda, profesyonel öğretmen kimliği edinim süreci, tecrübesiz öğretmenler, etkili öğretim süreçleri, öğretmenlerin alan ve eğitim bilgileri batı dünyasında gittikçe daha fazla ilgi görmesine rağmen (e.g Graham& Phelps, 2003; Beijaard, Verloop,& Vermunt 2000; Flores, 2006; Ruohotie- Lythy, 2013), az sayıda çalışma mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin kendi öğretmen kimlikleri görüşlerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Dahası, Türkiye’de yürütülen çalışmalar çoğunlukla mesleğe henüz başlamamış olan ya da mesleklerinin ilk senesinde kırsal ilköğretim kurumlarında çalışan öğretmenleri ele almıştır (Erkmen, 2010; Başer, 2012; Saban, 2004). Bu sebeplerden dolayı Türkiye’de bir yükseköğretim kurumunda göreve başlayan öğretmenlerin kendi öğretmen kimlikleri görüşlerini inceleyen bir çalışma profesyonel destek ve pratiğe yönelik uygulamalar sunması açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Çalışmanın yürütüleceği kurum her sene üç ile beş tecrübesiz öğretmen istihdam etmektedir. Fakat bu tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin çoğu birkaç sene içinde kurumu terk etmektedir. Söz konusu kurum Türkiye’nin en büyük özel üniversitelerinden biri olması ve bu kurumda çalışmanın sosyal ayrıcalıkları olmasına rağmen bu durumun önüne geçilememiştir. Bu sebeplerden dolayı mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin tecrübelerini ve kendilerini öğretmen olarak değerlendiriş biçimlerini anlamak söz konusu kurum için önemli hale gelmiştir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın bulguları etkili profesyonel gelişim ve öğretmen kimliği konusunda kurum içi farkındalığı artırmak ve gerekli dayanışma ve profesyonel desteği sağlamak açısından önemlidir.

Dahası, bu çalışmanın bulguları tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin öğretmen kimliği anlayışlarını artırarak öğretmen yetiştiren kurumların müfredatlarını geliştirmelerine yardımcı olurken İngilizce öğreten kurumların tecrübesiz çalışanlarına gerekli profesyonel desteği sunmalarına yardımcı olabilir (Farrell, 2008).

Son olarak, tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin kendi öğretmen kimliği farkındalıklarının artması öğrencilerine bağlamsal olarak uygun öğrenme fırsatları sunmalarına yardımcı olabilir.



Yukarıda bahsedilen sebepler ve öğretmen eğitimi alanına katkıda bulunmak amacıyla Sosyo-kültürel Teori (Vygotsky, 1978) göz önünde bulundurularak ve Beijard, Verloop ve Vermunt'un (1999) profesyonel kimlik algısı teorik çerçeve olarak kullanılarak, bu çalışma mesleğe yeni başlayan tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin öğretmen kimlikleri görüşlerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu değişken süreci inceleyerek her bir katılımcının kendi öğretmen kimliği algısı ve bu süreçle ilişkilendirdikleri unsurlar aşağıda verilen araştırma soruları aracılığıyla incelenmiştir:

1. Çalışmanın yürütüldüğü yükseköğretim kurumunda mesleğe yeni başlayan tecrübesiz öğretmenler kendi öğretmen kimliklerini nasıl algılamaktadır?
2. Söz konusu öğretmenler hangi değişkenleri kendi profesyonel kimlik görüşleriyle ilintili bulmuşlardır?

## **Yöntem**

Bir çalışmada araştırma soruları ve yöntemi paralel gitmelidir. Bunu sağlamak için araştırmanın amaçlarına en uygun araştırma yaklaşımını bulmak ise araştırmacıların sorumluluğundadır. Bu anlamda bu çalışmada doğal ortam çalışmaları, araştırmanın süreç alması, araştırmacıya yorum yapan kişi olarak ana rolün vermesi ve yoğun betimlemeler içermesi bakımından (Hays& Singh, 2012) nitel inceleme yöntemi benimsenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, bu çalışma belli bir süreci doğal ortamda derinlemesine incelemesi (Yin, 2012) açısından da bir durum çalışmasıdır. Son olarak veri toplama araçları olarak nitel durum incelemesinde kullanımları üzerine sözlü görüşmeler, gözlemler ve kapsamlı saha notları kullanılmıştır.

