Exploring the Possible-Selves of Turkish Preservice Teachers

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Abstract: Teacher candidates have to go through to a variety of processes, phases and transformations to become a teacher. Examining new teacher identity can be considered as an important step to develop more effective teacher training programmes, and identity development of a teacher is related to understanding the notion of 'self' (Beauchamp &Thomas, 2009).This study investigates the possible-selves of preservice teachers in relation to the concept of self-knowledge. The main purpose of the study is to investigate the possible selves of senior students who expect to become teachers in the near feature. A six-point Likert type scale was applied to undergraduate students attending primary school teaching, science teaching and English language teaching programmes to measure their expected and feared possible-selves about their first year of teaching. The results of the statistical analyses showed that the preservice primary school and science teachers had higher scores than the EFL preservice teachers regarding the expected possible-selves in the first year of their in-service teaching.

Keywords: possible self, pre-service teacher, EFL

Türk Öğretmen Adaylarının Olası Benliklerinin İncelenmesi

Özet: Öğretmen adayları**,** öğretmen olmak için birçok süreç, aşama ve dönüşümden geçer. Yeni öğretmen kimliğini araştırmanın daha etkili öğretmen yetiştirme programları geliştirmede önemli bir adım olduğu ve öğretmenin kimlik oluşumunun "öz" kavramını anlama ile ilgili olduğu düşünülebilir (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Bu araştırmada öğretmen adaylarının olası benlikleri "kendini tanıma" bağlamında incelenmiştir. Çalışmada, yakın gelecekte öğretmen olacak olan son sınıf öğrencilerinin olası benlik ve korku düzeylerinin ölçülmesi amaçlanmaktadır Sınıf, fen bilgisi ve İngiliz dili eğitimi programlarına kayıtlı üç grup öğrenciye öğretmenliklerinin ilk yılına ilişkin olası umulan ve korkulan olası benliklerini ölçme amacıyla altılı likert ölçeği uygulanmıştır. İstatistiksel analiz sonuçları, sınıf ve fen bilgisi eğitimi programlarına kayıtlı öğrencilerin mesleklerindeki ilk yıla ilişkin benlik düzeylerinin İngiliz dili eğitimi programına kayıtlı öğrencilere göre daha yüksek olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Olası benlik, öğretmen adayı, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce

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INTRODUCTION

Examining new teacher identity is an important step to improve teacher training programmes and identity development of a teacher, which is related to understanding the notion of 'self' (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). One of the important domains of self-knowledge is 'possible selves' which represents individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves are basically cognitive components of hopes, fears, goals and threats, and they are important in that they function as the reinforcers of future behaviour. In other words, they are selves to be approached or avoided, and they provide an evaluative and interpretative context for the current view of self. The Possible-Selves Theory (Markus and Nurius, ibid)provides an established psychological framework that is well suited for studying identity development among new teachers. Hamman et al. (2010) explain the possible selves theory and its relation to teacher identity stating that it is particularly useful in examining the developing teacher identities of student teachers engaged in their final teaching practicum, and newly-graduated teachers during their first year of teaching. For these individuals at varying points during the important phase of transition from student to teacher, the possible-selves theory suggests a theoretical framework for examining future-oriented, identity relevant, goal-directed thinking in the present, and the salience of that thinking for regulating behaviour to reach a future state (p.1349). Dastgoshadeh and Samar (2013:144) contend that contents of teachers' possible selves are in fact their identity goals, that is, their possible selves are the representations of their different compartmentalized but interconnected identities including language, personal, socio-cultural, and professional. The researchers further state that an ascertained number of values, beliefs, expectations, and aspirations are strongly held by the teachers as their core identities.

