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**THE EFFECT OF EFL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY ON THEIR
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY**

THESIS BY
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MASTER OF ARTS

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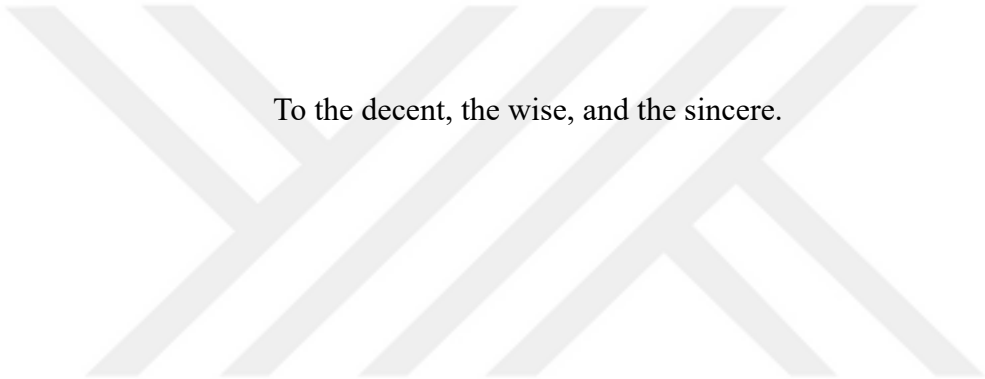
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DEDICATION

To the decent, the wise, and the sincere.

ETHICS DECLARATION**Student's****Name& Surname:** Önder ÖZTUTUŞ**Number:** 2023008013**Department:** English Language Education**Program:** Master Thesis (X) Ph. D. Thesis ()**Thesis Title:** The Effect of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity on Their Ecological Assessment Agency

I hereby declare that;

I prepared this master thesis in accordance with Çağ University Institute of Social Sciences Thesis Writing Directive,

I prepared this thesis within the framework of academic and ethics rules,

I presented all information, documents, evaluations and findings in accordance with scientific ethical and moral principles,

I cited all sources to which I made reference in my thesis,

The work of art in this thesis is original,

I hereby acknowledge all possible loss of rights in case of a contrary circumstance.
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12/06/2025

Önder ÖZTUTUŞ

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My father Aziz ÖZTUTUŞ, my mother Nesrin ÖZTUTUŞ, my brother Uğur Ender ÖZTUTUŞ, and my sister-in-law Fatma ÖZTUTUŞ deserve heartfelt thanks.

This work is dedicated to all those who strive for knowledge, seek the truth, and envision a better world.

ABSTRACT**THE EFFECT OF EFL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY ON THEIR
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY****Önder ÖZTUTUŞ****Master's Thesis, Department of English Language Education****Supervisor: Dr. Betül ALTAŞ****June 2025, 100 Pages**

EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency has been significantly influenced by the complex nature of learning and teaching as well as the high demands of globalized world. As a result of this, prescribed curricula and standardized student assessment can consistently challenge teachers' assessment agency. Despite the rising interest in the role of teachers' agency, there is a limited investigation on EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency. Besides, there is an emphasis on repositioning of teachers as assessors and teachers' role as responsible agents in assessment. Applying a correlational survey research, the study aimed to determine whether EFL teachers' professional identity has an effect on their ecological assessment agency. This research also examined whether EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency vary related to gender, academic degree, the type of school in which EFL teachers work, work experience, and EFL teachers' membership of a professional development community. This study involved 268 EFL primary, secondary and high school teachers working in state and private schools in Diyarbakır. These participating teachers were selected by the convenience sampling. Data were gleaned by "Personal Information Form", "Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency (TEAA) Questionnaire" (Ghiasvand et al., 2023), and "English Language Teacher Professional Identity Scale" (ELTPIS) (Mahmoodarabi et al., 2021). The collected data were analysed by SPSS 27. The findings of the study indicated that EFL teachers' professional identity significantly and positively affects their ecological assessment agency. The study found that EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency was significantly different regarding work experience, academic degree, and membership in a professional development community. The study also indicated that EFL teachers' professional identity was significantly different regarding academic degree and membership in a professional development community.

Key words: Teacher agency, teacher ecological agency, teacher ecological assessment agency, teacher professional identity, EFL teachers

ÖZ

İNGİLİZCEYİ YABANCI DİL OLARAK ÖĞRETEN ÖĞRETMENLERİN MESLEKİ KİMLİKLERİNİN EKOLOJİK DEĞERLENDİRME FAİLLİKLERİ ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

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Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreten öğretmenlerin ekolojik değerlendirme failliği, öğrenmenin ve öğretmenin karmaşık doğasından ve küreselleşen dünyanın yüksek taleplerinden önemli ölçüde etkilenmiştir. Bunun bir sonucu olarak, öngörülen müfredat ve standartlaştırılmış öğrenci değerlendirmesi, öğretmenlerin değerlendirme failliğini sürekli olarak zorlayabilir. Öğretmen failliğinin rolüne yönelik artan ilgiye rağmen, Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreten öğretmenlerin ekolojik değerlendirme failliği ile ilgili sınırlı çalışma mevcuttur. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin değerlendirici olarak yeniden konumlandırılmasına ve değerlendirmede sorumlu failler olarak rol almasına vurgu vardır. İlişkisel tarama modeli uygulayan bu çalışma, Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreten öğretmenlerin mesleki kimliklerinin ekolojik değerlendirme faillikleri üzerinde bir etkisi olup olmadığını araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu çalışma ayrıca, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimliklerinin ve ekolojik değerlendirme failliklerinin cinsiyete, akademik dereceye, öğretmenlerin çalıştığı okul türüne, iş deneyimine ve öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim topluluğuna üyeliğine göre değişip değişmediğini de incelemektedir. Bu çalışma, Diyarbakır'daki devlet okullarında ve özel okullarda çalışan 268 ilkökul, ortaokul ve lise İngilizce öğretmenini içermektedir. Katılımcı öğretmenler kolaylı örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilmiştir. Veriler, Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Öğretmen Ekolojik Değerlendirme Failliği Anketi (Ghiasvand ve ark., 2023), ve İngilizce Öğretmeni Mesleki Kimlik Ölçeği (Mahmoodarabi ve ark., 2021) ile toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler SPSS ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimliklerinin onların ekolojik değerlendirme failliğini anlamlı ve olumlu bir şekilde etkilediğini göstermiştir. Çalışma, öğretmenlerin ekolojik değerlendirme failliklerinin iş deneyimine, akademik dereceye ve mesleki gelişim topluluğuna üyeliğine göre anlamlı şekilde farklı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Çalışma ayrıca, öğretmenlerin mesleki kimliklerinin akademik dereceye ve mesleki gelişim topluluğuna üyeliğine göre anlamlı şekilde farklı olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen failliği, öğretmen ekolojik failliği, öğretmen ekolojik değerlendirme failliği, öğretmen mesleki kimliği, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretmenler

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ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
TEAA	: Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency
ELTPIS	: English Language Teacher Professional Identity Scale
SPSS	: Social Sciences Statistics Package
CFA	: Confirmatory Factor Analysis



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1. INTRODUCTION

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers are expected to foster new opinions for globally effective and universally practical good teaching rather than adopting a single formula (Gray & Block, 2013). Teachers' capability should find a room with the aim of engaging agentic behaviours, which is influenced by their professional identities, shaped through a variety of teaching experiences (Benson, 2010). According to Au (2007), the current form of the education system and the way teachers work in schools have prioritized practical outcomes of standard tests, which have caused teachers to isolate themselves from critical-thinking skills regarding the nature of teaching and reflections on assessment practices. This tendency stems from a prevailing belief that a standard testing or curriculum is the best way to implement teaching (Eisner, 2003). To maximize teacher agency under these circumstances, Biesta and Tedder (2007) suggest that teachers should be encouraged to be active within their context, as practices of communities and affordances are key constructs related to the development of teacher agency and teacher identity. Regarding this aspect, EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency should be granted the power to exercise stronger professional capacity and freedom in their workplaces (Sugrue & Dydral-Solbrekke, 2014). In other words, teacher agency can be regarded as an essential element of assessment. Therefore, it is insufficient for teachers to accept prescriptive curricula or restrictive assessment systems and institutional accountability policies (Biesta, 2010). However, standardized educational policy, inflexible curriculum, and school regulations minimize teachers' agency (Benson, 2000). Agency gives opportunities to individuals to take actions and make conscious decisions, and that is why it affects their profession and professional identity (Edwards, 2015).

Neoliberalism has become the dominant ideology since the late 20th century and its ideals became evident, going so far as to affect every sphere of public and private life (Block, et al., 2012). As a consequence of this, institutional structures also impose neoliberal policies that compel teachers to stick to standardized and globalized policies in education (Davis & Phyak, 2015). Similarly, the capacity of teachers to manage their teaching and learning is limited by their working environment, institutional regulations, standardized curricula, and educational policies (Benson, 2000). This may, in turn, have an effect on their personal beliefs, instructional decisions, professional identity and agency. EFL teachers may feel pressured to "teach to the test" when they encounter standardized assessments which can inhibit their creativity and critical thinking skills and which can also restrict opportunities for genuine and effective language teaching. Moreover, prioritizing the outcomes may result in ignorance of

affective factors in language teaching including identity and agency (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Norton, 2000). EFL teachers tend to accept their passive agency because they do not regard themselves as free assessors (Rezegah, 2022). As a consequence of the constraints on teachers' responsibilities on teaching, teachers' own agentic behaviours are commonly affected (Teng, 2019). Besides, teachers' either optimistic or pessimistic reactions to the teaching context encourage or discourage their identity development (Song, 2016).

Due to its complexity, there is no standard and exact definition of identity in literature. In this regard, identity can be perceived as a certain individual within a definite context (Gee, 2000). Varghese et al. (2005) explain that identity can dramatically change, and develop with contextual factors as a result of dialogues. Besides education, identity has been investigated in a variety of disciplines for decades in philosophy (Taylor, 1989), in psychology (Erickson, 1959) and in anthropology (Holland et al., 2001). Also, identity has been approached from multiple theoretical perspectives such as dialogical approach (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Hence, focusing on one theoretical perspective can be inadequate to understand the concept of identity.

Teacher identity is the way teachers assess, place and visualize themselves and other teachers. In other words, teacher identity is related to how teachers define themselves and how teachers describe other teachers (Johnson, 2003; Lasky, 2005; Varghese, 2006). Self-reflection, past experiences and the context where teachers occupy affect teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Identity also affects teacher agency by reconstructing the current context (Lasky, 2005). As the context can cause restrictions or provide opportunities for teacher agency (Ruan, 2018), change is also inevitable in educational institutions. Thus, EFL teachers are required to improve their agency to conduct and implement educational changes in educational settings (Song, 2016), and they should also consider their roles when describing themselves to others (Lasky, 2005). Therefore, agency, as a concept, has been seriously considered in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). Since the role of agency has increased attention in recent years, scholars have focused on enhancing awareness of teacher agency within professional settings and contexts (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). By seeing agency as dependent on how teachers actively approach their goals within their context, the ecological perspective confirms that teachers may trigger change in their professional context (Farmasari, 2021). Drawing upon the ecological model, teacher agency has been defined by Ghamoushi et al. (2022) as a time-sensitive and particularly context-sensitive emergent construct. Schools and other institutional factors may impact the teacher agency particularly in assessment (Luxia, 2007). For this reason, it is unrealistic to think the concept of teacher agency

by disregarding its connection to teacher assessment. According to Rezagah (2022), EFL teachers in the world typically hold limited agency to decide educational matters in assessment. As stated by Vu (2020), teachers are adversely affected by this problem as they cannot employ their knowledge, develop their efficiency and implement their favourite methods.

