Exploring the Professional Identities of EFL Lecturers in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The fact that there is no universally approved conceptualization or description of the professional identity of teachers in the existing literature makes it difficult to explore teachers' professional identity. Teachers' professional identity represents not only how teachers see themselves as teaching professionals but also allows them to exercise agency to pursue their goals (Beijaard et al., 2004). Bearing these essential elements in mind, this paper aimed to examine the professional identities of 15 EFL lecturers in Turkey. In this descriptive study, the participants were selected through the purposive sampling strategy. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire with 40 items adapted from Noi et al. (2016) was utilized to reveal EFL lecturers' professional identities based on those aspects; (1) teaching beliefs, (2) professional socialization, (3) career progression and (4) professional competence. To sustain the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire, Twenty Statements Test (TST) by Kuhn and McPharland (1954) was used, and the obtained data were examined by using a categorical-content analysis strategy. The results of the study revealed that EFL lecturers have strong teaching beliefs, higher rates of professional socialization and a great extent of eagerness toward career progression, whereas they need more support from their institutions. The study also identified that the majority of the EFL lecturers perceive themselves as mentors, and they feel less valuable and demotivated when there is unfairness in their institutes.

Key Words: Teacher identity, EFL lecturers, professional identity, professional development

Türkiye'de İngilizceyi Yabanci Dil Olarak Öğreten Eğitmenlerin Mesleki Kimliklerini Araştırma

ÖZET

Mevcut literatürde öğretmenlerin profesyonel kimliğinin evrensel olarak onaylanmış bir kavramsallaştırması veya tanımının olmaması, öğretmenlerin profesyonel kimliğini keşfetmeyi zorlaştırmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin profesyonel kimliği, yalnızca öğretmenlerin kendilerini öğretim uzmanları olarak nasıl gördüklerini temsil etmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda onların hedeflerini gerçekleştirmeleri için aracılık yapmalarına da izin verir (Beijaard & diğerleri, 2004). Bu temel unsurları göz önünde bulundurarak, bu araştırma Türkiye'de İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten 15 öğretim görevlisinin mesleki kimliklerini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu tanımlayıcı çalışmada katılımcılar amaçlı örnekleme stratejisi ile seçilmiştir. Noi ve diğerlerinin (2016) çalışmasından uyarlanan ve 40 maddeden oluşan 5 puanlık Likert ölçekli bir anket, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretim görevlilerinin (1) öğretim düşünceleri, (2) profesyonel sosyalleşme, (3) kariyer gelişimi ve (4) mesleki yeterlilik açılarından mesleki kimliklerini ortaya çıkarmak için kullanılmıştır. Anket yoluyla elde edilen nicel verileri desteklemek için Kuhn ve McPharland (1954) tarafından geliştirilen Yirmi Cümle Testi kullanılmış ve elde edilen veriler kategorik içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretim görevlilerinin güçlü öğretim inancına ve yüksek mesleki sosyalleşme isteğine sahip olduklarını, bunun yanısıra kariyer gelişimine yönelik çalışmalarda bulunmaya ve kurumlarından daha fazla destek almaya ihtiyaç duyduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Öte yandan, çalışma ile aynı zamanda İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretim görevlilerinin çoğu kendilerini danışman olarak gördükleri ve çalıştıkları kurumlarda adaletsizlik olduğunda kendilerini daha az değerli ve motivasyonlarını kaybetmiş hissettikleri belirtilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Kimliği, Yabanci Dil Eğitmenleri, Mesleki Kimlik, Mesleki Gelişim

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Introduction

Professional identity is a critical term that affects the way teachers believe, behave and act out to develop professionally. It is defined by Collin (2009) as one's sense of self that is connected to a particular vocation. It is an indispensable part of teachers that bears a construct of a professional self. It embodies not only how teachers see themselves as teaching professionals based on their interpretations of their continuing interactions with their social contexts but also allows them to exercise agency to pursue their goals (Beijaard et al., 2004). It also affects teachers' motivation on how they are concentrated on their work roles depending on some external factors such as school context. The classroom context itself is defined by Singh and Richards (2006) as a complex ecological site in which unfolding events and processes shape how participants think, feel, and act, thus teachers can construct their identity through knowing the possibilities of classroom space, students, their neighborhoods, the resources, the curriculum and policy. Therefore, the present study sought to get an insight into the professional identities of Turkish EFL lecturers.

