Full research paper

INVESTIGATING PROFESSIONAL TEACHER IDENTITY THROUGH ESP COURSES: VOICES FROM THREE EFL INSTRUCTORS VIA CASE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

The current zeitgeist in language teacher education dwells on teacher identity regarding it as one of the big buzzwords to explore and critically reflect teacher qualities from a socio-cognitive perspective. Drawing from this current trend, the research intended to disambiguate three English language instructors' sense of self-efficacy, perceptions, professional identity and professional competence in one of the most established and prestigious state universities in the country through the qualitative case study method. After selecting ESP practitioners following convenience sampling, autobiographies, informal dialogues, classroom observations, opening interviews, post-observation interviews, and field notes were utilized to gather data. Having scrutinized the professional identities of instructors through the lens of self-efficacy beliefs, perceptions, and professional competence, the study exposed that professional competence came to the fore being the best mediator to gain awareness of professional teacher identity. However, self-efficacy did not subserve as a predictor in exploring the complexity of teacher identity due to discordance with perceptions and realities of identity issues. Finally, some suggestions for further considerations were stated to be operationalized within the EFL context of in-service language teacher education.

KEYWORDS

Case study, perception, professional competence, self-efficacy, teacher identity

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Highlights

- *The research has disambiguated English language instructors' sense of self-efficacy, perceptions, professional identity and professional competence.*
- *The study has exposed that professional competence came to the fore being the best mediator to gain awareness of professional teacher identity.*
- *Self-efficacy has not subserved as a predictor in exploring the complexity of teacher identity.*

INTRODUCTION

In language teacher education, Varghese et al. (2005) emphasize the necessity of understanding teachers' reasoning about their professional identities to interpret language teaching and learning thoroughly. Likewise, Sachs (2005:15) defines:
'Teacher identity provides a framework for teachers to construct their ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act', and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society. Importantly, it is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience.'

This explanation lays the weight on cognitive aspects of identity in addition to stressing how crucial it is to decipher this concept within a social framework. The post-modernist views of Duff and Uchida (1997), Olsen (2008), Vygotsky (1978), Wenger (1998) also suggest a multi-pronged approach to be espoused while treating teacher identity and decrying its non-linear process (Yuan and Lee, 2016). Then, it can be postulated that the teacher's self is not restricted to his/her beliefs, ideas and manners, but rather that it interacts with their expectations and experiences as well. This dynamic and selfhood human agency and intrapersonal

identity, which turns into 'situated identities' (Alsup, 2006), and finally 'selves' evolving in a social milieu, shape his/her understanding, school of thought, principles for the profession and helps to build the feeling of belonging (Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011). Thereby its connection with teacher perception, self-efficacy, and professional competence need to be further explored to ascertain the teacher professional identity issue in-depth.

Teacher perceptions

In a general sense, this concept refers to teachers' apprehension of their roles within a profession, and with class practices. Atkinson et al. (1987) clarify that teachers' perceptions towards teaching can be thought of as representative of their awareness of professional activities. In other words, their mindset, expectations, and attitude towards teaching performance have to do with their personal and professional development. Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000) also touch upon the fact that teachers' perceptions on professional identities have an impact on efficacy beliefs, eagerness to approach educational innovations, professional development and in turn being able to put these changes into practice. This means; perception is an intricate concept, demanding versatile thinking in examining its salient role in teacher identity.

Professional competence

The terms of professional learning, teacher capability, respecting the utility of professional development activities and managing professional socialization, which is a *rite of passage* in identifying their social status, usually spring to mind concerning competency. Steiner (2010) affirms that competencies ought to be viewed as a means of fostering professional development among teachers. In a similar vein, Pantic, Wubbels and Mainhard (2011) characterize its multi-faceted aspect in that professional competence comprises emotions, attitudes, qualities, decision-making ability, communication skills, and knowledge as the linchpin of professional identity.

Górska-Poręcka (2013) points out the dichotomy between instructors giving general English lessons and the ones lecturing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) who need more specific subject matter knowledge in their discipline. Deriving from the significance of pedagogical knowledge in professional competence as featured by Blömeke and Delaney (2012), professional beliefs about teaching and learning, motivation and self-regulation need to be emphasized. Furthermore, distinct types of knowledge, such as Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK) or content knowledge put forward by Shulman (1987) must be regarded as the flip side of the coin. Along those lines, Ibarra (1999), and Schein (1978) pronounce that teacher beliefs, motivation, and values originated from professional self-concepts, besides the years of teaching experience, will, in turn, shape professional identity. Taking all these facts into consideration and respecting the inextricable nature of professional thoughts, Eraut (1994: 162) outlines that 'competence should be viewed as an appropriate cut-off point on a learning continuum, not as a state of mastery.'

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) explicates self-efficacy as one's performance appraisal to develop and display specific behaviours to reach the objectives. It has been the subject of profound debate and concern and vetted primarily from different angles in quantitative research designs through efficacy scale instruments; nevertheless, these scales have been mostly criticized. These criticisms were owing to agency problems (Ross, 1995), the treatment of similar topics (Smylie, 1996), excluding contextual factors (Henson, 2002), and breaking confidentiality (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001). Another expostulation was about the dearth of qualitative analyses of salient teaching modus operandi, such as observations or interviews to decipher this issue in detail (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy, 1998). Considering these evaluations, teacher efficacy has been determined to be associated with mainstream agents, such as competency, and preferences to discover whether they interlock with professional teacher identity.

