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YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREING LANGUAGES EDUCATION
MA PROGRAM IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

MASTER'S THESIS

INVESTIGATING THE LANGUAGE TEACHER IDENTITY PERCEPTIONS OF NON-NATIVE EARLY CAREER ENGLISH TEACHERS

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SUPERVISOR
ASST. PROF. DR. GÜLÜMSER EFEOĞLU

2024

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Zehra YAŞAR tarafından hazırlanan “Anadili İngilizce Olmayan Erken Kariyer İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Dil Öğretmeni Kimlik Algılarının İncelenmesi” başlıklı çalışma, **24/06/2024** tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği ile başarılı bulunmuş ve jürimiz tarafından Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Programında **YÜKSEK LİSANS** tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Manolya Sağlam	…….

ÖZET

ANADİLİ İNGİLİZCE OLMAYAN ERKEN KARİYER İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN DİL ÖĞRETMENİ KİMLİK ALGILARININ İNCELENMESİ

Haziran, 2024

Öğretmen kimliğinin nasıl inşa edildiğine dair daha kapsamlı bir anlayış kazanmak, öğretmen eğitimi programlarının iyileştirilmesi (Beauchamp ve Thomas, 2009) ve öğretim kalitesinin arttırılması (Borg, 2003) açısından çok önemlidir. Mevcut literatür ağırlıklı olarak İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının kimlik oluşumunu araştırmıştır (Flores ve Day, 2006; Kanno ve Stuart, 2011; Göktepe ve Kunt, 2020). Bu durum farklı kademelerde öğretmenlik yapan ve kariyerlerinin başında olan öğretmenlere ilişkin dikkate değer bir boşluk bırakmaktadır (Do ve Hoand, 2023). Bu çalışma, farklı kademelerde çalışan erken kariyer İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, anadili İngilizce olmayan öğretmenler olarak öğretmen kimliklerini nasıl algıladıklarını ve Yanıltıcılık Sendromu ile nasıl başa çıktıklarını araştırmaktadır. "Anadili İngilizce Olmayan Öğretmen Yanıltıcılık Sendromu", dil öğretmeni rolündeki yetersizlik duygusuyla bağlantılıdır ve dolayısıyla öğretmenlik kimlikleriyle yakından bağlantılıdır. Görsel metafor çalışması (Hamilton, 2016), bir odak grup görüşmesi ve Anadili İngilizce Olmayan Öğretmenlerde Yanıltıcılık (Imposterhood) Sendromu Ölçeği (Bernat, 2009) kullanılarak yapılan bu çalışmada 109 katılımcı Anadili İngilizce Olmayan Öğretmenlerde Yanıltıcılık Sendromu Ölçeği'ni cevaplandırmış ve 25 katılımcı "Anadili İngilizce olmayan İngilizce öğretmeni ve anadili İngilizce olan İngilizce öğretmeni sizin için nedir?" sorusuna yanıt vererek görsel metaforlar üretmiştir. Veri analizi, anadili İngilizce olmayan öğretmenlerin, bu sebepten dolayı alanlarında ayrımcılıkla ve zorluklarla karşılaştıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ek olarak, anadili İngilizce olmayan öğretmenler, kendinden şüphe duyma ve düşük öz-yeterlik inançlarıyla mücadele etmektedir. Çalışma, kariyerinin başındaki öğretmenlerin öğrettikleri hedef dil olan İngilizce'nin anadili olmama durumlarının, dil öğretmeni kimlik yapılarını etkilediği sonucuna varmaktadır. Bu nedenle, öğretimin kalitesini, motivasyonunu ve genel refahını artırmak için öğretmen adayları, alanda anadili İngilizce olan öğretmenlere karşı kayırmacılığa karşı uyarılmalı ve hazırlıklı olmalıdır. Bu anlayış, etkili öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının tasarlanması ve İngilizce öğretmenlerinin üretkenliğinin ve kariyer gelişiminin desteklenmesi için gereklidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen Kimliği, Anadili İngilizce Olmayan Öğretmenler, Erken Kariyer Öğretmenleri, Yanıltıcılık Sendromu

ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING THE LANGUAGE TEACHER IDENTITY PERCEPTIONS OF NON-NATIVE EARLY CAREER ENGLISH TEACHERS

June 2024

Gaining a more comprehensive understanding of teacher identity construction is crucial for improving teacher education programs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), and enhancing teaching quality (Borg, 2003). Existing literature has predominantly explored identity construction among novice English teachers (Flores & Day, 2006; Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Göktepe and Kunt, 2020), leaving a notable gap regarding early career teachers working in diverse contexts (Do & Hoand, 2023). This study investigates how non-native early career English teachers, working in different contexts, perceive their teacher identities as non-native speaker teachers, and how they handle Imposter Syndrome. "NNST Impostorhood" is connected to feelings of inadequacy in the role of a language teacher and is linked closely with their identities. The embedded mixed methods design study involved the Picture Me task (Hamilton, 2016), a focus group interview, and a quantitative phase using the Non-Native English Teachers Impostorhood Scale (Bernat, 2009). 109 participants answered the Non-Native English Teachers Impostorhood Scale and 25 participants generated visual metaphors answering the question, "What is a non-native teacher and a native teacher?" Data analysis revealed non-native speaker teachers face discrimination and challenges in the field due to their non-native status. Additionally, non-native speaker teachers struggle with feelings of self-doubt and low self-efficacy beliefs. The study concludes that the non-native status of early career teachers influences their language teacher identity construction. Therefore, pre-service teachers should be warned and prepared for favoritism against native-speaker teachers in the field to foster teaching quality, motivation, and overall well-being. This understanding is essential for designing effective teacher training programs, and supporting the productivity and career development of English teachers.

Keywords: Teaching Identity, Non-Native Teachers, Early Career Teachers, Imposter Syndrome

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ESL	: English as a Second Language
ELT	: English Language Teaching
LTI	: Language Teacher Identity
L1	: First Language
L2	: Second Language
NEST	: Native English Speaker Teacher
NNEST	: Non-Native English Speaker Teacher

1.INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the foundations of the current study and the factors that affected the choice to explore non-native and novice English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' professional identity construction. The context for the study is discussed, followed by an explanation of its purpose through an exploration of the research questions that have guided the study. Finally, the significance of the study in the literature is discussed.

1.1 Background To The Study

In recent years, the notion of teacher identity has attracted the attention of many researchers within the field of teaching and teacher education. Forming a strong professional identity as a teacher may offer numerous advantages to novice teachers, including enhanced teaching quality, resilience, motivation, and job satisfaction (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011). In addition, understanding teacher identity construction is essential for the quality of teaching, and connections between teachers and students (Cross & Hong, 2012). This implies that identity plays a role in shaping a teacher and is therefore a significant component of professional growth.

Teacher identity is shaped by various factors, such as personal and professional experiences, emotions, personality traits, and working conditions (Olsen, 2008; Zembylas, 2011). Given these factors, it is no wonder that the struggles and emotions (Song, 2016) experienced by early career teachers in their initial years in teaching influence their professional identity construction. The current study aims to investigate the factors that constitute the professional identity construction of non-native early-career teachers.

As Nunan (2017) states, gaining insight into the professional identity construction of non-native speaker teachers is especially significant. Considering that the majority of English teachers are non-native speaker teachers (Braine, 2010) and they are not provided the necessary aid in the English language teaching field specifically (Braine, 1998), gaining a comprehensive understanding of how novice English teachers

perceive themselves and construct their identities in their respective settings is necessary to shed a light on the difficulties of teaching in non-English speaking contexts.

Given the significance of teacher identity in the journey of early-career teachers, exploring what factors influence the professional identity construction of non-native early-career teachers and whether they deal with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, in other words, the Imposter Syndrome, throughout the initial years of their careers becomes essential.

1.2 The Purpose Of The Study

It is noted that obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of teacher identity could improve the design and implementation of teacher education programs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Moreover, according to Flores and Day (2006), understanding the process of identity formation among teachers leads to increased levels of self-efficacy, motivation, and job satisfaction and, therefore, it is crucial for an efficient teaching career. Thus, the point of view adopted here is that teacher identity is the main focus of language teaching and learning.

Considering the importance of teacher identity on language teaching and learning, novice early career teachers' language teacher identity construction is an important issue for further investigation. Thus, the current study sought to examine what constitutes novice English language teachers' perceptions of their language teacher identity; particularly examining whether their non-native status leads them to feel inferior compared to native speakers, commonly referred to as experiencing Imposter Syndrome.

The current study was conducted with the motivation to gain a better understanding of how non-native speaker early career teachers construct their language teacher identity. The study specifically concentrates on non-native early career teachers' professional teacher identity construction in the Turkish context by exploring the factors that influence their identity construction as they go through the initial years of their careers, and how their perception of their non-native status and the so-called Imposter Syndrome affect the way they identify themselves as language teachers. In this respect, these questions directed the study:

1. How does being non-native speakers of English influence early career English language teachers' self-perceptions?
2. Does the Imposter Syndrome have an impact on the language teacher identities of non-native early career English language teachers? If yes, what components of the Imposter Syndrome are experienced?
3. What factors cause difference in the identity perceptions of non-native early career English language teachers?

To seek an answer to the first research question, the qualitative strand of the study, the Picture Me Task (Hamilton, 2016) and a focus group interview was conducted. For the second and third research questions, the quantitative strand of the study, the Non-Native Speaker Teacher Impostor Syndrome Scale (Bernat, 2009) and the demographic form developed by the researcher and the supervisor of the study were utilized.

1.3 Significance Of The Study

Studying identity construction is essential because teachers' understanding of their self-image is demonstrated through their actions and their professional identity (Farrel, 2011). Therefore, teacher identity is directly linked with teacher performance and quality of education. In addition, there seems to be a need for further research on the emotional and affective aspects of professional identity (Barkhuizen, 2017).

The literature shows that the studies on teacher identity are mostly restricted to the identity construction of pre-service teachers, neglecting the identity construction of novice teachers (Goktepe & Kunt, 2021). Therefore, examining early career teachers appears to be a suitable focus to ground this thesis. It is claimed that the early years of their careers consist of transformative events that cause novice teachers to construct and reconstruct their professional identities constantly (Schutz et al., 2018) and as a result, novice teachers struggle with adverse emotions, elevated levels of anxiety, feelings of inadequacy, and frustration (Farrell, 2012; Tejeda et al., 2016; Bellocchi, 2019). In this regard, the factors that influence the identity construction of early teachers and whether they experience the Imposter Syndrome as non-native novice teachers need to be examined.

Based on the information presented thus far, it appears that investigating the professional identity construction of novice non-native teachers is a valid area of

research to comprehend the intricacies of the early years and the feelings non-native teachers deal with (Nazari et al., 2023).

It is worth mentioning that gaining a more comprehensive insight into early career non-native teachers' identity development enables them to become effective teachers. As Cross and Hong (2009) revealed in their study, in cases where a discrepancy can be found between a teacher's existing identity beliefs and the present classroom dynamics, novice teachers can begin to question their professional identities leading to negative emotions and a reconstruction of those identities. In addition, Kim (2011) investigated the self-perception of non-native English teachers and discovered that the participants displayed low levels of self-esteem due to their non-native status, which played a pivotal role in shaping novice teachers' views of themselves. Therefore, it would be valuable to gain insight into the professional identities of novice non-native teachers.

In summary, this study is valuable due to its various and comprehensive means of collecting data with the aim of understanding what constitutes novice non-native teachers' identity construction, and whether their non-native status makes them struggle with feelings of inadequacy.

Specifically, the use of visual metaphors is predicted to unveil novice EFL teachers' preconceptions regarding their language teacher identities. There are various studies in literature which employs metaphors to investigate language teacher identity. Yet, most of them present participants with pre-established metaphors to choose from or express their ideas through writing or speaking. This study employs the Picture Me task (Hamilton, 2016) and allows participants to generate their own metaphors visually to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions.

The current study enriched the literature by offering a comprehensive exploration of non-native novice teachers' teacher identity construction, drawing insights from diverse perspectives shared by a broad range of non-native early career teachers. By focusing on the perceptions of non-native novice teachers', this research has the potential to encourage reflection among novice non-native teachers, teacher educators, and administrators as it offers fresh insights into the struggles of non-native teachers' and their construction of professional identity. Furthermore, the findings of this study may prompt teacher education programs to place emphasis on identity construction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study aims to explore the components influencing teacher identity as perceived by non-native early career English language teachers, and the impact of Imposter Syndrome on their perception of their language teacher identities. In this chapter, the literature research for the current study is explained, with a focus on key terms, theoretical foundations, and prior research related to the study's focus. Firstly, the discussion revolves around key terms such as teacher identity, non-native speaker teacher, and imposter syndrome, and early career teachers. Following this background knowledge for the present study, the three theoretical frameworks for teacher identity development is discussed and an overview of previous research addressing the issues in this study is given.

2.1. Teacher Identity

One key concept central to this study that must be elaborated on is teacher identity. The literature offers a range of definitions for teacher identity. Burns and Richards (2009) defines identity as a construct which reflects individuals' self-perception and how they perform their roles within various contexts. Reeves (2018) takes a different approach by including external influences in his definition of identity. According to him, identities emerges as individuals assert roles for themselves, while external parties also give identities to them; as a result of these self and external assignments individuals' identities can either align or conflict with each other.

Regardless of whether it is influenced by internal or external factors, Sachs (2005) believe teacher identity to be central to teaching, as "it provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of ‘how to be’, ‘how to act’ and ‘how to understand’ their job and their place in society. Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience." (p. 15).

Although there is general agreement that teacher identity holds significant importance in teaching, opinions vary on what influences the process of identity construction. Goodson and Cole (1994) highlight the impact of both external and internal forces by stating that teachers are individuals whose personal and professional lives are shaped and enriched by various factors both within and beyond the walls of the classroom. Conversely, neglecting the influence of internal factors, Reynolds (1996) believes that a teacher's identity is significantly influenced by their external environment, the expectations placed upon them by others, and the extent to which they permit external influences to shape their professional identity.

Walkington (2005), conversely, focuses on internal factors and states that teacher identity is established upon the basic opinions teachers hold about teaching and their roles, which are continually shaped and reshaped through practical experience.

Another consensus on the concept of teacher identity is that it is an ongoing decision-making process involving personal choices and external influences, which either align with or challenge an individual's claims to identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Similary, Reeves (2018) also states that identity is constantly being shaped, and the process of defining one's identity is a continuous one.

Drawing from the literature on identity, numerous scholars have attempted to outline its primary characteristics. To illustrate, Vargheese and Morgan (2005) claims that the notion of identity involves three specific qualities:

- identity is not a static, and internally consistent phenomenon; rather, it's diverse, and fluid.
- identity is significantly context-dependent, significantly intertwined with social, cultural, and political factors, including interactions with others, institutional environments, and similar influences.
- identity is built and navigated mostly through language and discourse (p.35).

In a similar vein, Rodgers and Scott (2008) propose four key assumptions for identity:

- identity is sculptured by various contexts, influenced by social, cultural, political, and historical factors.
- identity is being constructed via connections with others and is in relation with emotions;

- identity is not stable; but rather fluid
- identity is developed and evaluated through experience across time (p. 733).

In the light of Rodgers and Scott (2008), the current study believes identity to be constructred by the social and cultural context; negotiated through connections with students, parents, colleagues, and managers; and reconstructed through experience in the classroom.

In line with these assumptions provided above, it is suggested for the current study that novice non-native speaker teachers professional identity is influenced by several factors including their experiences in the initial years of their career, their non-native status, their interactions with their colleagues, learners, and administrators; and their feelings and emotions.

2.1.1. Theoretical Perspectives On Identity

In the literature, three principal theoretical perspectives on teacher identity are recognized: psychological/developmental, socio-cultural, and post-structural (Davey, 2013).

Deriving from the theories of Erikson, psychological/developmental perspective concentrates on the inner worlds of individuals when dealing with identity, and portrays identity as a singular, stable essence largely unaffected by context (Day et al., 2006, as cited in Davey, 2013). Although this perspective focuses on the internal selves of individuals, it is crucial to state that it does not disregard the role of society, culture, and relations with the outer world. Penuel and Wertsch (1995) assert that gaining an understanding of identities and identity construction is possible by investigating the way individuals position themselves in terms of social categories. Thus, the psychological/developmental perspective puts internal factors at the core of identity construction but does not overlook the influence of external factors such as social roles, belonging to a certain social group, and culture (Davey, 2013).

The sociocultural perspective of identity concentrates on how groups of individuals function in the world as social communities. This perspective indicates that the identity of an individual encompasses the beliefs, viewpoints, and opinions of the individual. Yet, those beliefs, viewpoints, and opinions are both shaped by and shape their background experiences, personal narratives about the past and their relations (Davey,

2013). Therefore, according to the sociocultural perspective, identity is constructed via social and cultural relations.

Just as other sociocultural theorists like Vygotsky (1978), Lave and Wenger (1998) argued that learning originates from social interactions between individuals rather than within their minds and viewed it as “a fundamentally social phenomenon” (p.3). Embracing the sociocultural perspective, Wenger (1998) suggested five aspects of identity: (1) identity as negotiated experience via participating in communities of practice, (2) identity as community membership, (3) identity as learning trajectory, (4) identity as nexus of multi membership, (5) identity as a relation between the local and the global (p.149). The first aspect asserts that individuals construct their identities by constantly mediating their self-perceptions and others' perceptions. The second aspect is related to the way individuals position themselves as members of communities of practice. The third aspect underscores the way individuals' backgrounds and past experiences shape their identities. The fourth aspect highlights the way individuals' identities consist of various roles. Lastly, the fifth aspect is linked to the way individuals perceive themselves by belonging to certain groups. As can be inferred from his view on identity, Wegner believes identity and practice to be profoundly interconnected.

Additionally, in their situated learning theory, Lave and Wenger (1991) presented two facets: "*learning-in-practice"* (p. 155) and "*identities-in-practice"* (p. 157). In the facet of learning-in-practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) implied that beginner teachers not only learn for the sake of learning itself but also to participate in the practices of the community they aspire to join (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). In the second facet, identities-in-practice, identity is viewed as a concept that is constructed through practice and performance, instead of as a concept that is pre-existing or arising as a result of acquiring specific skills (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). Thus, identities-of-practice conceptualizes identity as being constructed with practice.

Post-structuralist scholars argued that learning how to teach and how to be a teacher goes beyond simply acquiring skills and strategies. It involves the constant process of shaping and reshaping a completely new identity. Therefore, Clarke (2008) used the verb "becoming" to describe the internal and social journey of metamorphosing as a teacher.

Post-structuralist perspective views identity as shaped and reshaped by various social exchanges within the groups in which an individual participates, highlighting the

influence of power dynamics that are exercised within and through discourses. Post-structural lenses reject the idea of a self, and thus the root of a self, instead they focus on the everchanging nature of multiple selves. Similarly, Norton (2020) states that post-structuralism views identity as "diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space" (p.125). From a poststructuralist standpoint, identity is a dynamic process involving discourses among individuals, personal backgrounds, and even emotions. These elements continuously change over time as discourses evolve and contexts vary, consistently constructing and reconstructing identities (Gee, 2001; Zembylas, 2003).

In light of the sociocultural perspective on identity construction, it is considered for the current study that non-native speaker teachers are significantly influenced by others' perceptions and biases. As a result, they feel a sense of belonging to the non-native speaker teacher category, and this affiliation profoundly shapes their identity.

This section presented the three main theoretical perspectives on identity: psychological/developmental, socio-cultural, and post-structural. The following section delves into the construction of language teacher identity and the factors influencing the construction process.

2.1.2. Language Teacher Identity (LTI)

After a brief overview of what identity entails and its definitions by different scholars, the focus shifts to language teacher identity and its discussion in the related literature. Comprehending how language teachers construct their identities is essential for understanding the dynamics of language teaching because experiences, values, beliefs, and perceptions are central to identity (Pennington & Richards, 2016) and the main component which shapes individuals' experiences, values, beliefs, and understanding of the world is language. Thus, language is closely linked with identity. Furthermore, unlike other subjects, in language teaching, the subject matter itself is also the medium through which instruction is delivered. Consequently, a teacher's relationship with and perspective on the language they teach are integral to their identity.

Language teacher identity (LTI) and the construction of LTI is becoming an increasingly significant topic in research on language teacher education and development. However, the theoretical and conceptual exploration of LTI has received relatively little attention (Varghese, et al. 2005). Attempting to address this gap, Barkhuizen (2017) developed a definition for LTI to underscore its various aspects:

> Language teacher identity (LTI) is cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical—it is both inside the teacher and outside in the social, material and technological world. LTI is being and doing, feeling and imagining, and storying. It is struggle and harmony: it is contested and resisted, by self and others, and it is also accepted, acknowledged and valued, by self and others. It is core and peripheral, personal and professional, it is dynamic, multiple, and hybrid, and it is foregrounded and backgrounded. And LTI changes, short-term and over time—discursively in social interaction with teacher educators, learners, teachers, administrators, and the wider community, and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in classrooms, institutions, and online. (p.4)

Other researchers and scholars have attempted to provide insights on the concept of LTI (Miller, 2009; Song, 2016; Sang, 2020). As suggested by Sang (2020), identity refers to the core of language teacher identity, highlighting that it is the manifestation of the individual's comprehension of their self-perception. Likewise, Miller (2009) believes that the concept of language teacher identity involves how an individual perceives the significance of their role as a language teacher and their professional responsibilities within that role. Miller (2009) not only offers a definition for teacher identity but also attempts to illustrate its components by asserting that language teacher identity consists of (1) language teachers' content knowledge, (2) their view of teaching, (3) the manifestation of their teaching skills, (4) the way they are viewed by other teachers and administrators, (5) their ability to reflect on their performance, and (6) their willingness to ongoing learning.