There are many advantages to be gained from a greater understanding of teacher identity, mainly what is meant when one says, "I am an English teacher'. It has attracted a considerable amount of attention to be examined how much/well the teacher's personality traits and skills contribute to student learning. The concept is relatively new and seems to be useful on behalf of improving learning and teaching from the teachers' side. However, there is not much to say about the concept on behalf of EFL lecturers in Turkey. Seeing the importance of professional identity in the teaching and learning process, this particular study spotlight Turkish EFL lecturers and aimed to explore EFL lecturers' professional identities considering teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression and professional competence dimensions. Moreover, the study tried to uncover the lecturers' identities using the Twenty Statements Test (TST) by Kuhn and McPharland (1954) protocol. In this scope, related research questions of the study are;

1. What do Turkish EFL lecturers think about their professional identity in terms of teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression and professional competence?

2. How do Turkish EFL lecturers describe themselves by answering the question of 'Who am I?' within TST protocol?

Teachers are at the center of the learning process; thus, their professional identities, teaching beliefs and competencies are among the main factors that influence the success of education. For this reason, the results of the current study may provide insights for the language teachers, administrators and researchers who are interested in teachers' mental lives and their professional identities by uncovering teachers' approaches towards the education process. Also, despite the immense influence of teachers' professional identities on the teaching and learning cycle, the number of studies dealing with teachers' professional identities, teaching beliefs and perceived competencies are limited in the literature. As a result, this study was conducted to close this gap and enrich the literature about teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression and professional competence of the EFL instructors.

There exist some potential limitations in the findings of the current study due to several aspects. Firstly, as teachers' professional identity embodies multifaceted nature and an individualized concept, it is hard to reveal teachers' professional identities through a generalizable scale. Secondly, there are 5212 EFL lecturers in total in 95 School of Foreign Languages and 4 Preparatory Schools in Turkey (YÖK, 2018). Because of the limited scope and time restrictions of the current study, it would not have been possible

to reach more participants. Lastly, perceived identities by the teachers could have been compared with their students' realizations to reveal whether there are any inconsistencies between them.

Literature Review

Concept of Identity

It is important to understand identity as a complex and multiple individual and social phenomenon. This complexity makes it difficult to define within a static baseline. Furthermore, people do not have fixed identities, which they build via membership, context and language use (Gee,1996). Because of the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the identity concept, it requires to have clear definitions. Different elements within identity construction are illustrated by Kiernan (2008) in Figure 1.
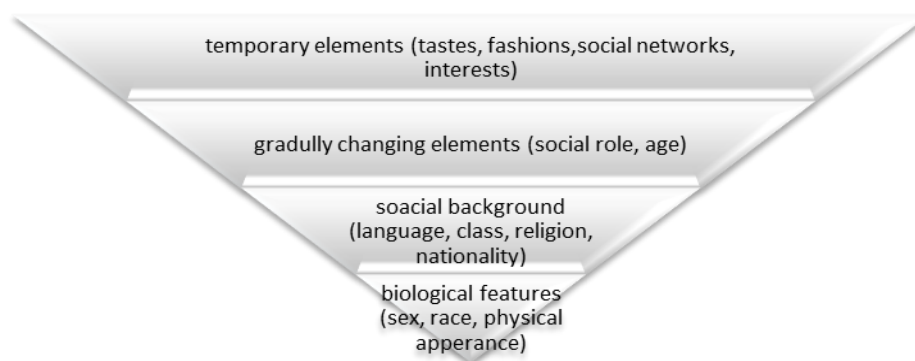

Figure 1. Elements of Identity

In this figure, Kiernan (2008) explains that the physical features are genetic and biological in origin and relatively permanent throughout a lifetime, even though the discourses of race and gender associated with them are socially acquired and continuously changing. He also assumes that the further up an element moves, the more contingent identity becomes on time and place within this layered inverted triangle.