The relevant literature shows that prospective teachers' possible selves, hopes, expectations and fears have attracted much attention from various scholars, especially since the early 2000s, even though the research about them dates back to the 1990s. Pat (1995), for instance, probed into the typical fears of student teachers who participated in a 13-week course of teaching practice combined with community work, and reported that their fears were related to their ability (1) to negotiate their circumstances; (2) to make the grade; (3) to prevent discontinuity in their classrooms; and (4) not to get lost. Salient issues in student writings included (1) communication and the national curriculum; (2) communication and racial and cultural diversity; (3) sexism, including equal opportunities; (4) urban regeneration; (5) school/community links; (6) crime; (7) finance; (8) paperwork; and (9) "burn-out." Conway and Klark (2003) examined intern teacher development during a two-semester internship program in teaching by focusing on the patterns of interns' evolving concerns and aspirations, and revealed that their concerns and aspirations shifted from those about personal capacity to manage their classrooms to concerns about their personal capacity to grow as a teacher and person, as their

understanding of teaching and all it involves changed. In a comparative study, Williams and Corvo (2005) scrutinized pre-service and in-service teachers' greatest fears and beliefs about school violence through an open-ended survey. The researchers reported significant differences between pre-service and in-service teachers in their rankings of fearful events and the perceived likelihood of these events. To be more specific, they revealed being most afraid of guns or other weapons or other forms of dangerous violence (hostage taking, an outside stranger coming in and threatening their students, and so on). They found that these fears were significantly correlated with the beliefs that these events were likely to happen. Their findings also indicated that pre-service teachers tended to be more concerned about their personal safety and personal failure in a crisis situation, and in-service classroom teachers tended to be more concerned about their students' safety. Çakmak (2008) analysed student teachers' concerns about the teaching process including the teaching profession, teaching methods, planning, instruction, evaluation and classroom management, and found that the concerns or the fears of the student teachers may change when they face the actual classroom atmosphere. She underlined that almost all the student teachers in the study were concerned about classroom management. In a qualitative study by Mars-Butler et al. (2008), three groups of teachers' fears about the first day of school were investigated, and three dominant thematic categories of fears were created based on their responses: (i) perception of self (fears related to academic competency, personal self-control and peer-student acceptance), (ii) perception of the world (issues of classroom control and responsibility), and (iii) fear for the student (emotional and physical safety of the student).

Exploring how stories can serve as a pedagogical strategy in pre-service teacher education, Harkins et al. (2009) concluded that sharing concerns for students facing the complexities of classrooms evoked memories of moments from early teaching years of experienced teachers, which might be helpful alleviating fears of prospective teachers. McGlynn-Stewart (2010) conducted a study with a focus on pre-service teachers' fears about learning and teaching primary mathematics, to understand how to handle them effectively. She basically analysed their response to a new mathematics methods course that is tied to practicum, and her findings revealed the importance of listening closely to their feelings about learning and teaching math, responding with opportunities to re-learn primary math concepts in a collaborative and hands-on environment, and providing opportunities for preservice teachers to experience success with math teaching in primary school settings.

In a longitudinal case study, Werbińska (2016) researched possible selves and autonomous behaviours of two prospective English language teachers, and reported that the anticipation of their future, derived from motivational functions of possible selves and recognized already at the inception of studies, may influence their future professional identity. Shoyer and Leshem (2016) examined the hopes and fears of student teachers, and found that student teachers expressed more hopes than fears.

Bates et al. (2013) studied pre-service math teachers' fears about teaching math, and concluded that teachers possess a variety of fears towards mathematics including having a lack of confidence in their teaching ability, a lack of teaching methods, an inability to engage their students, and a lack of mathematical content knowledge. Megawati (2015) found that EFL pre-service teachers found teaching especially young learnerschallenging.In terms of possible selves of prospective teachers, Hamman etal. (2010, 2013) examined student teachers' and in-service teachers' expected and feared possible selves, and found differences between them especially in some dimensions of feared teacher possible selves. Tavşanlı and Saraç (2016) investigated novice primary school teachers' possible selves and reported differences among prospective primary school teachersin gender and regional factors. Zhang et al. (2016) investigated the professional identity of Chinese pre-service teachers and its correlation with task value belief, intrinsic learning motivation, extrinsic learning motivation, and performance in the education program. They reported correlations among all variables except intrinsic learning motivation and program performance. The findings also indicated that professional identity is positively correlated with task value belief, intrinsic and extrinsic learning motivations, and program performance in a structural equation model (SEM) and that higher extrinsic learning motivation is associated with increased program performance.