As Miller (2009) states the way teachers are viewed by other teachers and administrators are directly linked to their teacher identity. For this reason, their native or non-native status significantly impacts their self-perception and the perceptions others have of them, shaping the type of language educators they are or aim to be as their language teacher identities are "contextually constructed and fluid, as well as interlaced with the discourses of race, gender, class, religion, and nationality" (Yazan, 2018, p. 28). In addition, Yazan (2018) argues that since it directs their perception of what aspects are essential in language teaching and influences their teaching approach, the way language teachers view the language is influential on their identity. Song

(2016) introduces the influence of emotions into this discourse by, indicating that due to the dynamic and intricate nature of teacher identity, one should go beyond cognitive and rational aspects to understand it. Song (2016) further adds that how teachers perceive, encounter, demonstrate, and discuss emotions is intertwined with their sense of self.

In conclusion, the current consensus in the literature is that language teacher identity is fluid, multiple, contextual, and interwoven with many factors such as gender, race, and native or non-native status (Vargheese & Morgan, 2005; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Miller, 2009; Yazan, 2018) and a better understanding of teacher identity could improve the design and implementation of teacher education programs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Thus, the language teacher identities of novice non-native speaker teachers were the focus of the present study.

2.2. Language Teacher Identity Construction

As it has been discussed in the previous section, literature describes the act of teaching and the process of evolving into a teacher as "identity work" (De Costa & Norton, 2017, p. 7) and a continuous, lifelong journey of "becoming" (Clarke, 2008). The post-structuralist turn in the field allowed LTI to be perceived as an concept that is adaptable, and thus can be purposefully shaped and influenced (De Costa & Norton, 2017). As a result, it became crucial to understand the nature of LTI and the influences on its construction.

According to Richards (2012), there are ten key dimensions that stand at the core of language teaching: proficiency in the language, subject knowledge, teaching skills and strategies, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, student-focused teaching, pedagogical reasoning skills, the ability to theorize from practice, functioning as a member in a community of practice, and professionalism (p, 46). Based on these key dimensions, Pennington and Richards (2016) presented the main underlying aspects of LTI construction:

- Language-related identity: A language teacher's identity is linked to their language proficiency and their native/non-native status in that language. Deriving from this understanding, Pennington and Richards (2016) state that non-native English speaker teachers may concentrate on their non-native status and constantly exhibit worry about their language proficiency. These teachers

might view language proficiency as the core of their identity construction process as competent educators. Thus, understanding the non-native speaker teachers' self-perceptions and identity constructions becomes crucial.

- Disciplinary identity: According to Pennington (2015), formal education in the field of ELT equips teachers with the relevant expertise, and qualifications that are central to the identities of teachers. In addition, it allows them to be professionally acknowledged by the other members of the community. Richards and Farrel (2011) view the recognition and perceptions of colleagues and managers as an important component of teachers' self-perceptions.
- Context-related identity: Another aspect that is influential on LTI construction is the contexts teachers function in. As Richards (2012) states each context offers different opportunities for learning how to teach. The working context can hinder or facilitate teachers in many ways. In some situations, teachers can face criticism or other challenges that result in a conflict between their existing identities and the reality of the working context. As a result, their process of learning to become teachers might be hindered. As Pennington and Richards (2016) expressed, in negative circumstances, teachers might become demotivated, and start to believe that they cannot establish an identity aligned with their values within the given context. In the opposite scenario, teachers might receive constant support and mentorship in their working places. In such conditions, teachers are more likely to align their teaching ideals with their classroom identity, making it easier for them to sustain high motivation in their work and consequently, improve their teaching quality. Thus, it becomes essential to investigate the impact of working context on the LTI construction of early career non-native speaker teachers.
- Self-knowledge and awareness: One other dimension that is believed to be central to LTI construction is self-knowledge and awareness. To shape their identities in a realistic way, teachers must be conscious of their strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies in order to take advantage of these strengths and cope with the weaknesses. Therefore, the identity of a language teacher should contain a strong and realistic awareness on skills and abilities (Pennington & Richards, 2016).

- Student-related identity: As displayed above, a good portion of LTI construction involves being a competent teacher. Therefore, teachers not only have to be aware of their capacity as teachers but also of their students' capacities (Pennington & Richards, 2016). With this awareness, they can develop strategies to improve the quality of learning and cope with self-doubt or blame they might fall into in terms of student failure. Thus, it is valuable to investigate the role of students' perceptions on the LTI construction of non-native speaker early career teachers.

Teachers' self-concept is another construct associated with teachers' self-perceptions and identity. It can be described as the extent to which teachers view themselves as effective in their roles as language teachers (Yeung, Craven & Kaur, 2014). White and Ding (2009) conducted a study with the aim of investigating the relationship between teacher self-concept and teacher involvement. The researchers concluded that self-concept is a strong source of motivation for attempting to implement changes in their teaching strategies.

According to Horwitz (1996), another notion associated with self-concept is anxiety. Horwitz (1996) believes that a significant portion of teacher anxiety originates from the inherent challenge to learners' self-perception of competence that arises when communicating in a second language that they do not fully master.

> Because complex and nonspontaneous mental operations are required to communicate at all, any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic. ...adult language learners' perceptions of genuineness in presenting themselves to others may (also) be threatened by the limited range of meaning and affect which can be deliberately communicated *(p. 128).*

Liu and Wu (2021) examined the foreign language anxiety of teachers. They concluded that the foreign language anxiety triggers were exclusively connected to self-confidence in terms of linguistic abilities and proficiency in the target language.

Another construct linked with teachers' self-beliefs and perceived self-concept is their self-efficacy. As it is defined by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), "the teacher's beliefs

in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (p.223). In addition, teacher self-efficacy is believed to be a significant element that defines the teachers' engagement or failure in the profession. In an effort to further explore the impact of teacher self-efficacy beliefs on EFL teachers, Fathi and Derakhshan (2019) conducted a study in the Iranian context. They revealed that teacher self-efficacy is a predictor of teaching stress.

Due to the fact that they have pre-existing beliefs about what kind of teachers they will be, and possess an anticipated identity they want to achieve, many pre-service teachers or early career language teachers often feel overwhelmed when faced with the disparity between their anticipated teaching experiences and the reality (Xu, 2012; Daniel, 2015). However, because identity is socially constructed and multi-dimensional, these educators may be unprepared for the ongoing and intense conflict between the identity they wish to adopt and the identity imposed on them by various internal and external factors within the social context of teaching and learning (Varghese et al., 2005). Therefore, it becomes crucial to gain a comprehensive insight into the LTI construction process of novice teachers and investigate the impact of constructs as their working contexts, non-native status, and their emotions and feelings. Based on the need to understand the LTI construction of novice teachers, the literature on early career teachers, non-native teachers, and the processes, feelings, and emotions they deal with as they shape their identity is presented in the following sections.

2.2.1. LTI Construction Of Early Career Teachers

Another key term which is needed to be mentioned as an integral concept to LTI construction is the initial years in the profession. Early career teachers are said to face various emotional challenges throughout their initial years in the profession (Bahia, et al.,2013; Nazari et al., 2023). Before delving into the affective factors experienced by early career teachers, it is necessary to define who early career teachers are. While it is undeniable that an early career teacher denotes someone in their early years of teaching, there is no agreement on the specific duration of years to which this term applies. Some researchers employ the term only for the first year of teaching (Riberio, 2014), and some others utilize it for the first three years (Huberman, 1993) or five years of the job (Kim & Roth, 2011). In the current study, an early career teacher refers to a teacher within the first five years of their teaching experience.

Even though the definitions of an early career teacher change with regard to the years of experience, the one consensus is that the early years are crucial for teachers as they are considered critical for a successful teaching career (Loughran et al., 2001) because even though they are defined as times full of emotional difficulties, including feelings of isolation and being left to their own devices (Farrell, 2012), the early years consist of transformative events that result in the reevaluation of the identities of inexperienced teachers (Schutz et al., 2018).

Ryan (1986) draws an outline for the emotional challenge teachers experience throughout their careers in a sequence of four stages: fantasy, survival, mastery, and impact. The first two stages are related to early career teachers.

- The stage of fantasy: The first stage includes the period when early career teachers, yet to step into the classroom as teachers, engage in imaginative visions of what the teaching profession will entail. Bearing an idealistic optimism, they create mental images of their future students and envision cultivating a positive and pleasant classroom environment.
- The stage of survival: The second stage encompasses the period when early career teachers struggle with preserving their professional identity beliefs in the face of the reality of a classroom and internalize students' problems as personal shortcomings. In the survival stage, if a discrepancy is present between a teacher's existing identity beliefs and the reality of their classroom dynamics, early career teachers can start to question their professional identities which can lead to negative emotions and a consideration of those identities (Cross & Hong, 2009). This discrepancy can be a result of the fact that although teacher education programs are adequate in preparing pre-service teachers with the required knowledge for the profession, the real classroom setting may differ immensely from the practicum experiences and novice teachers' premature beliefs related to the profession (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).
- The stage of mastery: The third stage includes starting to acquire the skills of teaching through a gradual and systematic process. As a result, self-assurance and optimism increase.
- The stage of impact: The last stage consists of the ability to handle diverse situations in the classroom, and mastery of teaching skills as a result of

> accumulating more experience and reflection on their teaching journey (Tejeda et al., 2016).

Ryan's (1986) stage of fantasy, the pre-existing beliefs of novice teachers about what kind of teachers they will be, had been highlighted by another scholar, Lortie (1975). Lortie (1975) illustrates this concept by the *apprenticeship of observation* term he coined. He believes that novice teachers take on the behaviors and strategies of the teachers they have encountered during their student lives.

> There are ways in which being a student is like serving an apprenticeship in teaching; students have protracted face-to-face and consequential interactions with established teachers. (p. 61)

According to Lortie (1975), the observations of novice teachers from when they were students cumulatively form their ideas of what is considered effective and ineffective in teaching. These already existing beliefs in teaching are hard to break and tend to be carried throughout the professional careers of the teachers. In addition, they are closely linked with the identity of the teachers. Due to these already existing beliefs, novice teachers grapple with the shock of reality when they step into real classrooms.

As noted previously, transitioning from university to the classroom is not an instant shift and novice teachers start seeing themselves as teachers gradually, as they gained experience in the field (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). So, without a doubt, to gain a comprehensive insight into the construction of a teacher's identity, one should gain a profound understanding of the challenges novice teachers encounter in the initial years of their careers. Karaman and Karataş (2013) have attempted to identify the said challenges teachers encounter at the beginning of their careers and generated three concepts in terms of difficulties early-career teachers face: "diffuculties in terms of support", "identity difficulties", and "pedagogy issues" (p.21). Indicating that these difficulties influence the identity construction of novice teachers, the researchers emphasized the need to concentrate on how to aid early-career teachers at the beginning of their careers.

In addition to challenges faced by them, there are some other main factors that should be studied to understand the identity construction of early career teachers. Flores and Day (2006) identified three constructs that made an impact on their identity

construction: "prior influences, initial teacher training and teaching practice, and context of teaching" (p.223). The findings revealed that both positive and negative experiences of participants with their past instructors influenced their identities. In contrast, their pre-service education seemed to have little influence on their identity construction. Lastly, in terms of their context of teaching, it was revealed that whether teachers' environments encouraged collaboration or not was quite influential on their attitudes towards teaching. To illustrate, teachers who worked in environments that fostered cooperation tended to have more positive attitudes toward teaching, whereas teachers who were provided with no assistance developed negative attitudes. Thus, the impact of working context on teacher identity of novice teachers should not be disregarded.

The literature reveals the demanding nature of the initial years has a shaping effect on teachers' self-efficacy as well. To give an instance, in the Canadian context, Faez and Valeo (2012) explored the self-efficacy perceptions of novice teacher as well as whether they feel ready enough to start their careers. The researchers studied 115 participants through a questionnaire and interviews. The findings implied that teachers' perceptions of their efficacy were influenced by the setting and circumstances of their teaching, revealing the importance of examining the influence of different working contexts on teacher self-perceptions. The study also suggested that novice teachers' perceptions of themselves and their skills correlated with their initial experiences in the profession and their ability to adapt to their new role as teachers. The participants who had trouble adapting to their new roles reevaluated their abilities as teachers. Thus, in line with previous studies presented in the section, this study also highlights the importance of assessing novice teachers at the beginning of their careers to make sure they develop a strong sense of self as teachers.

Another example is in the context of Singapore. Farrel (2003) investigated the initial year of novice teachers. Stating that initial years are " characterized by a type of reality shock" (p. 95). Farrel conducted a case study with novice teacher Wee in the first year of his career. Wee seemed to have handled his first year of teaching quite well, but he stated that he received little true support from the school or his coworkers, so he had to rely primarily on his own initiative. Thus, Farrel states that the working context of novice teachers and the assistance they receive are as influential on their development and identities as the novice teachers themselves. Farrel (2003) also emphasizes the role of teacher education programs by indicating that they should

deliver diverse situations novice teachers can undergo to lessen the effect of "the reality shock" (p. 95) and ease the transition process of novice teachers.

The study conducted by Hong (2011) explored the rationale behind the choices of some early career teachers to change professions whereas others chose to stay. Through interviews, the researcher explored fourteen participants, seven who have left teaching and seven who still continue to teach. Although both groups stated that they had an innate motivation to work as a teacher in the beginning, early-career teachers with lower levels of self-esteem and trust in their abilities chose to quit the profession. All of the participants recognized alike difficulties in terms of teaching like issues with classroom management and the ability to transfer their content knowledge to learners. Participants who left the profession expressed constantly feeling like they were subjected to unrealistic expectations and responsibilities. The common aspect shared by participants who chose to continue in the profession was being able to make meaningful connections with learners and being assisted by their colleagues and managers. This study emphasizes the importance of exploring the difficulties faced by novice teachers and understanding their feelings as well as providing them with better training and preparation strategies. Similarly, Kitching, Morgan, and O'Leary (2009) wanted to understand the aspects that encouraged and disheartened early career teachers. It was seen that the elements such as student participation and success facilitated the motivation and resilience of early-career teachers. One of the participants commented "In the staffroom a teacher made a remark how some of my past class students cannot read their readers. I feel so worried that I didn't do enough for them, was my teaching good enough? Is it good enough at the moment? Are children losing out by being in my class?" (p. 51). This excerpt from the interview emphasized the importance of remarks from colleagues on the self-efficacy beliefs and self-esteem levels of novice teachers. This study provides an evidence on the importance of developing a strong language teacher identity in the initial years of the profession. Kozikoğlu and Senemoğlu (2018) also investigated the same phenomenon, the difficulties faced by beginning teachers from different subject fields, including EFL, and revealed that their struggles were not limited to student rapport or classroom management. Beginning teachers also struggled with their relationships with colleagues, managers, and parents. In a similar vein to Kitching, Morgan, and O'Leary (2009), this study also emphasizes the influence of colleagues and managers in the experiences of novice teachers and their teacher identity construction.

The impact of early years on the existing beliefs and attitudes of teachers has been considered in the Turkish context as well. Due to the significance of the context, studies conducted by Turkish scholars should also be considered. To illustrate, Erkmen (2014) examined the attitudes of inexperienced EFL teachers regarding teaching and learning. Through a variety of data collection tools, nine participants expressed their already existing beliefs and attitudes toward teaching and how they have changed as a result of experience. The researcher discovered that the early views of novice teachers on teaching were significantly shaped by their earlier learning experiences and previous teachers. Findings also suggested that beginning teachers undergo a period of constructing and reconstructing their beliefs and identities due to their initial experiences. They modify their perceptions and teaching strategies as a means to meet the expectations of their learners. Thus, it is crucial to supply early-career teachers with the necessary awareness and support to review and evaluate their prior beliefs and teaching methods to enhance the quality of education.

Similarly, Çakmak (2013) examined early career teachers' self-perceptions and the challenges they encountered throughout their first years. Early career teachers described their initial experiences as "tiring, difficult, hard, compelling, demanding, tiredness, disappointment" (p.57) and struggled with a lack of self-confidence in terms of their content knowledge, and questioned whether they were efficient in terms of conveying this knowledge to the learners. Çakmak (2013) concluded there should be further attempts to gain insights into the experiences of early career teachers in order to make their transition from theory to practice smooth and enhance their career development.

Drawing from these, it is evident that during the early years, due to a lack of experience and preparation to cope with emotionally challenging incidents that are bound to happen in the classrooms (Bahia et al., 2013); early career teachers often face anxiety, frustration, self-doubt, and a lack of confidence during their initial years in the profession (Tejeda et al., 2016). These feelings and emotions not only affect the self-perception of teachers but also shape their professional identities (Nazari et al., 2023) and their decision to quit or continue in the profession. As suggested by Veenman (1984) and Farrel (2003), the likelihood of beginning teachers quitting teaching increases with the number of issues they believe they have encountered.

Identity development and emotions are deeply interconnected (Zeymblas, 2003). Thus, a teacher’s ability to recognize, evaluate, and regulate their emotions and feelings of

inadequacy (Bellocchi, 2019) is closely linked with their identity. To illustrate, Nichols, Schutz, Rodgers and Bilica (2016) aimed to gain a deeper insight into the link between the emotional states of early career teachers and their identities. The findings of their study suggested that as a result of their emotions, participants started to question their pre-existing perceptions related to teaching and themselves as educators. The study emphasized the importance of emotions in the construction of novice teachers' identities. Thus, it is essential to take the emotional experiences of teachers into account when studying teacher identity construction. In addition, Tejeda et al. (2016) examined the feelings and emotions faced by five early career teachers and how they manage those emotions in the initial years of their careers through interviews and observations. The findings suggested that participants struggled with the feeling of uneasiness due to their lack of experience and low levels of self-confidence. In addition, there were times they experienced frustration as a result of feeling like they were disrespected by the students and they were not perceived as a true authority.

In conclusion, it is evident that the emotions and feelings of novice teachers such as anxiety, self-doubt, frustration, and feelings of inadequacy are interconnected with their teacher identity. Thus, emotional challenges and feelings novice teachers experience throughout the initial years of their careers are another focus of this study.

2.2.2. LTI Construction And Native Speakerism

Another key term central to this study's focus that requires a definition is native/non-native speaker dichotomy, specifically, non-native speakers. A range of definitions in the literature regarding the concepts of native/non-native speaker teacher dichotomy exists. Before delving into that, it is essential to provide definitions for native and non-native speakers.

A person is typically considered a native speaker of English if it is their first language, thus the primary criterion for determining native speaker status is commonly based on birth (Davies, 1991 as cited in Medgyes, 2001). In the literature, linguistic theory has regarded native speakers as the sole reliable providers of linguistic data (Chomsky, 1965).

On the other hand, non-native speakers are typically understood as individuals whose first language is different from the language they are currently using or learning. Thus,

it is considered that they do not possess the characteristics of native speakers in theory (Boecher, 2005).

The literature reveals a diversity of opinions on native and non-native speaker teachers. According to Stern (1983), so-called native speakers possess an innate understanding of language rules, comprehension of vocabulary, the capability to engage in communication within social contexts, a diverse set of language skills, and the ability to use the language creatively (cited in Cook, 1999). Yet, as Paikeday (1985) asserts in his critical examination of the perceived superiority associated with native speakers, the notion of the native speaker is merely a construct of linguists' imagination. Also, Rampton (1990) argues that being born into a language does not ensure being a proficient user of the language. In addition, Phillipson (1992) asserts that the belief that native speakers are inherently more proficient language teachers than non-native speaker teacher lacks scientific support (Phillipson, 1992). In a similar vein, many researchers contend that non-native speakers have the potential to acquire native-level linguistic proficiency, including fluency, familiarity with linguistic expressions, and target culture (Davies, 1991; Phillipson, 1992, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy, 1999).

Phillipson (1992) argues that non-native teachers were more adept at instructing the language to adults compared to those who learned it as their first language during childhood. Likewise, Cook (2005) believes that non-native speaker teachers not only present good examples of proficient users of language but also give hope to learners and motivate them as past learners of the language. In addition, Canagarajah (1999) believes non-native speakers to be compelling educators owing to their multicultural backgrounds. Seidlhofer (1999) further states that "native speakers are aware of the destination, but they are unfamiliar with the terrain that must be traversed to reach it; they have not journeyed the same path themselves." (as cited in Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

Medgyes (1994) outlines six favorable qualities of non-native speaker teachers: 1) They serve as commendable learner models for their students; 2) They exhibit adeptness in effectively teaching language strategies; 3) They have the capacity to offer additional information about the language to their students; 4) They comprehend the challenges and requirements of the students; 5) They demonstrate the ability to foresee and foresee language difficulties; and 6) In EFL environments, they can leverage the students' native language to their benefit.