The interrelationship among identity, perception, self-efficacy, and competence

Having identified these four concepts, they seem to be tightly correlated with one another in terms of enhancing teachers' academic commitment and productivity. To date, some ground-breaking academic research has been carried out to examine teacher identity and its connection with autonomy and/or agency (Derakhshan et al., 2020; Huang, 2009; Lennert da Silva and Mølstad, 2020; Teng, 2019). Similarly, some has explored its potential link with beliefs (Basturkmen, 2012), level of awareness towards profession (Cooney and Shealy, 1997), self-efficacy (Day, 2002), professional competence (Charters, 1976; Hurt-Avila and Castillo, 2017; Lauermann and König, 2016; Pajares, 1992), and teacher learning (Richards, 2021). Dikilitaş and Mumford (2019) also handled autonomy from agency, motivation, and identity aspects in the teacher development process and concluded that teachers could fulfil Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs by nurturing their autonomy. Likewise, Buchanan (2015), Lasky (2005), McNicholl (2012), and Vähäsantanen (2015) underlined the interrelatedness of agency and professional identity from a sociocultural perspective. A wealth of studies has been primarily operationalized in ESL (Fotovatian, 2015; Harun, 2019) or administered on prospective teachers (Babanoğlu and Ağçam, 2019; Salinas and Ayala, 2018; Yazan, 2016). However, there are few if any examinations in in-service education aiming to have a thorough understanding of teacher identity and exploring its potential correlations with efficacy, competence, and perceptions, particularly in the Turkish EFL context. It follows that the current research has aimed to fill a niche in the literature by addressing the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of EFL instructors about ESP practices and their professional identities?
2. Are instructors' sense of self-efficacies interrelated with their teaching practices and professional identities? If so, how?
3. Are instructors' stated professional competencies overlap with their professional identities? If so, how?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Case studies have constantly been in the eye of the storm in the research paradigm due to its non-transferable feature of research findings to other stakeholders and inability to be generalized to universes (Firestone, 1993; Robinson and Norris, 2001; Ruddin, 2006; Tellis, 1997; Woodside, 2010; Yin, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (2002), and Merriam (2009) asserted that case studies in qualitative methodology must perform analytical conclusions after an in-depth examination of the specific context in which they occurred (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In addition, Nunan and Bailey (2010) underlined that a case can be either *bounded* or *integrated* depending on the physical and temporal boundaries. As this qualitative design was based on in-depth and holistic analyses of ESP instructors and their teaching experiences in a particular context bounded by time and activity (i.e. institution), it can be described as a case study research (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

Research context and participants

The study was performed at a comprehensive university in the central Anatolia region. The researcher adopted the convenience sampling method to identify the samples from within the instructors working at the school of foreign languages of this university. Initially, the study was planned to be conducted on eight EFL instructors as Table 1 indicates; however, considering the caveat of Duff (2008) in terms of incorporating a maximum of four or five participants in this kind of research, this number was reduced to four. Hence, the first four volunteer participants were purposefully incorporated into the design, whereas the other four were excluded from the prospective attendees. Notwithstanding this fact, one of the participants (labelled I4 in the table below) could not allocate enough time to take part in the post-observation interviews due to a large number of projects and a tight schedule. Thus, three instructors were determined to be the research participants in the end.

Instructors	Age	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Major	Educational Background
I1	55	Male	31	English Language Teaching	Bachelor's Degree
I2	41	Female	15	English Translation and Interpretation	Master's Degree
I3	28	Female	9	English Language Teaching	Doctor of Philosophy
I4	48	Male	24	English Language and Literature	Doctor of Philosophy
I5	51	Female	28	English Language Teaching	Bachelor's Degree
I6	54	Female	30	English Language and Literature	Master's Degree
I7	57	Male	34	English Language Teaching	Doctor of Philosophy
I8	52	Female	26	English Linguistics	Bachelor's Degree

Table 1: Demographics of instructors

Instructor 1 ('I1' henceforth) graduated from the English Language Teaching (ELT) department in 1989, and abandoned his Master's at the faculty of fine arts before writing his thesis. Initially, he delivered English lessons at two private schools in distinct regions of the country for three years and thereafter he held a temporary position as a part-time teacher at a university's school of foreign languages. Still, owing to an educational reform which did not stipulate students to take a preparation class in their first year at university, he could not see a promising future as a teacher in this setting. Then, a prestigious publishing house of foreign origin recruited him as an in-house trainer, editor, and material developer for about eight years. Yet, due to some serious problems in marketing and training, he reconsidered teaching English again at the same university he had previously worked for as a full-time instructor, though he would hold his position in the publishing house simultaneously throughout his academic career.

He mostly lectured ESP courses at faculties and graduate schools as well as taught basic English at the foreign language school. Since 2004, he had been teaching medical English, English for media, diplomatic English and vocational English for students at the faculty of political science in addition to English for TOEFL IBT, and IELTS exams. Besides having a lot of published work in English and Turkish, he had certificates of attendance from a variety of conferences, conventions, and seminars. As a seasoned instructor, he described that the bases of his teaching philosophy were against the rote-learning and Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) model, but since he principally focused on learner characteristics, rather relied on interactive communication, the Socratic method, critical thinking, flipped learning, contextualization, using technology and digital materials, such as Google class and WhatsApp. Accordingly, he would appeal to online role-plays, video recordings, or written assignments which did not demand learners to take high risks by thrusting themselves into the forefront. The implication is that he had a high opinion of his learners and their uniqueness besides his attempts to discover new routes of what and how to teach. I1 also added how meticulous he was in selecting lead-in, warm-up, and motivating activities beyond giving instructions and providing elicitations in his class. Additionally, he attached importance to increasing the awareness of learners towards learning a foreign language and using it in their daily lives to consolidate language knowledge.