In relation to the significance of the current study on teacher ecological assessment agency, English language teacher professional identity, as one of the factors, which can predict teacher ecological assessment agency, should be investigated in the field. Furthermore, teacher professional identity is a complex and constantly changing concept that is affected by context (Kiely, 2014), through the interaction of teachers' personal and practical knowledge (Beijard, 2019), and their ideas, beliefs, and actions (Miller, 2009; Pennington, 2014; Schutz et al., 2018), as well as their sense of agency (Beijard, et al., 2019). While there has been research on agency and teacher agency (Ghamoushi et al., 2022; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Lawless, 2019; Tao & Gao, 2021) teachers' assessment agency has been a neglected area (Estaji, 2024; Wang, 2007; Willis et al., 2019). Only a few studies have concentrated on the ecological perspective (Ahmad & Shah, 2022; Rezagah, 2022; Ali & Hamid, 2023), and these current studies have approached the assessment agency by investigating teachers' perceptions against significant educational changes in testing. Therefore, as the interrelation between EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency has not been tested, the research problem which arises from the fact is that the impact of these foreign language teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency must be investigated.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that the study aims to investigate the effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency in the context of English as a foreign language because the study on their interrelation can contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of professional identity of EFL teachers as the predictor of their assessment choices and decisions in an agentic way. The study is also prominent in that the influence of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency, has been neglected and it is still an under-research study today. Most of the recent teacher agency studies conducted in the Turkish context are related to teachers' professional roles and perceptions (Karataş, 2024), professional wellbeing (Otlı, 2024), effectiveness of teacher (Yılmaz, 2022), readiness for change and job satisfaction (Ersöz, 2021), commitment to teaching, academic optimism and teachers' personality traits (Gülmez, 2019), curriculum

literacy (Berberoğlu, 2023), and school climate (Vural, 2022). As there is no research study carried out in Turkish EFL context regarding the effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency, this study may contribute to practices of EFL teachers and teacher educators, curriculum designers and policy makers to better understand the interrelation between teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency as well as the effect of professional identity on the ecological assessment agency in the Turkish EFL context.

Aim and Research Questions of the Study

The study aims to examine whether there is an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency. The purpose of the study is also to determine whether EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency vary according to gender, academic degree, the type of school in which they work, work experience and their membership of a professional development community. Hence, the research questions of the study are presented as follows:

1. Do EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency vary according to:
 - a) gender?
 - b) academic degree?
 - c) the type of school in which EFL teachers work?
 - d) work experience?
 - e) EFL teachers' membership of a professional development community?
2. Is there an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency?

Definition of Identity

Identity is constituted by individual experiences, social demands and cultural context (Gee, 2000; Ghanizadeh & Ostad, 2016; Labbaf et al., 2019; Pavlenko, 2012). According to Danielewicz (2001), identity is socially framed by the individual vision and other people's view in a context. Thus, identity is not only an individual and fixed entity but it is also fluid and perpetually affected by social interactions and cultural issues due to its context-dependent nature (Hall, 1999). Identity should be formed as a self-image concept and developing via interactions with society (Holland et al., 2001). In education, identity is regarded as a dynamic

construct embodied by individual experiences, societal norms and institutional structures (Beijard et al., 2004). With this regard, Dubar (2005) defines identity, saying that it is shaped through continuous social interactions and personal trajectories during life. Furthermore, Dubar emphasizes the duality of identity concept related to how people identify their self and how they are identified by others.

Social identity theories often prioritize identity's dynamic feature that is naturally and continually shaped and reshaped via interactions and experiences (Beijard, 2019). The contextualized comprehension of identity suggests that individuals may have multiple identities that are engaged and reshaped in various social contexts (Gee, 2000; Danielewicz, 2014). For instance, a person can be a doctor, a wife and a mother at once in different contexts. The terms which were coined to the shifts or shapes in identity are diverse in literature in that some refer to the "identity development" (Olsen, 2015; Watson, 2006), others prefer the use of "identity construction" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and the rest of the researchers adopted the terms such as "identity formation" (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), "identity creating" (Parkison, 2008), and "identity shaping" (Flores & Day, 2006).

In addition, Positioning theory is established by individuals' realization of their presence among society (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999). Positioning theory was proposed by Davies and Harré (1990) in social psychology to describe the way of individuals' positioning, their life and identity development which are influenced by their interactions with others. In positioning theory, "position" is distinct from "role" due to the fact that the first one is dynamic whereas the latter is static (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003). Moreover, positioning theory also emphasizes practices that are parallel with communications at individual, institutional as well as cultural level (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Thus, according to positioning theory, identity is constructed via language and social interactions.

Positioning theory significantly affects the sense of identity in that identity is regarded as dynamic, engaged and specifically context-dependent rather than static (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). This perspective highlights how individuals continuously negotiate their roles and identities through social interactions, which are shaped by cultural norms, institutional expectations, and interpersonal relationships (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Furthermore, according to Harré and van Langenhove (1999), a person can possess multiple identities depending on the context although sometimes its positions are contradictory. For example, a post-graduate student might be positioned as a student in a class for the educational context, as a teacher at school, or a friend in a social context. Multiple identities involve distinct positions and responsibilities, which tend to vary across various interactions (Harré & van Langenhove,

1999). The positions that are assigned to individuals by context are critically essential for their identity development. When a community defines an individual as "inferior" via stereotypes, this label may affect their self-perception and interactions with other people (Gergen, 2009). These external positions and social construction of identity significantly contribute to the personal identity development (Bauman, 2004). According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999), identity is a dialogical process in that individuals actively develop and argue with positions. And, Harré and van Langenhove propose that individuals are not merely passive recipients of identity but they are equipped with the ability to "resist or accept" the positions that others attempt to impose upon them. According to Harré and van Langenhove, in a conflict scenario, an individual may decline an inferior position that has been assigned to them, thus affecting the power dynamic and their self-perception. Individuals can oppose and contest their designed roles because of modifying the trajectory of the interaction. As a result, the capacity to resist and negotiate positions proves identity's dynamic and socially-constructed reality (Davies & Harré, 1990).

Teacher Identity

Teacher identity has captured the interest over the last decades (Izadinia, 2013) and it represents the self-perception of educators within their professional responsibilities and the impact on their teaching practices (Suarez & McGrath, 2022). In other words, teacher identity describes teachers' sense of identity. Teacher identity is characterized as a synthesis of personal experiences, beliefs, and social contexts that shape teachers' perceptions of their responsibilities and practices in school settings (Nguyen, 2019). Personal experiences mean that identity of a teacher is continuously changing and it evolves with continuous professional growth and changes in educational paradigms, in addition to communications among individuals and the wider instructional society (Beijard et al., 2004; Day, 2012; Flores & Day, 2006)). Personal identity, along with professional identity, constitutes teacher identity (Day, 2012). Both identities are always reviewed in response to interactions with colleagues, classroom experiences, and the broader educational environment (Gee, 2000). This means that teachers are nowadays not regarded as teachers responsible for only teaching; instead, they are perceived as agents who should perform reflexive actions when making decisions in their teaching style.

According to Flores and Day (2006), the process of teacher identity formation is shaped by past influences such as biography of the individual, context of teaching: school culture and pre-teaching identity. Biesta (2015) suggests that in addition to general and theoretical

knowledge, teachers should be directed to bring knowledge into the real life as agents by prioritizing being skilful, social and expert in teacher education. Here, Biesta stresses the existence of teacher identity in a daily and professional life. Teacher identity develops teachers' creativity and provides teachers with ways to be a skilful teacher (Hattie, 2012). Teachers' communicational skills, planning skills and practical skills related to their methodology constitute their teacher identity (Zembylas, 2003). Accordingly, this vitality of teacher identity with the slogan of a skilful teacher assesses teachers' future and academic goals, the reason of existence in school, and their interactions with society (Duru, 2006). Given that being skilful is a fundamental component of teacher education, Izadina (2014) revealed that new teacher trainers apt to foster negative perceptions on their skills and identities. According to Hsieh (2010), teacher's commitment, personal involvement with teaching, job description, and his/her willingness to use personal power in teaching and to reach job satisfaction can be related to teacher identity. Bandura (2006) defines self-efficacy as teachers' perception of their own practicality and productivity to become outstanding in teaching through their agency and capacity and to reach their professional objectives despite obstacles they meet for supporting their students' education. As self-efficacy can be associated with teaching experience and teachers' professional knowledge (Eslami & Fatahi, 2008), positive teaching experiences, such as students' achievements may contribute to identity of teachers.

Many studies have asserted that teacher identity is constantly changing and dynamic (Beijaard et al., 2004; Cummins, 2011; Gee, 2000; Sachs, 2005). As a result, a stable or a standard model of teacher identity is inconvenient and impossible (Samuel, 2008), as internal and external factors have an effect on teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Fairley, 2020; Yazan, 2018). Every single interaction shapes the teacher's identity at each phase and every step of their profession because teachers experience multiple identities (Brown & Heck, 2018). In several studies, it has also been noted that teacher identity affects teachers' beliefs and values, learning and teaching theories, and assessment practices (Abell & Siegel, 2011; Flores & Day, 2006).

Over the last two decades, language teacher identity has been diversely studied as well (Day et al., 2006; Nguyen, 2019; Yazan & Lindahl, 2020). Language teacher identity is related to teachers' perceptions on their past, present as well as future imaginations in the vocational settings (Yazan & Lindahl, 2020). Yazan and Lindahl's (2020) view is rooted by Norton's (2013) identity through ecological lens because identity covers numerous portrayals of oneself that are formed socially in contexts through actions. Furthermore, language teachers' identities direct tensions and disagreements when interacting with others in contexts (Kayi-Aydar, 2015).

In a similar vein, language teacher agency is in reaction to challenges; therefore, both terms are regarded as vital because of the way teachers react and they have a mutual and dual effect on one another (Xu & Tao, 2023). Due to the dynamic and transformative feature of language teacher identity, teachers frequently encounter changes in their identity because they cultivate further experience, confront fresh pedagogical issues, or handle shifting educational contexts (Day et al., 2006). Thus, contextual factors may affect the process of teacher professional identity (Mockler, 2011). Identity highly depends on the context of an interaction and is decoded by means of language incorporating spoken and written language, body language, symbols and signs (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Thus, it can be stated that teaching context is the centre of language teacher identity. According to Lacasa et al. (2005), Bakhtin portrayed a person's usage of various sociolects in accordance with the context as heteroglossia, each "voice" represents a unique image of self-identity like a family member, friend, teacher and even a customer.

In terms of language teacher identity in Turkey, studies showed favourable results for teachers' self-expression (Akcan, 2016), identification of themselves via metaphors (Seferoğlu, et al., 2009) and power relations (Tokoz Göktepe & Kunt, 2021a). In a narrative study, Güngör (2016) reported that teachers called for a supportive community of practice and develop a mentoring system that facilitates teacher's self-reflection within their teaching atmosphere. In a longitudinal narrative inquiry by Tokoz Göktepe and Kunt (2021), the study reveals that language teachers' identity is constructed as a result of negotiation and power relations in their communities of practice. This argument is resonated with Hoffman-Kipp's (2008) definition of teacher identity as an interplay of personal, pedagogical, political participation and reflection in a broad context. Therefore, the focus of the research on language teacher identity is that there is an urgent call for language teachers to be reflective practitioners (Albedina, 2012).

