

Exploring Iranian Pre-Service English Language Teachers' Professional Identity through Sociocultural Lens

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to explore the process of professional identity construction of 49 male and female pre-service English language teachers of Isfahan Farhangian university Through a Vygotskian sociocultural lens. Since the construction of identity can be considered both personally and socially (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004), this study took a social constructivism and Vygotskian sociocultural approach as its theoretical basis. This mixed method study was conducted through reflective journals, semi-structured interviews, and a five items Likert-type questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS ver.19 and ANOVA for comparing the means of the quantitative data. Thematic analysis was used for analyzing the qualitative data. The results showed that the construction of student-teachers' professional identity is a dynamic and unstable process which is affected by different factors such as personal and sociocultural factors, self-image, learning environment, and practicum experiences and mentor teachers. The results of the current study can be used by educational policy makers, teacher educators, and evaluators for making better decisions about teachers to make educational progress.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, professional identity, practicum, mentor teachers

1. Introduction

The complex process of becoming a teacher requires pre-service teachers to have a clear image of themselves, and sense of ownership of emerging professional identity. They need to be equipped with necessary knowledge from teacher education programs to apply them in workplace in future (Bennet, 2013, p.55). Teacher identity as tacitly constructing and reconstructing the concept of sense of who they are and what they do involves teachers' self- image, attitudes, beliefs, and expectations of them as being a teacher which is continuously shaped through individual experience in social context (Beijaard et al., 2004; Salehizadeh et al., 2020).

The way teachers view themselves and the way this view affects their actions in the classroom and the way they project their future which affect their relations and interactions with their students, colleagues and other related people in their profession is specified in the theory of teacher identity (Penington, 2015, p.17). Lack of comprehensive definition of identity, and the foci of teacher education on teacher knowledge and teacher cognition (Beijaard et al., 2004), persuade the researchers to consider teachers' identity as integral part of teacher education. Moreover, lack of pre-service teachers' professional identity development exploration in Iran (Abednia, 2012; Zainadiny Mofrad, 2016) compelled this research to shed light on the conceptualization and understanding of pre service teachers' professional identity development during their practicum.

This paper strived to reports professional identity of Iranian pre-service teachers, and how they perceive themselves as teachers now and the teachers they aspire to become in future. It inferred the themes from their beliefs, expectations, and attitudes as teachers at the very beginning of their career journey and the factors contributing to these perceptions. It seems that scrutinizing emerging identity of pre-service teachers' from the beginning of their teacher education journey helps teacher educators to prepare student- teachers for their teaching career. Since pre-service teachers want to thrive on their effectiveness in teacher identity development, it seems that mentor teachers may facilitate the prospect professional prosperity of such teachers.

Despite different studies related to teacher professional identity construction, few studies can be found related to the Iranian pre-service teachers' professional identity construction. This exploratory study was an attempt to partially fill the gap; it addressed the following research questions:

1. How the identity of pre-service teachers is shaped before and after their acceptance in teaching education program?
2. How does the pre-service teachers' professional identity shape during their professional practice?
3. What is the connection between pre-service teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices?
4. What are influencing factors contributing the professional identity construction of pre-service teachers?
5. What is the impact of mentor teachers on student-teachers' professional goals for the future?
6. Is there any difference between male and female pre-service teachers' professional identity?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Identity

Identity definition as a social practice might date back to the 1960s, when stages of identity such as ego identity, identity crisis, and identity group were introduced by Erikson (1968). However, interaction between identity and SLA was opened up and discussed seriously after the publication of Firth and Wagner in 1997 (Block, 2007). The construct of identity relates to the sense of people about themselves, or who they are (Luk, 2008, p. 121). By shifting the focus of attention from individual to surrounding society in which the individual lives, the meaning of identity has also been changed (Farrell, 2017). Despite the contrary definition of teacher identity, the more generalized view is that identity is relational, dynamic, and often nonfictional, multifaceted and multidimensional which is constructed cognitively, emotionally, socially, culturally, and politically (Barkhuizen, 2017; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Gee et al., 2015; Malmir & Mohammadi, 2018).

Considering identity as a dynamic entity provokes contribution of different factors which shape and reshape the identity or self- image of teachers at present and in future (Izadnia, 2013, 2015, 2016), so time and space shift the nature of identity as a multifaceted construct. Research explorations consider factors such as collaboration and interaction with significant others, guided teaching relationships, paired placement of pre-service teachers, personal biographies, as well as individual contexts past memories and prior related experiences, reflective activities, context in which the teacher learn how to teach and teaching practicum as determining factors in shaping professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beck & Kosnik, 2000; Martel & Wang, 2014; Rodgers, 2011). In the same vein, Barkhuizen (2017) stated that different factors such as cognitive, emotional, and social factors are engaged in the identity construction of language teachers. Teacher identity is the matter of being and doing. It is the process of feeling and imaging and contesting and resisting which are accepted or rejected by self and others. Such an identity may be core or peripheral. This hybrid multiple and dynamic affair is personal or professional, is either foregrounded or back grounded. He furthered that teacher identity is a matter of change, either in a short time or over time under the effect of interaction with others such as learners, educators, administrators, etc.

Conceptualization of Pennington (2015) about identity construction relates to the mental image of teachers about “being a teacher” which guide teachers to use specific practices and acts of teacher identity to enact the way they aim. He furthered that the identity a teacher projects and develops for future reflects the image of the teacher he or she aspires to be. It will affect the teacher’s classroom roles and instructions which relates to the content and methods to be chosen and emphasized. Elaborating further, he recognized that teacher’s self- image can affect the positions of the teacher in his or her interactions and relationships with educational stakeholders such as students, colleagues, and larger teaching professionals.

Taking into account different researchers’ definition of identity such as Pennington’s (2015), and Barkhuizen’s (2017), this study tries to consider pre-service English teachers’ identity with regard to their

present and future professional self- image which is distinct in their practical behavior during their practicum, as well as their relation with others including their mentor teachers, and their classmates as their prospect colleagues who provide them a position for developing their professional identity. According to Beauchamp and Thomas (2011) as soon as teachers enter the school communities, from the very begging of their teaching and professional practice, they experience an identity shift.