Instructor 2 ('I2' henceforth) completed her Bachelor of Arts in English Translation and Interpretation in Iran in 2004. She stated that the basic reason behind choosing a career in language teaching was the four years she spent in London in primary school. However, despite her graduation from an English language department, she preferred to hold her master of education in journalism from 2004 to 2007 while working both as a journalist and a translator in international business and public policy in Iran for 12 years. She did not have any teaching experience through practicum as in the department of teacher education nor did she have a chance of getting related vicarious experience. Thus, she gained her first field-

based experience in a primary school only for a few years as a part-time substitute. Subsequently, her teaching experience as a contractual instructor started with the compulsory journalism ESP courses (e.g. Professional English for media and English for professional life) at this university in 2011. The only pedagogical support she was able to receive was the professional online courses about designing instructional programmes and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) courses in addition to face-to-face Mathematics, English, and Turkish lessons in the Persian language in İstanbul and Ankara three times a week. However, she has been planning to apply for new teaching qualification programmes in the near future.

She confessed that at first, she had difficulty in delivering business English classes due to her insufficient subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in foreign language teaching. Thereafter, she determined to be more fluent, self-confident, and efficient in language teaching, which led to changes in her perception towards learner needs. This included planning the curriculum, building rapport with learners via short dialogues during the breaks rather than creating teacher dominance, assigning them tasks to increase collaboration and limiting expectations in line with their progress. As to her conception of teaching, on one hand, she has principally followed creative teaching, and computer-assisted language learning. On the other hand, she has employed translation-focused language education, the repetitive language instructions instead of leading students to discovery (or inquiry)-based learning, and she is completely opposed to teaching grammar and including the PPP approach in language lessons.

Instructor 3 ('I3' henceforth) held her undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degree in English language teaching. After her graduation in 2012, she was recruited by a state university in the Marmara region as a full-time instructor. Three years later, she changed her workplace and maintained her teaching experience at this university while writing her dissertation. She lectured basic English lessons, ESP courses at different faculties of two distinct universities and also attended some international conferences both as a speaker and a listener. Having completed her Doctor of Philosophy and becoming an expert in language teacher education, she has published academic articles in national and international journals. Furthermore, she has regarded the importance of professional development practices throughout her teaching career. She explicated that she highly regarded the significance of her self-efficacy and commitment to teaching while giving the lessons of English for academic purposes and diplomatic English. She stressed that an indispensable part of foreign language education must be making students question their knowledge and find a correlation between what they aimed to learn and what they already knew. In other words, she claimed that the best learning technique was hidden in their minds waiting to be discovered in order to wield it for long-term language attainments.

Instructor 4 received his academic degrees from English Language and Literature, ELT, and English Translation and Interpretation departments, respectively. Before being an instructor at a state university located in a different city, he acquired teaching certificates through an instructional programme and online distance education. After three years, he started teaching at this university by giving ESP courses besides the lessons for general English and national and international language exams. In addition to some of his published books and articles, he still works as a referee in an international academic journal.

Participants	Name of the course	Course	Type	Students' year of study
I1	Medical English	English for Medical Purposes	EOP	Freshman (first year)
I2	English for Professional Life	English for Business Purposes	EOP	Sophomore (second year)
I3	Academic English	English for Academic Purposes	EAP	Junior (third year)

Table 2: Instructors' courses

ESP courses in Table 2 were called relying on the branches created by Dudley-Evans and Johns (1997) who categorized ESP as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) with their sub-classes. EAP includes English for Science and Technology, English for Medical Purposes, English for Legal Purposes, and English for Management Finance and Economics. As for EOP, English for Professional Purposes and English for Vocational Purposes would also be grouped under this title. Furthermore, English for Professional Purposes covers English for Medical Purposes (EMP) and English for Business Purposes (EBP), whereas English for Vocational Purposes encompasses Pre-Vocational English and Vocational English. Despite this variety in ESP types, only EMP, EBP, and EAP were involved in this investigation to analyse each of their practices thoroughly.

Data Collection

This study was administered within a postmodern framework by incorporating different data collection instruments and creating relationships or kinships among them (Yin, 2003). Furthermore, in the manner that Atkinson (2000) defines postmodernism as the promise of uncertainty considering the fact that it allows for teachers to question their identity and language besides stressing the weight of criticism in ambivalent nature of knowledge, the study also favoured this approach to finding out experiences and professional behaviours of instructors. To that end, the syllabi of the course, autobiographies, resumes from the official websites, and specially-developed extracurricular materials by the instructors-if there are any-were determined as data collection tools. Additionally, non-participant classroom observations (see Patton, 2002), informal dialogues, opening

interviews (see Appendix A) conducted once at the onset of the research were all incorporated in the study after attaining the approvals of two ELT professors in content validity. The prompts for the autobiographies were to cross-check them with the resumes, and not to miss any details regarding the attendees' demographic information.

The observations were conducted using Sendan's (1995) checklist which consists of two parts: the repertory grid elicitation sheet, and repertory grid observation checklist. Moreover, post-observation interview questions (see Appendix B) were also addressed in Turkish, and they took approximately 65 minutes in total (17:49 minutes for I1, 25:24 minutes for I2, and 22:25 minutes for I3). They were adapted from Long (2014) and Teng (2019) after a comprehensive literature review. They were also audio-recorded after obtaining the participants' consents in order to reveal reflections about their teaching performance and to find out the justifications behind their particular behaviours in classes. Thus, the answers of interviewees would lead the researcher to pose follow-up questions to delve deeper into the point. Although Turkish was chosen to make them feel relaxed during their self-expressions, all field notes were written in English.

