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Construction of academic success and failure in school memories

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The idea of 'Apprenticeship of Observation', proposing that pre-service teachers' early academic experiences might have effects on their professional development, has been a concern in teacher education in the last forty years. Early success or failure experiences of pre-service teachers in school may have a role in their professional identity development. This study aimed to understand the role of academic performance recollections of pre-service teachers on their professional identity construction from a discursive point of view. Accordingly, the constructions of pre-service teachers in relation to success or failure in their school memories were discursively analyzed. Eighty-one school memories were collected from 87 students who were enrolled in two teacher preparation programs. After the preliminary screening of data, 48 memories were classified as success or failure related in past academic lives of pre-service teachers. The remaining 33 memories were eliminated due to not matching the criterion of academic performance relatedness. Informed by (critical) discursive psychology, the memories of success or failure in school were discursively analyzed. Success and failure were constructed together as the two sides of a performance coin. The academic and professional understandings of pre-service teachers were not independent of their academic history. In their recollections, success or failure was constructed in relation to others and had a role on pre-service teacher's future academic and career preferences.

Key words: Success, failure, school memories, discourse analysis, pre-service teachers.

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of their teacher profession, pre-service teachers already have a perception related to learning, teaching and academic content from the years they spent as students. 'Apprenticeship of Observation' is a notion that was proposed by Lortie (1975) in his seminal work on teacher socialization. That is prior experiences of teachers in schools as students had an influence on their future instructional practices. These early experiences

and memories serve as a 'frame of reference' for the pre-service teachers and when they begin to work, they construct their professional identities in an integrative manner between their previous reference frame and actual teaching experiences (Flores and Day, 2006).

However, according to Lortie (1975), 'apprentice of observation' may not be facilitative for further formal education on teaching. Instead, it may have inhibitory

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effects such as causing pre-service teachers to become conservative in professional education, especially learning and practicing innovative teaching methods. Therefore, limiting the inhibitory role of Apprenticeship of Observation has become a concern in teacher education (Martin and Russel, 2009; Mewborn and Stinson, 2007). According to Grossman (1991), the effect of autobiographical school memories, which may limit the perspective of pre-service students to only an observed form of classroom reality, might be lessened through ways such as reflective understanding, “over-correction” and modeling in the teacher education programs. Accordingly, Feiman-Nemser (2001) proposed that in pre-service teacher education, pre-service teachers should be supported to examine their teaching beliefs in light of good teaching examples.

In opposition to Lortie’s understanding, some scholars proposed that Apprenticeship of Observation might be used as a means to support learning in profession (Boyd et al., 2013; Knapp, 2012). These scholars utilized the previous background of pre-service teachers as means to learn in teacher education programs and emphasized the role of academic autobiographies. Autobiographical memory was defined as people’s capacity to reminisce about their lives (Baddeley, 1992). Autobiographical memories play a role in identity construction (Fivush and Buckner, 2003; McAdams, 2003). By telling stories of their own, people regulate past experiences and prospect for future and construct and negotiate identities developmentally and contextually (Fivush and Buckner, 2003; Søreide, 2006).

Autobiographical memory research focuses on what functions autobiographical narratives serve. Theoretically, these functions were classified as directive, social and self functions (Bluck, 2003; Bluck et al., 2005). Accordingly, the retrieval of autobiographical memories guides future decisions and problem-solving (directive function), promote social interactions (social function) and help development and sustaining of a self-concept (self-function). Therefore, autobiographical knowledge shared in memories contains self-related past, present and future constructions in terms of goals, plans, decisions, problem-solving strategies etc (Bluck, 2003). Since the autobiographical memories reflect personal beliefs, goals, motives, and identity constructions (Conway and Jobson, 2012; Fivush et al., 2011; McAdams, 2003), they may influence future decisions and pre-service life stories of people (Biondillo, and Pillemer, 2015; Kuwabara and Pillemer, 2010; Pezdek and Salim, 2011). So, although, Lortie (1975) was cautious about the inhibitory role of apprenticeship of observation on the education of pre-service teachers, on the ground of directive and self-functions that are served by autobiographical memories, critical autobiographical reflections may help them to negotiate professional teacher identities. For instance, reflecting upon autobiographical experiences in a public blogging, future teachers began to critically think about

the position of a teacher, pedagogical practice, and student needs (Boyd et al., 2013).