2.2. Mentors' Role and Teacher Identity

Teacher education is a very challenging and an interesting process which has different stages and components. According to Sahargard and Mansourzadeh (2016) mentorship is one of crucial stage of teacher education. They asserted that mentor teachers' feedbacks and supportive behavior during practicum phase can influence student teachers' professional identity.

Different studies elucidated the pre-service teachers and their mentor teachers' relationship. For example, Izadnia (2016) worked on the interconnection of pre-service teachers and mentor teachers generally, without considering the concept of teacher identity. She concluded that although mentor teachers highly appreciated the importance of feedback and fostering positive relationship, their student teachers actually felt unsupported. She added that mentor teachers appeared to act against their espoused theories. She ascribed the possible reason for such mismatch and mentees' dissatisfaction relates to different interpretation of their roles. She suggested that mentor teachers' revisiting their views to meet the needs of their mentees through an open dialogue with their mentees prior to the practicum to discuss their expectations can be very effective.

Considering the relation between mentor teachers and pre-service teachers, Beck and Kosnik (2000) indicated a hierarchical, imitative and inflexible relationship between them. They referred to the influential role of teacher educators including mentor teachers during the practicum period which might be either positive or negative. Nokes et al. (2008) in their model compared pair-placed pre- service teacher with single-placed pre-service teacher. They reported that despite differences reflected in their teaching practices, teachers' pair-placed had positive outcomes such as learning to work together. Borko and Mayfield (1995) on the contrary reported that guided- teaching method showed no significant changes in pre-service teachers' teaching practices. So the role of associate teachers for improving learning to teach process was questioned by them.

This study relying on what is mentioned by Levin and Rock (2003) who focused on the positive effect of pre- service teachers and their associate teachers' involvement, tried to see the opportunities that mentor teachers can provide to Iranian pre service teachers. It tried to investigate the shared pedagogical beliefs and supports of mentor teachers for developing pre service teachers' professional identity.

2.3. Recent Studies on Pre-Service Teachers' Teacher Identity

The tensions and challenges pre-service teachers encounter, and these tensions' impact on the professional identity of them have attracted the attention of educational researchers. A case study conducted by Abednia (2012), for instance, investigated the construction of professional identity of Iranian teachers by considering the role of critical teacher education courses. He highlighted triple shifts from conformity to critical autonomy, from no orientation to transformative orientation and from a linguistic view to an educational view. In the same fashion, Masumpanh and Zarei (2014) in their study indicated that Iranian teachers' tendency toward "Standard English" is considered an effective factor in their professional identity construction.

In line with the above studies, Zarei and Ghasedi (2014) summarized the findings of recent studies related to the professional identity of teachers in Iran. Three categories were used to classify teacher's professional identity. Firstly, they referred to the construction of professional identity, then the characteristics of it were categorized, and lastly they referred to practicing teachers' narration. They also summarized the four categories of historical, sociological, psychological, and cultural factors related to perceptions and notions of professional community as major factors affecting teacher professional identity.

By developing a reliable and valid questionnaire, Sadeghi and Sahargard (2016) made an attempt to propose an Iranian EFL teachers' role identity model. Their model was based on Farrell (2011). Their model consisted three dimensions of managerial role, professional dimension, and acculturator side of the role identity of Iranian EFL teacher with local exigencies considerations taken into account.

Considering language teachers' professional identity, Zainadiny Mofrad (2016) investigated 79 language teachers in Iranshahr city, Iran. He explored the relationship between teachers' gender and work experience, and their professional identity. Using Beijaard et al. (2000) three aspects of professional identity questionnaire which considered teachers as subject matter experts, teachers as didactical experts, and teachers as pedagogical experts, at first he ascribed didactical aspect to his subjects, then pedagogical experts and lastly subject matter experts. This study showed gender and experience of the participants and the professional identity sub-scales had no significant relationship. But considering subject matter expert and experience of the teachers, a significant relationship was reported.

Despite extensive studies related to teacher identity, paucity of comprehensive researches related to pre-service teachers' professional identity can be detected from literature review. So the present study pursued to investigate this concept from different dimensions including sociocultural, managerial, and professional role of identity.

2.4. Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky's contribution to sociocultural theory has received a considerable attention from different scholars. Great emphasize of such theory can be detected on SLL. Different concepts of this theory such as

mediation, internalization, activity theory, ZPD, scaffolding, and their application in SLL classrooms can be explored and highlighted.

The application of sociocultural theory in second language teaching and learning focuses on the significance of social and collaborative model of learning. Considering the field of language learning sociocultural theory came out of social and cultural interaction between people. Vygotsky's theory seems to be very important in second language learning, because to him social interaction plays a vital role in language learning. His theory is basically engaged with child's mental development. To him this development relates to the social, cultural and historical artifacts. But later his theory was applied in education discipline. As it can be detected from the work of Lantolf and Beckett (2009), the world SCT was used to refer to educational paradigm in second language learning and development. So the extension of the theory of SCT of Vygotsky into SLA was done by Lantolf (2000) and Donato in (2000). To them second language learners' interaction and collaboration with other people lead the process of their language acquisition. So interaction and collaboration are very important ingredients of the theory. There are a number of studies conducted in the field of SLA in which Vygotsky's ideas are applied. In the present study, however, this theory was specifically implemented in the field of teacher training. So, components of SCT such as ZPD, meditation, scaffolding, and internalization can be supposed for student teachers. In the process of teacher training, mentors can provide pre-service teachers support and guidance, and then mentor teachers can diminish their help to make the student teachers more independent to be ready for their prospect classes in future.

Broadly speaking these major concepts reveal the remarkable achievement of socio-cultural theory in learning and teaching processes. The notion of ZPD, peer interaction and learning as a mediated process are Vygotsky's influential thoughts that can be used and practiced in teacher education and teacher training field. In the same vein, Beauchamp & Thomas (2009) and Beijaard et al. (2004) also proposed teacher identity construction can be considered both personally and socially. To them personal perspective refers to agency, emotion, meaning system and the self, and social perspective refers the influence of context, experience, social interaction which all are in line with social constructivism. In the learning to teach process of pre-service teachers, mentor teachers are significant others during the practicum experiences which can have a role in social aspect of constructivism. Gravee's (2010) triple tenets of constructivism which stated that 1) knowledge is constructed, 2) learning is situated and 3) learning involves social interaction is of great importance to be taken into account, because the mentor-mentee relationship and interaction impact the re-service teachers' professional identity construction. So considering the tenets of constructivism it can be assumed that a social constructivism approach can apparently provide a theoretical basis for guiding this study.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The present study was conducted in Farhangian university of Isfahan, one of the biggest centers of teacher training and teacher education program centers in Iran. The 49 participants of the study were pre-service English teachers (29 males and 20 females).