Participant	Date	Data Collection Tool(s)	Purpose of the Research
I3	11th February 2020	1. Autobiography 2. Opening interview 3. Classroom observation 4. Post-observation interview 5. Teaching documents	Assessment about their teaching methods, reflections to ESP course in the faculty, and teacher development opportunities besides reviewing their stance, manners, and pedagogical content knowledge
I1	17th February 2020	1. Autobiography 2. Opening interview 3. Classroom observation 4. Post-observation interview 5. His critical reflections 6. Casual conversations	
I3	18th February 2020	1. Classroom observation 2. Post-observation interview 3. Her critical reflections	
I3	19th February 2020	1. Informal dialogues through text messaging	
I1	24th February 2020	1. Classroom observation 2. Post-observation interview 3. Informal face to face conversation 4. The main course-book	
I3	25th February 2020	1. Classroom observation 2. Post-observation interview 3. Teaching documents 4. Reflections of the researcher 5. Her critical reflections	
I1	26th February 2020	1. Informal conversation through e-mail	
I2	27th February 2020	1. Autobiography 2. Opening interview 3. Classroom observation 4. Post-observation interview	
I2	28th February 2020	1. Reflections of the researcher 2. Casual conversations	
I1	2nd March 2020	1. Classroom observation 2. Post-observation interview 3. Reflections of the researcher 4. His critical reflections 5. The course-book	
I3	3rd March 2020	1. Classroom observation 2. Post-observation interview	
I2	5th March 2020	1. Classroom observation	
I2	6th March 2020	1. Post-observation interview 2. Reflections of the researcher 3. Her critical reflections 4. Teaching documents	
I1	9th March 2020	1. Classroom observation 2. Post-observation interview 3. Informal face to face conversation	
I3	10th March 2020	1. Classroom observation 2. Post-observation interview 3. Informal face to face conversation	

Table 3: Timeline for data collection

Table 3 portrays the data collection process which took more than one month from February to March 2020. During this period, the researcher was always in touch with the attendees to inquire about their instructions, provide missing information, or to remind them of the schedule.

Data Analysis

For the analysis, though the current study was not based upon a longitudinal design, raw data was reported after every one of the field visits due to their sheer amount (Campion, Palmer and Campion, 1997). When the researcher completed the fieldwork, the interviews, observations, and reflections were all vetted painstakingly to shed light on all facets of the concept. Informed by the former studies (e.g. Teng, 2019), she employed inductive thematic analyses to interpret all the data in the instructors' cases by looking for the patterns within them (Yin, 2003). Initially, she analysed each participant's responses as the first coder, then it was individually reviewed by a colleague with a PhD degree in ELT in a well-regulated way. Those two coders created major and sub-themes by comparison of the data and repeated reading as is highlighted by Merriam (2009). Moreover, cross-case analysis was utilized to integrate or modify the themes within and across the data (Creswell, 2007; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2010). Subsequently, it was treated *en masse* and juxtaposed through a holistic lens.

These multiple data sets were analysed to ensure thick description (Geertz, 1973; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Ryle, 1949), trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007), and transferability of the study. Moreover, most of the data collection instruments were implemented at least three times on the same instructor to triangulate the data as cited by Denzin (1978) and Patton (2002) and to enhance credibility and dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The researcher also used peer debriefing to ensure data validity (Lincoln and Guba, 2002). As suggested by Campion, Palmer and Campion (1997), the researcher filed each instructor's document per week and described the cases in a research journal format for higher validity. She also respected Conway, Jako and Goodman (1995) and handled one to one interviews with standard questions to have the highest reliability.

RESULTS

Perceptions of EFL instructors about ESP courses and echoes to professional identities

In light of the responses to an array of data sources, three major themes and nine sequentially identified sub-themes were tabulated in the matrix to represent perceptions of each instructor to the ESP courses. They were labelled with 'S' or 'D' letters according to similar and different answers of the attendees.

Central themes	Sub-themes	Cases		
		I1	I2	I3
1. Meaning of ESP	Improve language skills	S	S	S
	Academic attribution	S	D	S
	Cultivate a sense of community	S	D	S
	Use of strategies in tasks	S	D	S
2. Management of the course	Adopt top-down strategy	S	S	D
	Unsettled behaviour(s)	S	S	D
3. Convenience of the programme to learners	The correlation between the programme and learner needs	S	S	D
	Mismatching expectations	S	S	D
	Personal and professional growth	S	S	D

Table 4: A cross-case analysis of perceptions

Table 4 indicates all instructors' common views about ESP definitions regarding its feature in improving language skills. However, I1 denoted that his efforts were chiefly to achieve teaching basic language skills and sub-skills rather than enhancing EFL learners' academic literacy in ESP.

I cannot say that I have covered academic English in today's lesson. Only grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation did constitute the basis of my lecture as in split items. Though the lesson was in EAP or ESP context, they would be touched merely on micro levels (Interview).

Similarly, I3 reported that though her students were second years, they had some difficulties in making a simple sentence in English. Additionally, she mentioned another disjuncture, creating a sense of belonging in the class owing to the lack of interpersonal competence which originated from their diffidence to express themselves effectively. Yet, she attempted to discover whether they were able to utilize the strategies they learned in the lessons while designing an essay through writing assignments. As to I2, she seemed to be content with the senior students since she sensed their academic attributions, team spirit, and the practices of foregoing techniques based on a theoretical framework. She added that she assured herself about their competency in using the target language with the help of presentations and group work, therefore, they could easily notice their weaknesses and meet deficiencies supposing that an error was conducted.