Çalışmanın yapıldığı kurum Ankara'da bulunan özel bir yükseköğretim kurumudur. Kurum 2000'li yıllarda kurulmuş olup öğrencilerine sosyal ve ekonomik ayrıcalıklar sunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda söz konusu kurumun politik ve ekonomik kurumların önce gelenleriyle ilişkili olduğu bilinmektedir.

Toplamda beş senelik bir eğitim programı kullanılan söz konusu kurum üç dönem süren eğitimi ile bir sene süren İngilizce hazırlık eğitimi sunmaktadır. Üniversiteye girmeye hak kazanan öğrenciler İngilizce hazırlık eğitimine başlayabilmek için dönem

başında bir yerleştirme sınavına tabii tutulurlar. İngilizce hazırlık eğitiminin üç dönemlik eğitimi sonunda ise uluslararası olarak tanınmış ve standartlaştırılmış bir sınava tabii olurlar.

Kurumda görev yapan öğretmenler “okuma ve yazma”, “dinleme ve konuşma” ve “ana ders” gibi yetenek bazlı dersler vermektedirler. Her ders farklı bir öğretmen tarafından öğretilmektedir. Bu da haftada 20 ile 28 saat arası değişen bir ders saati yükü anlamına gelmektedir. Derslerin yanı sıra kurumda görev yapan öğretmenler ofis saati, sınav değerlendirmeleri, sınav gözetmenlikleri, konuşma sınavları ve çevirmenlik gibi görevlerden sorumludur.

Bu çalışma üç katılımcı öğretmen ile yürütülmüştür. Katılımcı öğretmenler söz konusu kurumda mesleklerinin ilk senelerine başlayan tecrübesiz İngilizce öğretmenleridir. Katılımcıların üçü de yükseköğretim kurumlarının İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünden mezun olmuşlardır. Her biri dört senelik bir lisans programı tamamlamış ve programları süresince dil yeteneklerini geliştiren derslerin yanı sıra edebiyat, dilbilim, tercüme, eğitim dersleri ve dil öğretim teori ile teknikleri ile alakalı dersler almışlardır.

Katılımcı öğretmenler “kriter ile örnekleme stratejisi” (Creswell, 2013) ile seçilmişlerdir. Bu durum tüm katılımcıların belirlenen kriteri karşılamaları anlamına gelmektedir. Bu çalışmada belirlenen kriter katılımcıların öğretmen yetiştirme programlarından yeni mezun olması ve mesleklerinin ilk senelerinde olmasıdır. Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına bağlı olup katılımcı öğretmenlerin kimlikleri takma isimler ve perdeleme yoluyla etik kodlar izlenerek korunmuştur (Christian, 2011). Aşağıdaki tabloda katılımcı öğretmenlerin takma isimleri ve özellikleri verilmiştir.

Tablo 1: Katılımcılara verilen isimler ve katılımcı öğretmenlerin genel bilgileri

<b>Takma İsim &amp; Cinsiyet (Hepsi kadın)</b>	<b>Öğretmen Yetiştirme Programları</b>	<b>Staj Dersleri</b>	<b>Erasmus Deneyimi &amp; Geçirilen Süre</b>
Kumsal	X üniveritesi	1. Dönem, Polonya 2. Dönem, Türkiye	Polonya, 6 ay
Ayla	X üniveritesi	1. ve 2. Dönem, Almanya	Almanya, yaklaşık 1 yıl
Gamze	Y üniveritesi	1. ve 2. Dönem, Türkiye	Yok