3.2. Data Collection/Instruments

The data were collected over two last semesters from BA students, studying teaching English as a foreign language in Farhangian university of Isfahan, Iran. In order to collect the data, three methods were used; one was in direct interaction of student teachers with the researcher (interview) which was deemed a suitable tool for negotiation and interaction with the participants to understand their attitudes, expectations, motivation, beliefs, personal histories and background about the nature of becoming an English teacher. Another more personally oriented tool was the process of reflective journal. This process of reflection on action occurred during and after the participants' first and second practicum. A questionnaire was also used before the practicum period to see the participants' self- image, their sense of professionalism and their identity role. The used methods were expected to provide different sets of data related to the principal domain of research, such as personal experiences as members of teaching community, student teachers' beliefs and expectations about teaching career and their sense of affiliation with teaching profession.

3.2.1. Interview

Before the beginning of the practicum, through a semi structured one-on- one interview, the participants were asked to announce their reasons for choosing English language teaching which will affect their vision of teaching in future and their professional identity formation. They were asked some questions such as:

- Why did you choose teaching as a professional choice?
- Who helped you to make this decision?
- What are some of the memories which make you decide to apply for a teaching program?
- What are some of your short/long term goals as a teacher?
- How do you link language teaching with the future of your students?

3.2.2. Questionnaire

This paper reports on the professional identity construction of 49 pre- service teachers. One of phases of the study is based on a questionnaire proposed by Sadeghi and Sahargard (2016) focused on

perception of social status of pre-service teachers of their job before the beginning of the practicum to see the participants' evaluation, commitment and their attitudes toward teaching English. This questionnaire considered 52 factors through three main roles of teachers: teacher as manager, teacher as professional, and teacher as acculturator. The first category of teacher as manager was subdivided into seven sub roles. The second teachers' role identity considered teachers as a professional was divided in to 3 sub roles, and the third category related to teachers as acculturator had three sub roles. Likert five response options scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree was used. To calculate items' score, the researcher allocated 5 points for strongly agree, 4 points for agree, 3 points for undecided, 2 points for disagree, and 1 point for strongly disagree.

3.2.3. Reflective Journal

The students were asked to write about their experience of teaching before and after their practicum. They were asked to reflect on their teaching to see their differences before and after their practical teaching.

3.3. Procedure

For collecting the related data, several stages have been taken out. The research inquiry was enhanced through using mixed method. For validating the accuracy of the research findings, the coded questionnaire survey, the interviews and reflective journals before and after and during the practicum were used. In order to confirm the credibility of the qualitative data triangulation method was used. To guarantee the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, member check and intra-rater and then inter-rater methods were used. The themes introduced by the participants were coded, and then after passing a lapse of time, they were recoded again to achieve inter rater agreement. So the core concept and themes based on the participants' answers were extracted.

3.4. Data Analysis

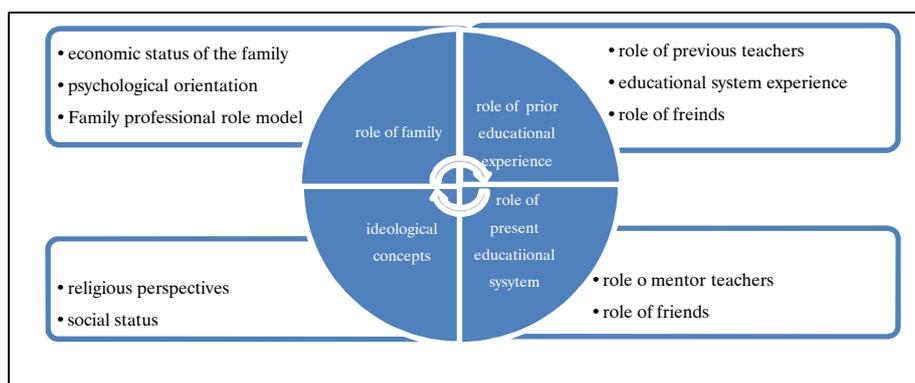
The interview data related to the different reasons contended for choosing English language teaching as a career and the participants' sense of professionalism were transcribed, and some of them needed to be translated into English. The participants were free to answer the questions in their native language or in English. For categorizing and coding the data, the quantitative research software SPSS was used. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed through using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics.

The following diagram displays the summary of the participants' answer to the questions of the interview related to pre-service teachers' factors influencing their professional identity construction. Most of the research data related to the pre-service teachers' professional identity construction reflected the

influence of social, educational, and personal factors on the perception and understanding of the participants. All these factors are presented in the following figure.

Figure 1

Summary of Pre-Service Teachers' Factors Influencing Their Professional Identity Construction



The interview reports reflected 4 themes: role of ideological concepts and reasons, role of family, role of previous teachers, role of EFL teaching in Iran. Some English excerpts of the interviewees are mentioned in the following.

3.4.1. Role of Family

The results of the interview indicated that the role of family was either positive or negative. Role of family was encouraging especially for those family members whose choice of teaching already had family approbation, which in turn was sometimes disapproval and discouraging. Family members who were teachers provide role model. This earlier contact with the teaching profession was identified by some of the subjects as recurrent link between family and subject matter. Some excerpts in the following section provide some reasons of the participants for choosing English language teaching as profession.

"...my mother was a teacher. She was always honored in the family and society. Her status in the society has motivated me to follow her career."

By contrast some pre-service teachers declared their family members' bad experiences of teaching were one of the reasons of their hesitation to choose it initially as a career:

"My sister is a teacher but she had not studied to be a teacher. As a clever student her ambitious was to be accepted in medical science, but she didn't. She is not interested in teaching. She always discouraged me to choose teaching. She told me terrible things about teaching."

Another student teacher was being apprenticed into teaching through a powerful combination of personal role models around. These family models were acting as professional role models and at the same

time family encouragement came in the form of pressure. Albeit, there was not professional pressure, but psychological.