In respcet of Turkey context, Demirezen and Özönder (2016) investigated Turkish English instructors' professional self and found that their professional self was very high and there were significant differences related to educational background. Babanoğlu (2017) examined prospective English as a Foreign Language (EFL, henceforth) teachers' feared and expected possible-selves, and concluded that prospective female teachers have higher scores in expected possible-selves than prospective male teachers. In another study, Hong and Greene (2011) investigated possible selves of pre-service teachers in a science education program through open-ended surveys and face-to-face interviews, and came up with six categories of future selves with the most frequent category being for effective/ineffective science teaching. They also reported that fears were articulated by the participants more frequently and that there was not a balance between their hoped-for and feared selves. Concerning the primary influence in shaping their hopes and fears, the researchers concluded that diverse past experiences related to teaching and learning appeared to be more salient factors than science teacher education program. In a similar study, Creţu (2017) explored hopes and fears of Romanian teacher candidates concerning the teaching profession. The findings showed that hopes were expressed by the participants more frequently than fears, and that self-related factors prevailed in the expression of hopes while external factors were reported more often in expressing fears. In their study with pre-service and in-service teachers of different nationalities, Ensor et al. (2017) found that the two groups of teachers significantly differed in defining their roles. The pre-service teachers in their study declared that they needed to develop their technical competences in order to be effective and innovative teachers while the in-service teachers expressed willingness to innovate even though

some of them felt uncomfortable with the technologies that telecollaboration requires. In a similar vein, Sanderson (2003) studied the strategies used by cooperating teachers in alleviating student teachers' concerns and fears related to teaching experience, and found that teachers use a multitude of strategies to calm their student teachers and set them up for a successful student teaching semester. The researcher also reported that cooperating teachers detailed the tasks needed to be accomplished before the beginning of the student teaching semester to ensure a smooth and successful experience.

All in all, the existing literature demonstrates that prospective teachers' feared and expected possible selves have not received much attention from Turkish scholars. In order to close the related research gap, this study is motivated to investigate the possible-selves of prospective teachers in relation to the concept of new teacher identity. It specifically aims to measure three groups of Turkish prospective teachers' possible selves. Research questions are posed as:

- What are the possible selves of preservice teachers in respect of expectations and fears for the first year of their teaching?

- Is there a statistical difference among preservice teachers' possible self scores in respect of their age, gender and major field of study?

- Research design of the study is outlined in the following section.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

Based on the research objectives, descriptive and quantitative research design, which is conducted to estimate population attitudes, attributes or characteristics (Bickman & Rog, 2008), and to describe specific events or situations (Saunders et al., 2009), was employed in this study. By doing so, it was aimed to measure the teacher candidates' possible-selves about their first year in teaching via a likert-type questionnaire.

Participants

As the study was set out to examine pre-service teachers' possible-selves about their future teaching career, participants of the study were selected through the purposive sampling method, which is "a method by which units are selected to be in a sample by a deliberate method that is not random" (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002, p. 511). Accordingly, a total of 179 undergraduate students attending three different teacher training programmes at a state university in Turkey took part in the study: (i), primary school teaching, (ii) science teaching, and (iii) English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. It is noteworthy that the data were collected during the mandatory teaching practicum period. Table 1 shows the demographic features of the participants in concern.

Table 1. Demographic Distribution of the Participants

Demographic variable	Groups	N	%
Gender	Female	142	79,3
	Male	37	20,7
Age	20-21	60	33,5
	22-23	99	55,3
	24 over	20	11,2
Major	Primary school teaching	43	24,0
	Science teaching	46	25,7
	EFL teaching	90	50,3

As illustrated in Table 1, 79,3% of the participants are female and 20,7% are male. The imbalanced distribution of the participants is considered normal as teaching programmes are mostly attended by female rather than male students in most countries, and Turkey is no exception in this sense. Age grouping is between 20-21 (33,5%), 22-23 (55,3%) and 24 and over (11,2%). At the time of the study, 24% of the participants were studying primary school teaching,25,7% science teaching, and50,3% English language teaching. The following section describes the tools employed in the data collection procedure.