Classroom observations, interviews, field notes revealed that I1 and I2 opted for top-down instructions by plunging into the language as a whole, and immersing them in the big picture, whereas I3 stated that she embraced bottom-up processes by virtue of learners' inefficacy in language use, thereby she felt obliged to take a macro view in teaching. Furthermore, she acknowledged her approach-avoidance tendency during instruction, and hence acknowledged her apprehension and unsettled behaviours now and then.

In general terms, I feel qualified for my position and consider myself fortunate in respect to receiving my doctorate in ELT. I always regard that the more I learn about how to teach,

deepen my content knowledge, and keep myself informed about the current trends in foreign language education, the better I am in conveying information to my students with enthusiasm. Nevertheless, this was my first experience in this faculty and I had not taught EAP before. Moreover, there was not any curriculum or course schedule followed by the former instructor who had retired and I took over that responsibility, thus I was puzzled indeed.

The responses shaping the third major theme, convenience of the programme to learners, unearthed to what extent they would overlap with one another. Likewise, the sub-themes, correlation between the programme and learner needs, and personal, professional growth of learners strengthened this parallelism. Accordingly, I3 highlighted:

I tried to keep the lessons conforming to hearsay reports of other lecturers and former English instructors. What's more, only a few students got into class due to lack of compulsory attendance as a matter of the decision taken by the authorities in the faculty. As a result, I could not conduct a needs analysis at the outset of my lesson. I somehow managed to survive the class by exploring potentially the best techniques related to the topic that I determined weekly on my own (field notes).

Regarding EFL instructors' perceptions of ESP practices and professional identities, their values of teaching, experiences, beliefs, professional roles, and knowledge came forth as the cardinal factors. To put it more clearly, their awareness allowed them to inquire about their mindsets, philosophy, and classroom practices judiciously. In what follows, they mostly seemed to respect their performance, attitudes towards the lesson, and subject knowledge critically from a supervisor or mentor's point of view. As a consequence, I1 and I2 appeared to have strong perceptions of their own professional identities by internalizing ESP practices thanks to overlapping expectations, priorities, and achieving classroom management skills, while I3 did not seem to adjust herself to the course and its entailments. Namely, her perceived professional identity was not revealed to be in parallel with her perceptions of the course.

Instructors' self-efficacy beliefs, classroom practices, and professional identities

Instructors' sense of self-efficacy that shape their teaching perspective, approach, and belief was scrutinized in conjunction with professional identity and classroom routines to unearth whether they are correlated and if so how.

Themes	Issues	Case(s)
1. Critical thinking	Socratic questioning, elicitations, thought-provoking tasks	I1, I2
2. Technology Literacy	Google classroom, games, social media, web applications	I1, I2, I3
3. Creativity	Sparking curiosity, extracurricular materials, differentiated instructions	I1, I2
4. Flexibility	Alternative strategies or techniques	I1, 12, 13
5. Collaboration	Drama	I1, I2

Table 5: Instructors' sense of self-efficacy and practices

Socratic questioning, elicitations, concept-check questions were listed by I1 as his core principles concerning the first theme. Similar to I1, I2 reported that thought-provoking tasks comprised her indispensable techniques to enhance the analytic approach and independence. I2 particularly emphasized this in her opening interview:

Journalism calls for a discipline of mind, and analytic thinking, which will then be reflected in language learning skills.

Nonetheless, I3 did not give consequence to this point in her interviews or observation notes nor did memos unpack any information about critical thinking as a motive embedded in skills. I1's use of Google classroom, I2's Kahoot games in addition to her attempts to meet the following requirements of the 21st century, such as the adoption of social media rather than print media, teaching how to write an e-mail instead of a letter, the design of a text depending on Associated Press (AP) style, and finally, the web applications of I3 proved that they were all into technology-assisted language teaching. As for creativity, I1 emphasized the importance of sparking inquiry while avoiding rote-learning strategies by providing background information at first about medical science, and terminologies, such as gastroscopy. In fieldwork, he once drew a stomach to explain the examination process with an endoscope and wrote the following questions on the board: "what preparation do I need to do?, what can I expect after a gastroscopy?, is gastroscopy reliable?, are there any side-effects or complications from having a gastroscopy?" He also pointed this out during the interview that followed:

Because they are first years, and hence they do not know anything about medicine, I cannot expect them to remark on specific terms or treatments stated in the course-book. Though it is not my field of study, I feel obliged to keep them informed as much as I can, seeing that I am not the slave of any books, and there is no best teaching material on the markets to improve your teaching quality in class. Teachers are the only ones who can make the lesson perfect through student-centred teaching.

I2 took the issue further with her claims that utilizing extracurricular materials, differentiated instructions, peripheral learning, and reducing teacher talk time to motivate learners besides considering their capability of gauging the appropriateness of the activity were ways in which to improve creative teaching. Likewise, she stated that thanks to her profound knowledge in NGO, she had a high level of academic self-efficacy.

Another pioneering aspect seemed to be nurturing flexibility and adaptability to facilitate learner autonomy via minimizing the salience of dependence, but increasing self-control strategies, and self-driven problem-solving skills. To that end, I1 assigned them to read academic articles and write summaries in essay formats, and in turn, he skipped the reading and writing tasks in the course book. At that point, he affirmed:

Not every teacher can accomplish fostering learner autonomy by scaffolding academic literacy as much as possible (interview).

I2 claimed to have pedagogy of practicality in that she would instantly propose alternative ways to receive learner output, such as guiding them to write when they failed in speaking to be able to iterate their attainment. Similarly, I3 slightly mentioned her beliefs in designing an academic writing course prompting learners to take charge of their learning and decision-making.