“...my mother was a nurse. Her work was based on round shifts. Sometimes she was obliged to work at nights. When I was in my junior high school, sometimes I felt loneliness. When I compared my mom's presence and my friend moms' presence at home who were teachers, I felt depressed. From that time on, I decided to choose a profession which allows me more free time and more connection with my family members. Being a teacher helps me to be employed while I have enough free time to spend with my family members.”

Economic status of the family was also determined as a strong reason of choosing the career. It was reported that family budget constraints affect the subjects' professional orientation and aspiration.

“Although my sister is graduated from one the best universities of Iran, she could not find a good job related to her field of study. Accepting in Farhangian University provided me the situation of employment from the beginning of the study.”

3.4.2. Role of Prior Experiences

This theme was subdivided into 3 other categories of former teachers, previous educational experience, and role of friends

Former Teachers

The results of the reasons and purposes of choosing teaching as a career also reveals the willingness of becoming teacher under the influence of former teachers is strong either positively or negatively. Some of the subjects reported they liked to imitate or surpass their former teachers.

Some of the remarks of the pre-service teachers are shown in the following excerpts:

“My first English language teacher was very active. His enthusiasm for teaching the students evoked my willingness to choose English language teaching in future.”

“My second grade high school teacher was old, and I just felt like she didn't have any patience. His class was monotonous and boring. I hoped as a teacher one day I will evoke the curiosity of my students and motivate them to learn English as the international language of the world. To your surprise, I chose teaching English under the effect of my prestigious, knowledgeable, open mind English teachers.”

4.3.3. Education System Experience

The data from the sub category of previous K-12 educational experience showed some part of pre-service students' identity was shaped by attending educational preparation programs. The following participants' excerpts propose some of the reasons of choosing the ELT as a profession.

“I always criticized the English language educational system in Iran. As a Student we participated in English classes during junior high school and high school. The outcome of this long teaching period would be the students who know something about the language, but not the language itself. The graduated students cannot speak fluently in English. They are mostly prepared to pass the tests for university entrances exam known as Konkour. I decided to choose language teaching with the hope of affecting English language teaching education in Iran. I really want to continue my studies in TEFL to be effective in this field.”

4.3.4. Ideological Concepts

Some of the pre-service teachers referred to some ideological reasons for choosing teaching. To them teaching is honorable. They stated teachers have good social and spiritual status. Paying attention to the following excerpt clarify the concept.

“We were taught from our childhood that teachers’ job are like prophets. The same as prophet, teachers can guide people.”

“I remember a sentence related to the respectful status of teachers in the society. They are like candles. They burnt themselves to illuminate their surroundings.”

Some cases also referred to some religious and cultural concepts. They had explicit remarks related to Islam and its views about teaching. One of the students emphasized the value Islam places on education. The following excerpt is an example of direct emphasize of Islam, prophet and Shia imams about the value of teaching.

“Prophet Mohammed has emphasized on education. He strongly emphasized educating self and others. Teaching is the most highly regarded job in Islam.”

Two next questions of the questionnaire asked the participants to reveal their perceptions about their responsibility and commitment as a teacher and their vision about the kind of teacher they want to be. Then they were asked to use a metaphor to represent themselves as a future teacher.

Despite the fact that the participants contended differently about their senses of professionalism, they mostly hoped participating in teacher training courses would make a huge difference in their teaching views and capabilities.

Some of them declared a good command of English, achieved before or during their training courses; along with the practical class affairs as an English teacher were considered as effective contributing factors in providing a good sense of professionalism.

“As an English teacher, I am expected to have a native like proficiency. To me a good command of standard English will exert a significant impact on my professional identity.”

Since teacher identity was defined as the conceptualization teachers have about themselves (Singh & Richards, 2009 cited in Izadnia, 2016, p.72) the participants were asked to regulate their reflective journals

based on those contributing factors during their preparation program which were very effective in changing their vision, their ability, and their perception about English language teaching. The results of the thematic analysis revealed remarkable changes.

To see what changes have been occurred in the participants' professional identity during the practicum, they were asked to write reflective journals during the practicum sessions. The participants were asked to regulate their reflective journals based on those contributing factors during their preparation program which were very effective in changing their vision, their ability, and their perception about English language teaching. The results of the thematic analysis revealed remarkable changes.

In line with what have already revealed, the participants in their interview reported the gradual increase of their professional identity level. One of the participants reported:

“At first I was very much worry about standing in front of the class. I thought I am not knowledgeable enough to be the master of the class. What would be my students' reaction and judgment toward me in the case of being asked a question which I don't know its answer? This thought really bothers me. Before the first practicum I was anxious about my presentation. At the very beginning, I was really stressed. And I could hear my heart beat. After passing two minutes, I coped my stress spontaneously, it seemed I found myself, I taught I was professionally confident. I had forgotten my disruptive feeling and I was teaching confidently. After finishing the teaching practice, I saw the satisfaction of my audiences. It really increased my confidence”.

Other excerpts also showed the professional identity changes have been occurred regarding their authority, their voice and self- confidence.

Along with social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) that proposed the view that learning happen in social processes through interaction with others, the results of interviews and reflective journals of the participants averred observing their classmates' practicum and following their mentor teachers' suggestions provide them the opportunity of considering themselves as effective member in teaching process.

“Following my mentor teacher's suggestions and observing my friend's practicum have boosted my enthusiasm to teach. They provide me good models to follow. For example, after one of my friends' teaching I asked him some questions about his feeling at the time of teaching. His positive feeling relaxed me and encouraged me to change my mind as a hesitate teacher to a firm one.”

One of the female participants' reflective journal report declared her changing professional identity after her practicum sessions. She explained due to obeying her mentor teacher suggestions in the second practicum, she could play a more authentic role, and she could envisage herself as a determined teacher, she wanted her own style and flair of teaching to feel ownership and to develop her identity. Some other male and female participants also referred the outstanding support and encouragement of their mentor

teachers as an effective factor to overcome their teaching crisis. By contemplating the seriousness of the teaching career, they reaffirmed their decisions to be an English teacher.