Fairclough (1992) also focuses on identity in dialogue by stating that language is crucial for the construction of individual, social, and collective identities. Fairclough maintains that what people say not only reflects identity but also actively constructs and transforms it by affecting individuals' positions, interactions, and self-perception. Barkhuizen (2017) considers identity of language teacher as ideological, and Morgan (2016) regards as reflective and transformative. As a result, language use in particular context is further shaped by hegemonic social power dynamics and ideologies as well as dialogues, which vary according to the power relations, are represented by means of identity (Dilek, 2021). Identity may also be affected by the influence of institutional discourses, including media, politics, and education. For example, individuals tend to transform their identities in reaction to power dynamics to oppose or follow

society's norms, which may shift according to the context (Mertkan & Bayrakli, 2018; Rachmad, 2019; Smith et al., 2015). From the lens of dialogical approach, teachers' identities are fluid and they are transformed and influenced multiple times through discourse (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) and internal factors as well as dynamics of social interactions (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The approach underscores the importance of reflective practices by engaging teachers with dialogues that enable them to critically and analytically evaluate their responsibilities, beliefs, values and teaching practices (Day, 2002). Thus, the dialogical approach highlights the interpersonal and reflective components of teacher identity, emphasizing that teachers constantly develop their professional identities through interactions with students, colleagues and broader societal and cultural influences besides self-reflective skills. In short, teacher identity is often associated with the notion of professional identity that includes the actions, beliefs and values that teachers foster throughout their whole career.

Teacher Professional Identity

Teacher professional identity involves teachers' perceptions: self-image, knowledge, competences, values and beliefs associated with both teaching and learning (Fejes & Köpsen, 2014; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Lasky, 2005; Lim, 2011; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). Teacher professional identity is formed by classroom experiences, dialogue with peers, students and administrators and within the pursuit of professional development practices (Schepens et al., 2009; Pillen et al., 2013; Mahmoudi-Gahrouei et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2023), and by the demands of broader educational settings such as curriculum, policies and standards (Sachs, 2001). Experiences are developed through teaching practices in communities and this affects teacher professional identity because it is context-dependent and highly depends on time (Beijard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Wenger, 2009). In particular, teacher professional identity is dynamic, and present, past, future, background and cultural elements as well as individual characteristics affect it (Lim, 2011; Dang, 2013). Teacher professional identity is directly influenced by factors stemming from the social context and political changes (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Hamilton, 2013; Hobold & Andre, 2008; Norton, 2016), the course materials and teachers' biographies (Beijaard, 2017), gender and attitude (Duff, 2016), teachers' beliefs (Lasky, 2005), teacher education (Danielewicz, 2001), teachers' trajectories in action (Karimi & Mofidi, 2019), teacher commitment (Day et al., 2005), and teacher professional development (Beijaard et al., 2000). As a result, this process may never come to an end (Danielewicz, 2001; Gray & Seiki, 2020; Taylor, 2017), and teacher professional

identity changes continuously in different time and contexts irrespective of the level engaged (Erturk, 2020; Han, 2021).

According to teacher professional identity paradigm, teachers are considered to be equipped with extensive pedagogical, didactical and subject matter knowledge (Beijard et al., 2000). From the perspective of Beijard et al. (2000), pedagogical experts engage with their students' social and emotional dimensions so that they can contribute to students' moral development. Beijard et al. also state that didactical experts enhance their agency to improve the implementation and assessment of educational ventures to direct teaching and learning process. Beijard et al. add that subject matter experts focus on skills to be expertise in their field by adapting and making programs, teaching efficiently and assessing students' potential.

Teaching context or contextual factors are defined as favouring or disfavouring conditions by Pennington and Richards (2016). Contextual elements may significantly affect teachers' professional identity (Beijard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Huang & Wang, 2021; Mockler, 2011), their emotions (Cheng, 2021; Song, 2016), their trajectories and experiences (Barret, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006; Gray & Seiki, 2020, Zembylas, 2003). Depending on the opportunities or constraints, these circumstances may have either beneficial or detrimental influences on the development of teacher identity. Additionally, school culture particularly reflects the demands of the students, school managers, curriculum, and school conditions (Duffe & Aikenhead, 1992). In addition, all teachers construct their career in interaction with social, cultural and hierarchical conditions of their context (Kelchtermans, 2009).

Furthermore, teachers who are in the early years of their work experience, are labelled as a novice teacher (Gatbonton, 2008). Here, experienced teachers are assumed to be more skilled and equipped compared to novice teachers (Ladd & Sorensen, 2017), and experienced teachers are significantly more competent at making decisions rooted in their prior experiences (Calderhead, 1996; Day et al., 2007). Consequently, teaching experience may affect attitudes, beliefs and perceptions on professional identities either positively or negatively (Kazimlar, 2019). According to Tang (2015), professional identity levels of Chinese university EFL teachers are greatly affected by the type of institution and the length of service. Additionally, Mofrad (2016) discovered that there are no notable variations among Iranian English teachers' professional identity regarding gender. However, Doğan and Erdiler Yatmaz (2018) stated that Turkish preschool teachers' professional identity is influenced by their educational level, gender and position at work.

Teacher professional identity can also be constructed through a membership in a professional development community which contributes to teachers' professional development

as teachers engage with diverse and new ideas as part of community. Being a member of a professional development community and conceptualizing membership as an idea of affordances, may yield a deeper sense of teachers' professional identity. Teacher professional identity deals with how teachers define their professional roles and the things they regard vital for their professional career (Van Veen & Slegers, 2006). Tsui (2007) and Xun and Zheng (2014) describe teachers' professional identity as a long and underexplored process, and since this process is constant, its dynamics continuously affect teachers' whole career (Gray & Seiki, 2020). Teacher professional identity has an impact on language teachers' familiarity with the way they implement the methodology and communicate with their learners and fellows (Yazan, 2018). This also reflects the complexity and slippery aspects of the teacher identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), and myriads of individual and contextual factors (Kelchtermans, 2009). It is claimed that examining identity and its contributions to teacher education provides new insights into questions about individuals and their context (Beijard et al., 2004), as better understanding of teachers' professional identity is the path to comprehend language teaching (Varghese et al., 2005).

English Language Teacher Professional Identity

Preliminary viewpoints for language teacher identity centred on subject matter and management of learners' behaviours and actions (Pennington & Richards, 2016). Therefore, language teacher professional identity encountered constraints on teacher agency, creativity, analytical thinking and societal responsibilities (Barkhuizen, 2017). To give multi-dimensional key perspectives to teacher identity matters in the context of globalization, Kumaravadivelu (2012) presented the KARDS model as an extensive model of language teacher education whose context-sensitive and holistic dimensions define EFL teachers' main positions in terms of local and global demands. The model of KARDS responds to the questions about teacher professional identity which includes teachers' views on their roles and their imagined identity (Korthagen, 2004). The KARDS model emphasizes the evolving roles of language teachers in developing critical awareness, professional identity, learner agency, raising learners' cultural awareness and socio-political consciousness in education (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). With the aim of developing teacher identity, the model highlights teachers' responsibilities as lifelong learners who adapt to both local needs and global educational challenges through reflective practice and informed action (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). As a result, teachers are responsible for staying updated and ahead on current issues in language teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

Teachers also take active roles in problem solving for the encountered matters in teaching through action research (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Implementing action research offers an opportunity for evaluating identity of teachers (Borg, 2007), and helps teachers be professional practitioners (Xu, 2016) and critical thinkers and explorers (Mahmoodarabi et al., 2021). Thus, all of these factors enable EFL teachers to exercise and promote their agency and agentic behaviours as well.

Language awareness in teacher professional identity is also in the KARDS model and it is directly linked to EFL teachers' repertoire of the subject expertise (Beijard, 2017; Brooks, 2016; Pennington, 2014). Thornbury (1997) claims that language as a system, discourse and ideology, which are key components of language awareness, contribute to the way teachers teach with greater efficiency. Language teachers who teach language systematically also focus on discourse within a specific dialogue-based circumstances instead of merely teaching form and meaning to the learners (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Beyond this, the linguistic procedures make students develop a capacity to analyse the language not only socially but also ideologically (Mahmoodarabi et al., 2021).

Kumaravadivelu (2012) assert that teaching is based on dialogic knowledge and teachers are obliged to cultivate their practice of theories in collaboration. In other words, teachers' identity, their perceptions on their self and sense of belonging to the institutions where they work are the central to teacher professional identity (Beijard et al., 2004; Miller, 2009; Van Veen et al, 2005). Kumaravadivelu (2012) also argues that teachers should take into account learners' socioeconomic situation, educational history, and learning objectives when appraising their needs, motivation, and autonomy in language teaching. To put it differently, teachers should dedicate themselves to interacting with their students' identities (Cummins, 2011). With the aim of developing their learners' identities, language teachers should develop their capacity to analyse educational issues from diverse angles.

Language teachers are continually forced to assess and evaluate their teaching beliefs and values since the belief system of EFL teachers profoundly affects their performance, behaviours, actions and decisions (Mahmoodarabi et al., 2021). For example, teachers can mirror their values in multiple ways from selecting coursebooks to showing empathy to learners' reactions (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Teacher identity is seen as a sociocultural and critical practice in teacher professional identity (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018). Kumaravadivelu (2012) emphasizes that teachers who identify their positions through a social, cultural and analytical view, are considered to experience a transformative teacher identity. Furthermore, Abednia (2012) argues that transformative teachers should not solely rely on

commercially published textbooks; instead, transformative teachers should inspire students to engage in critical thinking and develop strategies for societal transformation.

One of the significant preliminary studies conducted by Beijaard et al. (2000) revealed that contextual, experimental, and biographical factors did not directly affect differences in teacher professional identity. A correlational quantitative study by Cheung (2008) indicated that male in-service teachers master a stronger sense of professional identity rather than female teachers. According to Benson (2010), professional identities have an effect on teachers' capacity to wear a lens of agentic behaviours as teachers form their professional identities through a range of educational settings. Furthermore, Teng (2019) implies that teachers are no longer portrayed as isolated identities in learning and applying pedagogical skills, but as agents who are required to effectively participate in reflective actions especially when making judgments in their teaching practice. Therefore, EFL teachers' agency may be affected by their professional identity as people take vital actions and roles when individually and socially dealing with complexity of life (Sfard & Prusak, 2005).

Sheybani and Miri (2019) studied the relationship between EFL teachers' professional identity and their critical thinking competencies. Sheybani and Miri found that there is an association with teachers' critical thinking and professional identity, which showed that EFL teachers who have a high awareness of professional identity were possibly successful in critical thinking skills. Another vital outcome of Sheybani and Miri's research is that components of professional identity: personal, professional, and pedagogical identities contributed to promote teachers' critical thinking skills. These aforementioned findings stressed the requirement of developing an effective professional identity to boost the EFL teachers critical thinking skills.

Studies on Teacher Professional Identity in Foreign Language Education

Personal attributes, pedagogical approaches and context shape language teacher identity (Varghese et al., 2016). Wei and Garcia (2022) explored how foreign language teachers regard their versatile roles as linguistic experts and intercultural mediators. Wei and Garcia also drew attention to the innovative aspect of foreign language teachers as pedagogical agents. Furthermore, the integration of technology into the language teaching has been indicated as a significant effect on reshaping foreign language teachers' professional identities and pedagogical practices (Lai & Jin, 2021). A strong sense of professional identity can significantly promote teachers' intrinsic motivation, and their strong efficacy beliefs in their agency positively affect student learning and teacher' dedication to career (Wei & Garcia, 2022).

Groenewald and Arnold (2025) explored that teachers' skills, values and prior experiences contributed to a strong sense of agency. Findings of the study by Meyer et al. (2023) showed that teacher professional identity is constantly negotiated and constructed through interactions with students, colleagues and the broader school context.