Data Collection Tool

Developed by Hamman et al. (2013) and adapted to Turkish by Tatlı-Dalioğlu and Adıgüzel (2015), the New Teacher Possible Selves Questionnaire was used as the data collection tool in this study. The questionnaire consists of two scales as *expected possible selves*and *feared possible selves*. In the expected possible selves section, there are 9 statements in two sub-dimensions about expectations;five items (Items 4, 5,7, 8 and 9) on professionalism including such statements as "Realistically in my first year of teaching I (*strongly expect, expect, partially expect*..) *to be successful in my profession'* or '*to develop classroom management skills*",and four items (Items 1, 2, 3 and 6) on '*learning to teach'* sub-dimension containing statements such as '*to learn something from experienced colleagues*'. The participants were kindly asked to rate these statements for the degree of their expectations. The second scale in the questionnaire includes feared possible selves statements about fears containing three sub-dimensions as loss of control (Items 1, 2 and 3), being an uncaring teacher (Items 4, 5 and 8), and uninspired instruction(Items 6, 7 and 9). In this section, the participants were requested to complete the given statements(e.g. "Realistically in my first year of teaching I (*definitely afraid, afraid, partially afraid,…*) *that I cannot make a good classroom management* or *of being a careless teacher.*

Part 1. Expected possible-selves: 9 items on two sub-dimensions as professionalism andlearning to teach are as follows:

Realistically in my first year I …… (strongly expect, expect, partially expect, partially do not expect, do not expect, strongly do not expect)

1. to learn something from experienced colleagues

2. to make good connections with parents

3. to learn new teaching strategies

4. to be successful in my profession

5. to be fair and consistent to students

6. to benefit from the guidance of experienced colleagues

7. to develop classroom management skills

8. to be prepared and planned

9. to help students develop positive attitudes

Items 1-2-3-6   Learning to teach

Items 4-5-7-8-9 Professionalism

Part 2. Feared possible-selves: 9 items on three sub-dimensions: Loss of control, uninspired teaching and being an uncaring teacher, are as follows:

Realistically in my first year I …… (definitely afraid, afraid, partially afraid, partially unafraid, unafraid , strongly unafraid)

1. that I cannot make a good classroom management plan

2. that I cannot be successful in teaching the context of my lesson

3. that I lose the control of the classroom

4. of being a careless teacher

5. that I cannot be a positive role model for my students

6. of being an insufficient teacher who keeps the students busy to fill the lesson time

7. of being a boring teacher

8. of being unfair to students

9. of teaching the subjects in a boring way

Items 1-2-3 loss of control

Items 4-5-8 being an uncaring teacher

The data were gathered through the questionnaire from participants who were requested the rate each item according to six degrees of Likert type. The following section provides information about the data analysis.

Data Analysis

The New Teacher Possible Selves Questionnaire, of which reliability and validity analyses was measured and approved by Tatlı-Dalioğlu&Adıgüzel (2015), was utilized as data collection tool in this study. The questionnaires collected from prospective teachers were analysed via SPSS 15.0for quantitative interpretation. Forgender comparison, the independent samples t- test was used whereas the ANOVA test was performed for age and department comparison. Additionally, the participants' expected and feared possible self scores were compared by the Pearson correlation coefficient test. The analysis results are provided and discussed in the subsequent section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the first instance, descriptive statistics of expected and feared possible selves were ascertained to see the general level of student teachers' expectations and fears. Table 2 presents the related scores obtained from the preservice teachers' responses to the questionnaire items.