Bu çalışmada veri toplama araçları olarak sınıf gözlemleri, sözlü görüşmeler ve saha notları kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın yürütüldüğü kurumda her dönemin 12-13 hafta sürmesi ve zaman limiti dolayısıyla veriler 2 dönem boyunca 22 hafta süresince toplanmıştır. Katılımcı öğretmenler her dönem başında ve sonunda 1 ders saati gözlemlenmiştir ve her bir katılımcı için 22 hafta süresince 4 gözlem yapılarak toplamda 12 sınıf gözlemi tamamlanmıştır. Aynı zamanda her 2 ile 4 haftalık süre içinde katılımcılarla 10 ile 40 dakika arasında değişen, toplamda 21 sözlü görüşme yapılmıştır. Sözlü görüşmelere ses kaydı yapılmış ve toplamda 400 dakikalık kayıt elde edilmiştir. Sözlü görüşme kayıtları kelimesi kelimesine çözümlenmiştir. Veri toplama araçları çeşitlendirilerek derin ve güvenilir veriler elde etme yoluna gidilmiştir. Aşağıda verilen tabloda veri toplama araçlarının özeti verilmiştir.

Tablo 2: Veri toplama araçları özeti

Süreç	Sınıf Gözlemleri	Saha Notları	Sözlü Görüşmeler
- 22 Hafta	- Toplam 12	- 12 kere	- 21 görüşme
- Aralık 2014-	- Her biri 50 dk.	- 6 sayfa	- 10 ile 40 dk.
Temmuz 2015	- 600 dk.		- 400 dk.

Veri analizi için Creswell 'in (2013) sunduğu sarmal veri analizi adımları uygulanmıştır. Veri toplama süreci içinde sözlü görüşmeler kelimesi kelimesine çözümlenmiş ve detaylı okumalar yapılmıştır. Detaylı okuma süreciyle paralel olarak veriler betimleyici kodlama tekniği (Miles & Huberman, 1994) ile kodlanmıştır. Yapılan kodlamalardan kategorilere ve temalara ulaşılmıştır. Veri analizi sürecinde katılımcılarla ve yardımcı bir araştırmacı ile kodlamalar tartışılmış ve verilerin güvenilirliğini artırma yoluna gidilmiştir.

### **Bulgular ve Tartışma**

Veri analizi sonucunda elde edilen temalar Kumsal için “öğretmen kimliğinin reddi” ve “otorite saplantısı” iken Ayla'nın durumunda elde edilen temalar “öğrencilerden onay beklentisi” ve “kimlik geçişi: öğrenci mi öğretmen mi?” olarak saptanmıştır. Son olarak Gamze için belirlenen temalar ise “yaş ve profesyonellik” ile “çaresizlik ve kendini suçlama”dır.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları her katılımcı öğretmenin bilgi uzmanı, eğitim uzmanı ve eğitim sürecinin didaktik yönlerini kapsayan uzmanlık kimliklerini benimsediğini göstermiştir (Beijard, Verloop& Vermunt, 1999). Kumsal, Gamze ve Ayla bir öğretmen olarak bilginin önemini vurgulamıştır. Dil yetenekleri konusunda kendilerine güvenli bir duruş sergilemişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, öğretmen yetiştiren

bir yükseköğretim kurumundan mezun olmanın getirisi olarak, öğretmenliğin bilginin ötesinde yönler taşıması gerektiğinin farkındadırlar. Kumsal, Gamze ve Ayla öğrencilerine yabancı dil ile ilgili bilgiler vermenin yanı sıra onlara yeni dünyaların ve kültürlerin kapısını açabilen bir rehber olmak istemişlerdir. Bu eğitimci kimliklerini modern dil öğretim metotlarını kullanarak ve öğrencilerle etkili bir iletişim kurarak sağlamaya çalışmışlardır. Fakat katılımcı öğretmenlerin eğitimci kimlikleri farklı zorluklarla sarsılmıştır.