Types of identities also bear significance when it comes to the point that one should differentiate between them. Block's (2009) listed 7 types of identities, namely Ethnic Identity, Racial Identity, National Identity, Migrant Identity, Gender Identity, Social Class Identity and Language Identity. According to Block's (2009) identity types, professional identity can be counted as a subcategory of a social class identity, which employs a very significant role in an individual's life because of the time spent in a professional setting by socializing and interacting with other people.

Professional Identities of Language Teachers'

Roe (1992) states that language teaching is a career for life, and career development is a life-long process. In this ongoing process, professional identity is a crucial term that affects the way teachers believe, behave and act out to develop professionally. Professional identity is defined by Collin (2009) as one's sense of self that is connected to a particular vocation. Whatever job the person possesses, the feeling of belonging to it and its society holds to the core of the effectiveness of the work outcome and professional satisfaction.

When it comes to teaching as a profession, the outcomes affect not only the individual teachers but also the lives of their students as well. In fact, constructing a professional identity as a teacher starts long before teachers enter the profession. Indeed, they absorb all the experiences, both positive and negative

ones, as they were students themselves as Lortie (1975) defines them as 'apprentices of observation' who spend nearly 13 years observing teachers and participating in classrooms as students, thus, sympathizing with the identities of the teachers is a burdensome transaction as their professional identities began to be shaped long before their induction. Moreover, Varghese et al. (2005) claim that teachers, their beliefs, knowledge and values should be understood to understand the classroom as a whole since it is the teacher who is at play in the classroom. In the light of an extensive review of existing literature in their study, Noi et al. (2016) define four core dimensions that establish teachers' professional identity as follows.

- Teaching beliefs
- Professional socialization
- Career progression
- Professional competence

These core dimensions also constitute the backbone of the particular study, enabling a clear baseline of conceptualizations of confusing terminologies.

There are a few studies about the professional identities of teachers in the literature. For example, Mofrad (2016) investigated teachers' professional identities in Iran and worked with 79 Iranian English language teachers. The results demonstrated that Iranian language teachers viewed themselves as didactical, pedagogical and subject matter experts. In another study, Canrinus (2011) investigated the teachers' professional identities considering the factors such as job satisfaction, occupational commitment and self-efficacy; and found out that teachers are looking for relationship satisfaction and want to improve themselves by receiving help from teaching experts. Hsieh (2015), on the other hand, conducted a study and explored three teachers' professional identity orientations concerning professional experiences, classroom-based experiences and research-grounded discourses. The results of his study displayed that the professional identity construction was portrayed as self-oriented, classroom-oriented, and dialogically oriented for the participant teachers. Likewise, Yuan and Burns (2017) explored two English language teachers' professional identities through action research and revealed that the teachers developed positive and strong professional identities although they experienced several negative contextual factors such as insufficient support from the institution and lack of career development opportunities.

In the Turkish context, the studies about teachers' professional identities are limited in number. To start with, Yavuz (2010) investigated personal and professional experiences that influence the teacher identity of Turkish EFL teachers and found that teacher knowledge, professional development and teacher anxiety affected teachers' identities. Balban (2015) studied teacher identity formations of three novice teachers and uncovered that various elements such as students, workload, assessment and professional development opportunities played a role in their perception of teacher identities. In addition, Ölmez (2016) explored Turkish EFL instructors' perceptions of their professional identities. The results of the study demonstrated that the instructors had highly developed professional identities. Also, Dikilitaş and Yaylı (2018) conducted a study to find out the professional identities of teachers. The results suggested 4 dimensions of teacher identities, which were sensitive teacher, active seeker of informed practice, self-reflector and empathy builder and collaborator.