Table 2 Possible-selves Scores

Scale and Sub-dimensions	M	sd	skewness
Professionalism	5,62	0,46	-0,89*
Learning to teach	5,28	0,71	-0,38*
EXPECTED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	5,47	0,53	-0,57*
Uninspired instruction	2,54	1,57	0,96
Loss of control	3,10	1,42	0,32
Being an uncaring teacher	2,44	1,45	0,94
FEARED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	2,69	1,35	0,84

* After logarithmic conversion $(-1*\lg_{10}(7\text{-score}))$

According to the results of the expected new teacher possible selves scale(5,62±0,46) and its sub-dimensions 'professionalism' (5,28±0,71) and 'learning to teach' (5,47±0,53), the scores are mostly at 'totally expected' level, which indicates that all preservice teachers have high levels of expectations about the first year of teaching. The total scores of questionnaire are:6-1=5/6=0,83; 1-1,83: *strongly do not expect*, 1,84-2,67: *do not expect*; 2,68-3,5: *partially do not expect*; 3,6-4,33: *partially expect*; 4,34-5,16: *expect*; 5,17-6,00: *strongly expect*.

Feared new teacher possible-self scores (2,69±1,35), and its sub-dimension 'loss of control' (3,10±1,42) were found at '*partially unafraid*' level. Other sub-dimensions 'uninspired instruction'(2,54±1,57), and 'being an uncaring teacher' (2,44±1,45) revealed at 'unafraid' levels. These findings could be interpretedas that preservice teachers' general possible-selves of fears about

their first year of teaching profession are between unafraid-partially unafraid levels regardless of their age, gender and major field of study.

The general scores of the participants were compared in respect of genderby utilizing the independent samples t-test, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3.T-test Results of the Possible-selves Scores Compared by Gender

Scale and sub-dimensions	Gender	n	Mean	sd	t	p
Professionalism	Female	142	5,62	0,47	0,23	0,822
	Male	37	5,62	0,39		
Learning to teach	Female	142	5,29	0,73	0,86	0,391
	Male	37	5,22	0,64		
EXPECTED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	Female	142	5,47	0,54	0,58	0,564
	Male	37	5,44	0,47		
Uninspired instruction	Female	142	2,53	1,56	-0,13	0,899
	Male	37	2,57	1,67		
Loss of control	Female	142	3,20	1,40	1,93	0,055
	Male	37	2,70	1,43		
Being an uncaring teacher	Female	142	2,46	1,43	0,30	0,767
	Male	37	2,38	1,52		
FEARED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	Female	142	2,73	1,33	0,73	0,468
	Male	37	2,55	1,43		

Results of the independent samples t-test that there is no significant difference between the female and male participants in respect of the expected and feared new teacher possible-selves($p>0,05$).Age groups of the participants were also compared in respect of the possible-selves scores through ANOVA test, as shown in Table 4:

Table 4. ANOVA Test Results of the Possible-selves Scores Compared by Age

Scale and sub-dimensions	Age groups	n	Mean	sd	F	p	Significance
Professionalism	20-21 age	60	5,57	0,48	1,70	0,185	
	22-23 age	99	5,67	0,44			
	24 +over	20	5,53	0,49			
Learning to teach	20-21 age	60	5,23	0,77	2,44	0,090	
	22-23 age	99	5,37	0,66			
	24 +over	20	5,01	0,73			
EXPECTED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	20-21 age	60	5,41	0,55	2,47	0,088	
	22-23 age	99	5,54	0,50			
	24 + over	20	5,30	0,54			
Uninspired instruction Loss of control	20-21 age	60	2,47	1,56	0,51	0,605	
	22-23 age	99	2,52	1,59			

	24 + over	20	2,87	1,59			
Being an uncaring teacher	20-21 age	60	3,10	1,49	0,04	0,959	
	22-23 age	99	3,12	1,40			
	24 +over	20	3,02	1,31			
Uninspired instruction	20-21 age	60	2,54	1,49	0,81	0,448	
	22-23 age	99	2,33	1,41			
	24 +over	20	2,72	1,51			
FEARED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	20-21 age	60	2,70	1,37	0,21	0,812	
	22-23 age	99	2,65	1,35			
	24 + over	20	2,87	1,37			

According to the ANOVA test results, no statistically significant difference was found among preservice teachers' expected and feared possible-selves scores regarding their age group (p>0,05). ANOVA test was applied to measure a possibility of significance among preservice teachers in respect of their major study of fields. The related test results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Possible-self Scores by Major Field of Study