Although numerous scholars have indicated that they possess the necessary proficiency and experience, non-native English teachers still encounter obstacles and discrimination within the English Language Teaching field. They are affected by the belief that native speakers are the sole models for teaching English (Kim, 2011). They feel their professional worth is unappreciated, and perceive an unreachable standard they are expected to meet (Rajagopalan, 2005). These beliefs and challenges encountered lead to low to levels of self-confidence and anxiety among non-native speaker teachers (Kamhi-Stein, 2000) along with "self-acknowledged bias stemming from their ethnicity or nonnative status" (p.10) and many scholars have proven so. To illustrate, Maum's (2003) study provides evidence as the non-native teachers openly conveyed their frustration in experiencing discrimination in the field. The research conducted by Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) also proves that non-native teachers do not feel adequate or valued in the field of English language teaching due to feeling like their abilities are frequently checked.

In addition, although possessing adequate teaching skills and qualifications, non-native teachers repeatedly find that these accomplishments are insufficient for job opportunities, feeling like they often have to prove their qualifications to colleagues and students. They consistently encounter troubles and need to exert double the effort compared to native English-speaking teachers to gain acceptance and respect (Amin, 2004) whereas native teachers are consistently employed with minimal or no formal teacher education, as there exists a preconception that being a native user of a language equates to being an efficient teacher of that language (Seidlhofer, 1999).

In the Turkish context, the situation is not so different. Ozturk and Atay (2010) executed a case study research with the aim of examining the perspectives of three non-native early career teachers on the native speaker/non-native speaker situation. When asked about their opportunities in terms of recruitment, participants were not hopeful due to hearing that having a few years of experience would enhance their chances and that a native teacher would be perceived as "much more welcome" (p.137). In addition, the findings suggested that participants feel uncomfortable in terms of accent and pronunciation. One of the participants openly conveyed her frustration with the fact that she works with Polish and American teachers and faces discrimination in terms of salary.

> *The Polish are considered native too, I can't believe that.... the Polish has English with an accent. I'm sure they are paid much more. I can't believe this: I'm a non-native speaker in my own country. (p.138)*

In addition, participants conveyed that parents often asked the management for native teachers. Another study in the Turkish context was conducted by Coskun (2013). He examined the attitudes of Turkish EFL teachers regarding the initiative to employ native teachers from inner-circle countries and found out that a significant portion of the participants opposed this decision. Among their reasons to oppose were potential job discrimination, and the threat of discrepancy in terms of salary. Some of the participants even stated that they felt like they would not be needed if their native counterparts arrived. The teachers also highlighted that native-speaker teachers would not have the necessary background to teach English, but would only be employed due to their native status. They also opposed the idea of co-teaching, sharing a class with a native speaker teacher, due to the belief that they would lose confidence as well as authority and dominance; and would face conflicts with the co-teacher. In addition, Tatar (2019) found out that non-native speaker teachers acknowledged the fact that a preference for native-speaker teachers in terms of recruitment exists in the Turkish context. Participants also highlighted that administrators hire native teachers just because they are native regardless of their educational background or previous experiences. In addition, participants openly conveyed feelings of demotivation and low self-confidence as a result of facing discrimination in the workplace.

In her doctoral dissertation, Skliar (2014) explored favoritism towards native English speakers within the Turkish context. A significant portion of non-native teachers gave instances where they experienced discrimination from both the administration and student as well as reporting feeling less confident in their speaking abilities and accent. The participants also highlighted that native teachers are often hired for promotional purposes by schools and are typically paid higher amounts of money than their non-native counterparts.

As the growing body of evidence has proven so, non-native and native dichotomy is an important problem that should be studied. It is evident that non-native status of novice teachers is interconnected with their self-efficacy beliefs, the way they perceive themselves, and their professional identity. Thus, the way Turkish non-native teachers perceive themselves and native teachers are another focus of this study.

2.2.3. LTI Construction And The Imposter Syndrome

It is evident from the literature that the fact that they are non-native speakers of the language they are teaching has an impact on the language teacher identity of NNESTs (Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Kim, 2011; Tatar, 2019). Over the past decade, researchers identified different phenomena experienced among NNESTs (Selvi et al., 2024) due to their non-native speaker status, as follows:

- Inferiority complex: According to Medgyes (1994), NNESTs never feel competent enough in terms of their linguistic knowledge. They are constantly self-conscious about the fact that English is not their L1 and they suffer from discomfort because of this. These beliefs manifest themselves as a type of 'inferiority complex' (p. 95).
- Schizophrenia (Medgyes, 1999): Medgyes (1999) argues that NNESTs struggle to maintain a balance between their L1 and L2 personas. In fact, they become so immersed in the language that they start integrating them into their personal lives which results in two distinctive personas, "displaying signs of schizophrenia" (p. 95).
- I-am-not-a-native-speaker syndrome: Suarez (2000) believes that the constant comparison between NESTs and NNESTs leads to catastrophic outcomes in the mentality of NNESTs. They tend to feel insufficient and ineffective as teachers. Additionally, some NNESTs possess a low level of tolerance for their grammar and pronunciation mistakes and evaluate their proficiency based on those mistakes unfairly. Thus, they suffer from the "I-am-not-a-native-speaker syndrome"
- Stockholm syndrome: Bejerot describes the phenomenon of Stockholm Syndrome as a reaction to emotional abuse wherein an individual feels compelled to develop an emotional bond with the person who abused them in order not to suffer. Llurda (2009) illustrates a type of Stockholm Syndrome experienced by NNESTs as they still try to survive in a world that esteems native speaker teachers as the sole representers of the language.

The last phenomenon expressed by Selvi et al. (2024) is the Imposter Syndrome which is also one of the key components of the present study. The phenomenon known as "imposter syndrome" was initially underlined in the field of education by Clance and

Imes (1978) in their influential work in which they conducted interviews with 150 accomplished women who had achieved academic degrees, high scores on standardized tests, or received recognition from colleagues and organizations, yet, still experiencing a sense of inadequacy or a feeling of perceiving themselves as unsuccessful.

It is crucial to clarify that the Impostor Syndrome does not fit into the traditional understanding of a syndrome (Clance, 1985), as it “lacks elements of disease or disorder (p. 23). With the aim of preventing any associations with pathology, Clance and Imes (1978) intentionally employed the more neutral term "imposter phenomenon".

Experiencing the impostor phenomenon indicates struggling with a set of interconnected emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. The emotions and feelings "impostor phenomenon" includes are a sense of self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy, and an expectation of failure that troubles individuals who attribute their accomplishments to luck or external factors rather than owning it to their own abilities (Nelson, 2011). Individuals who experience the impostor phenomenon often experience emotions or thoughts related to the fear of being exposed as incompetent, in other words, fraudulence (Clance and Imes, 1978).

In addition, those who struggle with imposter syndrome find themselves stuck in a destructive emotional cycle. As Fraenza (2016) states, despite their notable success, they struggle to embrace and acknowledge their accomplishments fully and persistently hold the belief that they have tricked others into thinking they are more capable than they truly are. They tend to ascribe their achievements to luck and struggle with accepting compliments for their achievements as they consistently focus on negative feedback and attribute it to their weaknesses (Casselman et al., 2006). Additionally, individuals experiencing the impostor phenomenon fear the embarrassment and discomfort linked to failure, along with the emotions of appearing inadequate (Clance & O’Toole, 1988). Also, these individuals tend to overestimate the competence of others, often doing a disservice to themselves by comparing their weaknesses to the strengths they perceive in others.

As it has been noted previously, individuals experiencing Imposter Syndrome become trapped in a cycle of emotions, thoughts, and actions that can significantly influence and dominate their sense of being and lives (Harvey & Katz, 1984). Thus, it influences the language teacher identities of early-career non-native teachers.

In the context of language teaching, a distinct form of impostor syndrome appears, known as “NNST Impostorhood” (Bernat, 2009), characterized by a sense of inauthenticity or fraudulence that does not stem from high achievement, but the feelings of inadequacy in assuming the role of a language teacher in a field that recognizes native speakers as the best teachers of the language. Several researchers employed the NNST Impostorhood Scale (2008) developed by Bernat to investigate the impact of the phenomenon on native speakers (Razmjoo, 2014; Daquilanto, 2015). Razmjoo's study considered its impact on students with English majors, yet the results were insignificant. Daquilanto (2015) utilized the scale to assess the impostorhood and anxiety experienced by 15 EFL student teachers. The findings revealed that imposterhood affects the student teachers' confidence in their abilities as teachers as well as their anxiety as teachers. The need for further investigation has been expressed by the researcher.

The scale has not been utilized in the Turkish context. Considering all these, it is evident that there is a need for investigating the Impostorhood Syndrome experienced by non-native English speaker teachers of Turkish origin. To understand to what extent their non-native status and the so-called Imposter Syndrome affect their professional identity, the current study strives to examine two aspects of imposter syndrome-low self-efficacy beliefs, and fraudulence- in the self-perceptions of early-career non-native speaker teachers via the Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposterhood Scale.

2.3. Using Metaphors To Understand Teacher Identity

Metaphors go beyond being mere figures of speech; they serve as a fundamental mechanism of the mind, enabling the modeling and concrete representation of past experiences. Therefore, metaphors can be viewed as a psychological process of modeling that results in fresh conceptual insights (Zhao, et al. 2010). Schon (1983) also suggests that metaphors play a role in shaping or reshaping images of these categories, aiding in the comprehension of events within educational pursuits. Hence, employing techniques that elicit metaphors can be effective in gaining insights into how individuals conceptualize their experiences.

It is a frequent occurrence to encounter metaphors in research studies focusing on the field of teaching. Numerous research studies have investigated the metaphors employed by either future teachers or those currently in the teaching profession to gain an understanding on their beliefs regarding teaching, education, and experiences

across different subject areas (Martinez et al., 2001; Berci, 2007; Mahlios et al., 2010; Ma & Gao, 2016; Ahkemoğlu & Kesen Mutlu, 2016). As Saban (2006) suggests, metaphors serve as valuable insights into the professional thoughts and cognitive processes of teachers.

The literature frequenly explores the metaphors prospective teacher and teachers use to convey their identities as well (Farrel, 2006; East, 2009; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Seferoğlu et al., 2009; Buchanan, 2015; Nguyen, 2016; Erickson & Pinnegar, 2017; Gao & Cui, 2021). Sumsion (2002) argues that metaphors not only encapsulate our existing knowledge but also broaden it. Thus, due to their comprehensive nature, through metaphors generated by early career English language teachers, a through undersanding of the way teachers perceive themselves can be acquired.

As Karabay (2016) argues, metaphors play a crucial role in shaping individuals' comprehension of behaviors and concepts related to specific events and phenomena, enabling them to articulate thoughts on complex concepts and translate abstract ideas into tangible ones. Without a doubt, to understand the concept of metaphor fully, it is essential to examine the term "metaphor" through the explanations provided by different scholars. One definition which is provided by Oxford, et. al. (1998) is that metaphor “involves employing a familiar object or event as a conceptual tool to elucidate features of a more complex subject or situation” (p. 4). In other words, it is the act of making use of a well-known item or object to make sense of a more intricate concept. Another definition is given by Holman (1980) includes the idea that a metaphor is a linguistic device where two dissimilar things are implicitly compared because they share a similarity. As it can be understood from these definitions, metaphors act as cognitive tools individuals use to apprehend the world around them based on their mental images.

Metaphors affect the way we make sense of the world around us, or in the words of Saban (2006) ‘For better or worse they fundamentally affect our way of conceptualizing the world and reality whether we are aware of this phenomenon or not’ (p. 299). Erickson and Pinnegar (2017) further adds that metaphors not only can make us gain a grasp on teachers’ understanding of their identity and beliefs but also the classroom environments they aim to establish, and their approaches to teaching and learning. Since metaphors are described as the linguistic expressions of meanings and actions derived from personal experiences (Schon, 1993), it is only natural to utilize metaphors in identity studies. As a result, it is remarkable how frequently

metaphors are utilized to examine teacher identity and its development (Saban, 2011; Uslu, 2015; Karabay, 2016).

One instance is the frequently cited study by Thomas and Beauchamp (2010) in which they explored the self-perceptions of novice teachers. The metaphors given by 45 novice teachers were analyzed to evaluate their self-perceptions. One of the participants utilized the metaphor of "a coat hanger" to indicate that they believed everything in the classroom depended on the teachers and it may fall if the teacher is not able to aid learners. This metaphor strongly displays the burden and heavy responsibilities novice teachers felt they were under. The metaphors of the participants also displayed a strong lack of self-esteem and a common belief that they lack power in their workplaces. Thomas and Beauchamp (2010) concluded that in order to adequately prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of teaching and the demanding nature of the profession, it is essential to raise their awareness on the construction of their identities.

Another instance is the study of Kavanoz (2016). With the aim of investigating teacher identities, Kavanoz (2016) conducted a metaphor analysis study. She asked 94 student teachers to provide answers for the sentence: “An EFL teacher is like ... because ...” (p. 21). The researcher generated eleven themes from the metaphors provided by the participants, such as "source, knowledge provider, artist, craftsperson" (p. 22). Upon the detailed analysis of the results, it became evident that the participants exhibited a shift from teacher-focused metaphors to student-centered ones, as a result of their classroom practice. In addition, Zhu and Zhu (2018) attempted to gain insight into the identities of pre-service teachers using metaphors. Sixty participants from China and sixty participants from America were asked for metaphors to describe their teaching and themselves as teachers before and after their practicum experiences. Three different themes emerged from the metaphors, including the way participants view themselves, their development as teachers, and the impact of their working context (p. 2).

More recently, in the Turkish context, Efeoğlu (2023) conducted a study to investigate the impact of years of experience on 184 EFL student teachers' identities via metaphors. The findings unveiled that the experience had an impact on their identities. Additionally, the metaphors utilized by participants moved on from teacher-focused to learner-focused due to their experience in the field.

Another investigation of teacher identity was conducted by Fenwick (2000) via metaphor analysis. The metaphors were organized into four different categories: "guide, outfitter, firestarter, and caregiver" (p. 62). Findings suggested that participants viewed themselves as individuals guiding learners through already-discovered pathways due to their familiarity with the environment. Almost invariably, participants viewed themselves as the lead in the learning process. They stated that their duties included keeping learners eager to learn and secure throughout the journey of learning. This study signifies the importance of metaphors and identity to work on encouraging teachers to critically examine their work, teaching strategies, and the efficiency of their teaching.

Similarly, Erickson and Pinnegar (2017) utilized metaphors and found that "each metaphor brought elements of identity and teaching practice together in unique and divergent ways" (p.106). Thus, the importance of metaphors in comprehending teachers' identities and beliefs should not be disregarded.

The researchers mentioned earlier in this section have explored teacher identity with a range of different aims through the use of metaphors and their analysis. Their results have proven that metaphor is seen as a valuable method for gaining an understanding of teachers' thoughts, beliefs, and emotions regarding their work. Yet, as it can be seen in the previous studies, metaphor studies on teacher identity generally focus on the identity construction of pre-service teachers, leaving a notable gap in terms of metaphor studies on identity construction of novice teachers in the Turkish context. Considering the effectiveness of metaphor analysis on understanding teacher identity and the gap in the literature in terms of novice teachers, the current study aimed to investigate the identity construction of early career teachers who have 0-5 years experience. With this aim in mind, the present study utilized the Picture Me task designed by Hamilton (2016). Unlike other research studies where participants were presented with pre-established metaphors to choose from and provide reasons for their choice (Buchanan, 2015), or where individuals expressed their metaphorical views of teaching through speaking or writing (Thomson, 2015); the Picture Me task allows participants to generate their metaphors by taking photographs or drawing pictures, filling a significant gap in the literature.

Just like Hamilton (2016), several other researchers utilized digitally captured images to gain an understanding of teaching and teacher identity. Davis (2017) employed visual metaphors to understand the self-perceptions of two EFL student teachers. They

concluded that the metaphors let them gain a deep understanding of teacher identities by making "the experience coherent" (Musoff, 2012, p. 302 as cited in Davis, 2017). Similarly, Birello and Pujola (2023) evaluated the visual metaphors of 143 student teachers to understand how they perceive writing. They concluded that visual metaphors are valuable in terms of symbolizing concepts related to teaching. In addition, visuals help participants to convey their opinions beyond just words.

In this chapter, key terms relevant to the current study were presented and the framework for the study was outlined. Previous research on topics such as teacher identity, language teacher identity, emotions experienced by novice teachers, and native/non-native teacher dichotomy was reviewed. It is worth noting that studies focusing on the language identity construction of early career teachers in Türkiye are limited, as highlighted by Hamiloğlu (2014). Consequently, the significance of the current study was emphasized in relation to the literature. The next chapter details the methodology employed in this study, including the methods of data collection and analysis

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research design is presented in detail. The mixed methods approach is elaborated upon, discussing the theoretical framework and mixed methods research paradigm, followed by the introduction of the research design as context and the participants of the study. Data collection tools, such as the Picture Me task, the focus group interview, the demographic form, and the Non-Native English Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale, are presented, along with thorough data analysis methods in qualitative and quantitative terms. Lastly, the methods employed to justify the trustworthiness of the research is presented.

Prior to detailing the specific methodology employed to address them, it is essential to acknowledge the research questions of the present study. The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How does being non-native speakers of English influence early career English language teachers' self-perceptions?
2. Does the Imposter Syndrome have an impact on the language teacher identities of non-native early career English language teachers? If yes, what components of the Imposter Syndrome are experienced?
3. What factors cause difference in the identity perceptions of non-native early career English language teachers?

To address these questions, a mixed methods research approach has been employed, and participants selected for the study are non-native English speaker language teachers with 0 to 5 years of experience. A comprehensive description of the data collection tools and data analysis methods is provided, along with the reasoning behind their selection.

3.1. Research Paradigm: Mixed Methods Approach

Recognizing the challenge of offering a precise definition for expansive terms like mixed methods research, Johnson et al. (2007) state that mixed methods research is characterized by the incorporation of qualitative and quantitative research approaches

by a researcher or a team. This includes combining perspectives, methods of data collection, analysis techniques, and inference strategies to attain a thorough understanding and validation of findings

Creswell and Clark (2018) compile the characteristics of mixed methods research instead of attempting to pinpoint a singular definition. They outline four features as follows:

1. systematically gathering and scrutinizing both qualitative and quantitative data in a rigorous manner to address research questions and hypotheses
2. incorporating or blending these two types of data and their respective outcomes
3. structuring these processes into well-defined research designs that offer the rationale and steps for conducting the study
4. contextualizing these procedures within theoretical and philosophical frameworks

Mixed methods research is employed in diverse situations to address specific needs comprehensively. It integrates qualitative and quantitative data for complete and corroborated results, provides deeper insights into initial findings, aids exploration before using standardized instruments, enhances experimental studies by incorporating qualitative aspects, and facilitates the thorough description and comparison of different case types (Creswell & Clark, 2018). As suggested by Creswell and Clark (2018), utilizing mixed methods research yields a richer body of evidence for investigating a research issue compared to relying solely on either quantitative or qualitative methodologies. Driscoll (2007) asserts that gathering both quantitative and qualitative data via various approaches can result in the emergence of unforeseen themes and data which would not have been apparent otherwise. In summary, a researchers must take into account their research capabilities, the time and the resources available to conduct thorough data collection and analysis processes. Given the aspects discussed above, employing a mixed designs study was well-suited for the current study to ensure comprehensive results.

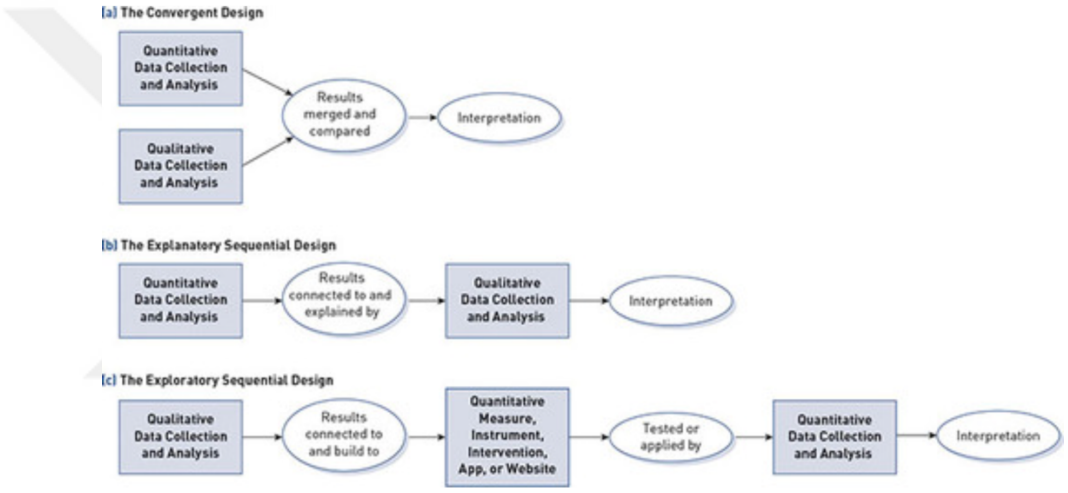
Creswell and Clark (2013) identify three types of mixed method designs.

- The convergent design: This technique involves the integration of both the quantitative and qualitative findings for comparison or combination in order to gain a more thorough comprehension.