In this study, the main focus was pre-service teachers’ constructions related to academic performance in their school memories. In these autobiographical school memories, academic success or failure was investigated from a social constructionist perspective. Social constructionist thought in relation to education assumes that the practices of education were justified by epistemological beliefs of people and those beliefs belonged not to individual minds but to communal relationships (Gergen and Wortham, 2001). Similarly, a basic tenet of social constructivist thought in learning is that our knowledge has been constructed upon our previous beliefs and experiences and learning has been mediated by social interactions in cultural context (Vygotsky, 1998). That is, learning is not an isolated, personal process; instead in school memories, it is co-constructed in differing social and historical contexts (Tanggaard and Nielsen, 2013). So, being crucial academic concerns, success or failure is constructed in socio-cultural reality through social relations in school. Success and failure are common academic issues revealed in school memory research (Ivcevic et al., 2010; Rothenberg, 1991; Walls et al., 2001). However, the academic performance has not been studied through a discursive lens. In this study, the main objective was to discursively analyze the success or failure constructions of pre-service teachers in easily recalled school memories.

Academic performance (success or failure experiences) is the main dimension that has a role in identity development of learners in the educational context. Identity construction of pre-service teachers was affected by self, social and directive functions of autobiographical memories (McAdams, 2003). Discursive analysis of memory content reveals how these functions regulate the discursive practices in constructing a professional identity and may provide a basis for innovative teacher education ideas. In school memories, people usually report social and academic themes together (Pillemer et al., 2007; Walls et al., 2001), but the distinctive role of memories on academic performance needs elaborative investigation (Ivcevic et al., 2010).

This study aimed to understand the role of academic performance recollections of pre-service teachers on their professional identity construction from a discursive point of view. In discourse analysis the main concern is on how discursive objects are constructed, while the discourse itself is being constructed (Burr, 2015). In this reality construction, there are discursive resources available for speakers. Interpretive repertoires (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) and subject positions (Davies and Harré, 1991) are discursive means for meaning and identity construction in context.

Therefore the following were the main focuses in discourse analysis of memories on academic

performance (Edley, 2001):

1. How was “success or failure” constructed discursively?
2. What were the interpretive repertoires used in constructing academic performance?
3. What were the subject positions offered to the actors in the memories?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this research, a qualitative research method, discourse analysis was used. Discourse analysis is a common method to text or talk in analyzing constructed meanings. Parker (1992) defined discourse as “a system of statements, which constructs an object”. In another definition, “discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events” (Burr, 2015).

In the study, a discursive psychological perspective to discourse analysis was applied. In discursive psychology, there are three assumptions about discourse. These are (a) discourse is primary; (b) discourse is constructed; and (c) discourse is an action medium (Potter and Edwards, 2001). First, discourse assumed that language itself is not the means to report reality; it is the prime reality in context. Second, text and talk -discourse itself- are also constructed. Third, discourse is performative, so by talk and text people construct accounts of the world.

Data sources, collection tools and procedures

The participants of the study were senior year undergraduate students ($N = 87$); attending German Language Teaching Program ($n = 40$) and Science Education Program ($n = 47$) at Istanbul University and enrolled in Classroom Management course. There were 39 men and 48 women, with a mean age of 21.72 ($SD = 2.43$) who participated voluntarily and due to the participation, earned a small amount of extra credit as a bonus added to their final exam results.

The analytical material was collected in 2014 academic year at Istanbul University. Participants were asked to provide written descriptions of at least one easily recalled school memory. In the prompt the participants were reminded they were pre-service teachers and had been spending long years as students in schools. Thereafter, they were asked to remember the most vivid memory from the previous school years and write it down in detail. Each participant was given a blank paper to write down the memory he/she wanted to share. Data was collected as an in-class assignment and pre-service teachers were allowed 30 min to reply. They also asked for age and gender. Participants were asked to describe their memories in detail as much as possible.

The total number of memories they reported was 81. Some of the volunteers reported ideas related to their school lives instead of exact autobiographical memories ($n = 13$). Some also described more than one school-related memory ($n = 7$).

Data analysis

In consistence with the suggestions of (critical) discursive psychology (Edley, 2001; Potter and Wetherell, 1987), a discourse analysis was conducted on autobiographical memories of pre-service teachers related to success or failure in school. The data was read and re-read in order to reveal not just the explicit but also the implicit ways (Van Dijk, 1993) that the tellers had used while constructing success or failure in school. For instance, in some cases tellers explicitly reported performance-related content (e.g. “in the exam”, “teacher asks”) or meaning of academic success or

failure was constructed free of content specific words (e.g. “surprise of teacher”).