Kumsal'ın durumu ele alındığında, günlük pratiklerinde Kumsal'ın eğitimci rollerine sıkı sıkıya bağlı olduğu görülmüştür. Kendi kişiliğini dersleri sırasında ön planda tutarak, öğrencilerin de birer birey olduğunu göz önünde bulundurarak ve modern bir akademisyen olarak onlarla olan iletişimini güçlendirme ve her bir öğrencinin ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilme yolları aramıştır. Diğer bir taraftansa öğretmenlik mesleğinin toplum içindeki saygınlığının az olmasına (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnston, 2009) ve öğretmenlerin otonomisinin düşük olmasına bağlı olarak Kumsal öğretmen kimliğini reddetmeyi sürdürmüştür. Kumsal'a göre öğretmenlik mesleği sıkıcı, monoton ve tutucu bir meslektir ki bu bakış açısı Kumsal'ın profesyonel öğretmen kimliğini reddi konusundaki düşüncelerini daha da karmaşık hale getirmiştir.

Kumsal aynı zamanda sınıf içindeki otoritesi ve güç sahibi olmak konusunda saplantıları olduğunu dile getirmiştir. Sınıf gözlemleri esnasında da Kumsal'ın yanlış olduğunu düşündüğü ve öğretmen olarak sınıf içindeki otoritesini sarsacağını düşündüğü davranışları hiçbir şekilde tolere etmediği görülmüştür. Öğrenciler birbirlerine bakıp gülümsediğinde ya da konu ile alakalı dahi olsa birbirlerine soru sorduğunda rahatsız olmuştur. Bu anlamda öğrencilerinden onu sevmeleri yerine ona saygı duymalarını talep etmiştir. Kumsal'ın sınıf yönetimini konusunda uyguladığı katı politika tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin deneyimlerini konu alan birçok çalışma da rastlanmıştır (Farrell, 2008).

Benzer bir şekilde, Ayla'nın olmaya çalıştığı ideal öğretmen bilgi ve didaktik yönlerin uzmanlığının yanı sıra baskın olarak eğitimci kimliğini kapsamıştır (Biejard, Verloop,

& Vermunt, 1999). Ayla öğrencilerinin ilgi ve ihtiyaçlarını anlamakta uzmanlaşarak onlarla etkili iletişim kurmayı istemiştir. Fakat Ayla'nın öğrenciler tarafından sevilme arzusu yerine getirmeye çalıştığı eğitimci kimliği görev ve sorumluluklarını zorlamıştır. Öğrencilerin kendisi hakkındaki görüşlerine çok fazla önem atfetmiştir. Bu yüzden bir öğretmen olarak duruşunu dengelemekte zorlanmıştır. Kendi koyduğu sınıf içi kurallarını yine kendi ihlal etmiş ve öğrencilerin tepkisini almamak adına onlarla uzlaşma yolu izlemiştir.

Ayla aynı zamanda öğretmen ve öğrenci kimliği arasında gelgitler yaşamıştır. Zaman zaman sınıfta bir öğretmen gibi değil, bir öğrenci gibi hissettiğini belirtmiştir. Bu gelgitler Ayla'nın öğrencileri ile gereğinden fazla empati kurmasına sebep olmuştur. Farrell (2008) tarafından da belirtildiği gibi Ayla öğrencilerine onları anladığını ve onlardan biri olduğunu ispat etme çabası içine girmiştir. Yine Farrell (2008) tarafından belirlenmiş bu “başlangıç idealizmi” aşamasında Ayla genel olarak duyguları tarafından yönetilmiş ve sınıf içinde profesyonel bir yabancı dil öğretmeni ve eğitimci duruşunu koruyamamıştır.

Gamze'nin durumu da benzer bir şekilde bilgi uzmanlığı, didaktik yönlerin uzmanlığı ve eğitimci uzmanlığı kimliklerinin (Biejard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 1999) yanı sıra meslektaşlarla yardımlaşma ve dayanışma unsurlarını da kapsamıştır. Gamze için kendinden daha deneyimli meslektaşlarıyla kurduğu iletişim ve dayanışma öğretmen-öğrenci (Johnson, 2009) olarak kendi öğretmen kimliğini algısında önemli bir rol oynamıştır.