- The explanatory sequential design: This technique implements the quantitative data collection phase first. In the next phase, qualitative data is gathered and analyzed to clarify or expand upon the quantitative findings.
- The exploratory sequential design: The exploratory sequential design starts with and usually emphasizes qualitative data. Based on the qualitative findings, a quantitative phase is conducted informed by the qualitative results. (p. 217-222).

The figure below illustrates the three designs.

Figure 1: Three Types Of Mixed Method Designs



Adopted from: *Creswell & Clark, 2023, p. 256*

One other type of mixed method design in the embedded design. According to Creswell and Clark (2010), in the embedded mixed methods design, the gathering and examination of both quantitative and qualitative data are combined, and "the collection and analysis of the secondary data set may occur before, during, and/or after the implementation of the data collection and analysis procedures traditionally associated with the larger design" (p.92). Embedded mixed methods design utilizes a supplementary quantitative study incorporated within a predominantly qualitative study (Creswell & Clark, 2010; Johnson et al., 2007).

The current study aims to investigate how their non-native status influence the self-perceptions of non-native speaker early career teachers; which factors shape their construction of teacher identity, and the impact of Imposter Syndrome on the

understanding of language teacher identity in this specific demographic of language teachers.

To acquire a more profound insight into the concepts and to enhance the understanding of the connection between teacher identity and imposter syndrome, an embedded mixed-methods study was undertaken because the QUAL data set was given more importance in comparison to the secondary QUAN data set. In other words, the current study utilizes an "unequal priority" QUAL(quan) mixed methods design (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p.389). Unequal priority indicates that the one of the aspects of the study has a greater importance than the other. In the present study, the QUAL component possessed a greater importance.

This approach encompassed the acquisition and examination of qualitative data, followed by a subsequent collection and analysis of quantitative data. The quantitative phase primarily built connections, while the qualitative phase provided depth, context, and insight to each aspect of the investigation.

3.2. Research Design

The context and the participants of the study is introduced, followed by an illustration of the research process.

3.2.1. Participants

The present study involved nonnative English speaker English language teachers who willingly participated and are teaching at the present, with experience ranging from 0 to 5 years. To uphold ethical considerations, the anonymity of participants has been preserved, a matter that is elaborated on later in this research.

For this study, a purposeful sampling strategy was employed in participant selection. Purposeful sampling, also known as purposive sampling, entails the deliberate selection or recruitment of participants who have encountered the central phenomenon or key concept under investigation in the study (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Native teachers were intentionally excluded due to the belief that being a native language teacher might influence both teachers' professional identity and the impact of imposter syndrome on their identity differently. As potential differences were considered plausible, the focus was narrowed to nonnative English language teachers. The study includes teachers from various educational contexts (primary school, secondary

school, high school, university) to ensure diverse perspectives and examine the research questions from different teaching levels.

While the mean age of the sample group is 25.1, the youngest teacher is 22 years old, and the oldest one is 54. Likewise, the average year of teaching experience is 2.5, and teachers' years of experience range from one to five years. Thus, when the distribution of the participants in terms of gender, age, and department is examined, it can be stated that the sample group has a high representation power of the differences in the research group studied. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the sample group.

Table 1: Demographics Of The Participants

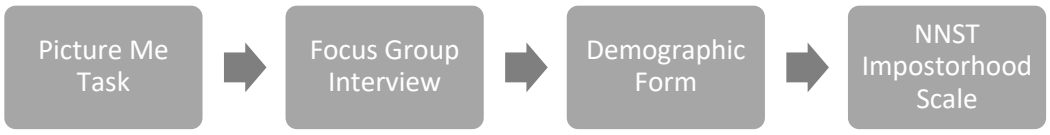
		N	%
Gender	Female	91	83.5
	Male	18	16.5
	Total	109	100
Age	20-24	67	61.3
	25-29	34	31.2
	30-34	5	4.5
	35 and more	3	2.7
	Total	109	100
Experience	0-1 years	29	26.6
	1-2 years	36	33.0
	2-3 years	13	11.9
	3-4 years	14	12.8
	4-5 years	17	15.6
	Total	109	100
Educational Background	Bachelor's Degree	63	57.8
	Master of Arts Degree	46	42.2
	Total	109	100
Department	English Language Teaching	90	82.6
	English Language and Literature	11	10.1
	American Culture and Literature	2	1.8
	Translation and Interpreting	1	0.9
	Turkish Language Teaching	2	1.8

	Electrical Engineering	2	1.8
	Educational Sciences	1	0.9
	Total	109	100
Working Context	Primary school	26	23.9
	Middle school	30	27.5
	High school	22	20.2
	University	31	28.4
	Total	109	100

3.2.2 Data Collection Tools

The data have been gathered through the Picture Me task, the focus-group interview, the demographic form, and the Non-native English Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale. The data collection tools can be seen in figure 2.

Figure 2: Synopsis Of The Data Collection Tools



3.2.2.1. Visual Metaphors And The Picture Me Task

Metaphor can be described as an implied analogy that creatively associates one object with another (Holman,1980). Massengill Shaw, and Mahlios (2008) define metaphor as analogic devices operating beneath a person's conscious awareness, functioning as cognitive tools for framing and defining experiences to derive meaning about one's life. Yob (2003) states that a metaphor is utilized when there is a desire to investigate and comprehend something obscure, abstract, innovative, or highly speculative.

Literature frequently utilizes metaphors in research studies focusing on the field of teaching. Due to their comprehensive nature, a considerable amount of research studies have examined the metaphors employed by either future teachers or those currently in the teaching profession to gain an understanding of their beliefs regarding teaching and their self-perceptions (Martinez et al., 2001; Berci, 2007; Mahlios et al., 2010; Ma & Gao, 2016; Ahkemoğlu & Kesen Mutlu, 2016). Therefore, metaphors serve as valuable insights into the thoughts and cognitive processes of teachers (Saban, 2006) and for this reason, a metaphor task was employed for the present study.

The instrument development for this study drew inspiration from Hamilton's (2016) study. With the research question “What metaphors do secondary prospective teachers identify, capture, and share to represent their understanding of teachers and teaching?” in mind, Hamilton investigated 52 prospective English teachers’ perception on teachers and teaching. The study focused on visual metaphors captured by prospective teachers and required them to take digital pictures of their chosen metaphors regarding teaching and education, as a foundational framework. Furthermore, Hamilton’s study instructed participants to provide a title for each metaphorical image and write abstracts for each image where they discuss their ideas.

For this study, participants were asked to answer the questions: “Who or what (or both) is a native speaker English teacher?” and “Who or what (or both) is a non-native speaker English teacher?” using digitally captured metaphors (images and/or pictures they have taken or drawn). The questions were crafted to explore participants' perceptions of both native English-speaking teachers and non-native English-speaking teachers. The questions also aimed to identify potential differences in how participants perceive these two types of teachers and understand their perspectives. The participants received a set of instructions which included a definition clarifying the

nature of a metaphor and provided examples to prevent any potential confusion, thereby establishing clear expectations about using and understanding this instrument. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for images/visuals were as follow:

- To prevent any potential bias, participants were not allowed to seek assistance from AI in the creation of images.
- For the integrity of the study and to prevent copyright issues, the authenticity and originality of the images were ensured and images from the internet were not allowed.
- In order not to limit the responses or unintentionally influence the responses, the participants were not provided with a set of pre-established options to choose from.

They were required to select a total of two images, one for each question, to visually represent their perspectives. Additionally, participants were instructed to provide concise written abstracts for each image, ranging from approximately 120 to 150 words. In these abstracts, they were expected to describe and discuss their chosen images and the manner in which they addressed the specific question posed. The metaphor-capturing tasks developed for them can be found in Appendix 1.
Participant confidentiality was upheld, and individuals were reassured that their metaphorical expressions would be anonymized in the reporting process. In total, 25 responses were collected for the Picture Me task.

3.2.2.2. Focus Group Interview

A focus group discussion serves as a valuable endeavor to bring together participants who share common experiences for the exploration of a specific topic of interest. It is recognized as an efficient method to collect insights from diverse groups, including individuals of various age groups such as young children, teenagers, and adults (Lune & Berg, 2017). They offer a valuable advantage by creating authentic settings where participants both influence and are influenced by one another (Casey & Krueger, 2000).The information obtained from the focus groups may contribute to elucidating the quantitative findings, serving the purpose of complementarity, as suggested by Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989).

In contrast to alternative data collection methods like questionnaires and observations, group discussions stand out as a valuable means to delve into the internal perspectives and emotions of individuals. Interviewing participants proves highly effective for gaining insights into feelings, thoughts, perceptions, sensitive issues, experiences, and the knowledge held by group members (Wisker, 2001).

The emotions that teachers experience and express, for example, are not just matters of personal dispositions but are constructed in social relationships and systems of values in their families, cultures, and school situations and closely linked with their identities (Zembylas, 2003). Hence, employing group discussions provides an effective means to investigate teacher identity.

In summary, the choice to utilize focus group interviews is motivated by the aim to encompass a variety of viewpoints regarding teacher identity, utilize the dynamics within a group setting, produce comprehensive qualitative data that complements the quantitative data, contextualize participant experiences and chosen metaphors, and seamlessly integrate with the overarching research framework.

In this study, focus group discussions were used as a qualitative data resource. These sessions consisted of group discussions among participants, aiming to delve into their perspectives regarding professional identity, the Imposter Syndrome, and the exploration of the rationales behind their chosen metaphors.

This method allowed for a more in-depth exploration of the quantitative data from the NNST Scale and the qualitative data from Picture Me task and facilitated a richer understanding of the factors influencing teacher identity, the metaphors participants choose to reflect their identity and feeling inadequate as a non-native English teacher.

As Tümen-Akyıldız and Ahmed (2021) suggest, the selection of participants for a focus group is non-random, necessitating thorough planning to achieve favorable group conformity. To ensure this conformity, teachers from diverse educational settings (including primary school, secondary school, high school, and university) and varying levels of teaching experience were intentionally chosen to examine and observe potential differences in their professional identity. Additionally, the criteria for inclusion consisted of teachers with varied years of teaching experience, ensuring a range of perspectives within the study.

When dealing with a complex subject, the researcher should limit the focus group discussions to no more than seven participants (Casey & Krueger, 1994). Taking this

recommendation into consideration, the decision was made to include only five participants. The participants were chosen based on their convenience.

The facilitation of focus group discussions was led by the researcher. Her responsibilities included establishing a genuine and supportive atmosphere, promoting active participation, and guaranteeing that every participant had a chance to express their thoughts and experiences.

A series of open-ended questions (see Table 2) was formulated, covering topics including professional identity, the Imposter Syndrome, and the motifs reflected in the selected metaphors for the Picture Me task.

Table 2: Focus Group Interview Questions

1.What does being a non-native English language teacher entail? How is the profession of being a non-native English language teacher perceived by the public? How do you relate to it? Do you see similarities between yourself and that kind of teacher? What sets you apart? What kind of teacher do you want to become?
2.How do you perceive yourself as a novice non-native English language teacher? Is there a particular term, expression, or idea that resonates with your understanding or experience of being a non-native speaker and early-career English language teacher?
3.What makes you realize that you are a novice non-native English language teacher? What makes you feel that you are seen as such? How would you like to be perceived as a teacher by others: students, parents, colleagues, and administrators?
4.What are the difficulties of being an English teacher? Do you face any obstacles? Which of them are unique to Turkish non-native speaker and early-career language teachers, if any? How do they make you feel?
5.How do you evaluate yourself as a teacher and your teaching abilities? How do you think others evaluate you as a teacher and your teaching abilities?
6.How do you envision your future in this profession? Do you anticipate continuing to teach for the foreseeable future or possibly for the rest of your life?
7.Is there anything else you'd like to add? Thank you for your participation in this interview.

The research consisted of a session of focus group discussion in Turkish, lasting about 30 minutes. The session was audio-recorded, and thorough notes were documented both during and after the discussions.

The focus group interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The selection for the online meeting was made due to unavailabilty of the participants who reside in other cities.

The researcher transcribed the focus group interviews verbatim from the audio recordings. The transcripts underwent a meticulous review process to ensure accuracy, and any identifiable information was anonymized to safeguard confidentiality.

Participants willingly gave informed consent, acknowledging that their involvement was both voluntary and confidential. Ethical considerations encompassed the protection of participant privacy, the acknowledgment of diverse opinions, and the handling of data with sensitivity.

3.2.2.3. Demographic Form

Data for the demographic details of the participants came from the demographic form developed by the researcher and the supervisor of the present study. The form included questions regarding the demographic information, working context and teaching experience of participants. The questions encompassed participants' details, including their name, age, gender, place and date of birth, educational background, years of teaching experience, current educational setting (primary school, secondary school, high school, university), proficiency in foreign languages and self-assessment of four language skills in those languages, experience of working or studying abroad, and completion of a Master of Arts degree. The questions were designed with the objective of exploring the potential factors that could impact the construction of professional teacher identity.

The sequence of data collection involved the completion of the NNST scale following informed consent procedures. The questions developed for the demographic form are presented below (Table 3):

Table 3: Questions In The Demographic Form

1. Gender
2. Educational level
3. Are you pursing a Master of Arts degree or have you completed a Master of Arts program?
4. If yes, in which field did you complete your master's degree? What is your graduation year?
5. What is the undergraduate program you completed?
6. How many years have you been teaching?

7. At what level do you teach?
8. What foreign languages do you know? Can you self-rate your reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in those languages?
9. Have you been abroad for more than 6 months?
10. If yes, please indicate the country you were in, the duration and the reason for your stay.

3.2.2.4. Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale

For the quantitative phase of this mixed methods study, the Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale (Bernat, 2008) was employed to investigate whether non-native teachers experience a sense of inadequacy.

The NNST Imposter Syndrome Scale was adapted by Bernat from the Imposter Phenomenon (IP) Scale by Clance (1985). The IP Scale was created to help individuals identify if they have impostor phenomenon traits and to what degree they are experiencing them. Upon the confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analyses, Chrisman (1995) found out that the internal reliability score for the IP Scale was 0.92. Additionally, upon the confirmatory factor analysis by Chrisman (1995), the IP Scale was significantly correlated with measures of depression, self-esteem, social anxiety, and self-monitoring *($p \leq .01$)*.

After analysis, every item on the IP Scale has a corresponding item on the NNST Imposter Syndrome Scale, with the exception of items 7 and 15. Thus, for the quantitative phase of this mixed methods study, the Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale (Bernat, 2008) was employed to investigate whether non-native teachers experience a sense of inadequacy.

The quantitative component of this mixed methods research is essential for the systematic analysis of numerical data, enabling the identification of patterns, trends, and statistical relationships within the variables under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). McKim (2015) also suggests that the quantitative stage can provide insights that inform the qualitative phase. The quantitative data provides a solid foundation for statistical analyses, enabling the identification of significant correlations, differences, or trends (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Blending quantitative and qualitative methodologies strengthens the validity and comprehensivenessy, thereby contributing to a more resilient investigation into the intricate factors affecting the research matter (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Thus, combining the results from the Non-native Speaker Teacher (NNST) Impostorhood Scale has the potential to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the findings from both qualitative and quantitative stages.

The scale was chosen for its specific focus on exploring the non-native speaker teachers' perceptions of their professional identity, aligning closely with the research objective of this research study. The scale consists of 14 items rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not True at all) to 4 (Always True). Except for the reverse items (item 8 and item 10), higher scores indicate greater imposterhood. Additionally, it is a multidimensional scale with two constructs: fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs. It has no Turkish version. The highest scores that can be obtained for each construct is 16 (fraudulence), and 36 (self-efficacy beliefs).

Sample items from the scale include (Bernat, 2009):

- I feel that other people tend to believe that I am more competent than I am.
- I am certain that my abilities don’t reflect the level of my achievement.
- I feel inferior compared to Native Speaker Teachers.
- I am not sure if I am able to teach English well, since I am non-native speaker teacher.

Participants were provided with precise instructions regarding the purpose of the scale and how to respond to each item. The survey was distributed digitally using Google Forms during a devoted data collection session, ensuring consistency in administration across participants.

This research study followed ethical protocols, prioritizing participant confidentiality and welfare. Informed consent was secured, and participants were guaranteed the confidentiality of their responses.

Quantitative data acquired from the NNST Scale were analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine mean scores and standard deviations. One Way ANOVA and Post-Hoc tests were also conducted to explore potential differences between

fraudulence, and self-efficacy scores and the variables of teaching context and teaching experience.

3.3. Data Analysis

3.3.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data for this study was obtained through the Picture Me task, written abstracts, and a focus group interview. The data analysis process for each data collection tool can be found in the following section.

3.3.1.1 Metaphors and Abstracts

A commonly used approach for analyzing qualitative data is thematic analysis. Because thematic analysis is not restricted to theory or epistemologies, it is extremely versatile, adaptive, and in accordance with an extensive variety of approaches, as claimed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis offers a quite adaptable approach that can be modified for the needs of many studies, providing a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006 as cited in Nowell et al., 2017). When exploring distinct viewpoints, comparing and contrasting different ideas, and investigating unexpected opinions, thematic analysis proves to be a practical form of data analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis proves beneficial for highlighting essential aspects of extensive data since it compels researchers to adopt a methodical approach to managing data which assists in generating a precise final report (King, 2004). Braun and Clarke (2006) developed a six stage precedure for thematic analysis method in qualitative research design. The first stage is ‘familiarizing oneself with the data’. This stage includes reading and rereading the raw data to know and understand the content thoroughly. The second stage is called ‘creating initial codes’. In this stage, the researcher creates codes by spotting significant words or phrases. On the third stage, which is called ‘creating themes’, the researcher analyze the codes with the aim of finding themes that convey more general concepts. Following this stage, the researcher begins "reviewing themes," which includes going over possible themes and determining if they could address the study question, which can result in the combination and/or elimination of some themes. The fifth stage, “describing and labeling themes”, requires each theme to be examined in-depth by addressing their

objectives and range. On the last stage, identifying instances, examples from data are chosen to be reported.

The raw data obtained from the abstracts and metaphors were coded by hand due to the small number of participants (N=25). Following a careful reading and rereading of the raw data, each participant's metaphors and the explanations for the metaphors were recognized independently. Following the six stages of Braun and Clarke (2009), the responses of participants were coded into possible themes. The idea of code is understood as a concise term or expression that symbolically represents a key, condensed, and often impactful characteristic of a segment of language-based or visual information (Saldana, 2009, as cited in, Taşdemir & Seferoğlu, 2016) and themes are broader concepts made up of multiple codes combined to represent a shared notion or idea (Creswell, 2013, as cited in Taşdemir & Seferoğlu, 2016). Following the suggestion of Creswell (2002), during the labeling stage of the themes, "the exact words of the participants" were used to the greatest extent possible. Due to the nature of metaphors, the researchers are aware that there may be potential misinterpretations (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Therefore, they recognize that their labeling may not completely grasp the participants' original intention. With the aim of dealing with the challenge of interpreting on behalf of others. The researchers relied on the participants own utterances to the greatest extent possible. In order to establish "a sharedness of meanings" -this involves ensuring that both the researcher and participants grasp the concept in a similar manner- it is crucial to utilize language, especially the specific terms (Fontana & Frey, 2003, as cited in, Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Following the labeling of the themes, the researcher reviewed them and consequently combined some themes together because they were found to be highly similar. Then, each theme and sub-theme were examined thoroughly, addressing their respective objectives, the recurring ideas within the themes, and their scope. Finally, illustrative and explanatory examples were selected to be reported. The table below presents the data analysis process utilized in this study:

Table 4: The Thematic Data Analysis Process

Step 1	Thorough reading of raw data
Step 2	Generating initial codes
Step 3	Generating themes
Step 4	Reviewing themes

Step 5	Describing and labeling themes
Step 6	Identifying examples

3.3.1.2 Focus Group Interview

Prior to the beginning of the actual data analysis process, the focus-group interview was audio-recorded and all data was verbatim transcribed thoroughly right after the session in order to make sure the researcher can examine and reflect on what were stated during the interview to conduct an initial thematic analysis, as outlined by Josselson in 2013. Microsoft Word software was employed throughout the transcription process. Pauses, slips of tongue, grammatical mistakes were all included in the transcription without attempting any editions or corrections to ensure authenticity. The interview was conducted in English. The findings were presented without compromising anonymity. Every participant was given a three letter code, which they were referred to by. The codebook for the participant codes (see Table 5) is presented below. Thus, the participants were referred to only by letters such as FUP, MPIP, etc.

Table 5: Codes For The Participants

Gender	Female = F
	Male = M
Context	Primary = P
	Secondary = S
	High school = H
	University = U
Years of Experience	1 years= B
	2 years= PI
	3 years= I
	4 years= UP
	5 years = A

3.3.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data for this study came from the Non-Native Speaker Imposter Syndrome Scale. The study made use of IBM SPSS Statistics 21 program to analyse data. The 15 item 4 point likert scale was divided into two constructs: fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, the quantitative part of the study focused on the comparison of participants with different working contexts, and years of experience in

terms of fraudulence, and self-efficacy constructs. This part attempts to describe the statistical procedures used for research questions.

To explore which factors had an effect on the fraudulence, and self-efficacy scores of the participants, different groups of were compared through a one-way Anova test. Before conducting the ANOVA, the data were examined for normality and homogeneity. A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted and did not show evidence of non-normality *(W = 0.98, p = 0.31).* Based on this outcome, a one-way ANOVA test was used.