Since the focal point of the study was to discursively analyze the success and failure constructed by pre-service teachers, the data corpus was initially subjected to thematic screening. Initially, the data reviewed inductively for content related to successes or failures in school. Two independent coders (including the writer) coded the content on academic performance. Forty-eight memories were explicitly (exact word matches on performance, such as grade, exam, question etc.) or implicitly (global meaning was on performance) related to success or failure in the past academic lives of the volunteers. In qualitative analyses trustworthiness is tested by asking for the expert opinion for the meaningfulness of the reports (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). For establishing the trustworthiness of the preliminary classification of the data, the opinions of two other researchers, working in the Department of Educational Sciences of Istanbul University were asked for the correspondence of the codes and the inconsistencies were discussed in a meeting including two reviewers and two coders. The inter-coder reliability was 87%.

In this study, the quality of the work was compared to the criteria set for discursive psychology (Madill, Jordan, and Shirley, 2000). Internal coherence and openness to reader evaluation were taken in consideration. Internal coherence refers to the degree the analysis presented harmoniously and free of contradictions. Additionally, the validity of discursive work mainly relies on being transparent to reader evaluation and how the analysis makes sense for the reader (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In order to meet the criteria, the analysis was open to peer review. Besides, the findings reported in detail, interconnected and open to alternative readings of readers. Constructionist studies, instead of prediction, aims to explain mainly relying on language used (Madill et al., 2000). The study adopting a social constructionist perspective, epistemologically believed multiple readings and interpretations of the data. Since the data was collected in Turkish, after the analyses, the extracts below were translated verbatim.

RESULTS

The memories, which were initially classified as being related to academic performance, were used as the data set. In the analyses, it was observed that success and failure were recalled together as the two sides of a performance coin. As the discourse was constructed, the tellers defined and constructed success and failure simultaneously. Specifically, in the analyses, two distinctive interpretive repertoires were revealed in the memories, which offered differing subject positions for the actors.

Success or failure based on social referencing

The first interpretive repertoire defined the meaning of success or failure by social referencing. Specifically, in autobiographical memories of pre-service teachers, others' especially the teachers' acts as noticing or overlooking to academic initiatives of students used to construct success and failure as discursive objects.

Extract 1

“In high school, I never forget that my teacher called me

to her side and in front of the class announced that when she had read my exam paper she had been very pleased with the answers. She said she had nearly burst into tears because of her happiness. I never forget her praise in front of the whole class” (Female, 25).

In this extract, constructing success in relation to teacher’s praise and the rest of the class as the audience, allowed the speaker to evaluate herself as a high achiever. She also justified her position as defining this memory unforgettable. In respect to the traditional roles of teachers (e.g. questioning, assessing and evaluating etc., Mehan, 1982), in this memory the teacher was positioned as the evaluator and teacher’s positive evaluation was the criterion for success.

In telling a story of success in school, teachers were the most cited party in interaction. Similarly, in another account from primary school, success was constructed in relation to teacher’s reactions to an extraordinary performance.

Extract 2

“In primary school ... and one day in the music class I went near the piano and played a piece from Mozart, although I had very little knowledge of the notes. The teacher was surprised. She gave me a harmonica as a gift. I started to compose my own songs using that harmonica...” (Male, 24)

In this account, the surprise of teacher and limited knowledge of himself on the notes, stressed the extraordinary nature of his success. Accordingly, success was negotiated as a significant event and teacher noticed that significant event. In both accounts, success was constructed in relation to teachers’ reactions as noticing and reinforcing those performances by rewards.

Similarly, in the following account (Extract 3), success or failure was something generated depending on the acts of teachers. It is a special example, since the same student compared her two different teachers witnessed or overlooked her academic performances.

Extract 3

“In primary school, I used to think that I was unsuccessful since my teacher was just focusing on my lower performance in quantitative subjects and overlooked my higher performance in reading and writing. However, in secondary school, my Turkish teacher noticed my performance and I never forget that she gave me a pen as a reward. I still keep the pen” (Female, 22)

In the third extract, the first teacher was positioned as overlooking, but the second teacher positioned as the

witness of the higher performance of the student. By doing so, the speaker legitimized her position as a successful student from the early years of education. Yet, she had been thinking that she was unsuccessful due to the limited feedback from the first teacher. Parallel to previous accounts, in this extract the pen as a reward also functioned as the signifier of teacher’s positive evaluation and contributed to the unforgettable nature of the success.