The last theme, collaboration, appeared due to the drama method handled by I1, and I2 also used imparting knowledge to empower team spirit in a group setting as well as operating poster presentations through which she endeavoured to self-actualize herself. She echoed that this self-efficacy relied on her work experience in the United Nations. On the other hand, she declared that owing to the dominancy of teacher-centred education in her class, she could not manage to stimulate learners enough to take the floor, which was observed during fieldwork, and which created a discrepancy with the results.

Concerning the effects of self-efficacy on professional identity, teacher agency, and beliefs were explored as basic themes from the responses of the participants as is seen in Table 6.

Themes	Issues	Case(s)
1. Teacher agency	Teacher awareness, readiness to learn	I1
2. Teacher beliefs	Identifying macro-level plans, using integrated skills, learner-centred education	I1

Table 6: Sense of self-efficacy and professional identity

Even though the perceived self-efficacy of I1 decreased at times as was emphasized in the analysis of the previous research question. He must be given due recognition for showing high self-efficiency during the observations when he cleverly managed to disentangle himself from having to explain a word for which he could not remember the meaning. This is indicative of his constructive manner and propensity to persevere. Furthermore, he recognized the importance of exploring learners' ways of thinking, conceptualizations, reasoning, and readiness to learn; hence he managed to generate accurate predictions about the points where they would get lost thanks to his agency.

In his second lesson, having introduced common prescription abbreviations of drugs, such as measurements (mg, ml), frequencies (on, bd, tds, qds, 4-6h), and the routes (IV, IM, SC, PR, INH, NEB), he integrated power-point presentations along with audio records to elucidate the abbreviations with other examples. Only then did he ask learners to read the chart containing several abbreviations with which to make sentences. Similarly, his sufficient subject matter knowledge in this profession was detected while teaching noun clauses, adverbial clauses, word formation process, and modal verbs, though they were not covered in the syllabus, and instantly appeared with learners' immediate needs. Thus, his beliefs in delivery techniques were built upon establishing macro-level plans rather than designing the lesson from the ground up.

As to another instructor, 12, her perceived self-efficacies could not be observed during the lectures. The data gathered from the instruments revealed that she focalized on knowledge transmission instead of knowledge construction. Moreover, she tried to learn through reflection-on-doing rather than being in an attempt to identify a permanent solution, build a career development plan to remedy her deficiencies, and thus have a professional identity. The other classroom management problem she experienced and that was noted, was keeping the learners silent in class when others held the floor now and then. Consequently, she resorted to threatening:

Please be quiet! Otherwise, I may get annoyed. What happens when I get annoyed? I cannot concentrate on my profession. Therefore, while I am reading your papers, I might grade you down!... (Notes from the fieldwork)

Professional competencies and identities of the instructors

Individualized teaching, diagnosed as the only central theme, embodies some pivotal constituents, such as; attitudes, leadership, reflectivity, knowledge, expectations, and CPD activities. Therefore, it necessitates teachers to be self-directed in order to attain both skills and PCK as a life-long learning requirement. I3 mentioned that to maintain professional discipline, academic commitment, and keep abreast of recent trends in the field, which she has had to do with reading research papers, attending seminars, and writing articles even though none of which could be observed by the researcher in any judicious applications of her academic skills, such as academic writing or with reference to any corresponding domains of competency of the teacher. She was also unable to justify her specific practices in the class by alleging that these behaviours were of little consequence. In like manner, I2 confirmed that she did not have any professional competence to shape her identity, since she majored in journalism. Therefore, she could not get value out of teaching EBP, and thus she did not regard it as a direct investment in her teacher identity. Moreover, she sometimes felt lost while choosing the correct teaching method and managing the class when learners could not answer any questions even in the follow-up session, which also proved her problem in teacher agency.

Contrary to the others, I1 underlined the strong correlation between professional competence, professional development, self-awareness, and knowledge construction seeing that he hitherto attended some conferences on Socratic questioning. Consequently, he availed himself of the training and was successful in implementing this strategy in his ESP classes besides giving seminars referring to this issue. Additionally, he was reported to be mindful of his learners and their differentiated needs and enhancing their engagement in the lesson by setting dynamic goals as well as facilitating their inquiry skills.

DISCUSSION

Throughout the research, I1 remained in the forefront due to the fact that he perpetually accentuated his strong sense of self-efficacy by providing structured reasoning; creativity, technology literacy, and cooperative learning opportunity to

learners in class (see Table 4). In concert with the deductions of Basturkmen (2012), the correspondence between I1's beliefs and autonomy besides its reflection to classroom practices indicated his flexibility in teaching and his engagement in rational thinking as was displayed in Table 5. This is also in line with the assertion of Charters (1976), Derakhshan et al. (2020) and Pajares (1992) in that teacher beliefs, efficacy, and competencies would attribute to their professional independence. His stated professional competence attempts to increase CPD activities via attending conferences, maintaining the position in a publishing house, and reflecting his attainments to teachers or prospective teachers through seminars, and most importantly his awareness towards the requirements of his profession, displayed the power between two concepts. Additionally, his justification of positive perceptions and self-confidence in lecturing ESP was substantiated by Atkinson et al. (1987), Day (2002) and Qi, Sorokina and Liu (2021) in that teachers' sense of professional identity combined in with their commitment and self-efficacy since they symbolize teachers' professional prospects concerning their career. Furthermore, congruent with Dikilitaş and Mumford (2019) and Lennert da Silva and Mølstad (2020), I1 exposed the consistency between professional development activities and autonomy. As such, it would be compatible to postulate that his perceived ability deeply coincided with his classroom practices and then formed the backbone of a range of intertwined characteristics of his professional teacher identity.