To investigate the influence of different working contexts have on the participants' fraudulence, and low self-efficacy scores, groups of participants with different working contexts were compared through a one-way ANOVA test. A one-way ANOVA test was also run to take a deeper look into the potential differences between participants who differed in terms of years of experience. In addition, to examine if other factors such as gender, educational level, whether the participants completed a Master of Arts program or not, whether they have been abroad for longer than six months or not, whether they know any other foreign languages or not influence their fraudulence, and self-efficacy scores, one-way Anova and Post Hoc tests were conducted

3.4. Trustworthiness Of The Research

3.4.1. Qualitative Validity

Qualitative validity entails the researcher verifying the accuracy of their findings through specific procedures (Creswell, 2013). To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualititative data which includes the metaphors and the abstracts derived from the participants and focus-group interviews, Creswell (2013) presents eight different strategies which includes: "triangulating different data sources of information", "member checking", "using a rich and thick description to convey the findings", "clarifying the bias the researcher brings to the study", "presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes", "spending prolonged time in the field.", "using peer debriefing to enhance the accuracy of the account.", and lastly, "using an external auditor to review the entire project". For the qualitative part of the study, the strategies of triangulation, member checking, using a rich and thick

description to convey the findings, and presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes were employed.

3.4.1.1. Triangulation

As suggested by Creswell (2013), with the aim of guarenteeing internal validity, data was gathered through various means, including a 4 point likert scale, the visual metaphors and abstracts, and a focus group interview. As stated by Carter et al. (2014), data triangulation allows for a greater understanding of the concept. Also, the researcher is given the chance to further analyze and contrast results for a more accurate interpretation of data.

3.4.1.2. Member Checking

Peer review allows for a precise analysis of results and a more accurate interpretation of data (Creswell, 2013; Saldana, 2011). To build validity, a peer debriefing suggested by Creswell (2000) was utilized. Therefore, both the data and the results were reviewed by another researcher who is also the supervisor of the study. Each of the researchers worked on grouping the metaphors into the emergent themes and many similarities were found. When a dicrepancy occured on how to divide themes into subthemes, the researchers resolved it by engaging in discussion and reaching a consensus. Once all the data were coded and labelled, the themes and subthemes were re-evaluated and a strong level of consistency was apparent in the categorization.

3.4.1.3. Using A Thick Description

Using a thick description enables readers to transfer data to other settings while interpreting the implications (Erlandson, 1993). Thus, to give a better picture of the study; the participants of the study, the sampling choice for the participants, data collection methods and process were reported thoroughly. In addition, a great number of quotes and visuals were presented in the findings section not only to achieve rich and thick description but also to ground the interpretation of the researchers to ground the researcher's interpretation (Creswell, 2013).

3.4.1.4. Presenting Negative Information That Runs Counter To The Themes

Creswell (2013) argues that inconsistent or conflicting data that opposes emergent themes should also be provided in the study and indicates that incorporating data which

is contrary to the emergent themes enhances the credibility of a narrative, Creswell (2013) states that in order to achieve this credibility, contradictory findings can be presented and as a result, the narrative will gain greater validity.

3.4.2. Quantitative Validity

Quantitative validity is the degree to which a construct is correctly assessed. Another crucial aspect of a valuable quantitative study is reliability, which entails the unambigousness of an instrument. To put it differently, realiability is related to how consistent a research tool is in generating the identical results when employed in the same contexts repeatedly.

According to Campbell and Fiske (1959), reliability is related to the consistency among two endeavors to measure the same constructs through similar methods. One of the methods used to ensure reliability is Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha assesses a specific form of reliability called internal consistency, providing insights into the degree of correlation among items in a scale. Cronbach (1951) states that a desirable level of internal consistency should be no lower than 0.7. In addition, if the level of internal consistency is higher than 0.9, one should draw up the conclusion that some redundancy within the scale's items might exist. With this in mind, Cronbach's alpha of the scale was calculated using SPSS. The table below (Table 6) displays the results.

Table 6: Reliability Statistics For The Scale

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.83	0.83	13

The reliability statistic for the 15 item scale was 0.83, which is higher than 0.7 and lower than 0.9. As a result, it can be said that the reliability of the scale is at a desirable level.

Additionally, Cronbach's alpha of the constructs of fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs were calculated using SPSS. Table 7 displays the results for the fraudulence construct.

Table 7: Reliability Statistics For The Fraudulence Construct

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.72	0.73	4

Table 8 displays the results for the self-efficacy construct.

Table 8: Reliability Statistics For The Self-Efficacy Construct

Cronbach's alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items	N of items
0.70	0.71	9

Additionally, Boateng et al. (2018) suggested "evaluation by experts" to ensure content validity. Due to their expertise in the field, experts are able to assess whether each item accurately reflects the domain under consideration or not. As suggested, the scale used in the present study was evaluated by two experts in the field, including the supervisor of the study.

3.5. Positioning As A Researcher

The researcher played an active and involved role during the research process. As a graduate of ELT department, being a non-native speaker early career teacher with 2 years of teaching experience, the researcher had insight into professional teacher identity, obstacles faced by non-native teachers of Turkish origin and actual language teaching. This background facilitated the interpretation of metaphors, abstracts and focus-group interview data. Moreover, the researcher personally attended the focus-group interview. In addition to that, the researcher provided participants with information to help them understand the nature of metaphors, fostering a comfortable and non-judgemental environment for the participants during the data collection process.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Upon the completion of the necessary paperwork, the researcher applied to the Yıldız Technical University Academic Ethics Committee. Ethical consent was obtained with an issue number 005683. The researcher conducted the study in compliance with the norms of ethics. After explaining the aim of the study to each participant, their agreement was obtained. They were also briefed on the procedure for collecting data. They were aware that the focus-group interview would be recorded. Every participant was given a code to ensure the participants' privacy and anonymity. Participants were given the option to state whether they were interested in learning about the study's findings. Those who expressed interest received information about the findings at the end of the data collection phase, providing them with the opportunity to access the results of the study.

4. FINDINGS

This chapter includes the the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the the analysis of participant metaphors and abstracts, and focus group interview and the quantitative findings obtained from the Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale. A brief overview of the findings is presented and then the themes and sub themes by referring to the participants' ideas on what constitutes teacher identity, how they perceive native and non-native speaker teachers' professional identity, and whether the effects of Imposter Syndrome can be seen in their reflection understanding of their professional identities as non-native speaker teachers is discussed.

The current study aimed to investigate the perceptions of non-native speaker early career teachers on the professional identities of both native and non-native speaker teachers, and whether the imposter syndrome is evident in their own identities. Additionally, the study explored how different working contexts and years of teaching experience influenced their understanding of professional identity data were gathered through participant-provided metaphors and abstracts, focus-group interviews, and the Non-native Speaker Teacher Imposter Scale. Analysis of the data involved calculating mean scores and percentages for quantitative data and identifying emerging themes and sub-themes through a careful process of data analysis.

4.1. Emerging Themes From Picture Me Task

The first source for qualitative data in this study was the Picture Me task. 25 participants partook in the task. Data from the pictures and abstracts were thoroughly analyzed. After conducting an in-depth thematic analysis, five overarching themes emerged, each comprising several subthemes. The themes and subthemes are provided in the table below (Table 9).

Table 9: Emergent Themes From Picture Me Task

Theme Number	Theme Name	Sub Themes	F	P
1.	**Psychological States**	1.Feeling of inferiority	7	28%
		2.Need to prove oneself	5	20%
		3.Low levels of self-confidence	4	16%
		4.Feeling insecure in one's position	5	20%
2.	**Attitudes and Behaviors**	1.Perception of others	8	32%
		2.Flexible vs. rigid attitude	5	20%
		3.Informal vs. formal behavior	3	12%
3.	**Innate Traits and Abilities**	1.Innate linguistic knowledge	16	64%
		2.Originality and uniqueness	4	16%
		3.Variety and diversity	7	28%
		4. Similar paths with learners	7	28%
4.	**Challenges and Effort**	1.Extra effort	9	36%
		2.Tougher conditions	7	28%
		3.Constant improvement	7	28%
5.	**Prejudice and Discrimination**	1.Prejudice	8	32%
		2.Discrimination	8	32%
		3.Devalued status	4	16%

4.1.1. Internal Psychological States

This theme is represented with four subthemes produced by early career teachers. The subthemes are feeling of inferiority, the need to prove oneself, low levels of self-confidence, and feeling insecure in one's position.

4.1.1.1 Feeling Of Inferiority

Certain statements were categorized as feeling of inferiority such as a dull knife that lacks sharpness that a native speaker teacher brings. Some other instances that come under this subtheme are a zoo trip, and a flower that bears less petals compared to other flowers. Feeling like they are deprived of a certain element that only native speaker teachers possess, and the belief that despite their tremendous efforts, they could only

attain a portion of the proficiency that native speakers have were highlighted by the participants.

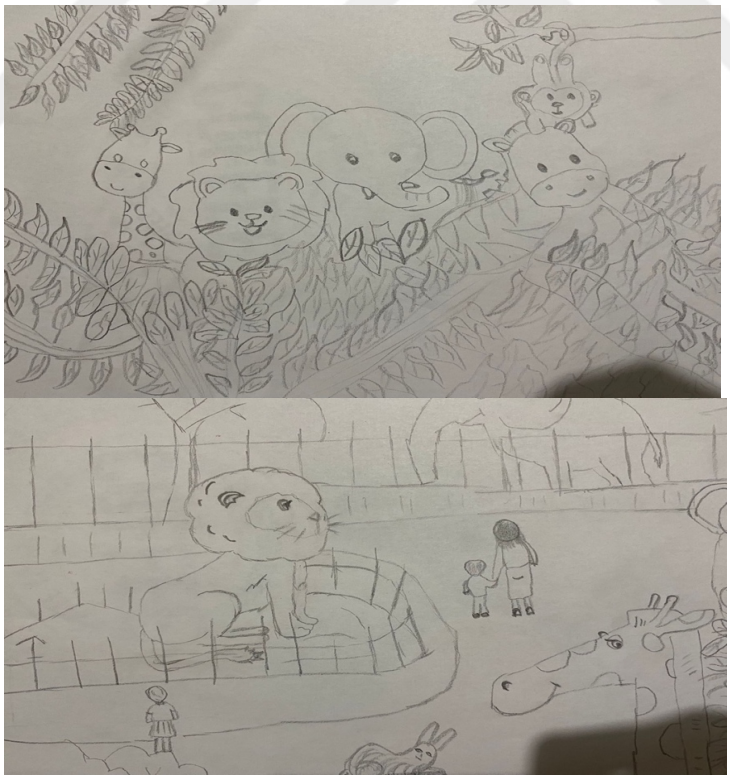
The following is an example of one of the statemets made by early career teachers about feeling inferior to native speaker teachers.

> *A flower with less petals: On the other hand non-native speaker is able to acquire only some of this knowledge after hard work which requires a long period of time and even after this hard work you still figure out that you have a lot more to gain until you can be the flower with beautiful leaves, carrying all that knowledge.*

Another participant chose these two metaphors to state although non-native speakers teachers offers beneficial and valuable education, they cannot replicate the authenticity and naturalness of the language learning experience provided by native speaker teachers.

For the coding of participants, please refer to the page 48.

Figure 3: Drawings Of Participant (F-U-PI)



> *Going on a safari: Learning from a native speaker teacher is like going on a safari, exploring a wildlife habitat. The teacher is your guide, helping you understand the language in a natural way, just like observing animals in their*

own habitat. You see how expressions, tones, and cultural context are used, giving you a better grasp of the language. The native speaker's easy way with the language is like animals' natural behaviors, making your learning experience real and exciting, not just from books. It's like going on a safari where each meeting adds to your learning journey.

Visiting a zoo: Learning from a non-native speaker teacher is somewhat like visiting a zoo for language education. While you do get to experience and interact with the language, it's not as immersive or natural as being in the animals' natural habitat. The non-native speaker teacher serves as a guide, showcasing aspects of the language in a controlled environment, much like observing animals in enclosures. Although you can learn a lot, it might lack the instinctive, everyday feel of language as it's used by native speakers. It's a bit like seeing animals in a zoo – interesting and educational, but not quite the same as experiencing them in the wild.

4.1.1.2. Need to Prove Oneself

Upon analysis, some of the statements were grouped into the sub theme of need to prove oneself similar to a stray cat which is continuously seeking to display their worth to certain individuals such as colleagues, administrators, students, and parents in order to gain their approval or support.

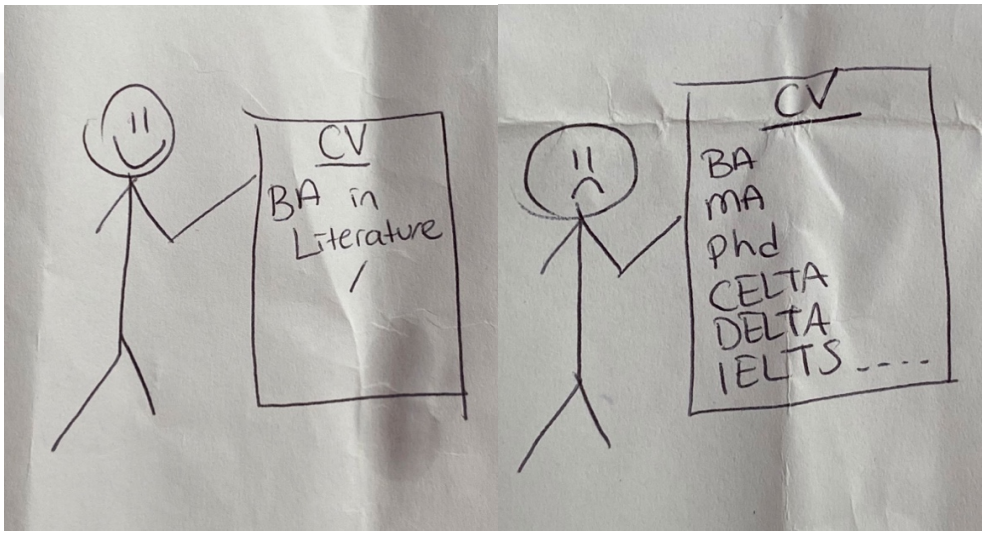
Figure 4: Photographs Of Participant (F-U-B)



Like a house cat: They are the priviledged children of EFL/ESL world and they will get everything they wanted.
Like a stray cat: They consistenly try to prove themselves to some people to get fed and their environment is so wild that they get frustrated at some point.

Another participant used the metaphors of an empty CV versus a filled CV to draw a contrast between the experiences of non-native speaker teachers who must continually strive to assert their worth, in contrast to native speaker teachers who can easily find jobs without needing to demonstrate their worth.

Figure 5: Drawings Of Participant (F-U-I)



An empty CV: Native English teachers tend to have it easy when it comes to job hunting. Always one step ahead of others only because they were born in a specific country.

A filled CV: As much as they try, non-native speakers like me always feel the need to prove our worth and intelligence, qualifications and knowledge

4.1.1.3. Low Levels Of Self-confidence

Upon analysis, another sub theme emerged from the metaphors captured, indicating a discrepancy in terms of self-confidence of native and non-native speaker English teachers. This underscores how non-native speaker teachers perceive native speaker teachers as possessing greater self-confidence compared to themselves. The dominant

clinical symptoms observed in individuals undergoing impostor syndrome include diminished self-confidence and low self-esteem (Chae, et al., 1995 cited in Maftei, et al., 2021). Therefore, this subtheme not only aligns with the feeling of inferiority but also with the concept of imposter syndrome. Some instances for this subtheme includes:

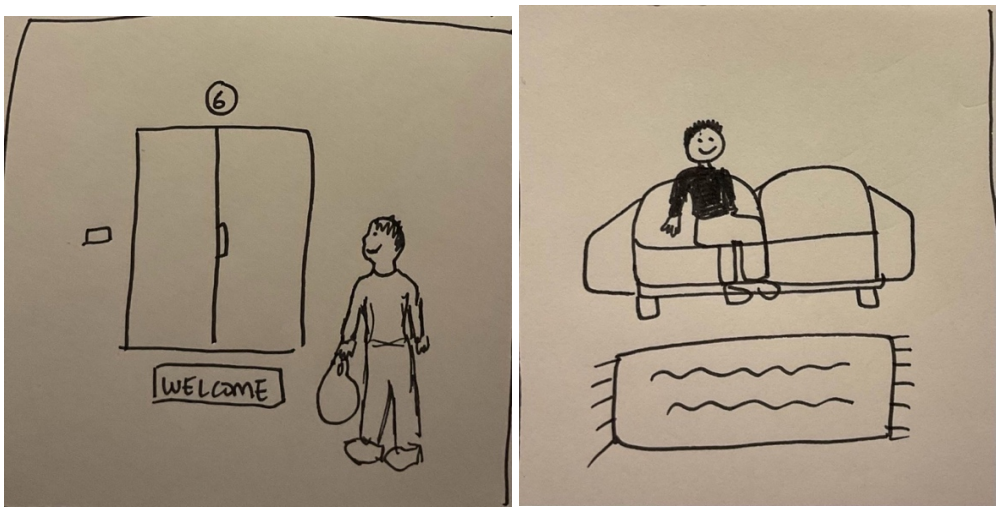
- *He is relaxed, calm, confident, knows everything's place – if something is lost; he can easily find it.*

- *He/she has self-confidence because he/she knows that he/she is the best speaker of that language even in its worst version*

4.1.1.4. Feeling Insecure In One's Position

Another subtheme was not feeling secured in one's position. One participant displayed this subtheme but in an adept manner, using the metaphors of 'a host of a house' for the native speaker teacher and 'a guest in a house' for the non-native speaker teacher to recognize the demanding nature of trying to be an adequate non-native speaker English teacher, but never feeling secure in their position, the anxiety that comes along with it, and the affective responses to it.

Figure 6: Drawings Of Participant (F-U-I2)



Host: Being a native teacher is like being at your own house. He is relaxed, calm, confident, knows everything about the place.

Guest: A non-native teacher is like a guest- who goes to people's houses. When he is out, he is no longer at his house, going to a place which he is not completely comfortable…and they feel like a stranger from time to time- and they have to be careful and follow the host's rules in order to stay in that house.

4.1.2. Attitudes And Behaviors

There are three subthemes produced by the early career teachers that fall under this theme. The subthemes are flexible attitude versus rigid attitude, formal attitude versus informal attitude, and perception of others.

4.1.2.1. Flexible Attitude Versus Rigid Attitude

One participant utilized the metaphors of a rubber band and a sword to draw a contrast between the differing attitudes and behaviors of non-native and native speaker teachers. These metaphors indicate that native speaker teachers are believed to be flexible, enjoyable and cool by the students, parents, colleagues, and administrators whereas non-native speaker teachers are believed to possess a more disciplined, controlled and structured nature.

Rubber band: A native speaker English teacher is also flexible like a rubber band, able to switch things up and teach in a way that works for everyone and make learning English more fun and relatable for each person in the class.

Sword: A non-native English teacher is also sharp and serious like a sword. They bring a sense of discipline and precision to the classroom, in a more methodical manner.

Although most of the participants used the adjective flexible to describe native speaker teachers, one participant highlighted the flexibility of a non-native speaker teacher by drawing an anology between the teacher and the ocean.

Figure 7: Photograph Of Participant (F-S-B)



The ocean is a powerful symbol of the depth and complexity of knowledge that non-native English teachers bring to their roles. Much like the ocean's hidden treasures, these teachers offer unique perspectives and diverse backgrounds, enriching the educational experience. Just as the ocean's currents navigate through its vastness, non-native teachers creatively adapt to language challenges. They are versatile and flexible, much like the ever-changing tides. Similar to how the ocean connects continents, non-native English teachers reach global learners with a multitude of backgrounds and contexts. Their teaching is a bridge between cultures, drawing on their own experiences as well as the vastness of linguistic diversity. This interconnectedness and depth of understanding contribute to a richer learning environment, fostering a global perspective among students.