In the analyses of memories, it was also revealed that failure was not independent of success and the meaning of failure was constructed in a similar way to that of success. Teachers were the mostly cited witnesses of lower performances since they not only instruct the students but also evaluate the performance of them upon a particular criterion in their formal relationship pattern (Bernstein, 2004). Therefore, whether lower performance was judged as failure or not in the classroom was usually dependent on teachers’ evaluations on the situation.

Extract 4

“It was the second year of primary school. Although I had been successful in the first year, I was not successful at Math in the second year. One day, our teacher wrote a Math question on the blackboard and called my name to solve the problem. I could not answer the question. He kept me waiting near the blackboard till the end of the lesson and made the other students solve the problem. I was feeling guilty since I could not solve the problem and at the same time I was embarrassed in front of my friends” (Female, 22).

Just like the case of success, in the case of failure, being noticed by the others was the focal issue. In the account, the failure was constructed in relation to reaction of teacher and perceived existence of others as the audience. Similar to construction of success, teachers’ positioning as evaluator justified speaker’s definition of the situation as a failure. According to this definition, the speaker reported negative effect (guilt and embarrassment) as a legitimate associate of failure. So, failure was constructed as depending mainly on the negative feedback from the teacher and negative feelings experienced due to this feedback.

Since failure construction is a social issue, the meaning of failure changed according to the reaction of evaluators. In the following extract, the reaction of the teacher was different from the previous ones and failure was negotiated as a transient state between the teacher and student.

Extract 5

“I never forget how my teacher cared for me in the first

grade. It was the reason that my school life became one of happiness. I started school at the age of 7. I knew Math, addition and subtraction but I could not say the letter R. I used to hesitate to talk to my friends. For that reason, in the class hours I could not participate; but during every break my teacher tried to teach me by repeating 'R' sound. Whenever he pronounced 'R', I could only pronounce 'Y' instead of 'R' and he used to smile upon my mistake. In the end I learned but my participation in the lesson did not change" (Female, 23).

In Extract 5, in a positively defined teacher-student relationship school was associated with positive feelings. The speaker described herself as a knowledgeable student who had only one problem, which prevented her from social contacts. By doing so, she construct failure as a minor problem that could be revealed by the help of the teacher and justified teacher's act as helping a student who already had a good academic background. Teacher's reaction to student's failure in pronouncing 'R' was legitimized as persistence in teaching and providing necessary feedback. Therefore in the end, even though it was possibly resolved through development, the student explained the recovery because of learning. In this case, failure was constructed as something transient and possible to be overcome developmentally.

To sum up, in the first interpretive repertoire, academic success or failure was constructed as socially relevant issues. That is the meaning of success or failure was based on social reference and not independent of the evaluations and feedback from the school social group, primarily of teachers.

Success or failure based on future referencing

The second interpretive repertoire, which was also related to the social referencing repertoire, was about the effects of success or failure in the long run. That is, success or failure was discursively constructed as important factors on future academic lives of students. Similar to the social referencing repertoire, in this repertoire, teachers positioned as witnesses of success. After that, the academic lives of the students became more successful.

Extract 6

"In the 7th grade, my beloved Math teacher called me to the blackboard, and made me solve a problem. Then she said 'You are the first student I have ever given 100 points to in the oral exam'. This event made me so happy and my positive attitude toward Math continued. Besides, I was planning to be a Math teacher, but it did not happen" (Female, 25, currently Science Education Student).

In Extract 6, success was constructed as something that

had effects on the future. Even in the end she could not manage the most desired career choice, her successful experience in Math influenced her future career preferences and she succeeded in a related career in the university entrance exam. In the autobiographical memory reported, although the student was reported as being an achiever, the success was again constructed in relation to reaction of the teacher. The effect of that event on the academic life of the student was prolonged and the student defined her career choice on teaching profession in relation to this anecdote from the secondary years. Similar to the previous accounts, the academic success was again constructed on the "the first time discourse". The act of the student was beyond expectation and influential that the teacher for the first time decided to give 100 points. This first time and uniqueness discourse also discursively used to legitimize the effect of this recollection on the future academic career.

In another account, success had effects for the future in a positive way:

Extract 7

"Until the second year of primary school I was not a brilliant student. In the second year our teacher asked a difficult question. Since I was a timid student I did not raise my hand. Fortunately, my teacher called me to solve the problem and I did it successfully. As a result, the whole class applauded and the teacher praised me. Since then, because of this care, I think I have been more active and successful as a student" (Male, 30).