In the following excerpt the participants asserted *that*:

“After my first practicum, I felt like a feather. I was in the seventh heaven. The feedback from my mentor teacher after checking my lesson plan really and thoroughly boost my confidence. During my first practicum I was sure that my mentor teacher was satisfied with my teaching. This satisfaction was completely distinct from her face. Looking my mentor teacher's face encouraged me to show my whole potential. Now I think I can articulate a personal practical identity image of myself as a teacher, and I become adamant of pursuing English teaching as a career in future.”

One of the female participants' reflective journal report declared her changing professional identity after her practicum sessions. She reported:

“After my first practicum I thought I did not have enough sense of authority. I really wanted to have my own style and flair of teaching. During my first practicum I found no ownership. I was teaching the same way as most of my classmates. But hopefully in the second practicum I tried to have my own voice. Getting some advice from my mentor teacher, I could insert some innovations to my teaching. I thought at the moment I was able to make my own decision about teaching method. Now I was establishing my professional identity.”

She explained she was playing a more authentic role.

“I could envisage myself as a determined teacher”.

One of the pre- service teachers wrote in his reflective journal that:

“Despite my discouragement before the first practicum, the second practicum provided me a chance to show my accomplishment very successfully. My mentor teacher outstanding support and encouragement helped me to overcome my crisis. This time I enthusiastically want to be a full time teacher. I am ready to take the hard responsibility of teaching”.

By contemplating the seriousness of the teaching career, she reaffirmed her decision to be an English teacher. The reports of the two groups of pre-service teachers highlighted the process of teacher identity development during their teaching practicum. They asserted that their teacher identities had been shaped both before they entered the teacher education program, and during their teacher training program. They noted about their expectations or imaginations of their professional roles and responsibilities prior to the teaching program and challenges they had related to these pre-existing expectations or imaginations by the reality they faced. Their engagement with the teaching practice, negotiations with mentor teachers and peers as prospect colleagues, were found to be significant for the development of their teacher identities.

To describe the professional changes during their treatment period from the beginning to the end of the term, the participants were asked to have a metaphoric image of themselves and their perception of

teacher identity construction. A distinct common view of teacher as an instructor and examiner and the role which is more social and cultural, and managerial as well as educational and professional one were commonly detectable from the used metaphors. In line with Farrell's three main role identities, using different metaphors, the participants of this study also revealed their perception of themselves as a prospect teachers as multi- dimensional concept encompassing several roles in pedagogical milieu. Other metaphors used to describe their professional identities were as guide, supporter, and director, entertainer, cultural adaptor, etc. One of the pre-service teachers said:

“I don't want to impose my students to my students to follow my orders exactly. To me interpersonal relationship is very important. I will guide them to find their own way of learning.”

The following excerpt emphasizes the scaffolding role used by one of male participants.

“As a supervisor I want to encourage my students to have progress in their studies. I want to scaffold the students to solve their problems.”

One of the female participants uses motherly relation metaphor to emphasize the support and guidance role identity for herself. Other metaphors depict motivator and feedback provider as professional identity that pre-service teachers could assigned to themselves.

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In the next phase of the study and to confirm the validity of the data Sadeghi & Sahargard (2016) sub-categorization model questionnaire was used. The questionnaire which was redefined and localized for Iranian EFL teachers consisted of three main roles of teachers.

The first category of teachers' professional identity is the managerial role which is divided into seven sub roles 1) knowledge transmitter, 2) trader, 3) juggler, 4) interaction supervisor, 5) promoter, 6) arbitrator, and 7) entertainer.

The first table refers to the analysis of variance of means of female participants to consider their significant differences.

Table 1*Analysis of Variance of Female Managerial Role*

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	40.122	6	6.687	15.83	.000
Within groups	56.17	133	.422		
Total	96.22	139			

The results of comparing the means of female participants showed that there were significant differences between the subjects' means ($F=15.83$, $\text{sig}=.000$).

The following table displays the results of mean comparison using Duncan at the level of 0.05.

Table 2*Comparison of Means of Female Managerial Role*

R	N	Subtest for alpha=0.05			
		1	2	3	4
5	20	3.18			
3	20		4.05		
4	20		4.28	4.28	
7	20			4.51	4.51
6	20				4.75
2	20				4.76
1	20				4.79
Sig.		1.00	.265	.265	.212

The results of comparing means of female participants indicated that there were significant differences between item 5 and other sub roles of managerial role of teachers. There were no significant differences between sub roles of 1, 2, 6 and 7, but they had significant differences with 4, 3, and 5.

As it can be detected from the above table, most of the items in the manger role have a mean higher than 4, and the role of knowledge transmitter ($M=4.79$) had higher mean and the role of promoter had the lowest mean score ($MF=3.18$). Results of comparing means using one-way ANOVA for male participants are presented in the following table.

Table 3*Analysis of Variance of Male Managerial Role*

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	13.622	6	2.27	12.97	.000
Within groups	34.303	196	.175		
Total	47.92	202			

The results of comparing the means of male participants showed that there were significant differences between the subjects' means ($F=12.97$, $\text{sig}=.000$).

The following table displays the results of male participants' mean comparison using Duncan at the level of 0.05.

Table 4*Comparison of Means of Male Managerial Role*

R	N	Subtest for alpha=0.05			
		1	2	3	4
5	29	4.09			
6	29		4.52		
2	29		4.64	4.64	
7	29		4.72	4.72	4.72
1	29			4.78	4.78
4	29				4.86
3	29				4.90
Sig.		1.00	.092	.252	.132

Comparing the participants' means indicated superiority of the sub role of juggler ($M=4.9$). The least mean referred to teachers as promoter ($M=4.09$). This sub role (5) had significant difference with all other sub roles. Comparing other sub roles indicated that there were no significant differences between 3, 4, 1, 7, but these four sub role had significant difference with 2, 6, and 5. It is clear that sub roles of 6, 2, and 7 had no significant difference with themselves, but they had significant differences with 1, 4, 3, 5.

In the next part, to determine how teachers see themselves as professional teachers, the three related sub roles of teachers as 1) entertainer, 2) pundit, and 3) collaborator were compared through mean comparison. The results of one-way ANOVA for comparing the means of female participants' professional role are presented in the following table.