4.1.2.2. Formal Attitude Versus Informal Attitude

One other distinction that aroused upon analysis was related to the formal versus informal attitudes of native and non-native speaker teachers. Participants believed that

native speaker teachers are perceived as having an informal attitude whereas non-native speaker teachers are believed to have a formal attitude. Some instances include:

> *(for non-native speaker teachers) Their teaching style is more formal.*

> *(for native speaker teachers)Then, you can add salt to make your learning more delightful, informative, complementive and enjoyable.*

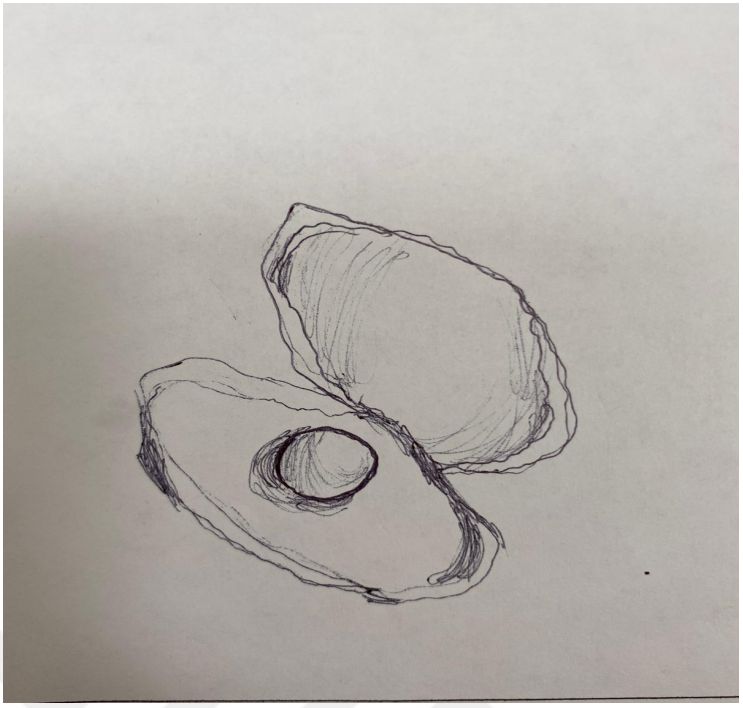
4.1.2.3. Perception Of Others

Upon analysis, another common aspect which emerged was the perception of others. It is crucial to clarify that by others learners, parents, colleagues, and managers are referred. The participants expressed that they shared a worry about the thoughts of their colleagues, students, administrators as well as their perceived efficacy in fulfilling the expectations placed upon them within their professional roles. Yet, it is important to note that participants seem to experience this feeling of inadequacy when compared to their native counterparts, not on their own. This element can also reveal the tendency for non-native speaker teachers to engage in self-comparison within professional contexts. The following statement is an example of the remarks made by early career teachers about the way native speaker teachers are perceived by the others.

> *Its innate beauty also creates the perception that it is always the most beautiful. But the fact that a language is your mother tongue does not mean that you are always the best teacher of it.*

Another participant likened native speaker teachers to oysters with fascinating natural beauty. Their ability to impress others were also mentioned. The participant also mentioned the cases where a native-speaker teacher may struggle to highlight the best in students, potentially due to a lack of expertise or inexperience in the field. So, there is this ongoing risk that native teachers' pearls, their innate linguistic abilities, might go unnoticed.

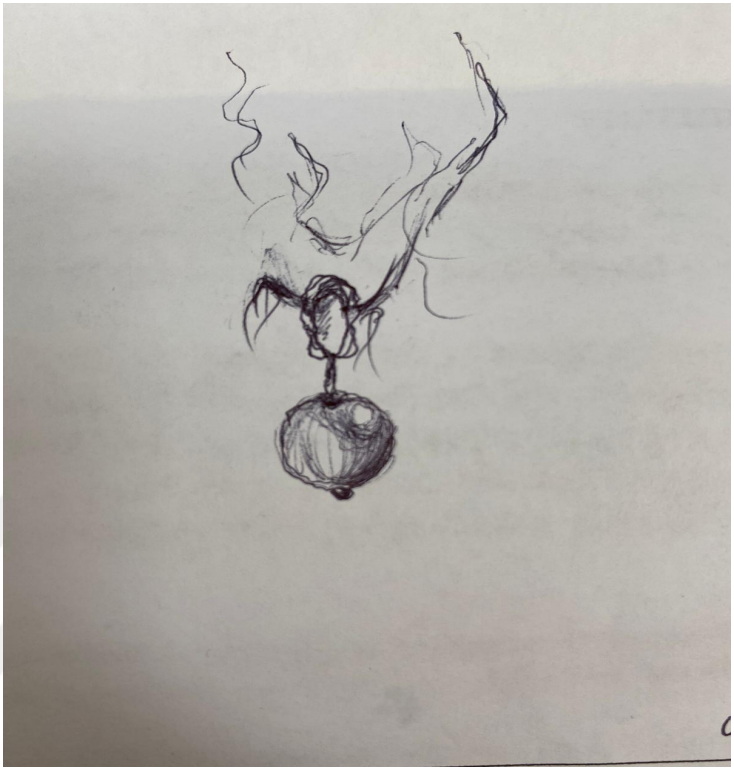
Figure 8: Photograph Of Participant (F-U-B2)



A native speaker English teacher is like an oyster preserving a pearl inside. An oyster can fascinate one, just like a native speaker English teacher can inspire the students. The classes would flow naturally and they would be engaging with the teacher. However, there is this risk of the pearls going unnoticed. The oyster would be unable to show how to bring out the best in them, in such case.

To draw the contrast between a native speaker and a non-native speaker, the same participant used the metaphor of a pearl earring to describe the journey non-native speaker teachers had to go through to be where they are now. According to the participant, a pearl earring not only impresses the others but also has a function because a non-native teacher understands. The participant highlighted the importance of learner-centeredness and being aware of their needs by stating that if the lessons are not learner-centered, the pearl earring might lose its purpose and become a reflection of its past self.

Figure 9: Photograph Of Participant (F-U-B2)



A non-native speaker English teacher is like a pearl earring. It has gone through a process to become the way it is. It does not only fascinates but also has a certain purpose. The teacher would understand the students' needs. However, the pearl earring might get stuck in a painting and only show itself without serving its old purpose. The teachers start to solely present, without involving the students.

4.1.3. Innate Traits And Abilities

There are four subthemes produced by the early career teachers in this theme. The subthemes include innate linguistic knowledge, variety and diversity, originality and uniqueness, and going through similar paths with learners.

4.1.3.1. Innate Linguistic Knowledge

Some of the statements were categorized as innate linguistic knowledge such as native speaker teachers as an encyclopedia which is a wealthy source of information or a sunset with innate understanding and fluency. Some other instances that come under this subtheme are a safari tour, an island, a tour guide, and a flower that bears many petals. The vast vocabulary knowledge, genuine cultural awareness, accent, fluency, and other language abilities that come with being a native speaker teacher were highlighted by these participants.

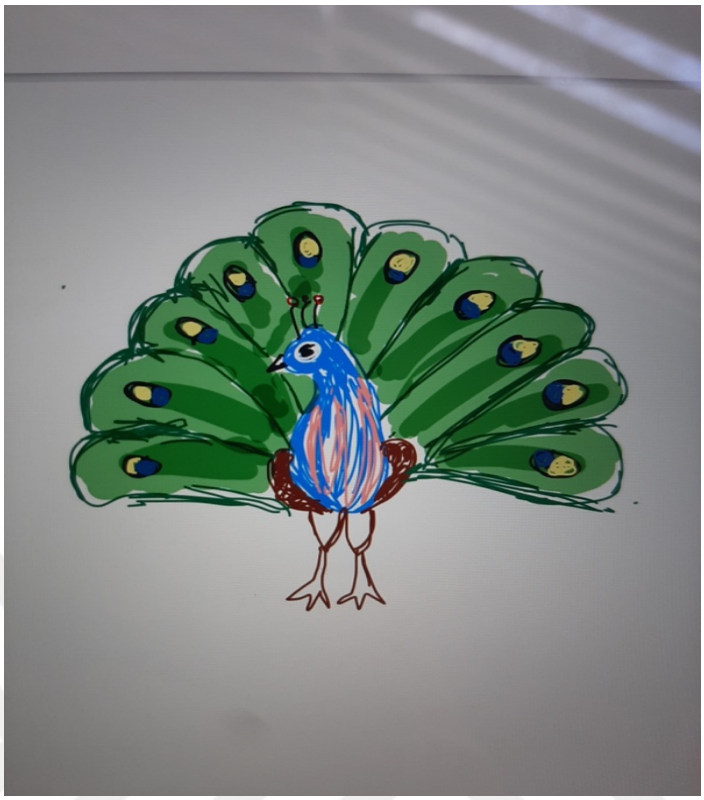
> *A flower with many petals: Let's assume that the leaves of the flower are aspects of language. It could be skills such as speaking listening reading or writing. It could also be skills and vocabulary gained from your environment such as idioms, culture. A native speaker is filled with all of these. Immense amount of vocabulary knowledge and natural phrases. There for I pictured a native speaker as a flower with lots of blossoms and fulfilled his/her*

Another participant likened native teachers to tour guides, indicating that they are the most efficient people to show the unexplored lands of language to learners, considering their proximity to both the culture and the language.

> *In my opinion, a native teacher is like a tour guide. They are born into the target culture and language and have a good command of both. In this way, they can explain them to their students in the most competent way*

Although acknowledging their innate linguistic capabilities, some participants strongly implied that being a native speaker of a language is not enough to be a good language teacher.

Figure 10: Photograph Of Participant (F-S-I)



Peacock: Just like a peacock, it shows its magnificent wings. Its innate beauty also creates the perception that it is always the most beautiful. But the fact that a language is your mother tongue does not mean that you are always the best teacher of it. For this reason, teachers whose mother tongue is English may not always be as bright inside as they look from the outside.

Another participant viewed native speaker teachers as a wealthy source of information, yet a hint of irritation towards native speaker teachers who cover their insufficient expertise in the field with their nativeness was evident in the statements she made.

Figure 11: Photograph Of Participant (F-U-A)



Trees: Native speaker English teachers are those resembling the trees in the photograph; strong, mighty and have a lot to cover. This metaphor is sometimes true. It depends on the teacher. There are those like the trees mentioned, who could equip students with a different perspective, since they are born into the native culture and so can bring that cultural knowledge into the lesson. And then there are those who actually lack the knowledge, the expertise and anything related to teaching.…These hide behind those mighty trees or their nativism to escape from the truth, that they don't know much about our field.

Altogether, early career teachers metaphors and remarks were indicating that they perceive native speaker teachers as individuals equipped with a rich amount of innate linguistic skills, yet some participants highlighted that these skills do not always guarentee expertise in the teaching field.

4.1.3.2. Variety And Diversity

Two other subthemes that fall under the theme of innate traits and abilities were variety and diversity. Metaphors such as salt that adds flavour, and mosaic-like earth that represents cultural and linguistic variety brought up by non-native speaker teachers. Other metaphors include a frappucino, a mirror, and a sunflower. Non-native speaker teachers' distinct cultural backgrounds, varying perspectives and their ability to present linguistic knowledge diversely due to possessing two different language systems were brought forward by participants.

> *Sunflower: Despite not being native speakers, they stand tall in the language education field, their distinct viewpoints to the sunflower's ability to thrive under diverse conditions.*

> *Ocean: Much like the ocean's hidden treasures, these teachers offer unique perspectives and diverse backgrounds, enriching the educational experience.*

> *Mirror: A non-native teacher can be explained as a mirror. A mirror reflects what is shown to it and who or what is reflected changes throughout the course of time. ... And indirectly how they can help students and their points of view vary greatly compared to native teachers.*

Although most of the participants used diversity and variety to describe non-native speaker teachers, one participant offered a different viewpoint by highlighting the diversity of native speaker teachers.

> *Android phones: A native speaker teacher is similar to an Android phone. Just as there is a diverse variety of Android phones, each with its unique features and qualities, native speakers vary in their teaching abilities*

4.1.3.3. Originality And Uniqueness

Other subthemes in this theme were originality and uniqueness. The metaphors in these subthemes highlighted the way native and non-native speaker teachers cannot be replaced because of their uniqueness.

One participant employed the metaphors of Turkish coffee and filter coffee and conveyed the value of the originality and the distinctive strengths of both non-native and native teachers, indicating that they are not superior to each other.

Figure 12*:* Drawings Of Participant (F-P-I)



Filter coffee: A native speaker English teacher is like a great, tasty, hot brewed filter coffee. It is original in its own way, it is native in its own way. One can

never take it for granted, its taste can never be forgotten, mistaken for any other type of coffee.

Turkish coffee: A non-native speaker English teacher is like a great, tasty, foamy Turkish coffee. It is original in its own way, it is native in its own way. One can never take it for granted, its taste can never be forgotten, mistaken for any other type of coffee.

4.1.3.4. Similar Paths With Learners

The last subtheme that falls under this theme was similar paths with learners. The following statements are instances of the remarks made by early career teachers about native speaker teachers going through similar paths with learners.

Encyclopedia: Also non - native teachers are more emphatic towards to students because they usually have similar struggles with learning language which students can experience.

An experienced explorer: A non-native English teacher is like an experienced explorer. They were not born into the target culture and language but devoted their years to learning that language and discovering that culture. They are very successful in guiding their students because they know very well what the experience of learning that language is like as they have already walked that path. They know the difficulties of learning a language and despite the restrictive conditions they have, they try to lead their students in exploring this new world.

These early career teachers were evidently concentrating on native speaker teachers' ability to build empathy and the uniting nature of experiencing the same struggles and hardships of learning a foreign language. One of the participants even expressed the positive influence of sharing a mother language with students has on their teaching.

Plug: Since s/he shares the native language with the students, s/he may predict the common mistakes. For example, s/he may warn his/her students such that: "It's 'I hate you.' not 'I hate from you.' In that case, students will be aware of this possible mistake and actually "shape their language"

According to a different participant, having experienced the same difficulties associated with learning a foreign language like students enables them to be in the right location at the right time just like a puzzle piece.

> *The last right piece of a puzzle: Non-native English teacher is just like a last right piece of the puzzle. You try to complete your puzzle but realize that you misplace one piece. Then you change its place and add the last right puzzle to the correct place. With the smiles on your face you achieve to complete your long, challenging but delightful puzzle work. I think this puzzle completion process resembles to what non-native teachers have impact on students' learning process. Puzzle work is language learning journey. It is tough, it requires time and hard work. The one who completes the puzzle is the student. She is responsible for hard work. Lastly, the last puzzle is non-native teacher. Non-native teacher can understand the challenges of student because she has also gone through the same learning process. So, she is at the right place at the right time with her knowledge and experience to help with the journey.*

4.1.4. Challenges And Effort

There are three subthemes produced by the early career teachers in this theme. The subthemes are extra effort, tougher conditions, and the need for constant improvement.

4.1.4.1. Extra Effort

The other subtheme that falls under this theme was extra effort. Participants conveyed that they need to yield extra effort in the workplace due to their non-native status. One of the participants employed an americano and a frappucino to make a comparison on how native speaker teachers are able to survive in the field with minimal effort to establish rapport in class or to prove themselves in institutions to gain recognition whereas non-native speaker teachers have to exert additional effort in order to earn acceptance and respect.

> *Americano: A native English teacher is similar to an americano, effortlessly embodying the essence of the language and getting into jobs without the need for extra accomplishments. Their fluency and cultural familiarity naturally brings authenticity into their teaching, requiring minimal effort to connect with students or to prove themselves in institutions.*

Frappucino: A non-native English teacher is like a frappuccino since they need to blend various qualities and putting in extra effort to be accepted and respected in the ELT world. Despite not having the innate cultural background, their dedication and additional qualities contribute to a unique teaching style, working hard to create an engaging and inclusive learning environment.

Another participant likened native speaker teachers to peacocks, and non-native speaker teachers to pigeons, implying that in order to have beautiful and vibrant plumage of a peacock, a pigeon has to exert constant effort, similar to the constant striving of non-native speaker teachers.

Figure 13: Photograph Of Participant (F-S-I)



Pigeon: A teacher whose mother tongue is not English is like a pigeon. Although it does not know what it feels like to have fancy wings, it always tries to teach something that is not its own. It wants to look beautiful, like a peacock. In order to have feathers, one has to constantly exert effort and study.

One of the early career teachers seemed to emphasize native speaker teachers' ability to impress the others with its 'effortless beauty' -which is the innate and almost

flawless linguistic skills- just like a sunset, whereas a sunflower has to stand tall with unwavering determination and working hard.

Figure 14: Photographs Of Participant (F-U-B3)





Sunset: The sunset metaphor suggests a seamless connection to the language, as if their very presence mirrors the effortless beauty of a day's end.

Sunflower: A non-native speaker English teacher is symbolized by the resilient sunflower, turning towards the language with unwavering determination, much like the sunflower's quest for sunlight.

On the whole, the remarks in this subtheme highlighted the contrast between the identities of native speaker teachers and non-native speaker teachers. Native speaker teachers, often relying on their native status, are perceived qualified by students and administrations. However, non-native speaker teachers have to exert constant effort to survive in the field.

4.1.4.2. Tougher Conditions

The belief that non-native speaker teachers face tougher conditions and carry heavier workloads compared to their native speaker counterparts was expressed in the metaphors and abstracts collected from the participants.
This early career teacher was evidently stating the reality of facing many more issues in instutitons as non-native speaker teachers compared to their native counterparts, with a hint of frustration.

> *The workload and the working conditions are far harder for us and we have to deal with many more issues.*

Some participants highlighted an additional challenge faced by non-native speaker teachers, pointing out that native speaker teachers encounter less difficulty in finding job opportunities:

> *A native English teacher is similar to an americano, effortlessly embodying the essence of the language and getting into jobs without the need for extra accomplishments*

> *Native English teachers tend to have it easy when it comes to job hunting.*

4.1.4.3. The Need For Constant Improvement

One other subtheme that fall under the theme of challenges and effort was non-native speaker's need for constant improvement. It includes metaphors such as an iphone that consistently upgrade themselves, and a smartboard that tries to impress individuals with constant updates. Non-native speaker teachers' dedication to improve their skills and strive for excellence in teaching to gain respect and recognition from their administrators was emphasized both in the metaphors and abstracts provided by the participants. Some instances include:

> *Iphone: A non-native speaker teacher is like an iphone. Similar to how iphones consistently improve with each new release, non-native speaker teachers continually upgrade their skills and adapt their methods*

Smart board: A non-native teacher is like a smart board, because they have a constant commitment to self-improvement. They regularly update themselves to incorporate the latest features and enhancements and pay special attention to their professional development to make sure their teaching methods are effective. They enhance their teaching abilities through time and dedication

It is worth to note that two metaphors in this subtheme was related to electronical devices and technology, symbolizing their everchanging nature, known for constant advancements and enhancements. The use of these metaphors implies that non-native speaker teachers also perceive the need to continually evolve and progress to maintain relevance.

4.1.5. Prejudice And Discrimination

This theme consist of three subthemes offered by the early career teachers. The subthemes include prejudice, discrimination, and underappreciated status.

4.1.5.1. Prejudice

Upon analysis, the general consensus among participants was that non-native speaker teachers experience prejudice against them. They note that students often perceive them as dull and less engaging compared to native speaker teachers. Additionally, native speaker teachers face less criticism and judgment for their decisions within their institutions compared to their non-native counterparts. Some instances include:

As it is his house, nobody can judge or criticize him for his decisions.

When compared with natives, we are mostly considered boring, not fun and old.

4.1.5.2. Discrimination

A few participants discussed the discrimination they believe to be occurring in their workplaces with regard to career chances and the level of acceptance they receive from managers and coworkers. To highlight the discrimination they face, a participant utilized the metaphors of a crooked lamp and plugging something to point out that when you are a native speaker teacher, employers do not mind the other qualities you

have or teaching style, but in order to be acknowledged and accepted, non-native speaker teachers need to fit a certain mold.

> *A lamp, crooked or not, enlightens the room at the end of the day and nobody mentions it is crooked. You just accepts it as it is. You don't worry about how it works.*

> *Just like plugging something in, you need to have a specific shape, which means you need to have a specific knowledge of how this language differs from your native language so that you will be careful about some phrases.*

4.1.5.3. Underappreciated Status

A number of participants expressed feeling devalued compared to native speaker teachers, having their work often disregarded, receiving criticism from parents, students, or administrators, and dealing with disparities in salary.

One participant brought attention to the feelings of underappreciation they experience in comparison to native speaker teachers by using the metaphor of a faded flower among other exquisitely flourishing flowers.

Figure 15: Photograph Of Participant (F-U-A)



A faded flower: Non-native teachers, like myself, are like the one faded flower among other beautifully-thriven flowers. We are unappreciated. The work we do is invisible or ignored by the students and they don't see our hard work…However, the fact that we get broken, not appreciated or critized by the students, the administration and the public is not seen…Especially money-wise, most of the time, just because they are natives, they get paid much more, which makes the non-natives to feel devalued even more.

4.2. Emergent Themes From Focus Group Interview

The second source for qualitative data in this study was the focus group interview. Five participants partook in the focus group interview. Data from the focus group interview was comprehensively analyzed. The meticulous thematic analysis process revealed six distinct themes along with their respective frequencies, as outlined in the table below.

Table 10: Emergent Themes From The Focus Group Interview

Theme Number	Theme	Frequency	Percentage
1	The advantage of walking through similar paths as learners	3	60%
2	The ability to establish a bond with leaners	2	40%
3	Prejudice against NNST	3	60%
4	Discrimination in the workplace	2	40%
5	Feeling of inferiority	3	60%
6	Performing on stage	3	60%

4.2.1. The Advantage Of Walking Through Similar Paths As Learners

During the focus group interview, the idea of experiencing similar challenges as the students emerged from participants when discussing the influence of their Turkish background on their teaching identity. One participant mentioned a tendency to caution students beforehand about difficult subjects, specifically pointing out the areas where they might encounter difficulties. However, she expressed uncertainty about whether this practice was beneficial, fearing it might inadvertently bias students or create prejudice towards certain topics.

> *As an English teacher of Turkish origin, I have gone through the same paths that my students have gone through, and when I did, I had some difficulties, for example, this could be any grammar subject. Now I find myself warning the students before starting the lesson, saying, "You know, this might be a difficult subject." I'm starting to do it as a result of reflection but I realized later that I shouldn't actually do this because they'll start to form a prejudice against the subject, and this is a self-criticism that I'm doing right now, but it happens because I have gone through the same paths as them. (Participant F-U-I)*

In a similar vein, another participant noted that the first few years of the profession consist of recognizing common mistakes made by students and finding strategies to overcome them. They suggested that being a non-native speaker teacher of Turkish origin gives them an advantage in this aspect compared to native speaker teachers.