Farrell (2008) tarafından belirtilmiş olan aşamalara bakıldığında, Gamze'nin “başlangıç idealizmi” “hayatta kalma” aşaması tarafından izlenmiştir. Bu aşamada Gamze her geçen gün “gerçeklik şoku”nu daha derinden hissetmiştir. Bu süreçle birlikte, Gamze'nin eğitim uzmanı rolü çalıştığı kurumun, dolaylı olarak da kendinin, taşımaya başladığı “yaş” ve “deneyimsizlik” kaygısı tarafından zorlanmıştır. Gamze “genç” ve “deneyimsiz” olarak etiketlenmek konusunda kaygılar taşımıştır çünkü bu koşullar altında öğrencilerinin ona saygı duymayacağını düşünmektedir. Gamze'nin

bu kaygıları aynı zamanda toplum tarafından yaş, deneyim ve profesyonelliğin denk tutulması stereotipi tarafından pekiştirilmiştir.

Gamze'nin yaş ve tecrübesizlik konusundaki endişelerini öğrenci davranışları kaynaklı güvensizliği izlemiştir. Sürekli başarısızlığa uğrayan öğrencileri dolayısıyla bilgi uzmanı kimliği konusunda yetersiz olduğunu ve öğrencilerini başarı konusunda yeterince yönlendiremediğini ve motive edemediğini düşündüğü içinse eğitim uzmanı kimliği konusunda yetersiz olduğunu düşünmüştür. Kendini ve yetersizliklerini durumun sorumlusu olarak uzun süre suçladıktan sonra Gamze bu tarz zorluklar yaşayanın sadece kendisi olmadığını anlamıştır. Bunun üzerine, bu suçluluk ve yetersizlik duygularını sonlandırıp içinde bulunduğu karmaşanın üstesinden gelmenin yollarını aramıştır. Bunun için öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını daha iyi anlayarak ve eğitim uzmanı kimliği rollerini geliştirerek öğrencilerin öğrenme sorumluluklarının kendilerine ait olduğu bilincini güçlendirmeyi amaçlamıştır. Bir diğer değişle, Gamze'nin “gerçeklik şoku”, hayal kırıklığı ve umutsuzluğu gerçek öğrenme ortamlarının şartlarını realist olarak anlamaya çalışması yoluyla azalmıştır.

Katılımcı öğretmenlerin öğretmen kimliği algılarıyla ilintili buldukları değişkenler göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, politika etkisi, öğrenci profili, öğretim programı politikası, iş yükü ve profesyonel gelişim imkânları gibi temalarla karşılaşmıştır. Kurumun politik güçlerle olan derin bağı ve bu bağın kurumdaki günlük işleyişlere olan etkisi Kumsal, Ayla ve Gamze tarafından sık sık vurgulanmıştır. Vargese, Morgan, Johnston ve Johnston (2009) tarafından da belirtildiği üzere, öğretmenlerin kendi kimliklerini algıları “ hayati bir şekilde sosyal, kültürel ve politik durumlara bağlıdır” (p.35). Bu bağlamda meslektaşları ve öğrencileri ile birlikte zorunlu olarak politik toplantılara götürülmek katılımcı öğretmenlere kendilerini “köle” ve “yalaka” gibi hissettirmiştir. Bu tarz durumları profesyonel bulmamakla birlikte bu toplantılar katılımcı öğretmenlerin kendilerini “değersiz” bireyler ve profesyoneller gibi hissetmelerine yol açmıştır.

Vargese, Morgan, Johnston ve Johnston (2009) tarafından da ileri sürüldüğü gibi katılımcı öğretmenler, tecrübesiz ve gerçek eğitim ortamlarını ilk defa deneyimleyen

öğretmenler olarak bilgi uzmanlığı, didaktik uzmanlık ve eğitim uzmanlığı kimliklerindeki yeterliliklerini öğrencilerinin başarılarına ya da öğrencilerle yaşadıklarını deneyimlere bakarak değerlendirme eğilimi göstermektedirler. Kumsal, Ayla ve Gamze'nin çalıştığı kurumdaki öğrenci profiline sosyo-ekonomik farklılığı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, katılımcı öğretmenler eğitim uzmanı kimlikleri anlamında zaman zaman çaresiz ve karmaşık duygular içinde bulunmuşlardır. “Hayatta kalma” evresinin (Farrell, 2008) de bir karakteristiği olarak özellikle Ayla ve Gamze idealleştirilmiş teoriler ve sınıf ortamlarının gerçeklikleri arasındaki boşluğu derin olarak hissetmişlerdir.