Method

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were utilized to ensure triangulation. It is conducted in the fall semester of the 2018-2019 academic year with 15 EFL lecturers who were selected purposively as participants. Some of the participants have started taking Ph.D. lessons while others have already finished their Ph.D. degrees. They have at least 3 years of experience. Table 1 shows the demographic distributions of the participants.

Table 1. *Demographic Distribution of the Participants*

	Gender		Ph.D. Degrees		
	Female	Male	In progress	Finished	TOTAL
N	11	4	10	5	15
f	73.3%	26.6%	66.6%	33.3%	100%

As it is presented in Table 1, most of the participants were female (73,3%) and continue their professional development by taking Ph.D. lessons (66,6%). On the other hand, Table 2 below illustrates the age ranges of participants.

Table 2. *Age Distribution of the Participants*

	25- 30	30- 35	35-40	TOTAL
N	6	5	4	15
f	40%	33.3%	26.6%	100%

It is evident from the table that the majority of the participants are between 25-30 years old; nevertheless, the age distribution of the participant EFL instructors appeared to be similar as seen in Table 2.

The participants of the study have different years of experiences as presented in Table 3 below

Table 3. *Experience Distribution of the Participants*

	3- 5	6- 8	10- 12	18	TOTAL
N	3	7	3	2	15
f	20%	46.6%	20%	13.3%	100%

As may be seen in Table 3, the majority of the participants have work experience between 6 and 8 years. The group includes both novice teachers and experienced ones with 18 years of experience.

Data Collection Tools

As a quantitative data collection tool, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire with 40 items adapted from Noi et al. (2016) was utilized to reveal EFL lecturers' professional identities based on those aspects; (1) teaching beliefs, (2) professional socialization, (3) career progression and (4) professional competence. The first part of the questionnaire, which dealt with teaching beliefs, consisted of 10 items while the second part dealing with professional socialization had 7 items. The third part of the questionnaire had 8 items emphasizing career progression, and the last part focusing on professional competence had 15 items. The items of the questionnaire demonstrated positive reliability (std. alpha> .77) as a result of the pilot study, which was conducted with 9 participants who were excluded from the study later on.

To sustain the quantitative data acquired via the questionnaire, Twenty Statements Test (TST) by Kuhn and McPharland (1954) was used, and the obtained data were examined by using a categorical-content analysis strategy. TST protocol has widely been used to describe the content of the self. The concept is easy to use and provides rich data, and therefore many studies utilized the concept (Carpenter & Meade-Pruit, 2008). Seemingly, to help teachers to develop their professional identity, Korthagen (2004)

emphasizes the importance of asking questions to themselves such as 'Who am I?', 'What kind of teacher do I want to be?', and 'How do I see my role as a teacher?'. Thus, in the TST protocol, participants answer the 'Who am I?' question with 20 statements in a free writing style. Then their statements were coded and tabulated into four categories (A, B, C, D) by the researcher according to TST protocol. Alpyay and Alpyay (2011) identified that while statements about physical characteristics such as age, home location, etc., belong to Category A, identifications of the self concerning social groupings (interpersonal) and norms belong to Category B. On the other hand, reference or implication to a specific pattern of behaviors such as attitudes, values, and needs belong to Category C, and the self-identifications of vague and abstract concepts belong to Category D.

The researcher applied different methods to collect the intended data for the study. Research questions and data collection tools are given in Table 4 below.

Table 4. *Research Questions and Data Collection Tools*

Research Questions	Data Collection Tools
1. What do Turkish EFL lecturers think about their professional identity in terms of teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression and professional competence?	The Questionnaire
2. How do Turkish EFL lecturers describe themselves by answering the question of 'Who am I?' within TST protocol?	Twenty Statement Test Protocol

As it is shown in Table 4, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire with 40 items and the TST protocol were implemented to get the intended data to provide the study with a clear ending.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure had some stages in itself. Firstly, participant teachers were informed about the study to have their consent to take part in it. Then, questionnaires were filled by the participants. At the next step, the participants were given a blank page to describe themselves as an answer to the 'Who am I?' question. They were asked to write twenty statements about themselves anonymously. At last, the researcher kept them to analyze altogether.