The critical stance of I1 in exploiting differentiated instruction revealed his capability (see Table 6), self-efficacy, problem-solving skill (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Richards, 2021), and teacher competence in respect of his professional identity. By the same token, he synthesized topics along with fine-tuning of their functionality in the target language, and regarded the gravity of motivation and autonomization process for learners by avoiding spoon-feeding. Furthermore, similar to Buchanan (2015), Lasky (2005), McNicholl (2012), and Vähäsantanen (2015), I1 displayed how interdependent the agency, professionalism, and teacher identity were indeed in addition to verifying that teacher competencies were in tandem with their professional identity in the Turkish context. In more concrete terms, the professional competence of I1 turned out to be a predictor of his 'professional wellbeing' (Lauermann and König, 2016: 18). Finally, in a similar manner to Hurt-Avila and Castillo (2017), I1 bolstered the scholars to allege interplay between professional competence and teachers' identity in the current study.

As to I2, a majority of her recounting was detected to be contradictory. She mentioned that she occasionally executed student-led learning activities, such as arranging their NGO within a group development plan. She asked them to define the details of foundation (vision, mission, objectives), resource gathering capacity (existing and required resources, strategy development, accounting controls, and budget prioritization), adaptability (strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats analysis), and communication, networking and advocacy after conducting a pilot activity and creating a template. Correspondingly, she was able to embed extracurricular activities in the course, hold pedagogy of practicality, organize a collaborative learning environment to build a sense of community, and above all encouraged learners to openly share their views as is seen in Table 5. Yet, even though her sense of self-efficacy looked similar to I1, the reports in informal dialogues and memos disclosed the adoption of direct instructions in teaching, and the difficulty of reducing teacher talking time. The researcher also extrapolated from the fieldwork that she embarked on substitution drills to teach the language functions. It reveals the fact that she did not have a comprehensive or solid grasp of PCK. In other words, she was not able to specialize her attainments in an educational setting to cultivate creativity and practice efficient activities to increase student outcomes. However, she declared that she appreciated her content knowledge in NGO which enabled her to have such a high sense of efficacy in teaching while referring to her perceptions of giving an ESP course.

I2 could not display specific subject matter knowledge of EOP, thus she sided with Górska-Poręcka (2013) due to the requirements of PCK on ESP practitioners in terms of having professional knowledge. It follows that she disaccorded with Blömeke and Delaney (2012). Likewise, her responses cannot attest to the existence of her strong beliefs, nor was its reflection to professional teacher identity observed as Table 6 indicates. Therefore, her case was in contrast with Ibarra (1999), Schein (1978) and Qi, Sorokina and Liu (2021) as well.

Different from the other two instructors, I2 had put forth the academic attributions of learners in the class and also mentioned the convenience of the programme with their needs (see Table 4). This was despite her counterclaims that she could not expect them to accomplish the objectives of the lesson thoroughly due to their low level of proficiency in the English language. Moreover, in the way that Newton and Newton (2001) emphasized, I2 could address neither casual nor subject-relevant questions. Yet, they are of importance in guiding learners to think analytically and activate their subject knowledge, which must have ensued from her paucity of pedagogical background. Similarly, as Derakhshan et al. (2020) put it, the impact of professional teacher identity is deeply reflected upon the decisions they make about their teaching techniques and the pedagogical choices. Thereby, she could not administer the lesson properly considering the lack of professional help, the praise of rote-learning strategy, her confession about obtaining no benefit from the course, unsatisfactory concept-check questions, reiterations of quite similar questions, and failure in enabling a smooth transition from NGO to describing how to write a business plan. Scientifically speaking, her case clashed with Atkinson et al. (1987), Day (2002), Buchanan (2015), Lasky (2005), McNicholl (2012), and Vähäsantanen (2015) in that her sense of high self-efficacy, which may have appeared thanks to the absence of vicarious experience, did not have a part in teacher agency, and professional identity. Nonetheless, in concert with Hurt-Avila and Castillo (2017), her tenuous professional competence attributed to the shortage of quality in teacher identity besides the interconnection between her perceptions and self-efficacy which reinforced the findings of Austin et al. (2015). Finally, there were two main areas where her professional identity did not correlate with her performance.

These were her perceived ability and her emotional self-efficacy to boost learner outcomes as an integral part of this concept.

The last participant, I3 was identified as being the least mentioned instructor in the tables owing to her unassertive manner and self-restraint to the investigation. It must derive from conspicuous problems with course management, job involvement at a new faculty, unsettled behaviours in adopting a set of procedures, serious difficulties in selecting supplementary materials and seeking a way to change the current, elusive syllabus. Hence, her endeavour was mostly to make the lesson look attractive by using integrated skills and student-led activities as well as effective and practical materials, such as visuals, audio-visuals and technology. Her perceived high level of professional identity was directly related to her being a master of writing skills and other key issues in ELT. Still, she neither managed to display her independence or agency, nor did she adjust expectations to the current students on account of her lack of experience in this department. This was dissimilar to the other two instructors in the research. Taking up a new course, ESP should have allowed room to probe strategies to manage this lesson much better.

It can be straightforwardly asserted that I3's beliefs enacted as the saying goes a *self-fulfilling prophecy*. To put it more clearly, her low perception, self-efficacy, and professional competence all correlated and thus disclosed that her beliefs directly influenced her teaching performance, behaviours, and the trajectory of the course despite her so-called high level of professional identification. Likewise, I3 experienced a similar case with I2 in the fact that she could not utilise subject knowledge due to being incompetent at general content knowledge and low professional competence; therefore, they both failed to self-actualize themselves.