According to Derakhshan et al. (2020), teachers, who hold a powerful professional identity and a degree of autonomy in their positions, generally experience greater job satisfaction and success. Derakhshan et al. also state that teacher professional identity dramatically impacts teachers' effectiveness in the classroom; thus, teachers need to be supported so as to develop their professional identity and student agency. Furthermore, Teng (2019) argues that teachers are constantly concerned with intrinsic and extrinsic factors due to the interplay between agency, autonomy and identity. From an ecological perspective, Teng's study highlights the vitality of identity which affects the individual's agency. Teng also draws attention to the interconnectedness of identity with environmental factors, suggesting that an individual's identity is continuously negotiated through interactions in contexts. Day (2012) reveals that teacher identity significantly affects teacher agency concerning interactions with colleagues, students and broader educational communities.

The effect of teacher professional identity on teachers' career has been emphasized by many studies related to teachers' backgrounds, beliefs and values in teaching, learning and assessment practices (Abell & Siegel, 2011; Trent, 2016; Varghese et al., 2005). Yazan (2017) suggested that professional identity is shaped within a certain role and position by means of a medium which focuses on the intercommunication at micro level and contextual contacts at macro level through meso-level actions. Yazan asserted that teacher professional identity negotiation is strongly associated with teacher's position. In a similar way, Trent (2016) also argued that EFL teachers develop their identity by positioning within their context. Consequently, with the aim of understanding teacher identity, essence of identity, transformation and agency in EFL teachers are advised to reconsider (Varghese et al., 2005).

In a study with EFL teachers, Dilek (2022) found that male teachers exhibited lower professional identity than female teachers. Nonetheless, focusing on the professional identity of EFL teachers, Mofrad (2016) reported that gender and teaching experience has no substantial role. Conducting a study with 331 EFL teachers in China, Yan (2023) found that Chinese EFL teachers' educational level and leadership positions considerably affect teacher professional identity. There are also research studies which investigated the teacher professional identity and professional development (Dikilitaş & Yaylı, 2018; Swennen et al., 2014), teachers' beliefs and their professional identity (Vizek Vidović & Domović, 2019), teachers' perceptions of

professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2000), teachers' emotions and identity (Teng, 2017; Wolff & De Costa, 2017) and teacher identity from a dialogical self perspective (Stenberg & Maaranen, 2021). Further research has focused on the connection between teacher professional identity and teacher agency (Day et al., 2006; Hiver & Whitehead, 2018; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). While many of these aforementioned studies adopted qualitative methods, other studies have used quantitative or mixed-methods (Shi & Cheng, 2020; Yan & Bava Harji, 2023). This shift gives the path for studies evaluating and assessing teacher professional identity levels and sheds light on exploring correlations between teacher professional identity and other factors (Dilek & Altaş, 2022; Li & Khairani, 2025; Li et al., 2025; Zarrinabadi et al., 2023).

Agency

Agency is a complex term which can be defined as one's own voice, control, and power (Metcalf & Game, 2007). Agency is the capacity to act purposefully, feel control of actions and constructively direct the professional growth (Sang, 2020). Oolbekkink-Marchanf (2017) explains agency as the capacity to take part in meaningful endeavours. Agency can also be described as the readiness to analytically react to conflict situations (Bandura, 2006; Biesta & Tedder, 2006). Thus, agency refers to the efficacy in taking intentional actions and making decisions purposefully and reflectively (Rogers & Wetzell, 2013). As the concept of agency is a dynamic and challenging system (Mercer, 2011), being agentic for teachers may not be the same in every context (Priestley et al., 2015). Bandura (2001) regards agency as an intentional act and a vital capacity to fulfil actions for definite objectives. According to Bandura, agency also encompasses the belief system, the dynamics of motivation and skills. Thus, agency is a complex, multi-dimensional and dualistic concept (Archer, 2000). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) use the word "slippery" to describe the complexity of the nature of agency because of the multiple interpretations of the concept. Agency is not isolated, independent and separated term as there is a continuously reciprocal and constructive link between the individuals and the social context (Bandura, 2001; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). This mutual relation between the individuals and their social contexts is a prior condition of being agentic actors (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Lawless, 2019).

Agency that was regarded as an individual power is an individual capacity (Bandura, 2001). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), formerly called Social Learning Theory, highlighted the role of self-efficacy in human agency by emphasizing the effect of individuals' beliefs on their actions, goals and success. The Social Learning Theory also regards agents as

“producers as well as products of the social system” (Bandura, 2001, p.1). In this view, agency was seen an innate capacity of a person, yet further studies revealed that agency is formed by the demands or expectations of a social and cultural context (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Priestley et al., 2015). Human agency in Social Learning Theory is categorized in various forms such as direct, proxy and collective agency (Bandura, 1989). This represents that individuals’ perceptions of their own agency can maximize or minimize their actions as self-efficacy carries a role by impacting how people approach their own goals (Bandura, 2001). Thus, social cognitive theory regards self-efficacy as the basis of human agency. Sociocultural perspective adopts Vygotsky’s work and defines agency as potential to act through social and cultural factors (Ahearn, 2001). This perspective prioritizes that the sociocultural contexts construct and affect one’s beliefs and values as well as agency. Consequently, the development of teacher agency is shaped on social atmosphere or at the interpersonal dimension before the psychological area (Wertsch et al., 1993). Indeed, teacher agency can be mediated by interactions with various contexts (Edwards & D’Arcy, 2004), and the role of culture must be considered to discuss the agency (Edwards, 2015) rather than just focusing on items and structures highlighted by sociocultural perspective. Being different from previous approaches to agency, the ecological approach identifies it as an environmental experience (Priestley et al., 2015; Leijen et al., 2020). Priestley et al. (2012) say that:

Agency is not something that people can have – as property or possession – but something that people do. It is a ‘doing’ or ‘achieving’ rather than a ‘being’ or ‘having’. Agency is something that is achieved in particular settings, rather than a capacity that people have in isolation. (p. 197)

Agency is influenced by a mixture of contextual and socio-cultural nuances (Ashton, 2022; Karimpour et al., 2022). Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman (2019) approached the concept of agency by taking into account individuals in their context. Namgung et al. (2021) revealed that agents and contexts are interconnected and mutually-dependent. In this sense, ecological agency points to resources for individuals’ effective and collective being in the world (Costall, 2007), and it should be taken into consideration in an array of social settings (Priestley et al., 2013). As a result, the ecological perspective acknowledges that teacher agency may be contextually afforded or restricted (Priestley et al., 2015).

Teacher Agency

Throughout the history, nearly in all communities, teachers are demanded to have their voice when they practice, take actions and make decisions (Ghamoushi et al., 2022). Teacher agency is the self-directed and self-conscious behaviour, innate tendency, ecologically influenced action and dialogue-based engagement with the context to take actions and make decisions especially when teachers engage with policies (Lasky, 2005; Priestley et al., 2013). Teachers are not only seen as policy actors but also, they are regarded as active agents in adapting and resisting policies (Liu et al, 2020). The necessity of teacher agency is situated in the capacity of teachers to agentively adapt, adopt or compete with the latest policies and practices (Severance et al, 2018). On the other hand, Oolbekkink-Marchand et al. (2017) say that teacher agency is a chain of actions that a teacher fulfils his/her aims by disregarding the typical expectations, norms as well as requirements in their context.

According to Tao and Gao (2021), agentic teachers are required to be reflexive and creative when they experience contextual restrictions for their students' education since teacher agency is profoundly impacted by latest policies. Furthermore, teacher agency may be influenced by access to broader professional discourses regarding educational objectives, which should be considered a critical component of teacher training (Biesta, 2015). Consequently, educators are not viewed as isolated entities in the acquisition of knowledge anymore; however, they are active agents who take reflexive actions when deciding on instructional practices (Teng, 2019). Teacher agency might be expressed at numerous degrees as teachers completely adapt to educational changes or resist the changes (Tao & Gao, 2017) because their past experience and present contexts are distinct (Kayi-Aydar, 2015).

In alignment with their pedagogical beliefs, teachers' agency can be apparent while teachers interact with students, experience challenges in dominant discourses, mirror their repertoire on methodology and employ constructive adaptations to their students learning (Roberts & Graham, 2008). Consequently, teachers' beliefs regarding agency can be monitored in their interpretations, seldom objections to school and their own manoeuvrings (Biesta et al., 2015). In conclusion, teachers are demanded to take action through their context instead of merely existing in the context. Teachers can use individual skills, available affordances and situational factors (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). This is an important milestone in teacher education, as teachers have traditionally been constrained by restrictive tests and assessment systems, causing a tendency toward non-professional status that damages teacher agency (Bloomfield, 2010).

Teacher Ecological Agency

The ecological approach acknowledges the link between persons and the context as they are interdependent in supporting and enabling the ongoing development of one another (Van Lier, 2010). Isolating teacher agency from the context, structures and environment would be futile as teacher agency and teacher practices are deeply integrated with the school context (Adebayo, 2019; Martin, 2004). The professional environment or context is at the heart of the educational ecosystem because teacher agency is encouraged individually and collectively with the help of community and alongside other affordances in the setting (Ashton, 2022; Priestley et al., 2015). Therefore, it would be improbable to construct teacher agency isolated from the context (Biesta et al., 2015; Jenkins, 2019).

From the ecological lens, teachers are able to exert teacher agency as a result of dialogues, communications, and affordances within the socio-cultural context (Priestley et al., 2015). In other words, it is achieved through a complex interplay between individual power and social context, and the process of exerting agency is constant and dynamic, and versatile and nonlinear (Song, 2016). According to Ruan (2018), there are two major factors which affect this process: firstly, a healthy dose of self-control and reflection can help make achievement of agency easier, and secondly, the context in which teachers have experience can either enhance or restrict them. In educational contexts, teachers position themselves politically in relation to changes or reforms that affect their institutions and their identity in the views of colleagues, learners and the wider community (Li, 2023; Teng, 2020). Therefore, teachers can perform their agency easily in educational contexts where their ideas, values, emotions and agentic actions are considered.

Priestley et al. (2015) centred on agency by adopting an ecological model and highlighting its temporal and relational aspects. EFL Teachers' professional engagements, such as teaching practices and interactions with their colleagues, could constitute teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2015). Herein, there are three key dimensions of teacher ecological agency (Priestley et al., 2015). The iterational dimension incorporates teachers' history, practices, prior experiences and trajectories constructed from life and educational training skills (Priestley et al., 2015). Understanding life and educational training skills may empower teachers to successfully tackle immediate challenges and cultivate greater future perspectives (Priestley et al., 2015). Teachers with life experiences and professional skills are equipped with an extensive repertoire for manoeuvre when they confront with occupational obstacles (Priestley et al., 2012).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) called the projective dimension “Motivated” related to an act in the future rather than in the present and past. The projective dimension integrates teachers’ actions, hopes and goals (Priestley et al., 2015). It is initially affected by the iterational dimension and allows teachers to take actions and responsibilities based on their potential future trajectories and goals (Day et al., 2007). Teachers’ goals may be entirely beneficial in terms of students’ development and motivation. Thus, the projective dimension of teacher ecological agency may underline their capacity for making projections related to their future goals.

The Practical-Evaluative dimension can be understood as taking action in line with the contextual elements such as cultural, structural, material elements that allow teachers to achieve their agency (Ghiasvand et al., 2023). For example, cultural affordances are related to teachers’ thinking, how their students can be critical thinkers or how teachers make their students think analytically (Priestley et al., 2015). For the practical-evaluative dimension of teacher ecological agency, practicality and availability are premise of achieving teacher agency (Farmasari, 2021). From this perspective, teachers develop agency through everyday practices and judgments based on their current context, distinctive trajectories and desired goals because different contexts demand different requirements and present resources for teachers to exercise and achieve agency (Priestley et al., 2015). As a consequence, teacher ecological agency can be affected by the presence and accessibility of physical resources, opportunities or constraints of the current context.

Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency

Teacher agency is not possibly narrowed for only pedagogical decisions and practices without its role in assessment (Ghiasvand et al., 2023). Current global trends and school policy reforms draw attention to redefine teachers as assessors and their roles as reliable agents in assessment (Estaji, 2024). Assessment agency requires collaborative and transformative decisions, actions and practices with aim of providing learner-centred approach and reflective practices in class (Soini et al., 2015). Thus, teachers’ trajectories, experiments and professional agentic actions constitute teacher assessment agency (Estaji, 2024).

EFL teachers’ assessment choices, their career purpose, and the demands for teachers to engage in tests constitute the major elements of their assessment agency (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2019; Willis et al., 2019). Successful assessment agency practices are achieved when EFL teachers actively take the responsibilities and restrictions together with their staff (Estaji, 2024). The active participation is significant for teachers’ professional development in terms of

developing and reflecting their teaching practices (Borko et al., 2010). Yet, teachers may occasionally and firmly refuse assessment changes and abide by their past and present assessment practices as they are easy to implement and they are in harmony with their assessment values (Willis & Klenowski, 2018). Specifically, in contexts where communities focus solely on exams, teachers face high pressure, and these contexts limit their ability to test discrete skills, resulting in reduced power. (Ali & Hamid, 2023; Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2019). The focus of communities on students' test scores also blocks teachers' assessment agency in terms of taking actions and decisions (Fang & Warschaver, 2004). Consequently, teachers frequently perform passive agency and insufficient educational decisions in assessment in EFL contexts (Rezegah, 2022).

Teacher assessment agency is concerned with decisions about classroom activities, tests, academic goals and formative and summative assessment (Ghiasvand et al., 2023) as well as alternative assessments. Furthermore, EFL teachers may internalize agency better while doing assessment practices (Gosling, 2000; Wang et al., 2023). Teachers, who apply formative assessment, experience more agency because they are tremendously engaged throughout the process and networking of views with learners (Verberg et al., 2013). Teachers who have a high sense of agency can organize a positive learning atmosphere and develop students' active participation and motivation (Smith & Gorard, 2007). Teachers support negotiated assessment when they collaborate with students to define common assessment objectives (Boud et al., 1999; Gosling, 2000). Collaboration with students highlights teachers' agency and fosters healthier power dynamics between students and teachers (Gosling, 2000). With the effect of relations and collaborations between teachers and students, a negotiated assessment constitutes a reflective dialogue with the aim of developing learning (Verberg et al., 2016). As a result of interactions and reflections, teachers feel that negotiated assessment actually enables them to take actions and follow their goals (Verberg et al., 2016). In this sense, learning-oriented assessment procedure allows EFL teachers to take charge of actions and decisions that develop both student learning agency and their agency (Willis et al., 2019). Teachers experience assessment agency when they implement their personal skills at the individual and community levels together and thereby, they deliberately manage, develop and reflect their actions (Estaji, 2024). Educational systems, structures and contexts, as elements of ecology, also affect EFL teachers' agentic actions associated with assessment (Luxia, 2007).

In addition to Priestley et al.'s (2015) dimensions of Iterational, Projective and Practical-Evaluative of teacher ecological agency, Ghiasvand et al. (2023) argue that teacher agency in terms of assessment from an ecological perspective constitutes and incorporates additional but

separate dimensions in the Practical-Evaluative: Teachers' Practical-Evaluative View (TPEE), Schools' Practical-Evaluative Effects (SPEE) and Professional/Democratic Community's Practical-Evaluative Effect (PDCPEE). Teachers' practical-evaluative view focuses on teachers' assessment choices influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they engage (Ghiasvand et al., 2023). The practical side refers to what can be achieved within a specific context, yet the evaluative side highlights how teachers assess actual obstacles and the practicality of potential actions (Ghamoushi et al., 2022). The schools' practical evaluative effect deals with how teachers engage assessment within institutional structures and expectations especially when school managers influence assessment agency (Biesta et al., 2015). Professional democratic community's practical-evaluative effect emphasizes the collaborative democratic approach within the educational context where teachers, school managers and other stakeholders work together to assess teaching practices (Ghiasvand et al., 2023). The evaluation not only measures but also supports professional development, reflection and meaningful change in such a community (Sergiovanni, 2000). As a result, teachers' evaluative process aligns with their own professional goals, adapts to the needs of their students, and is more valuable for broader communities, rather than relying on standardized tests (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). Thus, ecology of the educational context addresses the complex and dynamic relations in which EFL teachers also position themselves to exert their assessment agency.

Related Studies on Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency

Recent research studies emphasize the major effect of language teacher education on EFL teachers' assessment agency and their professional development (Estaji, 2024). Research related to assessment agency has been popular nearly a decade especially regarding assessment policy (Verberg et al., 2016) and formative assessment (Liyanage et al, 2014; Nest et al., 2018). Focusing the effect of formative assessment on teacher agency in a primary school in Preotorie, Nest et al. (2018) emphasized that teachers developed a high degree of agency as a result of the need and its importance to enhance students' scores in exams. Furthermore, formative assessment implementations develop both learners' education and agency for teachers (Jiang et al., 2022). The context and the formative assessment are highly related to teacher agency due to the interaction between teacher agency and the context (Billett, 2004).

Recently, in their study involving Iranian EFL teachers, Ghiasvand et al. (2023) designed a questionnaire to measure teachers' views on teacher ecological assessment agency.

The results of Ghiasvand et al.' study outlined the critical function of agency in assessment procedures of a second language. Adopting an ecological model, Namgung et al. (2021) executed a pivotal study on the agency of English teachers in assessment which displayed that the familiar attitudes on standard testing maintain to affect teachers' beliefs, values and current assessment agency practices. Nanguang et al. recommended the necessity of analysing teachers' trajectories critically, developing their awareness of available affordances and future goals with the purpose of promoting teachers' assessment agency. Ali and Hamid (2023) conducted a study in rural areas in Bangladesh that examined the interplay between teacher agency and washback effect. Ali and Hamid's study revealed how teacher assessment agency is subjected to intense political pressure. The study by Mansouri (2021) is in parallel with these findings in which EFL teachers' assessment agency and literacy are restricted in practice by institutional policies and pressures.

The Effect of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity on their Ecological Assessment Agency

EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency are complex, fluid, dynamic, dimensional, social and interaction-focused concepts that develop over time and are constructed by experience, reflection and contextual factors (Day, 2002; Tucker & Stronge, 2006). Teachers' professional identity and teacher assessment agency are similar in terms of their mutual effects on professional autonomy, student learning, and teaching practices (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Kelchtermans, 2009). Accordingly, teacher identity can also affect teacher agency in terms of their mutual relationship; therefore, teachers' assessment agency may also be linked with and predicated by teacher professional identity. Yazan and Lindahl (2020) claimed that identity negotiation and enactment are essential for agentic actions. In essence, both constructs: teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency are formed by past experiences, present conditions, prospective perspectives and interactions throughout time and context. Professional identity and educational context are fundamental components of teacher agency in the ecology of teaching so as to better comprehend the way teachers achieve their agentic roles and voice along with active actions that are blended with capacity and intentional effort. Since contextual elements form the teachers' professional identity and may assist or block their ecological assessment agency regarding their perception of available potentials within an ecosystem, teachers' professional identity may affect their ecological assessment agency. Hence, teachers' professional identity

and teachers' ecological assessment agency can be two interconnected concepts that mean having the capacity to comprehend a situation and to take action within the EFL context.

Ghiasvand et al. (2023) who focused on the various interacting factors on EFL assessment with regard to the ecological standpoint indicated that personal and socio-cultural factors as well as contextual factors affect teacher ecological assessment agency. The study by Ghiasvand et al. emphasized the complex interconnections of factors constructing the way EFL teachers perceive assessment. The study by Ghiasvand et al. also stressed the vitality of teachers' agentic behaviours especially related to ecological assessment agency in teacher education.

Studies unveil that language teachers are required to mediate social identity markers such as gender, shifting policies and ongoing curriculum reform (Kayi-Aydar et al., 2019; Ng & Broucher-Yip, 2017). Lasky (2005) claims that teachers with an effective teacher professional identity feel independent to make assessment decisions and are more inclined to criticize standardized testing practices. Therefore, the relationship between teacher professional identity and teacher assessment agency is reciprocal as teacher's professional identity can develop or restrict their assessment agency.

Kunter et al. (2013) employed regression analysis to examine instructional practices, including teachers' assessment decisions. The findings of Kunter et al.'s study indicated that teachers holding a strong professional identity were more inclined to participate in authentic assessments, and their professional identity was a significant predictor of their assessment-related actions and decisions. Jansen (2004) conducted a multiple regression model to better understand whether systematic reforms affect teachers' practice of high-stakes tests in assessment practices. Jansen's study also revealed that teachers felt their professional identity as being interfered and affected by external policies, and their assessment agency dramatically impeded.

In the context of Australia, the research by Turner (2017) revealed that teachers' positioning significantly constructs their agency practice in the classroom with ease. Furthermore, Lai et al. (2016) conducted an empirical study in China where they identified identity, positioning, power relations as well as social variables which are effective for promoting agency of a teacher.

These aforementioned studies in literature illustrated the effect of teachers' professional identity on their agency and professional development. Teachers who can exert a strong professional identity are possibly more inclined to adapt assessment methods to meet students' needs, analyse standardized tests critically and promote assessment practices in line with their

beliefs and values in the ecology of teaching context. Hence, two variables: teacher professional identity and teacher ecological assessment agency can be interconnected because of the interplay between them. Considering EFL teachers' assessment agency, it is obvious that though EFL teachers have agentive capacities and agentive roles in assessment practices, it is impossible to be achieved, constructed and even shaped in case of the lack of teacher professional identity, engagement and school leaders' skills (Farmasari, 2020). Accordingly, teacher professional identity is a prior condition to experience and promote EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology employed to determine whether there is an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency. Also, the study investigates whether EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency vary according to gender, academic degree, the type of school where they work, and work experience as well as their membership of a professional development community. This section thoroughly presents the context and participants, design of the study, instruments, procedures for data collection and data analysis. Additionally, it ensures the adherence to the issue of ethical research.

2.2. Context and Participants of the Study

Data were obtained from 300 EFL primary school, secondary school, and high school teachers at state and private schools in Diyarbakır but data of 32 participants which were evaluated as extreme values were removed and the remaining data were used in the study. As a result, a total of 268 EFL teachers participated in the study. Convenience sampling was chosen in order that it relies on selecting participants who are easily accessible and in close proximity to the researcher (Creswell, 2014; Etikan et al., 2016). During 2024-2025 academic year, data were gleaned from participants from December to January.

Table 1.

Participants' Information

		N	%
Gender	Female	145	54.1
	Male	123	45.9
Academic Degree	Bachelor's degree	192	71.6
	Post-graduate degree	76	28.4
Type of School	State	206	76.9
	Private	62	23.1
Work Experience	1-5 years	81	30.2
	6-10 years	93	34.7
	11-15 years	40	14.9
	16+	54	20.1
Membership of a Professional Development Community	Yes	68	25.4
	No	200	74.6

The sample of the study involved 268 EFL teachers from Diyarbakır, Turkey. Of the participants, 123 (45.9%) were males, while 145 (54.1%) were females. While 62 (23.1%) participants work at private schools, 206 (76.9%) participants work at state schools. Besides, 192 (71.6%) participants have bachelor's degrees and 76 (28.4) of them have post-graduate degrees.