Table 4*Analysis of Variance of Female Professional Role*

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	32.42	2	16.21	22.144	.000
Within groups	41.72	57	.732		
Total	74.14	59			

The results of the above table indicated a significant difference between female teachers' means ($F=22.14$, sig.0.000). The following table displays the results of female participants' mean comparison using Dunckan at the level of 0.05.

Table 5*Comparison of Means of Female Professional Role*

R	N	Subtest for alpha= 0.05		
		1	2	3
1	20	3.07		
2	20		4.09	
3	20			4.86
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

The results of the above table showed that there were significant differences between all three sub roles. The highest mean score related to teachers as learners ($M=4.86$) and the least mean score referred to teachers as pundit ($M=3.07$). The results of one-way ANOVA for comparing the means of male participants regarding the role of teachers as professionals are presented in the following table.

Table 6*Analysis of Variance of Male Professional Role*

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	0.116	2	0.058	1.397	.235
Within groups	3.48	84	0.41		
Total	3.6	86			

The results of the above table indicated that there was no significant difference between the sub roles of teachers as professionals ($F=1.37$, sig.0.235). The following table displays the results of male participants' mean comparison using Dunkan at the level of 0.05.

Table 7*Comparison of Means of Male Professional Role*

R	N	Subtest for alpha= 0.05
		1
1	29	4.86
2	29	4.87
3	29	4.94
Sig.		0.148

According to the above table, all sub roles related to one group (1), so there is no significant difference between the three sub roles of teacher identity. The results of male participants mean comparison showed they saw themselves more as learner ($M=4.94$), and then as collaborator ($M=4.87$), and less as pundit ($M=4.86$). In the following table the results of comparing means of the role of acculturator and its three sub roles of 1) social panacea, 2) cultural adaptor, and 3) tutelage-provider is listed. The results of one-way ANOVA for comparing the means of female participants regarding the role of teachers as professionals are presented in the following table.

Table 8*Analysis of Variance of Female Acculturator Role*

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	0.474	2	0.237	1.363	.264
Within groups	9.91	57	0.174		
Total	10.38	59			

The above table result indicated that there is no significant difference between the means ($F=1.363$, sig.0.264). The following table displays the results of female participants' mean comparison using Dunkan at the level of 0.05.

Table 9*Comparison of Means of Female Acculturator Role*

R	N	Subtest for alpha= 0.05		
		1		
2	20	4.56		
3	20	4.62		
1	20	4.77		
Sig.		0.138		

The results of comparing means of female pre-service teachers indicated no significant difference between the sub role of teacher as social panacea ($M=4.77$), teacher as cultural adapter ($M=4.62$), and teacher as tutelage ($M=4.56$). They saw themselves mostly as social panacea, then as tutelage provider, and lastly as cultural provider. To compare the means of male participant's aculturator role, with its three related sub roles, ANOVA result is presented in the following table.

Table10*Analysis of Variance of Male Acculturator Role*

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	6.32	2	3.161	13.475	0.00
Within groups	19.7	84	0235		
Total	26.03	86			

The results indicated the difference between the means are significant ($F=13.475$, sig.0.000). The results of comparing the means of the three sub roles using Dunkan are presented in the following table.

Table 11*Comparison of Means of Male Acculturator Role*

R	N	Subtest for alpha=0.05		
		1	2	3
3	29	4.2		
2	29	4.57		
1	29	4.85		
Sig.		1.00	1.00	1.000

Considering the significant differences of the three sub roles indicated that male participants saw themselves mostly as social panacea (4.85), and then as cultural adaptor ($M=4.57$).The lowest indicated sub-role was tutelage- provider ($M=4.2$). To assess the supposed relationships between the professional

identity and gender of teachers, male and female pre- service teachers were compared to each other in terms of the professional identity sub-roles of professional identity. The results can be seen in Table 12.

Table 12*Analysis of Variance of Male and Female Professional Identity*

	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between groups of female	12.481	2	6.241	8.86	0.000
Within groups of female	180.82	257	0.704		
Total	193.3	259			
Between groups of male	5.871	2	2.936	14.157	0.000
Within groups of male	77.558	374	0.207		
Total	88.430	376			

The results of one way ANOVA of 13 identity sub roles of female and male pre-service teachers under three general themes of teachers as manager, teachers as acculturator, and teacher as professional revealed that these sub roles had significant differences with each other (MF=4.33, MM=4.83, $p \leq 1\%$) As it can be detected from the above table, female pre-service teachers saw themselves mostly as acculturator (M=4.65) and then as manager, but male participants saw themselves more as professional (M=4.89), and then as manager (M=4.65) and less as acculturator (M=4.54).

4. Results

Analyzing the participants' responses to the Likert questionnaire revealed that male pre- service teachers conceive themselves more knowledgeable in teaching than females. It means that they thought they had profound knowledge about different methods of learning and teaching. Comparing male and female participants mean scores indicated that female participants need to be more equipped with teaching methods. They need to reflect on their teaching methods in future to expand their professional knowledge.

In line with some excerpts from narratives it can be detected that adhering to sociocultural theory, the pre-service teachers conceived themselves as learners at the time of teaching. They asserted that not only they were teaching their students, but also they were learning from them. Both groups of the participants (M=4.94, F=4.8) claimed their previous experiences as a student affect the way they teach. The participants also allocated collaborator sub role identity to themselves. Since they asserted they share their knowledge with their present classmates and their prospect colleagues. By looking at the tables 6 and 7 and mean comparison of two groups, it can be detected that female participants were more willing to share their professional knowledge with their colleagues (M=4.08, F=4.09).

According to Farrel (2011) the way teachers manage their classes refers to managerial role of teacher identity. Comparing the managerial role of the participants showed male superiority over females (M=4.65, F=4.33). Teachers' manager role was divided into 7 sub- role identities. The results confirmed

the tendency of female participants to take into account the knowledge transmitter role ($M=4.78$, $F=4.79$). They approved that they are ready to provide useful learning materials such as different books, soft wares, etc. for the students, and they want to be the presenter of the knowledge to their students. As it can be detected from the results of mean comparison male participants were weaker in assigning such role to themselves.

Female participants also assigned the role of arbitrator to themselves ($M=4.52$, $F=4.75$). They notified that they are willing to provide appropriate feedback to their students at the time of making mistakes. To them peer or classmate error correction is useful, and learners' performances in the class are to be judged fairly. The sub role identity of trader was the fourth role chosen by the participants. Mean comparison of male and female pre-service teachers ($M=4.64$, $F=4.76$) indicated female participants considered financial affair of their job of teaching more important than male participants.