Scale and sub-dimensions	Dept.	n	Mean	sd	F	p	significance
Professionalism	A-Primary school	43	5,67	0,42	0,68	0,508	
	B-Science	46	5,63	0,50			
	C-EFL	90	5,59	0,46			
Learning to teach	A-Primary school	43	5,45	0,60	9,08	0,000	A>C
	B-Science	46	5,53	0,60			B>C
	C- EFL	90	5,07	0,76			
EXPECTED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	A-Primary school	43	5,57	0,47	4,99	0,008	A>C
	B-Science	46	5,58	0,51			B>C
	C- EFL	90	5,36	0,54			
Uninspired instruction	A-Primary school	43	2,50	1,57	0,19	0,830	
	B-Science	46	2,44	1,54			
	C- EFL	90	2,61	1,61			
Loss of control	A-Primary school	43	3,07	1,54	0,35	0,708	
	B-Science	46	2,97	1,43			
	C- EFL	90	3,18	1,36			
Being an uncaring teacher	A-Primary school	43	2,19	1,47	0,83	0,440	
	B-Science	46	2,52	1,59			
	C- EFL	90	2,52	1,36			
FEARED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE	A-Primary school	43	2,59	1,42	0,30	0,739	
	B-Science	46	2,64	1,46			
	C- EFL	90	2,77	1,27			

As shown in Table 5, expected possible-selves scores (F=4,99; p<0,05) and its sub-dimension 'learning to teach' (F=9,08; p<0,05) scores indicated significant differences among prospective

teachers with respect to their major field of study. According to LSD post hoc test results, which was applied to find out which group(s)differ from others, the possible selves scores of preservice primary school teachers' (5,57±0,47) and preservice science teachers' (5,58±0,51)were found significantly higher than those of the preservice EFL teachers (5,36±0,54). In addition, 'learning to teach' sub-dimension of expected possible-self scores of the preservice primary school teachers (5,45±0,60) and preservice science teachers (5,53±0,60) were also measured as significantly higher than those ofthe preservice EFL teachers (5,07±0,76). On the other hand, no statistical significance was found among the groups in terms of their feared possible-selves scores (p>0,05).

Lastly, expected and feared new teacher possible-self scores of the groups were analysed via the Pearson correlation coefficient to test whether there is any difference between the two scale scores of participants. The test results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Preservice Teachers' Expected and Feared Possible-self Scores

Scale and sub-dimensions	2	3	4	5	6	7
1-Professionalism	0,67**	0,88**	0,01	-0,08	-0,05	-0,04
2-Learning to teach		0,94**	-0,02	-0,12	-0,05	-0,07
3- EXPECTED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE			-0,01	-0,12	-0,06	-0,07	-0,01
4- Uninspired instruction				0,67**	0,86**	0,93**
5- Loss of control					0,71**	0,86**
6-Being an uncaring teacher						0,94**
7- FEARED NEW TEACHER POSSIBLE SELVES SCALE						

* p<0,005   ** p<0,01

The results indicate no significant difference between the expected and feared possible-selves scores of theparticipants (p>0,05). The following section summarizes the findings, offers practical implications for teacher training and professional development, outlines the limitations of the current research and is concluded with a couple of suggestions for further research directions.

CONCLUSION

In new teacher identity development research, "possible-selves" has an important role that provides both support for forming future-oriented thoughts in the early development of teacher identity, and assists self-concepts that may be beneficial to achieve identity-relevant teacher goals (Hamman, e al., ibid). Along these lines, examining possible-selves is considered a significant framework to undercover and/or construct student teachers/teacher candidates' self-concepts about their professional identity, and to give the opportunity to overcome the weaknesses and consolidating the strengths of their present-to-future beliefs on their profession. In this study, the possible-selves theory (Markus & Nurius, ibid) and its relation to new teacher identity was investigated in respect of

three different majors attended by preservice teachers (primary school teaching, science teaching and EFL teaching). In order to seek answers to the research questions, a questionnaire was administered to three groups of preservice teachers enrolled in these programmes at two state universities in Turkey. Their responses to the Likert-type items, which were designed to measure new teacher possible-selves of their expectations and fears about beginning of their teaching profession, were quantitatively analysed through statistical programmes.