Öğrenci profiline ek olarak, standart bir test etrafında şekillendirilmiş öğretim programı politikası (Miller, 2009) katılımcı öğretmenlerin eğitim uzmanı kimliklerini sarsmıştır. Sınıflarında öğrencileriyle olan iletişimlerini daha güçlü kılabacak, dolayısıyla eğitim uzmanı kimliklerini pekiştirecek, etkileşimli aktivitelere yer vermek yerine sınıf içi uygulamalarında söz sahibi olamayan ve haftalık programı takip etmek durumunda kalan Kumsal, Ayla ve Gamze kendilerini “papağan”, “robot” ya da “köle” gibi hissettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Yılsonunda yapılacak olan testin gölgesinde geçen derslerin yorucu ve stresli olduğunu vurgulayan katılımcılar, modern bir akademisyen yerine kendilerini “cevap anahtarı” gibi hissetmişlerdir.

Yoğun iş yükü (Flores, 2011) katılımcı öğretmenler tarafından heves, istek ve motivasyonlarını gölgeleyen ve beraberinde tükenmişlik sendromunu getiren değişkenlerden biri olarak belirtilmiştir. Özellikle tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin çabalarının takdir edilmemesi ve bu süreçte ihtiyaç duyulan profesyonel rehberlik ve desteğin sağlanmaması iş yükü ile birleşince Kumsal, Ayla ve Gamze'nin karmaşa ve çaresizlik hisleri daha da yoğunlaşmıştır.

Kumsal, Ayla ve Gamze öğretmenliklerinin ilk senesini “zorlu”, “yıpıracı” ve “hayal kırıklığına uğraticı” olarak tanımlamış olmalarına rağmen, çalıştıkları kurumun öğretmen- öğrenciler olarak (Johnson, 2009) profesyonel gelişimlerini desteklemek adına sunduğu meslek içi eğitim, yüksek lisans ve doktora programlarına katılım izni ve kurumda düzenlenen ve ev sahipliği yapılan konferans gibi imkanlarını teşvik edici



bulmuşlardır. Bu gibi imkanların “motive edici”, “yüreklenirici” ve “üretici” duygularını artırdığını dile getirmişlerdir. Kumsal, Ayla ve Gamze bu tarz dinamiklerin öğretmenliğin sıkıcı rutinini kırmaya yardımcı olduğunu ve sosyo-kültürel teorinin de öne sürdüğü gibi (Johnson, 2009) meslektaşlar arası iletişim ve dayanışmayı artırdığını belirttiler. Dahası, katılımcı öğretmenlerin bilgi uzmanı, didaktik yöner uzmanı ve eğitim uzmanı kimliklerinin bu “öğretici”, “paylaşımıcı” ve “dayanışmacı” imkanlar sayesinde pekiştirildiğini ileri sürmüşlerdir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları göstermiştir ki tüm katılımcı öğretmenler bilgi uzmanlığı kimliğinin farkındadır ve hedef dil yeteneklerini katıldıkları öğretmen yetiştirme yükseköğretim programı ile geliştirmişlerdir. Dahası, yükseköğretim kurumlarında aldıkları pedagojik dersler dil eğitimi konusunda kapsamlı bir bakış açısı geliştirmelerini ve profesyonel eğitimciler olarak sorumluluklar edinmelerini sağlamıştır. Fakat bu süre içerisinde öğrendikleri mükemmel şekillerde oluşturulmuş teoriler mesleğe henüz başlamamış öğretmenlerin mükemmel sınıflar ve öğrenciler beklmelerine sebep olmuştur. Mezun olmalarının ardından mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenler çeşitli şiddetlerde gerçeklik şoku ile karşılaşmakta ve bu süreç zaman zaman mesleği bırakma ile sonuçlanmaktadır. Tüm bunları göz önünde bulundurarak öğretmen yetiştiren yükseköğretim programlarının mesleğe başlamamış öğretmen adaylarını öğretim ortamlarının gerçeklikleri ve sınırları konusunda hazırlamaları büyük önem taşımaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, öğretmen adayları öğretim ortamlarının gerçeklerinin bilincinde olmalı ve mesleğe başladıklarında geçecekleri süreçler konusunda daha gerçekçi şekillerde donanımlı olmalıdır.