I3 conflicted with Atkinson et al. (1987), Day (2002) and Richards (2021) in that her perceived professional identity did not go hand in hand with her self-efficacy. She was in discord with Dikilitaş and Mumford (2019) and Engeness (2021) because of her inconsistency in autonomy, professional development activities and professional knowledge (see Derakhshan et al., 2020 and Eraut, 1994) which she reported to be the requisite of CPD in teacher education. Notwithstanding this fact, she supported Buchanan (2015), Lasky (2005), McNicholl (2012), and Vähäsantanen (2015) since her low agency, as a part of self-efficacy (see Table 6), and professional competence were compatible to one another. In a similar vein, she was in good agreement with Austin et al. (2015) thanks to the parallelism between her low-level perceptions, and self-efficacy beliefs. She also upheld Hurt-Avila and Castillo (2017) due to a linear, strong link between professional incompetence and professional identity with a low level of respect. She compromised with Charters (1976) and Pajares (1992) on account of her inability to display independence.

In short, considering the teachers' judgments, experience, values, and 'standards' (Varghese et al., 2005), all ESP practitioners indicated the correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and teacher perception as alleged by Austin et al. (2015). By the same token, similar to Pantic, Wubbels and Mainhard (2011), versatile dimensions of professional competence were disclosed by appraising teacher knowledge, professional knowledge, attitude, problem-solving skill, and professional identity. Taken together, professional competence turned out to be the leading factor in describing professional identity (Lauermann and König, 2016).

CONCLUSION

In this case study, three EFL instructors' discrepancies in perceptions of ESP courses, self-efficacy, and their impacts on teaching practices as well as professional identity were evident from a variety of facets, such as teacher agency, beliefs, critical thinking, technology literacy, creativity, flexibility, collaboration, and management of the class. The analyses were carried out through a set of data collection instruments and melting the gathered data in the same pot. At the end of the research, all EFL instructors' perceived professional identities were confirmed to be high. I1 managed to demonstrate his teacher identity much better through linear associations with professional competence, self-efficacy, and perceptions about the course and merit of his identity. Consequently, the intricacy of ESP teacher identity was unfolded as in the study of Tao and Gao (2018).

Motives behind the disjuncture of the other two instructors in identifying their teacher identities can be categorized distinctly. According to data analysis, both were professionally less competent in the teaching profession. The basis of I2's problem can be appointed to her self-assurance and self-esteem, whereas I3's problem was due to her low degree of perceptions towards practicing the course and her own professional identity. That is, I2's vigorous effort to maintain the lessons was predicated on her alleged self-efficacy and capacity which fell behind the pacing of the lesson, while I3 affirmed to have provided consistent results thanks to her values towards competence, efficacy beliefs, and perceptions. In conclusion, professional competence was reported to be the best representative of professional teacher identity.

The importance of PCK and specific subject matter knowledge to attain professional competence (Blömeke and Delaney, 2012; Górska –Poręcka, 2013; Shulman, 1987) was illuminated throughout the analysis. This is because they would both pave the way for CPD activities (Steiner, 2010) and the repercussions of teacher perception on raising awareness of professional identity amidst instructors (Atkinson et al., 1987). In this way, the multi-faceted (Duff and Uchida, 1997; Olsen, 2008), and non-linear nature (Yuan and Lee, 2016) of identity issue was clarified.

After exploring professional identity, and teachers' jurisdictions about the profession regarding the analyses of Buchanan (2015), Varghese et al. (2005) through the qualitative case study method as is required in the research paradigm (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy, 1998), some suggestions for further considerations ought to be uttered as well. Initially, future studies can systematically examine professional competence, CPD practices, and their potential effects on professional teacher identity. Moreover, professional identity might be investigated with some other characteristics, such as teachers' years of experience, and motivation levels (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). Additionally,

'situated identities' (Alsup, 2006) can be closely associated with the sense of belonging in detail by putting more emphasis on assessing learners' co-working opportunities in class in light of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998).

Vicarious experience as an essential source of self-efficacy beliefs also cannot be left unattended while delving into professional identity in teacher education. Thus, care must be taken to this issue on a deeper level, which seems to be underrepresented in recent research. Last but certainly not least, instructors' identity development and changes may be investigated by stretching the data collection process over a long period to determine the trajectory of ESP courses, shed light on necessary amendments in the curriculum, and finally offer supplementary materials to be adopted by practitioners.

As for the limitations of the study, some quantitative measurements might be involved to triangulate the data, or data collection may be regulated periodically at different times over a year to unveil their perceptions, senses, and anticipations of teachers over the long haul. In addition, the number of participants could be increased to four to interpret the cases with data-enrichment tools.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A. OPENING INTERVIEW

1. What are the qualities of a good teacher?
2. How can you portray yourself as an EFL instructor?
3. What are the perceptions of other instructors about your profession?
4. Can you talk about your (continuing) professional development activities? What are they principally oriented to? Why would you like to be informed about these issues?
5. Do you think that you can implement these ideas in class? How?
6. Do you think that these activities influence your identity in real terms?
7. How do you describe your professional teacher identity?
8. How do you invest in your professional teacher identity?
9. To what extent do you believe that your professional development "adventure" affects the learners?
10. How do you plan your teaching career as an instructor in the near future?

APPENDIX B. POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW

1. What do you think about your teaching performance today?
2. What were the things you adopted from your professional learning practices and implemented in the lesson?
3. Can you refer to any justifications of your specific behaviours in class?
4. What was the overlap between your sense of self-efficacy and classroom practice?