The first research question was intended to reveal their possible-selves, and the related results showed that their expectations for the first year of teaching are at the '*totally expected*' level, which means thattheir expectations are positive about the statements in 'professionalism' and 'learning to teach' sub-dimensions of the expected possible-selves. Furthermore, their feared possible-self scores are between the 'unafraid' in 'loss of control' and 'partially unafraid' levels at 'being an uncaring teacher' and 'uninspired instruction' sub-dimensions of the feared possible-selves. These findings are in line with those reported in Shoyer and Leshem (2016) and Creţu (2017) while partially contradicting with those of Hong and Greene (2011).

The second research question examined the possibility of a significant difference among prospective teachers' possible-selves scores in terms of their age, gender and major field of study. According to the results, there is no significant difference among the participants' possible-self scores in terms ofgender, which is inconsistent with Tavşanlı and Saraç (2016), and in terms of age (expected dimension), partly conflicting with Williams and Corvo (2005), McGlynn-Stewart (2010) and Ensor et al. (2017). They, on the other hand, significantly differed in their major. That is, the preservice science and primary school teachers displayed significantly higher expectations from their future initial teaching experience than their EFL colleagues, which confirms Megawati (2015). This particular finding might stem from some field-specific reasons from the perspective of the students attending English language teaching programmes. For example, the challenging nature of language teaching can be a problematic issue for the non-native language teachers. In the same vein, Tüm and Kunt (2013) emphasize that EFL student teachers may have language anxiety which may have negative effects on the application of grammar rules and the practice of speaking skills. Likewise, Ortaçtepe (2015) points out that teacher identity plays an important role especially for non-native language teachers, who already have to juggle at least three identities (L2 user, L2 learner, and L2 teacher). Moreover, the prospective EFL teachers are taught by following a mainly theory-based pre-service EFL teacher education programme, and they have to strive further by learning activities to fill the instructional gaps when they start their classroom practice as novice teachers (Yazan, 2016).

Novice teachers have uncertainties about what it means to be a teacher, and from a supportive perspective, the mentor's purpose is to help the novice teacher move past these fears (Butler & Cuence, 2012). In a similar vein, Sanderson (2003) proposes that sharing ideas and strategies that are

being utilized in the classroom may assist cooperating teachers by providing concrete ways to help their student teachers, and that a forum might be created to dispense thoughts and ideas relative to supporting student teachers. They further state that this forum could support the interchange of valuable knowledge and expertise they provide to their pre-service teachers to make their student teaching experiences less stressful and more rewarding (p. 12). Likewise, Adu and Abongdia (2015) suggest that teaching practice is an important component for teacher education curriculum that evokes different emotions in students; so, more needs to be learnt about the students' and host teachers' experiences for future reference when preparing students for teaching practice. More specifically, they maintain that prospective teachers' school experience may assist in the structuring of the curriculum so that issues such as stress and stressors during it can be addressed and conceptualized in the programme. Furthermore, they advocate that the host teachers need to learn the student teachers' fears, challenges and general feelings about their school experience so that they can minimise such negative emotions. In the light of the existing literature and the abovementioned findings of this study, some pedagogical suggestions (mentioned in summary section below) may be made for EFL teacher education programmes in respect of assisting prospective EFL teachers during their practicum period to overcome such problems as language anxiety, and providing instructional support to help them undergo a more self-confidently and prepared practicing language teaching in their first year of teaching.

This study is limited to a certain number of participants from three departments of faculty of educationattwo state universities in Turkey. Future research may have a higher number of participants and a higher variety of teaching programmes to achieve more fruitful findings. Besides, the tool used in this study can be developed by adding open-ended questions to obtain deeper insights about the 'self-knowledge' of preservice teachers, in their own words.

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