Dahası, katılımcı öğretmenler kurumda hizmet vermeye başlamadan önce bir hafta süren bir seminere katılmışlardır. Bu seminer sürecince katılımcı öğretmenler kurumun işleyişi, takip edilen öğretim programı, sınav politikası ve okulun tesisleri hakkında bilgilendirilmiştir. Kapsamlı ders planları ve tartışma ortamıyla öğretme teknikleri de içeren bu seminer Kumsal, Ayla ve Gamze tarafından oldukça etkili bulunmasına rağmen kurumda karşılaşabilecekleri olası öğrenci profili ya da öğrenci ile alakalı sorunsalları kapsamamıştır. Bu yüzden katılımcı öğretmenler sınıfta bir

zorlukla karşılaştıklarında şok olmuş ya da çaresiz hissetmişlerdir. Bu bağlamda seminer dönemine kurumda yaşanmış ya da yaşanması mümkün problemlerle ilgili tecrübesiz öğretmenleri bilinçlendirmek ve bilgilendirmek bu öğretmenler açısından oldukça faydalı olabilir.

Son olarak, katılımcı öğretmenler zaman zaman kaybolmuş ve çaresiz hissetmişlerdir. Özellikle Gamze öğrencilerinin başarısız sonuçları yüzünden kendini suçlamış öğretmen olarak yeterlilikleri konusunda umutsuzluğa kapılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, tecrübesiz öğretmenler idari birimlerden rehberlik ya da destek isteme konusunda bir istek taşımamışlardır. Bu durum katılımcı öğretmenlerin kendi yeterliliklerini öğrencileri görüşleri ve davranışlarıyla değerlendirmeye itmiştir. Bu bağlamda eğitim kurumlarında düzenli ve sürekli rehberlik ve destek sağlayan bir danışma programı geliştirmek ve yürütmek mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin gerçeklik şokunu daha pürüzsüz atlatalmalarına yardımcı olabilir. Bir başka deyişle, tecrübesiz öğretmenlere daha gerçekçi bir sınıf bilinci verilerek ve bu öğretmenlerin profesyonel öğretmen kimliği bilinçlerini geliştirerek mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlere destek olunabilir.

### **Gelecek Çalışmalar için Araştırma Önerileri**

Gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar için mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin tecrübeleri ve öğretmen kimliklerini algılama süreçleri ve şekilleri konusunda, uzun bir sürece yayılmış veri toplama yoluyla, bu dinamik ve zorlu süreci daha bütünsel ele alabilmek adına, uzun soluklu çalışmalar dizayn edilebilir. Benzer çalışmalar devlet üniversitelerinde de yürütülerek mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin değişen durumlarda ve süreçlerde yaşadıkları deneyimler göz önünde bulundurulabilir. Dahası, profesyonel öğretmen kimliği tartışma sürecinde mesleğe başlamamış ya da yeni başlamış öğretmenleri kapsayan dizaynlar geliştirilerek akademi ve okullar arasındaki boşluk doldurulmaya çalışılabilir. Son olarak, profesyonel destek ağlarının ve birimlerinin etkinliğini artırmak, tecrübesiz öğretmenlerin ilk senelerini daha az pürüzlü hale getirebilmek ve profesyonel gelişim imkanlarını arttırabilmek adına çalışmalar düzenlenebilir.

## L. TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

### YAZARIN

Soyadı : BALBAN

Adı : S E N A

Bölümü : İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce) : REFLECTIONS ON TEACHER IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF NOVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS

**TEZİN TÜRÜ**: Yüksek Lisans  Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası

Tarih