The account beginning with the word 'until' announced a significant event for the rest of academic life. In reporter's words, the student emphasized his timidity and 'non-brilliant past' as inhibitory factors for success. While he cited the reasons for his expected failure, he positioned his teacher as encouraging him to try for a possible success. And here again, success was constructed based on positive feedback of teacher and the rest of the audience.

Similarly, academic failures were constructed as having prolonged effects for the future. McAdams et al. (2001) categorized narratives of students on success or failure in two domains: redemption and contamination stories. In stories of redemption, a negative start (e.g. lower performance) may generate positive results and this experience becomes a motivating and inspiring self-story. So these stories, supports self-esteem and make people optimistic for the future. In the interpretive repertoire of future reference, redemption stories were observed (Extract 8).

Extract 8

"At the second year of primary school, I was a mute,

passive and lazy student. One day the teacher asked me a question but I could not answer it. Then she smashed into my face. Sure, I was very offended. After school my mother saw me and asked for the reason why I was very unhappy. When she learned the reason and talked to my teacher, though I was not sure what she told the teacher about me; the manner of my teacher changed significantly and she became more attentive to me. I appreciated this positive manner and started to study harder. After a short while, I was one of the most successful students in my class. Since then I have become successful through my academic life" (Male, 23).

In the account above, the student defined his situation from a pessimistic perspective and constructed a context where very less was expected from him. However, the negative reaction of the teacher had a significant influence on his academic story. Here, failure was signified as a point for change, and the teller legitimized his position in relation to his feeling of being offended. Yet, by the help of his mother and cooperation of his teacher he could turn this negative start to a satisfying future.

Through the analysis, in construction of failure, contamination stories were also revealed. In stories of contamination, events, which were initially positive, turned in negative consequences. The tellers of contamination stories are pessimistic, unmotivated for future commitments (McAdams et al., 2001). The following extract can be given as an example of contamination stories in the data corpus.

Extract 9

"In the second year of high school we had our first Math exam. Until this exam I was very successful on school subjects including Math. On that exam I had a very low score. I remember it was 18 over 100. I never forget that day and I will not forget. I began to cry and worse than that my teacher came by my side and said that he could not do anything as I was the one who failed and got that low score. In the end of the term, I totally failed in Math. Ever since that year, I could hardly pass the Math exams and my performance got worse. Unfortunately I am very bad at Math and actually I hate learning Math. For that reason I chose a major on language teaching." (Female, 24)

In this narrative, initially the student had higher academic performance on school subjects. But, she had a very low score that was an unexpected incident for her. In relation to the first interpretive repertoire revealed in the study, the social referencing repertoire, the reaction of the teacher to her low score had a critical role in her perception for the failure everlasting. That is, the student legitimized her future pessimism for Math as a result of both the low score itself and the inappropriate reaction of

the teacher. She constructed her low performance as a failure that had long lasting negative results. In other words, she defined a contamination story, which had global negative effects on future of her academic life. By constructing failure as a negative start for a negative academic legacy, the student defined herself cursed to be unsuccessful in Math. Therefore, she reported that because of her low expectation of success in Math she made a career choice free of Math.

DISCUSSION

Since the participants of the study were pre-service teachers, their early experiences and how they recalled those experiences became significant on constructing a professional teacher identity (Miller and Shifflet, 2016; Pritzker, 2012). In the autobiographical recollections of pre-service teachers, academic success and failure were constructed through social referencing and future referencing. Previous research reported that when school-related memories were asked, people recalled social issues more than the academic issues (Walls et al., 2001). Corresponding to the social constructionist thought, discursive analysis of school memories revealed that academic performance gained meaning in the social context of school. Especially, in the social interaction, the feedbacks of teachers directed the perceptions of students. Besides, success or failure was interpreted as factors that impacted the future academic lives of students.

The results demonstrated that teachers' feedback was influential on the self-evaluations of students on academic performance. The complementary characteristic of relationship between teachers and students in school determined alternative subject positions and identities to negotiate for both sides (Søreide, 2006). Accordingly, in the memories, the meaning of success or failure was built discursively on the quality of the relationship between teachers and students and the type of feedback received by the students. In social and future referencing repertoires, pre-service teachers emphasized reinforcing, punishing or helping roles of teachers on the academic performance of students. In the recollections, pre-service teachers reported that teachers witnessed or overlooked their attempts. In the literature, effective classroom teachers fostered learning by monitoring the progress of their students closely and provided them with necessary feedback (Berliner, 2004). In the case of success, Cüceloğlu and Erdoğan (2013) suggested that teachers might positively use their witnessing power over the academic achievements of students. Since learning (Vygotsky, 1998) and achievement occur in social interaction, teachers may use their social influence by focusing on learning and success initiatives for the academic development of their students.