Data Analysis

For analysis of the questionnaire, the descriptive analyses were done using SPSS 22 Statistical Package, and mean, and standard deviation scores about each part of the questionnaire were provided. To ensure the triangulation of the study, the collected data via the TST protocol were analyzed descriptively by the researcher. All of the 280 statements provided by the participants were categorized following four dimensions of TST protocol.

Findings

Findings of the First Research Question

Teaching Beliefs

The first chapter of the questionnaire was utilized to find out the teaching beliefs of participant EFL instructors, and it includes 10 items with a 5 Likert Scale. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 22, and Table 5 demonstrates the findings of the first chapter of the questionnaire.

Table 5. *Descriptive Statistics of Teaching Beliefs*

ITEMS	Mean	Std. D
Q1. A good teacher is one who provides an environment in which students feel safe to explore and learn.	4,93	0,25
Q2. A good teacher should encourage active participation from his/her students.	4,93	0,25
Q3. Teaching is about providing an environment in which students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning.	4,60	0,50
Q4. A good teacher is one who recognizes the learning needs of his/her students.	4,80	0,41
Q5. A good teacher should have a genuine interest in their students' well-being.	4,46	0,51
Q6. A good teacher is one who can motivate students to learn.	4,73	0,45
Q7. A good teacher has to be a subject matter expert.	3,93	0,96
Q8. A good education should prepare students for lifelong learning.	4,93	0,25
Q9. A good education should prepare students for life.	4,33	0,61
Q10. Teachers must use technology to enable students to learn effectively.	4,13	0,74

Being a provider for students to have a safe environment to learn (4,93), encouraging them to participate (4,93) and preparing them for life-long learning (4,93) are the strongest beliefs that teachers have according to Table 5. On the other hand, a good teacher's being an expert on a subject matter has the lowest score mean (3,93) among the other items. Nevertheless, general scores appear high in this chapter of the questionnaire which means teachers have strong beliefs about the mentioned characteristics of teaching. These beliefs are said to direct teachers' actions and their perception of themselves in their function as teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Therefore, it is possible to predict that the EFL lecturers who participated in the study tend to direct their teachings in the light of these strong beliefs.

Professional Socialization

The second chapter of the questionnaire was applied to unearth the professional socialization of participant EFL instructors, and it includes 7 items with a 5 Likert Scale. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 22, and Table 6 demonstrates the findings of the second chapter of the questionnaire.

Table 6. *Descriptive Statistics of Professional Socialization*

ITEMS	Mean	Std. D
Q1. I can identify positively with members of the teaching profession.	4,00	0,92
Q2. Being a member of the teaching profession is important to me.	4,26	0,59
Q3. I share new teaching ideas/knowledge with colleagues.	4,13	0,99
Q4. I work collaboratively with my colleagues.	4,13	1,12
Q5. I participate in professional development/training courses/conferences within and outside my institution.	4,33	0,48
Q6. I need to learn from other professional educators within and outside my institution.	4,46	0,83
Q7. Staying connected with the industry I previously worked in is important in supporting my professionalism as an educator.	4,00	1,06

It is clear from Table 6 that the general scores of the second chapter are comparatively high which means that the participants agree with the statements to a great extent. The highest score (4,46) says that it is essential for EFL lecturers to learn from other educators within and outside their institutions. The statement that got the second-highest score (4,33) reveals that it is crucial for EFL lecturers to participate in professional development/training courses/conferences within and outside their institutions. These

findings are promising because of the sense of collaboration and professional socialization in EFL lecturers maintain throughout their careers. It is important to remember that teachers' professional identity can simply be affected by personal, social and cognitive responses such that the formation of professional identity occurs within interpersonal communication (Flores & Day, 2006). Similarly, it is rational to think that the professional identity of teachers depends on the perception and understanding of the wider professional community (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2004). By participating in professional development/training courses/conferences, the professional identities of EFL lecturers may co-construct themselves within a wider professional community.