Conceptualizing supervisors who can manage student- student and student –teacher interaction under the role of interaction supervisor is more in male participants than in females ($M=4.72$, $F=4.28$). Male participants asserted that they can provide better turn taking procedures at the time of interaction to control the stream of communication in the classroom than female participants. The next chosen sub- role identity was teachers as juggler. Mean comparison of the participant showed stronger tendency of the male participants in providing multi-tasks for students for increasing their creativity ($M=4.78$, $F=4.05$). They saw themselves as teachers who can engage students at several tasks simultaneously, because they think that this will enhance the students' common understanding about the subject.

The last sub role identity chosen by the participants was teachers as promoter. Comparing the means of male and female pre- service teachers ($M=4.6$, $F=3.18$) showed that male participants were much more willing to provide motivation for the students and they can encourage their students more in the case of showing signs of learning.

5. Discussion

The findings of the study related to the analysis of reasons underpinning the participants' decision to choose TEFL, resonate with the study of Clarke (2008) who found family connections and their implicit or explicit encouragement, as well as previous teachers among the reasons of 75 female pre-service teachers in United Arab Emirates. Similarly, Fjardo (2014) referred to some of his participants' reasons for choosing English language teaching as their future profession. Similar to the finding of this study Fajardo (2014) noted in forming, sustaining and transforming professional identities of teachers, family budget and financial affairs, teaching community such as preset and past teachers of the participants, as well as participants' consideration about greatness of teaching profession paly a fundamental role to choose teaching as their future profession.

Analyzing the participants' responses revealing different reasons for becoming English language teachers indicated that the participants mentioned their professional identity was strongly affected by their

mentor teachers and their training courses during the practicum period. The finding of the present study was in line with the study of Masumpanah and Zarei (2010) in which the dynamicity of professional identity of their subjects is referred to different reasons such as good command of English during teacher training period which in turn provide them a positive attitude and a positive sense of professionalism toward English language teaching. Beijaard et al. (2000) assumed teachers' teaching context, experience and more frequently biography as categories of factors that affect the perception of teacher of their professional identity.

Comparing to the study done by Liou (2000), in which different factors involvement for professional identity construction such as self and context are important, the participants of this study also proposed the list of determining factors in their professional identity progress. In the same fashion Richards (2012) identified ten areas such as language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner-focused teaching, pedagogical reasoning skills, theorizing from practice, membership in a community of practice, and professionalism as "those dimensions of teacher knowledge and skill that seems to be at the core of expert teaching competence and performance in language teaching" (p. 46). As Richards (2012, p. 52) stated, if someone wants to become an English language teacher, he/she should be involved in community of professionals. So this membership and becoming part of this community needs specific standards and requirements such as having shared goals, practices, discourse, and values. To Richards in specific context of teaching, mingling of individual features of teachers with institutional identity potentials, as well as content and method of the field are highlighted as notions of teacher identity. He added that to make it in a nut shell, this process needs specialized knowledge which can be acquired through practical experiences and academic study.

Accordingly, Penington et al. (2016) also emphasized integration of teachers' individual characteristics with institutional possibilities and potentials, teachers' pedagogical identity, and particular field processes which can be achieved in specific teaching context. They proposed to construct and to operationalize different aspects of teacher identity, different activities such as observation of an ideal model in the course work is needed to be adapted in an unpredictable and innovative way in future. Thus, language teacher's identity is constructed "cumulatively in sites of practice as not only a user but also a producer of both the practical (pedagogical content) knowledge and the theoretical (disciplinary content) knowledge of the field" (penington et al., 2016, p.12).

The result of this study corroborates the results of Izadnia (2016) that the subjects participated in both studies asserted that they hopefully started their course filled with a deep passion and positive feeling about teaching. Eagerly they wanted to share their passion and knowledge with their students; to them an English teacher can make a change in the lives of their students, because a teacher can find strengths and talents of their learners to motivate them to confront their fears, doubts, and expectations.

The results of the second phase of the study related to the professional identity role of teachers, the first role as managers consisting of seven sub- role identities was opposed to Sahargard and Sadeghi (2017) result, which considered this theme of identity as the main professional identity role. Similarly,

Kumaravadivelu (2012) and Farrel (2011) considered managerial role of professional identity as main role of teachers, but the present study showed that this role was not the priority of Iranian pre-service teachers. It seems that part of this difference goes to the system of education in Iran which is highly centralized and top down structured (Atai & Mazlumi, 2013), that is textbooks are designed, developed, and authorized by ministry of education. The gap between macro plans and teachers' practices and preferences as a result of the centralized education system in Iran and the pre-planned way of teaching leaves limited way for teachers to provide materials for their students or to have special creativity for changing the materials and the way of providing information to their students. Obviously managerial part of teacher identity was not the top of pre-service teachers' choices, meanwhile; the need for some reform leads them to mention some sub roles of the managerial role as very important concepts. For example, both male and female groups of the participants have chosen the knowledge transmitter sub role as the most important part of their choices out of seven presented options. This choice individually can approve the need of the new generation of teachers and learners for educational reform in teaching and learning material development and the way of providing information to the students. As it was mentioned by Nezakat-Alhossaini and Ketabi (2012) student teachers should be encouraged by their teacher educators to be engaged actively in the process of learning to teach, rather than taking notes and memorizing the presented materials. The scope of teacher education needs to go beyond methodological concerns and theoretical, linguistic and technical skills.

The least chosen options in this category also indicated the female student teachers' weakness of how to provide motivation for their students and male weakness in entertaining their students in their classes. Congruence with what is mentioned by Izadnia (2016), the participants of the study in their interviews asserted that, the role of mentor teachers can be clearly detected as an important factor in progressing their professional skills. So consolidating a critical perspective through collegial community of mentor teachers and pre-service teachers can help mentees to overcome their weaknesses and fear facing pedagogical realities and challenges during their practicum.