In the current data corpus, success or failure was not

constructed as something in a vacuum; it gained meaning in real time social interactions. The feedback from teachers had a significant role in improving student achievement (van den Bergh et al., 2013). In the discourse of the memories, in some cases, the results of academic tasks (e.g. a high grade) were treated as less significant until the teacher noticed and provided feedback over the results. Teachers with higher expectations for their students provided more feedback and therefore clarified the cooperation between teacher and students in a caring social environment (Rubie-Davies, 2007). In terms of social referencing repertoire, besides the influence of teachers, the role of audience in interpreting success or failure was monitored in the findings. Especially, the positive or negative feelings experienced before the classroom community were highly cited as facilitative or inhibitory effects for the future attempts of students. Similarly, a relational approach emphasizing group work skills such as effective communication and mutual respect, classroom arrangements and instructional designs for group work, and teacher involvement through scaffolding was effective in fostering student learning and achievement (Baines et al., 2009).

In the memories, by use of the second interpretive repertoire, academic success or failure was constructed depending on their effects on future academic lives of students. That is, success or failures were longitudinal concerns in academic identity construction. In easily recalled memories from school years, success or failure experiences were the anchors in the academic lives of students (Rothenberg, 1994). Success or failure experiences had a role in the academic identity development of the participants.

Pre-service teachers, who attend formal education on teaching, are also the students of years. So they are knowledgeable both on being teacher and student. As an initial work in the literature, Lortie (1975), reminding us that previous experience of being a student might have inhibitory effects on being an effective teacher, was cautious about the phenomenon known as apprenticeship of observation. Yet, the autobiographical narratives of people had a significant effect on their past, present and future identity constructions (Fivush and Buckner, 2003). The directive function of autobiographical memories helped pre-service teachers generate problem-solving strategies, which were inspired by early experiences in school and self-function of autobiographical recalling served for a well-developed academic and professional self-concept (Bluck, 2003; Pillemer, 2003). Future referencing interpretive repertoire provided evidence on both directive and self functions of autobiographical memory reports. That is, in affecting the future, pre-service teachers constructed success or failure by telling redemption or contamination stories (McAdams et al., 2001), which resulted in productive or inhibited academic identities in the future, respectively.

In teacher education, autobiographical memories can

be used as effective tools. The self-reflective use of early school recollections in the formal training of pre-service teachers suggested and supported previously (e.g. Blake, 1995; Boyd et al. 2013; Grossman, 1991; Knapp, 2012). The findings of the study provided evidence, specifically on academic performance related beliefs and constructions. Since, emotions experienced in recollections were performative and related to the professional identity of teachers (Zembylas, 2005), utilizing vivid autobiographical memories in teacher education (Pillemer, 2003), especially emotionally bounded memories on academic performance may direct intentions and academic decisions of pre-service teachers (Kuwabara and Pillemer, 2010). In teacher education, reflective thinking over memories of academic success and failure, and analyzing subject positions offered in discursive practices to teachers and students in schools, may support pre-service teachers for constructing adaptive academic and professional identities.

Lortie (1975) argued that students, who were successful in school and had positive sentiments for teaching, were more likely to choose to teach as a profession. Cole (1985) commenting on Lortie's argument proposed that the reasons for students to chose teaching profession might not rely upon only conservatism of positive sentiments. Some pre-service teachers may enter the profession because of an idea to reform particular aspects of schooling. Analysis of autobiographical memories of pre-service teachers supported preliminary evidence for both reasons of entry to the profession. A future study may examine the connections between self and directive functions of autobiographical memories and reasons of entry to the teaching profession. Specifically, the role of academic performance can be the main focus.

In the literature, higher academic performance was related to positive self-regard in school memories, yet negative self-regard was reported in memories with interpersonal content (Pillemer et al., 2007). In the discursive analysis of memories, both positive and negative themes (success or failure experiences) had interpersonal referencing.

Especially, the role of teachers in regulating academic discourse was overtly stated from accounts of pre-service teachers. Further investigation of affiliation concerns in academic performance is needed. Besides, discursive psychology analysis used in the study mainly focused on discursive resources and practices in interpersonal level. Future studies may also analyze macro discourses that regulate the cultural understanding (Ganapathy-Coleman, 2014) of academic experiences in school memories of pre-service teachers.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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