81 (30.2%) of participants had 1-5 years of experience in their job, 93 (34.7%) of the participants had 6-10 years of experience, 40 (14.9%) participants had 11-15 years of experience in their job, and 54 (20.1%) of them had 16 and more than 16 years of experience in their job. 68 (25.4%) of participants also stated that they were members of a professional development community whereas 200 (74.6%) of the participants indicated that they were not members.

2.3. Research Design

The study set out to evaluate if there is an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency. In addition, the study aimed to assess whether EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency vary according to gender, academic degree, the type of school where they work, work experience and their membership of a professional development community. To this end, the design of the research selected was Correlational Survey Research. The adoption of a quantitative methodology was selected to yield objective and tangible information appropriate to statistical analysis for testing hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research design prioritized statistical accuracy and the generalizability of findings, ensuring a systematic and reliable approach (Bryman, 2016).

2.4. Data Collection Instruments

Data were gleaned by "Personal Information Form" designed by the researcher of this study (see Appendix B), "English Language Teacher Professional Identity Scale (ELTPIS)" developed by Mahmoodarabi et al. (2021) (see Appendix C) and "Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency (TEAA) Questionnaire" developed by Ghiasvand et al. (2023) (see Appendix D).

2.4.1. Personal Information Form

The personal information form which was designed by the researcher includes the questions related to demographic features of participants: gender, academic degree, the type of

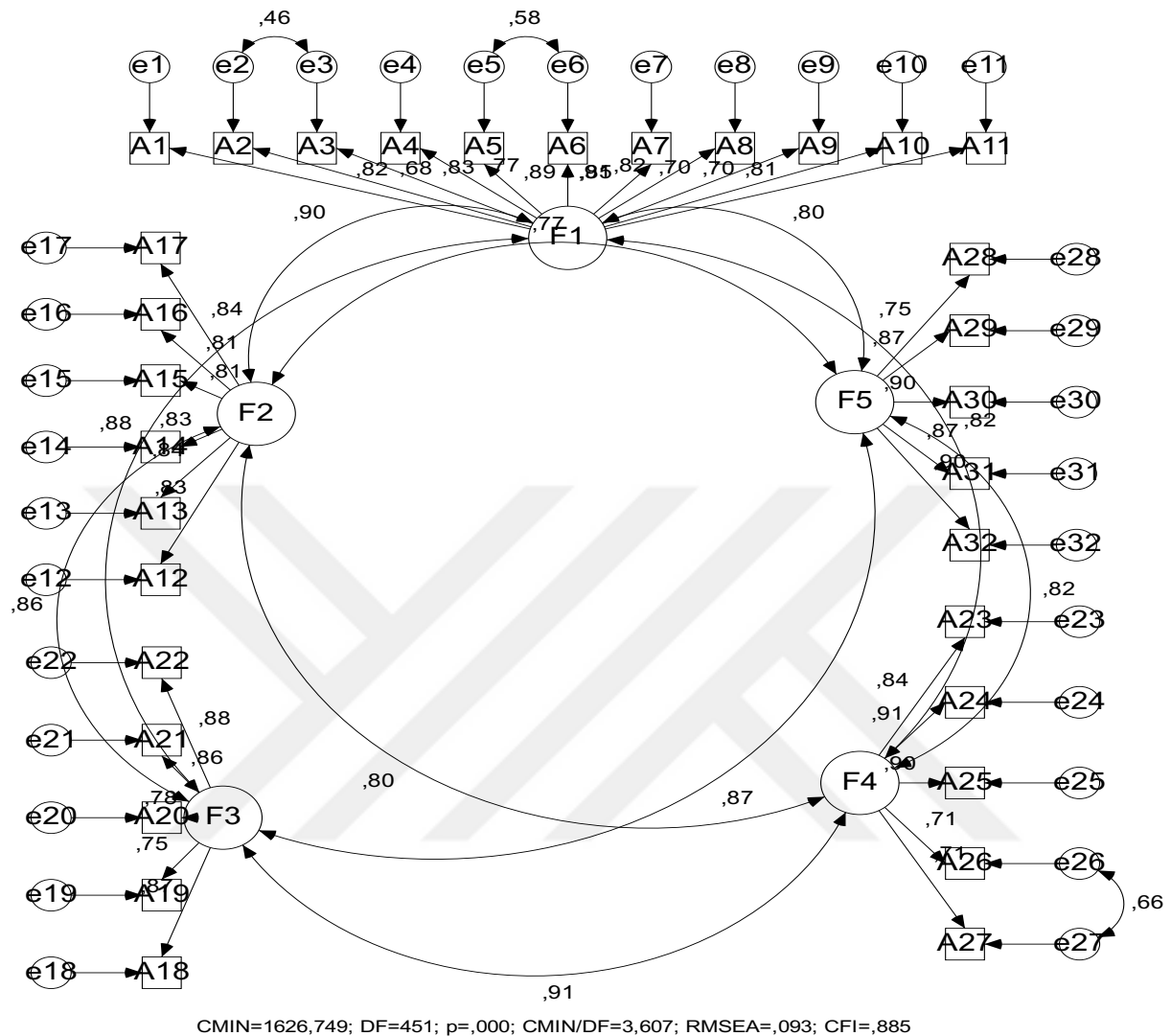
school they work in, work experience and their membership of a professional development community.

2.4.2. English Language Teacher Professional Identity Scale (ELTPIS)

To investigate EFL Teachers' professional identity, "English Language Teacher Professional Identity Scale (ELTPIS)" developed by Mahmoodarabi et al. (2021) was used. The scale has six factors and 42 items on a six-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". These are Researching and Developing One's Own Practice (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), Institutional and Collective Practice (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16), Sociocultural and Critical Practice (17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23), Appraising One's Teacher Self (24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29), Engaging Learners as Whole Persons (30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35), and Language Awareness (36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42). Cronbach alpha values were .85 for "Researching and Developing One's Own Practice", .83 for "Language Awareness", .87 for "Institutional and Collective Practice", .79 for "Engaging Learners as Whole Persons", .81 for "Appraising One's Teacher Self", and .82 for "Sociocultural and Critical Practice".

In this study, the internal consistency coefficient of ELTPIS was calculated as .95 in total. The Cronbach's Alpha value higher than .70 indicates that the scale is reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2011). In addition, in Figure 1., Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) which was applied with AMOS to test the appropriateness of the model of the ELTPIS was shown.

Figure 1 .CFA of ELTPIS

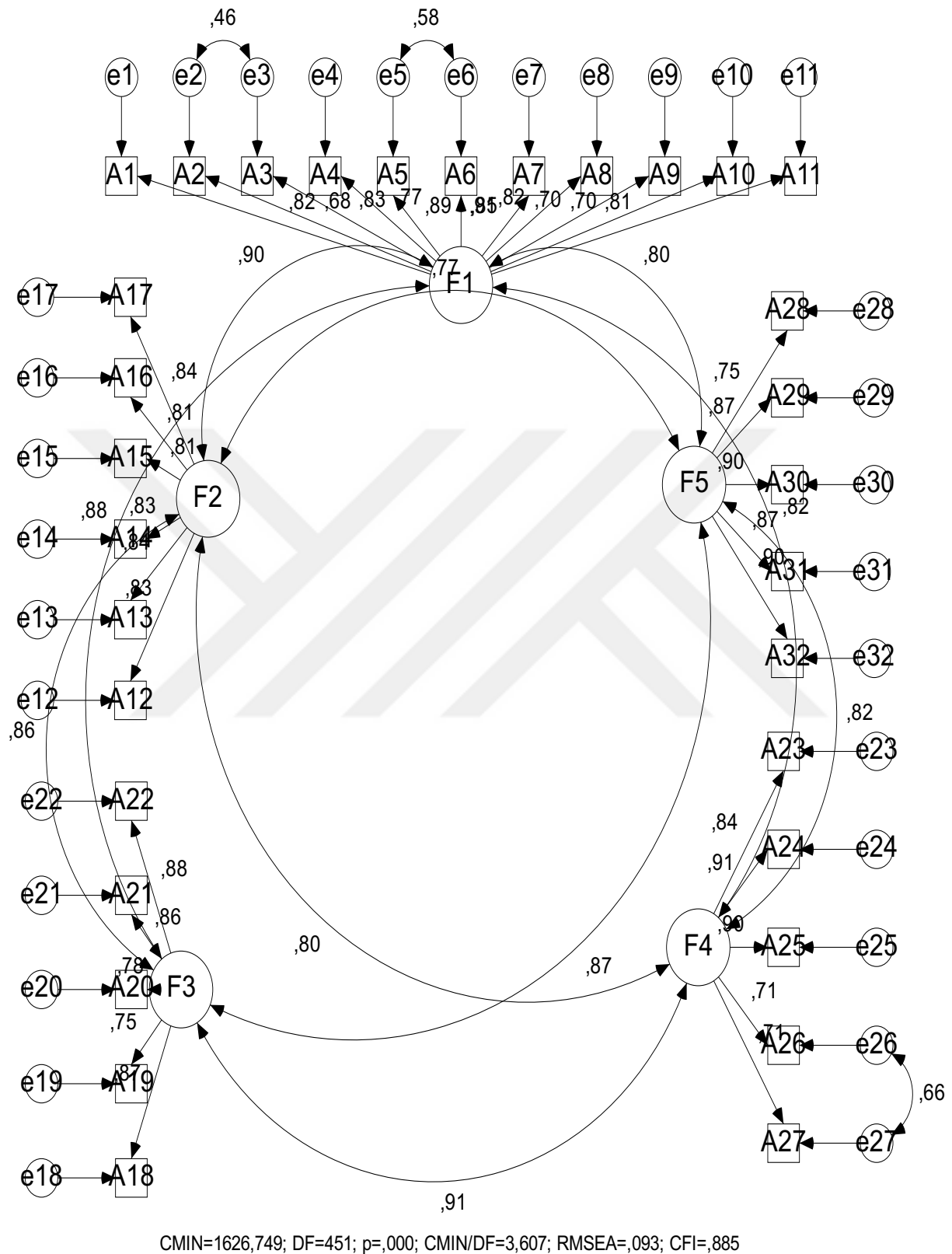


As a result of the CFA of ELTPIS, one of the fit indices obtained for the model was (CMIN=3080.797; DF= 799; CMIN/DF=3.856). It is seen that this value is between 3 and 5 values. In addition, CFI=.901 was obtained. CFI value is between .90 and .95. These values which are CMIN/DF and CFI indicate that the model is acceptable. SRMR = .035 was obtained from the fit indices. This value which is less than .05 indicates the good fit (Gürbüz, 2019). The RMSEA value was calculated as .098. This value is between .80 and 1.0, which indicates a mediocre fit (Koyuncu & Kılıç, 2019). These values obtained as a result of CFA for the present study can be interpreted as the confirmation of the measurement model by data.

2.4.3. Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency (TEAA) Questionnaire

To measure EFL teachers' perceptions of teacher ecological assessment agency, "Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency (TEAA) Questionnaire " developed by Ghiasvand et al. (2023) was utilized. The scale is composed of five components and 32 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree). These are as follows: Iterational (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), Projective (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17), Teachers' Practical-Evaluative View (18, 19, 20, 21, 22), Schools' Practical-Evaluative Effect (23, 24, 25, 26, 27), and Professional/Democratic Community's Practical-Evaluative Effect (28, 29, 30, 31, 32). Cronbach's α value: 0.91 shows a high reliability.

In this present study, the internal consistency coefficient of the TEAA Questionnaire was calculated as .96 in total. A Cronbach Alpha value higher than .70 indicates that the scale is reliable (Büyüköztürk, 2011). In the study, the fit of the model of the scale given in Figure 2 was evaluated by CFA with AMOS.