> *As English teachers, we are able to understand the grammar rules perfectly so we try to teach students thinking that they can understand it perfectly as well. The first years in teaching are like the years we get to learn the common mistakes and misconceptions. I think the first five years go in the form of learning which mistakes students make most often, which subjects they confuse most, in other words, what are the most common mistakes made by Turkish students? Eventually, you form your own teaching techniques and start warning your students about the topics they might have trouble with beforehand: "Look, you're going to get stuck here, so I'm underlining this section." (Participant F-S-UP)*

Another participant stated that while she does not use Turkish as the medium of instruction, she utilizes it as a means to establish deeper connections with students. This highlights a limitation for non-native speaker teachers in the Turkish context, making it more challenging for them to build rapport with students compared to their native counterparts.

> *I force the students to use the target language, I do my best so that they can speak English, but when the time comes, I switch back to Turkish, not as the*

medium of instruction, but just to establish a bond with the student. Natives do not have such an option, unfortunately, it is more likely that they will expose the students to the language. I think we will be more advantageous than native teachers if we do not allow the student to use Turkish unless it is necessary. (Participant F-U-B2)

On the whole, the responses in this sub theme were more positive than negative, indicating that having a similar background in learning a foreign language makes non-native speaker teachers relatable and favorable for students. In fact, it could be argued that non-native speaker teachers believe that they have an advantage to native teacher in terms of forming bonds with students and guiding them through possible mistakes.

4.2.2. The Ability To Establish A Bond With Leaners

The ability to establish a bond with learners was one of the most common notions discussed by the participants.A conseus among participants during the focus group interview was that non-native speaker teachers held an advantage in comparison to their native counterparts in terms of providing emotional support to students and establishing meaningful relationships with them.

My first objective as a teacher is generally forming a bond with students because the reason why I chose this profession is because of the bond I formed with my teacher and when you form a bond with that child or adult, they are also motivated to learn, so the learning process is also incredibly motivating. This was my first goal, that hasn't changed and I think I managed to capture that so far.I think that a non-native person can do this more easily in terms of establishing bonds with students. I think we can achieve this more easily with students, whether we use Turkish as the medium of instruction or not. I think this is our advantage. For example, I almost never use Turkish in my lessons and students sometimes want me to speak Turkish, but I realize that want to communicate in their native language not only because they do not understand it but because they need it, that is, they do not do this just to understand or analyze the lesson, they are trying to establish a bond with you. For example, when we were at university, we had a teacher, an academician whose native language was not actually Turkish, but he could speak Turkish,we understood

every word he said, of course, naturally, but he would make jokes in Turkish from time to time, and we would be really happy, and I sometimes try to act like him in class, for example, even though I don't use Turkish at all, I try to make jokes like this from time to time. Even if the joke is not funny, the student is surprised when you suddenly start speaking Turkish and finds you sincere. That's why I think we have a great advantage in terms of establishing a bond. I wanted to say this as well. (Participant F-U-PI)

Reflecting on her past experiences, a participant asserted that students tend to feel more comfortable when consulting a non-native teacher. Additionally, she implied that students might feel less inclined to discuss their concerns with a native speaker teacher as they might feel distant to the teacher.

Students have advisors at the university I work in.. For example, there is someone who will deal with their problems, and being able to talk about your problems with him/her in Turkish and being able to speak in his native language is a completely different thing. For example, I was an advisor last semester, there was an incredible flow of messages in the class and they could almost tell me all their problems and we were able to find a solution, but If I was a native teacher, maybe they wouldn't think that they could talk about their troubles so much, they would feel more distant, so it could have such an effect. (Participant F-U-PI)

4.2.3. Prejudice Against NNST

In the context of Turkey, one of the participants emphasized that parents are more inclined to show a preference of native speaker teachers. With a hint of annoyance, she complained about not being the first choice for anyone, be it parents or administrators.

There are many Turkish families who are trying to raise their children as bilinguals right now. For them, the fact that you can speak English as a Turk is not enough. Even if you have a good command of language and are fluent,

they prefer native speakers and they do not see you as competent. When you are a non-native teacher, you are never the first choice. (Participant F-U-PI)

Similary, another participant shared a concern about the prejudice that is held against non-native speaker teachers. She underlined that parents prefer a foreigner teacher instead of a Turkish teacher, no matter what their linguistic background are. So, a foreigner teacher whose native language is not even English is at a superior level in the eyes of parents'.

There are some foreign language classes in the school I'm working. At the beginning of the semester, if they had got enough money from the parents, they would have hired a so called native teacher who is not even native but just not a Turkish teacher. A foreigner teacher is always perceived as better and more competent than the Turkish teacher whether they are Persian, Mexican or Arab. (Participant F-S-UP)

Another participant reported a similar instance.

Yes, I do agree. For instance, a Tunisian teacher is perceived superior to Turkish teachers. I am pretty sure that if they had been able to afford it, the parents would have demanded a native teacher. If they had got to chose between a Tunisian teacher and me, they would have chosen the Tunisian teacher. (Participant F-U-PI)

One participant added that administrators, much like parents, tend to favor native speakers over non-native ones. However, she noted that this preference would not necessarily affect students, as they typically would not be able to tell the difference.

I think administrators may also support this idea if they could afford it. I don't think the students, young learners, can tell the difference between a native and a non-native speaker teacher as long as the non-native speaker uses English as the medium of instruction. (Participant F-S-UP)

4.2.4. Discrimination In The Workplace

Another concern that arose was the discrimination non-native speaker teachers face in terms of salary. One of the participants expressed that regardless of their educational qualifications, a native speaker typically earns a higher salary compared to a non-native speaker teacher with a master's degree. With a hint of irritation, the participant stated that managers need to find a way to address this imbalance. While acknowledging that the demand for native teachers is only natural, the participant criticized managers for allowing this injustice to exist, indicating that there should be a shift in the way managers view and value native and non-native speakers.

> *For example, even when it comes to salary, the salary that a Turkish English teacher with an MA or something like that will receive and a John who comes from America or a John who is said to come from America will be different from each other. Actually, it is a matter of supply and demand, of course, but when you think about it, at some point, education administrators, that is, people who are managers in educational institutions, need to understand the philosophy of this job properly, of course, in an ideal world, that is a separate issue, but they need to understand the philosophy of this job in a logical way and establish a balance accordingly. I'm not saying that there shouldn't be Johns or Kennedys, of course. I mean, it's only natural to have a native speaker of that language, but creating a huge gap between the two is actually something that managers do…. (Participant F-U-B)*

She mentioned an old manager as an instance to illustrate that not all managers share this bias, emphasizing that there are still managers capable of distinguishing between a high-quality native speaker teacher and a so-called native teacher.

> *One of our teachers had told us this before and they said that "we don't have any native speaker teachers". A teacher from the class also told our manager teacher that "the people who come here either are missionaries or losers, so it is very difficult to find a normal native speaker. When I find one, we will have a native speaker teacher." He said it. (Participant F-U-B)*

It is worth to note that the primary aspect participants seemed to complain about is the favoritism towards native speakers, even if they lack teaching experience or expertise, simply because of their native status. Despite working really hard and constantly trying to improve their teaching skills, non-native speaker teachers do not get the recognition they deserve, often feeling neglected and undervalued.

4.2.5. Feeling Of Inferiority

Participants were asked what being a Turkish non-native speaker English language teacher entails and whether they see any similarities between themselves or native speaker teachers and what sets them apart from native speaker teachers. A participant displayed frustration, indicating that they continually have to relearn detailed aspects like an exception rule in grammar or an uncommon vocabulary due to not being a native speaker. They expressed a sense of inadequacy in terms of innate linguistic knowledge, feeling like they would never attain a native-like proficiency. The following statement explains her perspective:

> *You always lack that one thing. You sometimes have to learn some tiny detail again and again, even on the topic you know the best. (Participant F-U-PI)*

Another participant shared similar beliefs regarding what distinguishes them from native speaker teachers, expressing a belief that they could never achieve complete mastery of the language and stating that they will encounter unknown linguistic items from time to time.

> *As a non-native speaker, you are definitely different from a native speaker. Something you don't know always comes up whether it is a daily conversation vocabulary or a slang or some detailed grammar rule. (Participant F-S-UP)*

Furthermore, participants expressed their discomfort regarding speaking English in the presence of their native speaker colleagues and indicated that this might be as a result of their lack of self-confidence.

> *The thing we suffer from the most is, for example, when we see the native s peaker teacher in our institution, we run away and get nervous, even as*

teachers, when we talk to a native teacher, I don't know if we have such a lack of self-confidence or maybe we wonder if we are going to say something wrong. (Participant F-U-PI)

4.2.6. Performing On A Stage

Another notion which was put forward by the participants was that they likened teaching to performing on a stage. They stated that they perceive themselves as stepping onto a stage rather than entering a classroom. Participants expressed that they leave behind any negative emotions or burdens prior to entering the classroom.

Also, I want to add this as well. I see it (classroom) like this, it's a stage, it's completely a stage, it's not like I'm teaching someone something, I feel like I'm going to go on stage today and, it's enjoyable to me, when I look at it like this, I can't think of it in any other way. (Participant F-U-PI)

Another participant agreed with this statement, expressing that they too experience a feeling similar to performing on a stage during their lessons.

This is very relatable. I totally agree with this, I go to work like this every day, I go with this thought, so even if I'm sad, I motivate myself a lot before class and my mood changes in class because I see the classroom as a stage. I also want to continue teaching in the future. I would love to work with pre-service teachers. (Participant F-U-B2)

To provide an instance, a participant recalled an incident involving one of her teachers who shared news of another teacher's death right after a joyful lesson.

A teacher at our university said, this is a theater stage, he was going to give us the news of the death of one of our teachers, at that moment and it was like this, this lesson went very well, everyone laughed, had fun, jokes were made, etc. He also laughed and had fun, then he said, this is a theater stage, the curtains are down right now. I am here just as Cem and then he gave the bad news, he left his teaching role and was there just as Cem. (Participant F-U-B)

In general, participants exhibited a strong dedication to their profession and maintained professionalism even when encountering personal challenges. They did not let their mood swings or external problems influence the quality of teaching. Additionally, they admired their past teachers who did the same thing.

4.3. The Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale

The *Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale* (Bernat, 2009) was administered to 109 teachers in order to explore what impact does the Imposter Syndrome have on the understanding of language teacher identity among novice English language teachers. As Yates and Chandler (1998) stated, the features of impostorhood includes "fraudulence" and "low self-efficacy beliefs". In this regard, the 13 item scale was divided into two constructs: fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs. The mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each item and each construct separately using SPSS. Table 11 presents the means and standart deviations of the collected data.

Table 11: Early Career Teachers' Attitudes Towards Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome

	Item	**Mean (N=4)**	**Std.**
Fraudulence	1.Sometimes I am afraid I will be discovered for who or what I really am.	1.81	0.92
	2. I find it hard to accept compliments about my teaching ability because they are mainly not true.	1.64	0.87
	3.My public and private self are not the same.	2.44	1.10
	4. Very few people really know how average I am.	1.74	0.83

Self-efficacy Beliefs	1. I feel that other people tend to believe that I am more competent than I am.	2.75	1.03
	2.I feel I don't deserve the awards, recognition, and praise I regularly receive.	1.50	0.83
	3.I am not sure if I am able to teach English well, since I am non-native speaker teacher.	1.53	0.81
	4. I often achieve success on a project when I think I may have failed.	2.56	1.00
	5. I am certain that my abilities don't reflect the level of my achievement.	2.69	0.98
	6. I feel inferior compared to Native Speaker Teachers.	2.19	1.01
	7. I often wonder if my accent makes it hard for people to understand me.	1.42	0.72
	8. Most of my successful teaching experiences are due to luck.	1.31	0.63
	9. When I stand in front of a classroom I feel like I don't belong there.	1.47	0.90

4.3.1. Fraudulence

The data analysis in this section contains participants' answers to the construct of fraudulence. This construct was analyzed through Likert scale items 3-4 and 11-13. This group of items concentrated on the participants' perceptions of feeling like impostors, fearing that they are pretending to be someone they are not and will soon be exposed.

The participants' responses to item 4, "I find it hard to accept compliments about my teaching ability because they are mainly not true." were largely negative. 58% of the participants chose the option not true at all. Thus, it was apparent that the majority of the participants believed in their abilities as teachers.

In terms of mean scores, the participants displayed the feelings of fraudulence with a mean score of 1.92 out of 4, and self-efficacy beliefs with a mean score of of 2.08 out of 4.

With regard to fraudulence construct, it was apparent that the majority of the participants felt like their public and private selves were not the same when the mean score for the item were taken into account.

4.3.2. Self-Efficacy Beliefs

The data analysis in this section comprises participants' answers to the construct of self-efficacy beliefs. This construct was analyzed through Likert scale items 1-2, 5-10, and 14-15. This group of items centered on participants' perceptions of experiencing feelings of inferiority, doubting their abilities, attributing their accomplishments to external factors like luck, feeling undeserving of praise and recognition, doubting their language skills due to being non-native speakers, and feeling inadequate.

The participants' responses to item 5, "I feel I do not deserve the awards, recognition, and praise I regularly receive." were largely negative. 67% of the participants chose the option not true at all. Thus, it was evident that participant believed that they are worthy of the recognition and praise they get for their hardwork.

In terms of mean scores, when the items for each construct are considered individually for the self-efficacy domain, the findings showed that the early career teachers' levels of feeling like others perceive them as more skilled than they actually are 2.75 were higher than the overall self-efficacy mean score. Also, it is evident that early career teachers feel like they might have failed at a project although they usually end up succeeding considering that 2.56 was higher than the overall self-efficacy mean score.

The participants' responses to item 14, "Most of my successful teaching experiences are due to luck." were mostly negative. 76% of the participants chose the option not true at all. Thus, it can be concluded that the participants did not attribute their success to luck.

Additionally, data displayed that the majority of early career teachers believed that their abilities do not reflect the level of their accomplishments taking into consideration that 2.69 was higher than the overall self-efficacy beliefs mean score.

The highest mean scores belonged to the items in the self-efficacy beliefs construct.

4.4. Factors That Constitute Teacher Identity Perceptions

In order to seek an answer to the research question: "What factors cause difference in the identity perceptions of non-native early career English language teachers?" a Shapiro-Wilk test was performed to ensure that data is normally distributed. When the results did not show evidence of non-normality (W = 0.98, p=0.31), a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. The one way ANOVA provided additional information and compared how non-native teachers' beliefs of fraudulence and self-efficacy differed in terms of constructs such as gender, years of experience, and different working contexts. When compared in terms of their respective working contexts, the ANOVA confirmed that there was a statistically significant difference in the levels of self-efficacy beliefs experienced by teachers working at different contexts: F(3,105)=3.18, p=0.02. (Table 12). The Post-Hoc results revealed that the difference was among middle school teachers and university instructors as well as primary school teachers and middle school teachers.

Table 12: One-way ANOVA Results For The Construct Of Working Contexts

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Fraudulence	1.488	3	0.496	1.078	0.362
Self-Efficacy	1.363	3	0.454	3.181	0.027

Findings also revealed that years of experience was not an influential construct in the perceived fraudulence, or self-efficacy beliefs of the participants. The minor differences in the more experienced and less experienced teachers perceptions are therefore inconsequential (Table 13).

Table 13: One-way ANOVA Results For The Construct Of Years Of Experience

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Fraudulence	2.397	4	0.599	1.315	0.269
Self-Efficacy	0.824	4	0.206	1.379	0.246

In addition, the results indicated that gender did not significantly impact how participants perceived their feelings of fraudulence, or self-efficacy beliefs. The slight

variations observed between male and female participants' perceptions were deemed insignificant.

Table 14: One-way ANOVA Results For The Construct Of Gender

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Fraudulence	0.481	1	0.481	1.043	0.309
Self-Efficacy	0.056	1	0.056	0.368	0.546

None of the other comparisons yielded significant results, regardless of factors such as participants' educational backgrounds, completion of a Master's degree, or travel abroad experience.

This chapter presented the themes derived from the thorough analysis of participants' metaphors, abstracts, and the focus group interview. Additionally, it displayed the results of the one-way ANOVA test and presented the means and standard deviations of the NNST Impostorhood Scale. The participants' insights were integrated with the aim of offering as much detail as possible. The following chapter discusses these results in connection with existing literature.

5. DISCUSSION

The present research study aimed to explore the factors that constitute the process of non-native novice teachers' identity construction, the way they perceive themselves as non-native speaker teachers and their native counterparts, and whether they face Non-Native Speaker Teacher Impostorhood as a result of their non-native status. In this regard, three research questions were formulated:

4. How does being non-native speakers of English influence early career English language teachers' self-perceptions?
5. Does the Imposter Syndrome have an impact on the language teacher identities of non-native early career English language teachers? If yes, what components of the Imposter Syndrome are experienced?
6. What factors cause difference in the identity perceptions of non-native early career English language teachers?

In order to seek an answer to the research questions, 25 non-native early career teachers, with experiences ranging from 0 to 5 years, were asked to provide digitally captured metaphors as answers to the questions of “Who or what (or both) is a native speaker English teacher?” and “Who or what (or both) is a non-native speaker English teacher?”. In addition, participants were asked to fill in a detailed demographic information form and the NNST Impostorhood Scale. It was also supported with a focus group interview. The findings were presented under three categories: (1) the way non-native early career teachers perceive themselves and their native counterparts, (2) the factors that constitute the identity construction of non-native novice English language teachers, and (3) the Impostor Syndrome. The results are discussed in the same way in the following sections.

5.1. Perceptions On Non-Native And Native Teachers

Concerning the first research question, which sought to reveal information about the self-perceptions of language teachers as non-native speaker teachers and their perceptions of their native counterparts, the data obtained from the digitally captured metaphors, abstracts, and the focus group interview was analyzed through a detailed thematic analysis. Five themes were derived from the perceptions of non-native speaker early career teachers: (1) internal psychological states, (2) attitudes and behaviors, (3) innate traits and abilities, (4) challenges and effort, and (5) prejudice and discrimination.

The results of this research indicate that the participants acknowledged the presence of favoritism for native-speakerism within the Turkish EFL context and experienced adverse effects as a result of this favoritism. As it has been repeated in the literature, non-native teachers commonly feel insecure about their own accents, linguistic skills, and language use (Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Jenkins, 2005; Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Similarly, in terms of internal psychological states, participants felt like they lacked a specific quality exclusive to native-speaker teachers and held the belief that, despite their considerable efforts, they could only achieve a fraction of the proficiency native speakers have in the current study. As Lowe and Pinner (2016) stated, native-speaker teachers are still regarded as the true source of language to this day. This finding was in accord with that of Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999), who revealed that non-native speaker teachers regard native speaker teachers to be authentic and valid users of the language. Similarly, Amin (1997) revealed that non-native speaker teachers consider speakers from inner-circle countries as the agents of "real" and "proper" English (p. 580). Besides, other studies confirmed the same results (Phillipson, 1992; Lee, 2000; Cook, 2005).

However, some of the participants acknowledged that being a native speaker of a language does not guarantee being a good teacher of that language. The participants stated that they are able to empathize with the learners as a result of going through the same paths themselves. In addition, they are aware of the common mistakes so they can lead their students more efficiently in their learning process. As McKay (2003) unveiled, non-native-speaker teachers were conscious of their advantages such as knowledge of the culture of learners, familiarity with the problems that may arise while learning a new language, and common mistakes and misconceptions students make

while learning English as native Turkish speaker learners. As Seidlhofer (1999) states: “Native speakers know the destination, but not the terrain that has to be crossed to get there; they themselves have not travelled the same route“(as cited in Moussu and Llurda, 2008, p. 320).This finding is in line with Medgyes (1992), who asserts that non-native teachers possess the capability to foresee common errors and when teachers share the same native language as their students, they can also assist learners by clarifying complicated language aspects in their shared native tongue. This perspective regards non-native teachers as capable of offering support tailored to their students' needs. Similarly, other studies proved the same results (Davies, 1991; Lee, 2000; Bećirović & Podojak, 2018).

Furthermore, the findings showed that non-native early career teachers struggle with low self-confidence both because of their linguistic abilities and the way learners, parents, colleagues, and managers perceive native speakers as superior. Similarly, when Yapıcı-Sarıkaya (2013) explored the non-native teachers' perceptions of their linguistic skills and teaching abilities, she unveiled that non-native teachers felt less self-confident in comparison to their native counterparts. Tum (2010) also suggest that non-native teachers may experience persistent anxiety due to feelings of inadequacy in the target language. Thus, to improve the quality of education, and prevent teachers from quitting the profession, some precautions should/could be taken. Pre-service teachers should be warned and prepared for favoritism against native-speaker teachers in the field. It confirmed the same result with the literature (Shibata et al., 2008; Derwing & Munro, 2015; Levis et al., 2016).