The second main theme of teacher identity role dealt with teachers' professional identity which was considered by the male participants of the study as the most important role identity referred to teachers' negotiation with their colleagues to expand their knowledge and to learn from them. This theme was also supported by Bijaard et al. (2000), Kumaravadivelu (2012), and Wanger (1989). It refers to pedagogical and didactical expertise which develops teachers' professional identity. Wanager (2012) referred to the ways teachers share their knowledge, and solve their teaching problems by participating in the community of practice. He mentioned that teachers can improve their knowledge and their day to day experiences by interacting with other teachers of the same field. They can share their concerns. The same as Bijaard et al. (2000) emphasizing on teachers' profound subject area knowledge as their professional identity and reflection to see which model is much more effective, Farrel (2011) also referred to the mutual role of teachers as learners and teachers to improve their pedagogical and didactical expertise.

The findings of the present study related to the sociocultural role identity as the third main theme of teacher identity showed an agreement with the previous studies. Hawking and Norton (2006) for example referred to the social mediator role of teachers. In Farrel (2011) the role identity of teacher was defined as socializer. To Farrel (2011) teacher acted like a care provider or a mother and father for their learners.

Sense of intimacy and sympathy that the subjects of the present study showed toward their students was interpreted by Farrel as motherly role of teachers. Duff and Uchida (1997) used the role of cultural workers to be assigned to teachers. They considered teachers as transmitters of culture. Clark (2013) stated that teachers are transmitters of cultural points emanated from a local content. But Sahargard and Sadeghi (2017) referred to the unique context of Iran which to them is multicultural and multiethnic. They indicated that teachers need to resolve and settle religious, cultural, ethnical, and other disputes of their students. Moreover, they should be able to make a balance between Iranian native culture and western culture. So the modified version of teachers as acculturator which is divided into three sub roles of social paneca, tutelage- provider, and cultural adapter was used in the present study.

6. Conclusion and Implications

Considering the multidimensional nature of professional identity which encompasses different domains in pedagogical milieu actuated the present study to consider it from different angles, such as managerial, professional, and socio-cultural. The findings of the study revealed and depicted a comprehensive view about Iranian pre-service teachers' perception and conceptualization of their role identity as manager, professional, and acculturator. They asserted that different factors such as practicum and mentor teachers' supports and feedback as constructive factors in changing their role from a merely student teacher to the one who get a more realistic view about teaching were important. Subtle changes in the vision and voice of the participants were reported by them.

Since teaching needs special experience and expertise, training programs for pre-service teachers is a basic invaluable and irrefragable concept. The necessity of mentoring programs is distinct to train student teachers as prospect teachers. According to Wang (2001) training in observation, providing effective feedback, supporting and counseling the student teachers are conscious process of induction into different teaching context that are considered as responsibilities of mentor teachers that does not take place automatically. This process is a gradual process of knowledge and belief development and construction which can only be achieved through systematic and ongoing training opportunities. So mentors' understanding of the academic and professional aspects can develop awareness of pre-service teachers in these concepts and also can develop a deeper understanding of the importance and contribution a mentor teacher can make to the development of student teachers.

In light of research data analyzed in the previous sections it can be concluded that the need of improvement in teacher training centers for increasing the quality of teachers training is necessary. Problems, issues, and areas of weakness in practical teaching reflect the need of many reforms.

Implementing theoretical knowledge in to practical teaching situation in the class requires acquiring desired skills. The skill and expertise of pre-service teachers are as important as their content knowledge. So to meet the objectives of this course more collaboration of mentor teachers, pre- service teachers and school staff is needed. So providing more facilities for such a purpose is the responsibility of both government and educational policy makers. The government also can monitor the quality of education by raising the standards of education. So the teacher training centers and mentor teachers should be monitored in terms of accountability. Mentor teachers can provide student teachers motivation and guidance by providing feedback to increase their professional qualities, their level of commitment, and interest in teaching profession.

5.1. Limitations of the Study

This study had some limitations. First, the subjects' number was low, so it limited the generalizability of the finding of the study to other situations. Additionally the researcher was limited to Farhangian university of Isfahan, so it lacks the merits of having access to other universities of Iran to compare different views, expectations, opinions and competencies of all pre- service teachers of Iran; moreover the participants of the study were limited to those who were passing their final year of learning to teach, while further research is needed to investigate the process of professional identity of pre-service teachers during their four year study of B.A to get a comprehensive view about different angles of the topic under the study, and to deepen our understanding about the relation between different factors affecting the professional identity of them.

Another limitation of the study goes to the heart of the relation and influence of more knowledgeable person in education on pre- service teachers, but not the opposite direction of influence, i.e., the influence of students on these subjects. So it seems that in the case of access to future class of such pre-service teachers, they might be asked about the influence of students on their professional identity and intercultural competence.

Part of the study is based on narrative approach, which refers to the pre-service teachers' interviews and reflective journals. Because of the complexity of the concept of teachers' professional identity which relates to social science, the collected data in this study might have suffered from some degree of pollution. Despite the great attempt to provide detailed and rich data, the generalizability or transferability of the findings was restricted to Iranian context as an EFL context due to the exploratory nature of the current study. Therefore, generalizing findings to other EFL or ESL contexts should be made with some precautions.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

Further research is needed to investigate the process of professional identity of student teachers during their four-year study of B.A to get a comprehensive view about different angles of the topic under

the study, and to deepen our understanding about the relation between different factors affecting the professional identity and intercultural competencies of them.

Sine professional identity is a dynamic concept; it seems that including different participants from first-year in-practice teachers to more experienced teachers for the purpose of comparing them to see the prospect change occurrence of from pre-service to in-service teachers will provide us proper data for identifying professional identity construction process.

Further research is also needed to check the influences of all teachers and professors who are engaged in the process of the student teachers' education.

5.3. Pedagogical Implications

Since teacher identity concept is mingling of different factors such as cultural, managerial, social, and professional dimensions, considering it from different dimensions help the language pedagogics and educational policy makers, material developers, teacher educators, curriculum developers, syllabus designers and even evaluators to make better decisions for language education system, which can have mutual benefit for both teachers and learners. The results of the study also showed that developing professional identity enhances the sense of belongingness and sense of plausibility which itself can provide a cooperative situation for teachers to share their views and experiences with their colleagues, which in turn can be beneficial for EFL teachers in the academic milieu. This study has provided substantive implications and recommendations at two levels of improvements in teacher training programs and policy makers.

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