Figure 2. CFA of TEAA Questionnaire

As a result of the CFA, CMIN/DF=3.607 (CMIN=1626.749; DF= 451) values show that the model is acceptable. SRMR = .0493 was obtained. This value that is less than .05 indicates the good fit. CFI=.885 was obtained. This CFI value is very close to the acceptable lower limit

(.90). RMSEA= .093 was calculated. Since this value is between 0.8 and 1.0, it indicates mediocre fit (Gürbüz, 2019; Koyuncu & Kılıç, 2019). These values obtained as a result of CFA can be explained that the measurement model is confirmed by data in this study.

2.5. Data Collection Procedures

Ahead of the distribution of the scales to gather data, the approvals to use them were taken from the developers of the scales. The research ethics approval was granted by the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Social Sciences from Çağ University. And, the permission from Diyarbakır Directorate of National Education was obtained for the study. Personal Information Form (see Appendix B), ELTPIS (see Appendix C) and TEAA Questionnaire (see Appendix D) along with a consent form (see Appendix A) were distributed online through Google Forms. During 2024-2025 academic year, data were gathered from December to January.

2.6. Data Analysis

In order to analyse the data which were gleaned by Personal Information Form, ELTPIS and TEAA Questionnaire, SPSS 27 was utilized and thereby Independent Samples T-test, Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis H test, the One-way analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA) and Simple Linear Regression Analysis were used in the data analysis.

Mean scores obtained from ELTPIS and TEAA Questionnaire that belong to 300 participants were calculated. Then, these scores were converted into z scores. Of the z scores obtained, 32 outliers that were not between -3 and +3 were identified. These outliers were removed from the study. Thus, data of 268 teachers were analysed. Normality of the data was determined by calculating the kurtosis and skewness coefficients. It is accepted that score series of kurtosis and skewness coefficients between -1.5 and +1.5 are normally distributed (Kline, 2011; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Parametric tests: Independent Samples T-test, one-way analysis of variance, and Pearson Correlation analysis were used to analyse normally distributed score series. Non-parametric tests: Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H were used to analyse the score series that did not provide normal distribution. When the result of Kruskal-Wallis H test is significant, Bonferroni correction is made for intergroup comparisons and the significance is accepted as $0.05/6=0.0083$ (Can, 2018). In the study, the effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency was analysed by Simple Linear

Regression analysis. Normality of score series was also analysed through kurtosis and skewness coefficients for the variables.

Table 2.

Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients of the Score Distributions for the Variables

Scale	Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
ELTPIS	Female	-0.18	-0.33
	Male	-0.72	1.32
TEAA Questionnaire	Female	0.09	1.18
	Male	-0.77	1.39
ELTPIS	Bachelor's degree	-0.25	0.05
	Post-graduate degree	-1.20	2.46
TEAA Questionnaire	Bachelor's degree	-0.18	1.19
	Post-graduate degree	-0.98	1.69
ELTPIS	State	-0.52	0.62
	Private	-0.17	0.24
TEAA Questionnaire	State	-0.18	0.82
	Private	-1.34	4.02
ELTPIS	*1-5	-0.12	-0.30
	*6-10	-0.59	0.55
	*11-15	0.21	-0.14
	*16+	-0.43	0.73
TEAA Questionnaire	*1-5	-0.12	0.63
	*6-10	-0.25	1.25
	*11-15	-0.32	3.23
	*16+	-0.76	0.05
ELTPIS	Yes	-0.68	-0.09
	No	-0.59	1.20
TEAA Questionnaire	Yes	-0.78	1.79
	No	0.40	1.57
ELTPIS		-0.47	0.61
TEAA Questionnaire		-0.40	1.32

In Table 3, mean, standard deviation as well as skewness and kurtosis coefficients which were calculated for ELTPIS are presented.

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics Results for ELTPIS

	N	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
ELTPIS	268	5.15	0.46	-0.47	0.61

As seen in Table 3, the mean score of ELTPIS was $M=5.15$ ($SD=.46$) out of 6.00. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients of ELTPIS were in the range of -1 and +1.

In Table 4, mean, standard deviation as well as skewness and kurtosis coefficients which were calculated for TEAA Questionnaire are shown.

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics Results for TEAA Questionnaire

	N	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
TEAA Questionnaire	268	4.13	0.47	-0.40	1.32

The mean score of TEAA Questionnaire was $M=4.13$ ($SD=.47$) out of 5.00. The skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the TEAA Questionnaire were in the range of -1 and +1.

2.7. Reliability and Ethical Issues

For the reliability of the study, the approval of the Research Ethics Committee from Çağ University and the permission from Diyarbakır Directorate of National Education were taken. Developers of ELTPIS and TEAA Questionnaire were asked for their permission to utilize their scales. Moreover, all participants were provided with a consent form, which confirms that their involvement was entirely voluntary.

Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the scale-based items to measure internal consistency, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable (Büyüköztürk, 2011; Field, 2018). ELTPIS ($\alpha = .95$) and TEAA Questionnaire ($\alpha = .96$) were in total. As a result, the instruments used in this study were considered as reliable as they demonstrated consistency.



3.DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, data analysis and findings address the research questions of this study. Therefore, parametric and non-parametric tests, and Simple Linear Regression on SPSS were applied to analyse data.

Results of Differences Based on Demographic Characteristics

In the first research question, the study evaluates whether EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency are statistically different regarding gender, academic degree, the type of school in which they work, work experience and their membership of a professional development community. Accordingly, Independent Samples T-test, Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis H test, and one-way analysis of variance were applied for the analysis of data. In results, English Language Teacher Professional Identity is written as (ELTPI) and Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency is written as (TEAA).

Results of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity regarding Gender

In the analysis, Independent Samples T-test was conducted to assess the variation in EFL Teachers' Professional Identity scores regarding gender. The results obtained are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Independent Samples T-test Results of ELTPI regarding Gender

	N	M	SD	t	p
Female	145	5.15	0.44	0.18	0.86
Male	123	5.14	0.49		

As illustrated in Table 5, it was found that ELTPI scores of female and male EFL teachers did not differ statistically ($t=.18$; $p>.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity regarding Academic Degree

Mann-Whitney U test was run to examine the variation in EFL teachers' Professional Identity scores regarding academic degree. The relevant results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.

Mann-Whitney U Test Results of ELTPI regarding Academic Degree

	N	M	SD	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Bachelor's degree	192	5.08	0.42	122.44	23508.00	4980.00	0.00
Post-graduate degree	76	5.31	0.52	164.97	12538.00		

According to the Mann-Whitney U test, the mean rank values of ELTPI of participants with bachelor's degree are significantly lower than those of participants with post-graduate degree ($U=4980$; $p<.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity regarding the Type of School in Which They Work

To investigate the statistical difference in EFL teachers' Professional Identity scores related to the type of school they work in, Independent Samples T-test was conducted.

Table 7.

Independent Samples T-test Results of ELTPI regarding Type of School They Work in

	N	M	SD	t	p
State	206	5.15	0.48	0.26	0.79
Private	62	5.14	0.40		

ELTPI scores of participants working in public and private schools do not differ statistically as seen in Table 7 ($t=.26$; $p>.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity regarding Work Experience

The One-way analysis of variance was run to determine the variation in EFL teachers' Professional Identity scores related to work experience. Before the analysis, the homogeneity of the groups was evaluated by Levene's test and thereby it was determined that the groups were homogeneous.

Table 8.

One-way Analysis of Variance Results of ELTPI regarding Work Experience

	N	M	SD	F	p
1-5 years	81	5.16	0.44	1.92	0.13
6-10 years	93	5.11	0.54		
11-15 years	40	5.05	0.47		
16+	54	5.26	0.30		

In Table 8, it can be seen that ELTPI scores of participants do not differ statistically according to their work experience ($F=1.92$; $p>.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity regarding Membership of a Professional Development Community

To analyse the difference in ELTPI scores of participants regarding whether they are members of a professional development community, Independent Samples T-test was conducted. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 9.

Table 9.

Independent Samples T-test Results of ELTPI regarding Membership of a Professional Development Community

	N	M	SD	t	p
Members	68	5.38	0.46	5.04	.000
Non-members	200	5.07	0.43		

Table 9 presents that the ELTPI scores of participants who are members of a professional development community are significantly higher than those who are not members of a professional development community ($t=5.04$; $p<.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Gender

Regarding gender, Independent Samples T-test was conducted to assess the variation in EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency scores. The findings are detailed in Table 10.

Table 10.

Independent Samples T-test Results of TEAA regarding Gender

	N	M	SD	t	p
Female	145	4.10	0.42	-1.17	0.24
Male	123	4.17	0.53		

As seen in Table 10, TEAA scores of female and male teachers showed no statistically significant difference ($t= -1.17$; $p>.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Academic Degree

Mann-Whitney U test was utilized to compare the difference in EFL teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency scores regarding academic degree.

Table 11.

Mann-Whitney U Test Results of TEAA regarding Academic Degree

	N	M	SD	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Bachelor's degree	192	4.08	0.41	125.31	24060.00	5532.00	0.00
Post-graduate degree	76	4.27	0.58	157.71	11986.00		

As Table 11 indicates, according to the Mann-Whitney U test, the mean rank value of TEAA of participants with bachelor's degree is significantly lower than those with postgraduate degree ($U=5532$; $p<.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding the Type of School in Which They Work

In the analysis, Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between TEAA scores of participants working in public and private schools.

Table 12.

Mann-Whitney U Test Results of TEAA regarding Type of School They Work in

	N	M	SD	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
State	206	4.13	0.48	132.71	27338.00	6017.00	0.49
Private	62	4.15	0.45	140.45	8708.00		

There is no significant difference between TEAA scores of participants working in public schools and participants working in private schools according to the Mann-Whitney U test ($U=60172$; $p>.05$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Work Experience

Kruskal-Wallis H test was employed to examine the variation in TEAA scores regarding work experience. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test are presented in Table 13.

Table 13.

Kruskal-Wallis H Test Results of TEAA regarding Work Experience

	N	M	SD	Mean Rank	H	p
1-5 years	81	4.16	0.40	138.90	16.57	.00
6-10 years	93	4.06	0.54	119.31		
11-15 years	40	4.01	0.46	115.41		
16+	54	4.32	0.39	168.20		

According to the Kruskal-Wallis H test, TEAA scores of participants differed significantly in terms of their work experience ($H=16.57$; $p<.05$). Mann-Whitney U test was further conducted to compare the difference between two groups. The results obtained from this test are given in Table 14.

Table 14.*Mann-Whitney U Test Results of TEAA regarding Work Experience*

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
1-5 years	81	94.79	7678.00	3176.000	0.074
6-10 years	93	81.15	7547.00		
1-5 years	81	64.76	5245.50	1315.500	0.092
11-15 years	40	53.39	2135.50		
1-5 years	81	61.35	4969.50	1648.500	0.015
16+	54	77.97	4210.50		
6-10 years	93	66.92	6224.00	1853.000	0.972
11-15 years	40	67.18	2687.00		
6-10 years	93	65.23	6066.50	1695.500	0.001
16+	54	89.10	4811.50		
11-15 years	40	35.85	1434.00	614.000	0.000
16+	54	56.13	3031.00		

Based on the Mann-Whitney U test, the mean rank values of TEAA of participants with 6-10 years of work experience are significantly lower than the ones with 16 and more than 16 years of work experience ($U=1695.5$; $p=.001<0.0083$). Furthermore, the mean rank values of TEAA of participants with 11-15 years of work experience are significantly lower than the participants with 16 and more than 16 years of work experience ($U=614$; $p=.000<.0083$).