Career Progression

The third chapter of the questionnaire was used to find out the career progression of EFL instructors, and it includes 8 items with a 5 Likert Scale. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 22, and Table 7 demonstrates the findings of the third chapter of the questionnaire.

Table 7. *Descriptive Statistics of Career Progression*

ITEMS	Mean	Std. D
Q1. I am proud to be a teacher.	4,46	0,83
Q2. Pursuing a career in education is important to me.	4,66	0,48
Q3. I am given job assignments that help me in my development as a teacher in my institution.	3,20	1,08
Q4. I have a clear vision of how to become a teaching professional in my institution.	3,80	1,01
Q5. There is a clear career track for teachers in my institution.	3,00	1,19
Q6. I am clear about the steps to achieve career progression in this institution.	3,53	1,06
Q7. My job has a high professional status.	3,86	0,74
Q8. My job as a teacher is well respected by society at large.	3,60	1,18

It is evident from the findings of the third chapter that EFL lecturers are proud to be teachers (4,46), and they need to pursue a career (4,66) in education. On the other hand, the lowest mean score (3,00) reveals the fact that there are some organizational problems in achieving a clear career track for EFL instructors. Organizations must provide clear career tracks since a clear career path or structure can provide the teachers with a clearer vision and systematic progression for higher quality performance (Day & Gu, 2007). Organizational support holds great importance in sustaining commitment and effectiveness over a career.

Professional Competence

The fourth chapter of the questionnaire was utilized to find out the professional competencies of EFL instructors, and it includes 15 items with a 5 Likert Scale. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 22, and Table 8 demonstrates the findings of the fourth chapter of the questionnaire.

Table 8. *Descriptive Statistics of Professional Competence*

ITEMS	Mean	Std. D
Q1. I have sufficient knowledge about my teaching subject.	4,46	0,63
Q2. I select appropriate teaching approaches to guide my students' learning.	4,40	0,63
Q3. I use appropriate technologies (e.g., multimedia resources, games, and simulation) to enhance my students' learning.	4,20	0,56

Q4. I facilitate my students' learning through the use of technology.	4,13	0,63
Q5. I can facilitate my students to collaborate using technology.	3,73	1,03
Q6. I can make active contributions to curriculum decisions.	3,66	1,17
Q7. I can foster a conducive learning environment for my students.	4,20	0,86
Q8. I can help my students apply what they have learned to real-life situations	3,46	0,91
Q9. I can motivate my students in their learning.	4,26	0,59
Q10. I can make active contributions to assessment decisions.	3,80	1,14
Q11. I use assessment results to improve my students' learning.	4,00	1,06
Q12. I support the diverse learning needs of my students.	4,20	0,67
Q13. I build rapport with my students.	4,33	0,97
Q14. I mentor my students.	4,73	0,45
Q15. I provide career guidance to my students.	4,60	0,5

It is evident from Table 8 that EFL lecturers perceive themselves as having sufficient knowledge about the teaching subject. Among the highest scores, being a mentor (4,73) and career guide (4,60) are the prominent roles they mentioned. Besides, the participant instructors think that they have sufficient knowledge about the target subject (4,46) and guide their students by selecting appropriate teaching approaches (4,40). These roles play crucial parts in professional identities. As it is stated by Hagger & McIntyre (2006), a teacher's professional identity is closely linked with the role of the teacher in the classroom as well as directly linked with the 'craft' of teaching, that is, the teacher's competence in his or her professional knowledge and skills. The subject matter and curriculum goals, teaching and students' improvement in a social context are indispensable parts of the teaching profession, and they all affect teacher identity.