Another finding of the study was related to the contrast between the behaviors of non-native and native-speaker teachers. Non-native speaker teachers stated that non-native teachers teach in a more structured and concise manner, and they prepare learners more comprehensively. Benke and Medgyes (2005) also stated that native speakers excel in teaching and clarifying grammar following a structured method, enabling more comprehensive exam preparation. Moreover, non-native speaker teachers demonstrate sincere dedication to their profession by assigning a large amount of homework, devoting their time to meticulously plan their lessons, and consistently providing feedback on errors.

Yet, native-speaker teachers are often regarded as relaxed and fun by students. Participants stated that non-native speakers sometimes tend to "take the easy way out" by utilizing Turkish in the classroom when explaining intricate grammar topics.

However, native-speaker teachers do not have the option to take refuge in learners' L1 while instructing, thus, they try harder to engage students in speaking the target language. These findings were similar to the findings of Benke and Medgyes (2005), native-speaker teachers were observed to be more effective in encouraging their learners to engage in speaking activities. Likewise, Benke and Medgyes (2005) also remarked that native-speaker teachers are perceived as friendlier, and their lessons are perceived as more dynamic and vibrant compared to their non-native-speaker counterparts. Yet, it is argued that native-speaker teachers have a tendency to leave issues, such as learners not understanding a concept, unresolved due to their inability to explain the concept using L1 (Benke & Medgyes, 2005).

The results proved the presence of a perceived disparity in non-native speakers in terms of the innate abilities and traits between native and non-native speakers. This divergence is particularly evident among non-native English speakers, who frequently perceive native speakers as the holders of an innate linguistic capacity. As echoed in the literature, native-speaker instructors are "perfect models" (Benke & Medgyes, 2005) and "better qualified as language teachers" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 732).

One of the most notable concepts appearing in the study is that non-native speaker teachers believe themselves to possess variety and diversity compared to their native counterparts. In addition, they believe they are admired by their students for serving as models of success, as individuals who walked the same path and succeeded, and frequently displaying high levels of motivation. As Ellis (2002) states, the feature that distinguishes non-native teachers from native ones is their background in learning English as a second language.

Moreover, non-native speakers felt like they needed to exert more effort compared to native-speaker teachers. They believe the conditions in the workplaces were tougher for them. Their decisions and performance were monitored and evaluated continuously. Additionally, in order to be accepted and recognized by learners, colleagues, and employers they had to constantly improve themselves professionally. As a result, non-native teachers were discouraged and felt demotivated in the face of this inequity. In a similar vein (Skliar, 2014) concluded that non-native speaker teachers were perceived as having less prestige among students, other teachers, and managers compared to native speaker teachers, resulting in them needing to devote additional time and energy to enhancing their proficiency in the target language and

teaching strategies. Likewise, other studies in the literature proved the same results (Tatar & Yıldız, 2010; Tatar, 2019).

The present study also found that English language teachers face discrimination and prejudice within the field of English Language Teaching. In a similar vein, Clark and Paran (2007) concluded that non-native teachers are treated unfairly when seeking employment due to the negative consensus from managers. This confirmed the previous studies (Thomas, 1999; Medgyes, 2001; Holliday, 2006; Selvi, 2010). With the growing presence of novice English teachers across various levels of the Turkish education system, it is conceivable that a considerable amount of novice teachers will face similar challenges unless equitable hiring practices for teachers are implemented. Non-native speaker teachers were perceived as inadequate by the parents of learners. Surprisingly, they believed that the parents mostly cannot tell the difference between a native speaker and a non-native speaker; indicating the parents assume individuals presented as native English speakers even though they are actually foreign non-native English speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds and countries, including those where English is traditionally taught as a foreign language, like Persia, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia. Parents believe any teacher who is a foreigner is naturally better than teachers with Turkish origins. In addition, they mentioned managers hold the same belief because of the marketing benefits since having a foreign teacher would increase the appeal of the institution. As a result, many private schools opt to hire foreign teachers to enhance the school's perceived credibility. In the same vein, Tatar (2019) stated that many schools, principals, and parents hold mistaken beliefs about non-native speaker teachers and thus, it's accurate to say that native speakerism is a noteworthy concern in Turkey today. This finding is in line with previous research on the perceptions of parents and managers on non-native speaker teachers (Tatar & Yildiz, 2010; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2015; Liu, 2018).

Furthermore, non-native speaker teachers commonly received lower salaries in comparison to their native counterparts. The fact that they experience disparities in terms of income frustrated non-native speakers who believed that they worked hard and made a tremendous effort to improve their linguistic and teaching skills, whereas a native-speaker teacher only has to be native to receive a higher salary. In addition, most of the so-called native speaker teachers lacked sufficient educational qualifications for teaching English as a foreign language, unlike Turkish English teachers who typically received training and even Master's degrees in English

Language Teaching (ELT). As a result, non-native teachers sensed they were devalued and underappreciated in their workplaces. This is in line with the findings of Skliar (2014), in which non-native-speaker teachers hold the belief that their non-native status puts them at a disadvantage in various aspects including lower income when entering professional life.

5.2. Non-Native Early Career Teachers' Perceptions Of Impostorhood

To answer the second research question, "What impact does the Imposter Syndrome have on the language teacher identities of early career English language teachers?" the mean and standard deviation scores for the two constructs, fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs, in the NNST Impostorhood scale was calculated and compared.

The mean scores indicated that the majority of participants are convinced that their abilities do not accurately represent their level of achievement. This discrepancy may result from participants perceiving themselves as either more skilled or less skilled than others perceive them to be. Yet, the subsequent data from the metaphor task and focus group interview proved that the latter is more likely to be the cause. Non-native speaker teachers are perceived to be less adequate by their learners, parents, colleagues, and managers simply due to the fact that English is not their native language. Similarly, other studies confirmed the same results (McKay, 2003; Kim, 2011).

In addition, the mean scores revealed that most participants frequently achieve success on projects even when they believe they have failed. This is closely associated with their feelings of self-doubt and their perception of having low self-efficacy. These results align with the findings of Tajeddin and Adeh (2016). Their study also found that non-native speaker teachers struggle with self-confidence and understanding their role and status in comparison to native-speaker teachers. This difference may arise from the existing bias, and discrimination against non-native English-speaking teachers in the workplace compared to their native-speaking counterparts.

The mean scores showed that most participants believe others perceive them as more competent than they perceive themselves to be. This also indicates that non-native speaker teachers struggle with low self-efficacy beliefs and tend to doubt their abilities. The data from the Picture Me task also supports these findings. Participants constantly stated that they viewed themselves as lacking 'that one aspect', the innate linguistic knowledge of a native speaker in their case. Thus, non-native speakers teachers'

perceptions about themselves as teachers were influenced by the non-native and native speaker dichotomy.

5.3. Factors That Constitute Teacher Identity Perceptions Of Non-Native Early Career Teachers

To answer the third research question, “What factors cause difference in the identity perceptions of non-native early career English language teachers?” the one-way ANOVA was performed, covering constructs of age, gender, years of experience, working context, educational backgrounds of the teachers, and whether they had traveled abroad or not.

The influence of the working context of the teachers on their self-perceptions and identity was investigated. The one-way ANOVA demonstrated that the working context of non-native speaker early career teachers yield a significant difference in their fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs. The Post Hoc test revealed that there was a significant difference between middle school teachers and university instructors as well as primary school teachers and middle school teachers. Similar evidence is also provided in the literature. According to Wolters and Daugherty (2007), higher levels of self-efficacy were reported by elementary school teachers in comparison to teachers in middle or high schools. In a similar vein, the study of Klassen and Chiu (2010) revealed that teachers who instruct to higher grade levels had lower self-efficacy. This finding indicates the necessity for further investigation of the connections between teachers' beliefs and self-perceptions and their working context. One implication of this finding is that providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to gain experience in various working context during their practicum can help them develop a strong sense of teacher identity and better prepare them for the different challenges they will face in their future careers.

The impact of gender on teachers' self-perceptions, and therefore their identities, has been a controversial topic in the literature. While some researchers (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Özçallı, 2007) contend that notions such as self-efficacy vary significantly based on gender, numerous studies (Ekizler, 2013; Liu & Ramsey, 2008) deny the notion that gender has a meaningful effect.

According to the one-way ANOVA analysis in the present study, gender did not have a significant difference in the fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs of non-native speaker early career teachers. In the literature, there are numerous studies with similar

findings. For instance, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2002) conducted a study with the aim of evaluating teachers' self-efficacy, finding that gender did not have a significant impact on self-efficacy beliefs. Çelik, Koç Erdamar and Toraman (2016) also investigated the same phenomenon among teachers with different subject fields and found no significant discrepancy in the perceptions of self-efficacy and feelings of doubt between male and female participants.

Thus, it was unveiled that gender does not make a significant impact on the self-perceptions of teachers. In other words, gender does not positively or negatively impact teachers' feelings of fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, these beliefs can be improved and reconstructed through experience, career development opportunities, and teacher education programs.

The influence of years of experience was also considered as one of the constructs that influence teachers' perceptions of themselves. The results of the current study showed that years of experience did not yield a significant difference in the fraudulence and self-efficacy beliefs of non-native speaker early career teachers.

Thus, it might be concluded that teachers' self-perceptions might not be positively or negatively influenced by their years of experience. Yet, it is important to state that the participants' years of experience in the current study varied between 0 to 5 years. Klassen and Chiu (2010) revealed that the correlation between teachers' years of experience and self-perceptions might be more complicated than previously assumed. To illustrate, in their study, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found out that participants' self-efficacy beliefs increase in the initial years, and the middle of their careers, yet their beliefs decrease as they progress into the last years in the profession. Thus, the current study can also be adapted to non-native speaker teachers with more than 5 years of experience.

The influence of other factors, such as whether the participants held a Master's degree or had gone abroad, was also investigated. Yet, none of them yielded a significant difference.

6. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an overall summary of the research study is presented, followed by a discussion of the implications for the study and the identification of its limitations, along with recommendations for further research.

The study sought to investigate the non-native speaker novice EFL teachers' professional identity construction throughout the initial years of their careers, which factors contribute to that construction, and the effects of their non-native status on their levels of self-efficacy, particularly in relation to Imposter Syndrome, on perception of their identity. It was designed to explore non-native speaker novice teachers' perspectives through various data collection methods in order to gain comprehensive insight. It was tailored specifically to explore whether participants experience the so-called Imposter Syndrome, a sense of feeling inferior compared to native speaker teachers, in the initial years of their careers and which factors contribute to the construction and reconstruction of their identities. The motivation behind conducting this study originated from the researcher's personal fascination with teacher identity and native/non-native dichotomy.

Derived from these research objectives and interests, two questions were formulated concerning what constitutes teacher professional identity construction of non-native early-career teachers, and how their non-native status affected their understanding of their professional identities. In order to assert these research questions, data were gathered through the visual metaphor task, the focus-group interview, and the Non-Native Speaker Imposter Syndrome Scale. The analysis and discussion of the findings evidently indicated that the working context and the years of experience had an effect on the understanding of non-native early-career teachers' professional identity formation. In addition, the feelings closely linked with the Imposter Syndrome, such as fraudulence and low self-efficacy beliefs, were experienced by the participants. Yet, although it is recognized by non-native early-career teachers that they encounter discrimination and bias in the field, and struggle with feelings of inadequacy due to their non-native status; they also acknowledge certain advantages

over native speakers, such as their ability to establish a bond with students and display empathy.

The results showed that participants perceived a difference between themselves and native teachers. It was argued that native teachers were perceived as superior to non-native teachers by employers, colleagues, parents, and sometimes students. Non-native speakers reported feeling like they lack the innate linguistic ability native speakers possess. Due to their non-native status and the emotionally demanding nature of the early years of their career, participants expressed that they struggle with symptoms of Imposter Syndrome: low self-efficacy beliefs and fraudulence. In addition, the findings reported that even though they encounter difficulties with feelings of inadequacy, diminished self-confidence, and even frustration; non-native teachers believe themselves to be at an advantage in terms of establishing bonds and ability to show empathy. Finally, it was seen from the quantitative data that the working context and the years of experience affect non-native novice EFL teachers' identity construction. Overall, it could be noticed that the findings were in line with what has been proposed in the literature. Non-native English-speaking teachers often grapple with maintaining professional self-esteem and deal with self-acknowledged bias arising from their non-native status (Medgyes, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2000). It was the case for this study as the non-native early-career teachers grounded their arguments on the realities of their own experiences.

This study aspired to attempt to gain an understanding of the professional identity construction and reconstruction of non-native early-career English and connect the findings to teacher education programs. After integrating the findings of the study into the relevant literature on the teacher professional identity and its construction, it could be said that the findings have the potential to enhance the development of teacher education programs. For this purpose, the following implications have been identified.

- Novice teachers’ professional identity development is evidently overlooked in teacher education in Turkey in the sense that there is minimal or substantial focus on it. Teacher education programs fail to recognize the significance of novice teachers' requirement to comprehend their role in teaching, hindering their ability to connect with the profession.

- In order to prepare teachers for the formidable first years of teaching, more emphasis should be placed on professional identity construction during practicum, especially considering it is the initial experience for pre-service teachers in real classrooms where they begin to shape their professional identities.
- Administrators should also emphasize the importance of fostering the professional identity development of non-native novice teachers and support them in their journey of self-discovery as early-career teachers.
- The findings also revealed that non-native novice teachers get frustrated and demotivated by the discrimination they face in their workplaces. This suggests the necessity for making efforts to raise awareness among administrators and employees that being a native speaker does not necessarily mean being a better teacher.
- As was apparent in the results, the way non-native novice teachers are perceived by others strongly affects the way they understand and see themselves. Therefore, there should more forms of giving and receiving feedback via mentors or regular observation sessions of novice teachers' classroom teaching. By doing this, it will not only encourage them but will also enhance their understanding of their professional identities.
- Constant support and intentional guidance should be provided to assist early-career teachers in exploring their professional identities. This could be achieved through mentoring, communities of practice or by providing continuing professional development courses in the workplace.

This study aimed to contribute to the scarce literature on exploring the professional identity construction of non-native early-career teachers by examining a specific case from the Turkish context. However, it is not devoid of limitations, namely lacking extended observation of participants. Although the data is comprehensive, conducting a longitudinal study could provide a broader perspective on the construction of professional identity among early career teachers as they progress through their careers. Through this approach, a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the issue can be attained within non-native novice teachers' careers.

This study could be reproduced with varied participants and contexts. It would help to enhance understanding of the construction of professional identity among non-native early-career teachers and would be beneficial for those engaged or interested in language teacher education literature.

Furthermore, utilizing the perspectives of native-speaker teachers to contrast the differences in their experiences and realities on their professional identity development could be another way to broaden the view of this research and gain a clearer insight.

Future research studies could involve starting the data collection process when participants are still pre-service teachers and tracking the development of their teacher identity over the initial five years of their careers. The participants in this study were not observed during their pre-service teacher training, and it would have been valuable to monitor their professional identity construction at an earlier stage.

Various trends and notions in language teaching, such as teacher burnout, teacher resilience, and job satisfaction, could be explored within the professional identities of non-native novice teachers.

The current study restricted its sources of data to the visual metaphor task, the focus-group interview, and the Non-Native Speaker Teacher Imposter Syndrome Scale for manageability of data amount from 109 participants. Yet, another study can contain the use of individual interviews, classroom observation, and reflection journals from non-native novice teachers.

Finally, employing a narrative approach could offer an alternative method for conducting the same study, providing a comprehensive insight into the case. Implementing an alternative analysis strategy could be enlightening, too. All these will certainly be informative and guiding for the future of teacher education programs and even practicum programs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Picture Me Task

PICTURE ME

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that involves comparing one thing to another, implying a resemblance between them. For example, "The snow is a white blanket" is a metaphor, where snow is compared to a blanket for its visual similarity.

Metaphors are frequently used to assist prospective teachers' in expressing their ideas and understanding of the concepts related to teachers and teaching. Metaphors serve as a valuable tool for both practicing and aspiring teachers, providing valuable insights into how educators perceive themselves and their roles within the classroom environments they currently inhabit or aspire to engage with in the future. (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Thomson, 2015)

“Who or what (or both) is a native speaker English teacher?”
“Who or what (or both) is a non-native speaker English teacher?”

You are kindly requested to answer the questions above using digitally captured metaphors (images and pictures you’ve taken or drawn). Please note: Don't find pictures from Google; we're looking for your original creations! Select a total of two images, one for each question, to visually represent your perspectives. Please provide short written abstracts for each image (approximately 120-150 words per abstract) in which you describe and discuss your images and the way(s) they answer the specific question.

To illustrate:



"A teacher: 'A light in the dark'"

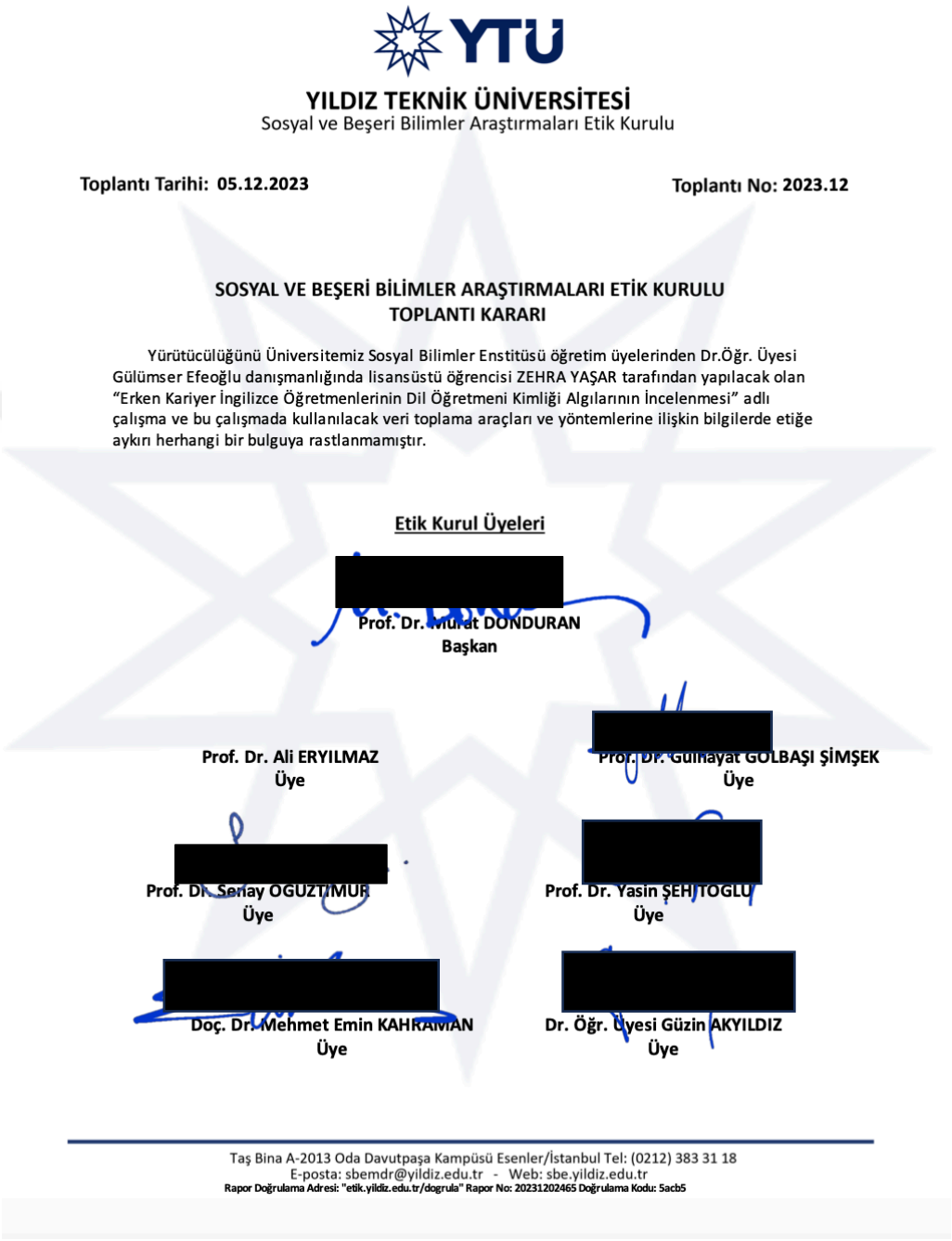
Teachers are like lights, helping students understand and find inspiration. They use their knowledge to ignite a love for learning. When things get confusing, teachers support students and help them through challenges.

1. **Who or what (or both) is a native speaker English teacher?**

2. **Who or what (or both) is a non-native speaker English teacher?**

Hamilton, E.R. (2016). Picture This: Multimodal representations of prospective teachers' metaphors about teachers and teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 55*(1), 33-44.

Appendix 2. IRB Approval



YILDIZ TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu

Toplantı Tarihi: 05.12.2023 **Toplantı No: 2023.12**

SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU TOPLANTI KARARI

Yürütücülüğünü Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü öğretim üyelerinden Dr.Öğr. Üyesi Gülümser Efeoğlu danışmanlığında lisansüstü öğrencisi ZEHRA YAŞAR tarafından yapılacak olan "Erken Kariyer İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Dil Öğretmeni Kimliği Algılarının İncelenmesi" adlı çalışma ve bu çalışmada kullanılacak veri toplama araçları ve yöntemlerine ilişkin bilgilerde etiğe aykırı herhangi bir bulguya rastlanmamıştır.

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