Findings of the Second Research Question

To get a deep understanding of EFL lecturers' professional identities, the TST protocol by Kuhn and McPharland (1954), which has widely been used to describe the content of self, was used to collect data. The concept is easy to use and provides rich data, and therefore many studies utilized the concept (Carpenter & Meade-Pruit, 2008). General findings were summarized in Table 9 as follows;

Table 9. *Total Number of the Categories*

Categories	Number	Frequencies
A (physical)	2	0.7
B (social)	69	24.6
C (reflective)	201	71.7
D (oceanic)	8	2.8
TOTAL	280	100%

Among the 280 statements, the overwhelming majority of EFL lecturers used statements that belong to the C category which includes reflective characteristics (71.7%). It is followed by social statements within the B category (24.6%). From the findings of TST, it may be probable to say that EFL lecturers do not generally prefer the physical and oceanic sides of their identities while they were describing themselves. The findings presented on this table would be plausible because all participants continue their professional development with Ph.D. degrees.

Besides, category B and Category C were further analyzed to find out whether the statements were positive or negative. The findings are illustrated in Table 10 as follows.

Table 10. *Positive and Negative Statements in Category B and Category C*

Categories	Positive		Negative	
	N	**f**	**N**	**f**
B	62	89.8%	7	10.1%
C	152	75.6%	49	24.3%

It can be seen from Table 10 that the majority of the participants' statements were positive. In category B, 89%, and in category C, 75% of the statements were positive. It means that the participants mostly prefer reflecting on themselves positively. Here are some examples of positive and negative statements of one of the EFL lecturers that belong to these categories as below.

Extract 1.

Category B (social): 'I'm good at teamwork.' (positive)

        'I'm not humorous.' (negative)

Category C (reflective): 'I want to be a better teacher.' (positive)

         'I feel insecure when I'm not prepared for a lesson.' (negative)

Reflective statements had the highest percentages among all the categories. Within reflective statements, personal values and attitudes, as seen in Extract 1, appear to a large extent. Furthermore, among reflective statements, the ones that EFL lecturers feel less valuable and demotivated were the statements that they mentioned unfairness in their institutes. When there is unfairness, they emphasize they cannot stand the situation.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study aimed to explore EFL lecturers' professional identities considering teaching beliefs, professional socialization, career progression and professional competence dimensions. Moreover, the study tried to uncover the lecturers' identities within the TST protocol. The findings of the study exposed some distinguished evidence about the professional identities of EFL instructors.

The results of the study revealed that EFL lecturers have strong teaching beliefs and a great extent of eagerness toward career progression. They are proud to be teachers, and it is vital for them to pursue a career in education. They are also in the opinion that their job has a high professional status. This outcome of the study has been supported by Mofrad (2006) who uncovered that teachers value their career development and feel privileged to be teachers. Another study that supports this outcome is the one conducted by Kazımlar (2019) that illustrated that language teachers have highly developed professional identities.

The study also unearthed that when EFL lecturers describe their professional identities, they mostly labeled themselves by using reflective characteristics such as their attitudes, values, and needs. They also referred to their social traits such as their ability to socialize, work in collaboration and their social roles in the teaching community. This outcome of the study is supported by the one conducted by Farrell and Mom (2015), in which the researchers found that the teachers generally refer to their reflective characteristics when describing themselves as a teacher.

The study also demonstrated that the majority of the EFL lecturers perceive themselves as mentors and facilitators. They think that being a provider for students to have a safe environment to learn, encouraging them to participate and preparing them for life-long learning are the duties of teachers in the education process. The conclusion above agrees with the study of Sayar (2014), in which the researcher found out that the teachers act as mentors and nurturers regarding instructors' professional identities.

It is also uncovered by the study that EFL lecturers have higher rates of professional socialization as they want to take part in educational conferences and receive help from other professional educators within and outside their institutions as they give importance to be a member of the teaching profession. This finding of the study is in agreement with Canrinus's (2011) findings that showed that teachers are looking for relationship satisfaction and want to improve themselves by receiving help from professionals.

Another outcome of the study is that EFL lecturers are not satisfied with the career development opportunities provided by their institutions and need more support from the administrators. This outcome of the study goes parallel with the one conducted by Yuan and Burns (2017) that demonstrated that the teachers have positive and robust professional identities even though they experienced several negative contextual factors such as insufficient support from the institution and lack of career development opportunities.

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