Results of EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Membership of a Professional Development Community

On the purpose of assessing the statistical difference in EFL teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency scores regarding whether they are a member of a Professional Development Community, Mann-Whitney U test was conducted.

Table 15.

Mann-Whitney U Test Results of TEAA regarding Membership of a Professional Development Community

	N	M	SD	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Members	68	4.32	0.49	166.48	11320.50	4625.50	0.00
Non-members	200	4.07	0.45	123.63	24725.50		

As seen in Table 15, the mean rank values of TEAA of participants who are members of a professional development community are significantly higher than those who are not members of a professional development community ($U=4625.5$; $P<.05$).

Result of The Effect of ELTPI on TEAA

In the second research question, the study assesses whether there is an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency and Simple Linear Regression was applied.

Results of the Effect of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity on their Ecological Assessment Agency

In the analysis, Pearson Correlation Test was applied to determine the relationship between EFL teachers' Professional Identity and their Ecological Assessment Agency. The results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16.*Results of Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between ELTPI and TEAA*

	ELTPI	TEAA
ELTPI	1	
TEAA	.72**	1

As a consequence of the correlation analysis, a positive, high and significant relationship was found between ELTPI and TEAA scores of EFL teachers ($r=.72$; $p<.01$). In the study, Simple Linear Regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of EFL teachers' Professional Identity on their Ecological Assessment Agency. In the regression analysis, it was found that the model explaining the effect of ELTPI on TEAA was significant ($F=287.12$; $p<.01$). The model that assesses the effect of ELTPI on TEAA explains approximately 52% ($R=.72$; $R^2=.52$).

Table 17.*Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis as the Predictor of TEAA*

	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
(Constant)	0.35	0.23		1.54	0.13
PI	0.74	0.04	0.72	16.95	0.00

As seen in Table 17, EFL teachers' Professional Identity statistically affects their Ecological Assessment Agency in a positive and significant way ($B=.74$; $\beta =.72$; $t=16.95$; $p<.01$). It was determined that a 1-point increase in EFL teachers' Professional Identity, which was determined to be a predictor of Ecological Assessment Agency, leads to a .74-point increase in EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The present study aims to determine if there is an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency. The study further investigates whether EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency vary based on gender, academic degree, the type of school they work in, work experience and membership of a professional development community. The study involved 268 EFL teachers from state and private schools in Diyarbakır. For this study, Correlational Survey Research was selected, and a Personal Information Form, ELTPIS and TEAA Questionnaire were employed. To address the research questions, parametric and non-parametric tests, Correlation Analysis and Simple Linear Regression were conducted. In addition to discussions of the research questions, recommendations for future studies, and limitations of the study are given.

Discussion of the First Research Question: Differences regarding Demographic Variables for ELTPI and TEAA

The first research question investigates whether EFL teachers' professional identity and their ecological assessment agency vary depending on gender, academic degree, the type of school in which they work, work experience and their membership of a professional development community. To assess whether these variables differ based on demographic variables, parametric and non-parametric tests were run.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Professional Identity regarding Gender

The research question seeks whether EFL teachers' professional identity varies related to gender. It was found in the present study that the professional identity scores of female and male EFL teachers were not statistically different. Tang (2015) says that gender is not a significant factor that differentiates the Chinese university EFL teachers' professional identity. Similarly, Mofrad (2016) indicated that there are no distinct variations among Iranian English teachers' professional identity in terms of gender. On the contrary, Cheung (2008) reported in a correlational quantitative study that male in-service teachers had a stronger professional identity than female teachers. Also, female teachers possess an inclination to report higher levels of professional identity and professional learning compared to male teachers (Qin & Liu, 2023).

Dilek and Altaş (2022) found that gender is a statistically significant factor which affects EFL teachers' professional identity, considering their commitment and self-perception.

Considering findings of the current study, gender plays no role in professional identity among EFL teachers. One reason may be that school culture with its values and support, the curriculum as well as socialization may have the same impact on male and female EFL teachers' professional identity. Another reason may be associated with both male and female EFL teachers' self-knowledge, awareness of teaching philosophy and belief system which similarly affect their identity in profession. EFL teachers in this context may develop their identity in their profession through their personal and professional expertise due to their interactions with colleagues. No gender effect observed on EFL teachers' professional identity may further be linked with the recognition of teaching profession as a respected occupation, especially in this context where males and females in that region are very eager to teaching profession as it is seen as a prestigious profession and where being a Foreign Language teacher may further provide both male and female teachers with a sophisticated self-image with intercultural and literacy skills to be open to the outside world. It can be summarized that as this profession offers and grants a status for all teachers, it can in turn give power and authority to all teachers to express their social and cultural identity in their society regardless of the power of gender.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Professional Identity regarding Academic Degree

The research question examines whether EFL teachers' professional identity is statistically different in relation to academic degree. According to the findings, the professional identity of EFL teachers with a bachelor's degree exhibit significantly lower scores compared to those with the post-graduate degree. This finding may be related to the reason that teachers with M.A. or PhD degrees are expected to advance their knowledge and pedagogical training more than the teachers with a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, postgraduate education offers a better and deeper theoretical understanding of being a teacher since teachers develop their linguistic knowledge, aspects of educational psychology and pedagogy (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Teachers with higher academic degree may engage in academic research, participate in conferences and contribute to academic discourse as opposed to teachers with lower academic degree. The participation to a professional community enhances teachers' identity and develop their belongings to a wider community (Sachs, 2001). Finally, teachers' reflecting a higher level of commitment to their job let them to consider themselves as a lifelong learner beyond

becoming just a teacher, and this perception develops teachers' professional identity (Izadina, 2014).

A similar result has been reached by recent studies in the field (Kazykhankyzy et al., 2024; Sheybani & Miri, 2019; Yan, 2023). Yan (2023) conducted a study with 331 Chinese university EFL teachers, showing that academic degree significantly impacts teacher professional identity. According to Yan's study, teachers with a postgraduate degree exhibited higher professional identity scores than teachers with a bachelor's degree. Kazykhankyzy et al. (2024) also explored the same result in a study, conducted with 470 Kazakh EFL teachers. In the Iranian context, Sheybani and Miri's (2019) study emphasized that teachers holding higher academic degrees demonstrated stronger professional identity.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Professional Identity regarding the Type of School in which They work

The research question asks if EFL teachers' professional identity is different related to the school type where they work. Regarding the results of the current study, EFL teachers' professional identity scores in public and private schools are not different statistically. Yan (2023) reported that development of EFL teachers' professional identity did not indicate any notable distinction regarding the type of school. Similarly, Coşgun and Savaş (2023) revealed that the professional identity of Turkish EFL teachers is shaped by professional growth rather than workplace. This result may imply that the category of the school does not have an influence in EFL teacher's professional identity in the context of the current study.

On the contrary, a study by Dilek (2021) indicated that EFL teachers working in private schools hold greater professional identity and autonomy than teachers in the state schools. EFL teachers in private schools have more positive perceptions of professional development compared to state school EFL teachers (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017). Factors such as extended working hours and more adaptable curricula in private schools might be considered to contribute to this difference, as they can provide teachers more freedom to cultivate their professional identity. However, it can also be stated that state school teachers may also develop a strong sense of professional identity as a result of working with student profiles from diverse economical and socio-cultural backgrounds to offer innovative practice for them and to respond to their needs.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Professional Identity regarding Work Experience

This research question assesses whether EFL teachers' professional identity varies in accordance with work experience. The result of the current study points out that professional identity of EFL teachers do not differ statistically depending on their work experience. Several studies conducted across different contexts show that there is no substantial difference in teacher professional identity regarding work experience (Canrinus et al., 2021; Ölmez, 2016). However, Kelchternas (2009) argues that teaching experience is a significant factor affecting teacher professional identity, and some studies also indicate the impact of teaching experience on teacher professional identity (Canrinus, 2011; Graham & Phelps, 2003; Judge et al., 2005). Judge et al. (2005) state that work experience plays a crucial role in teacher professional identity. When teachers gain experience, their professional identity is positively impacted (Canrinus, 2011). Furthermore, Makovec (2018) asserted that more experienced teachers perceive themselves as more proficient in their teaching compared to less experienced teachers. Additionally, Ladd and Sorensen (2017) claim that it is widely agreed by researchers and policy makers that more experienced teachers tend to be more skilled and competent than teachers in their initial years. Based on the current study, EFL teachers' work experience do not influence their professional identity because EFL teachers may have similar personal values, self-efficacy levels, sense of responsibility and occupational commitment as well as openness to experience new ideas. Another explanation of this finding is that unexperienced EFL teachers can compete with the most experienced teachers due to their self-knowledge, which is a vital part of teacher professional identity, and EFL teachers may be highly dedicated to their professional norms as well.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Professional Identity regarding EFL Teachers' Membership of a Professional Development Community

The aim of this question is to determine whether the difference is statistical between EFL teachers' professional identity regarding their membership of a professional community. The current study reports that scores of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity, as a member of a professional development community, are significantly higher than teachers who are not a member of a professional development community. Teacher professional identity entails the active and regular participation in professional development and constant engagement with the environment (Beijaard et al., 2004). Another reason may be linked to the function of personal,

professional, as well as shared interpersonal experiences for the professional identity emphasized by Olsen (2015) and Tsui (2017). In the light of the current study's results, being a member of a professional development community significantly enhances EFL teachers' professional identity. Wenger (1998) argues that communities foster a sense of belonging, and develop teachers' identities by empowering teachers to manage difficulties more efficiently as well as implementing innovative assessment techniques.

In line with the findings of the current study, it can also be highlighted that EFL teachers who are members of a professional development community may be provided with more opportunities to strengthen their professional identity through reflection, dialogue and collaboration with the members of their community, all of which may raise their awareness of their professional identities in the teaching context. Tran and Phan (2025) argue that teachers can discuss their teaching problems eagerly when they are relaxed and they experience agency in their professional development. According to Tran and Phan, teachers cultivate collaboration, reflection and stronger connections as a result of mutual engagement and shared repertoire within a community of practice. In numerous school systems, teacher networks go beyond the individual networks to incorporate external experts for teamwork and professional development activities (National College for School Leadership, 2006; Cordingley & Bell, 2012). Accordingly, the multidimensionality of professional identity incorporates issues such as culture, professional membership, and the involvement of identities in society and workplace (Trede et al., 2012). Therefore, participation in professional development communities may enable EFL teachers to foster networks and partnerships and enhance a better understanding of their school communities and ecological systems. Neglecting the role of professional community in teacher professional identity for EFL teachers would be a mistake to understand the development of teacher professional identity. Some teachers may hold a great experience and establish strong connections with their community; however, others might not want to participate in a professional development community as a member. Consequently, some teachers may regard being a member of a professional development community as advantageous in terms of improving their professional self, network and collaboration. In this sense, being a member of a professional development community, which can conceptualize membership as an idea of affordances from the ecological lens, may provide EFL teachers of this current study with a deeper experience of their professional identity.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Gender

This question examines whether EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency varies based on gender. In accordance with the results of the study, both female and male EFL teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency showed no significant difference. Although specific studies on teacher ecological assessment agency and gender are not available, the influence of gender may hold a significant role to indicate the difference between male and female teachers regarding their ecological assessment agency. Teachers' assessment-related decisions mirror the context of society and culture they interact (Priestley et al., 2015), and teachers develop their practical-evaluative dimension of assessment agency affected by cultural, structural, material elements of context (Chisholm et al., 2019; Ghamoushi et al., 2022; Ghiasvand et al., 2023). Considering diverse factors related to agency, agentic actions of teachers can be influenced by dialogical processes, societal expectations and cultural norms. The reason why no variation was observed in male and female teachers' assessment agency from an ecological lens may be connected with cultural elements. For instance, in terms of cultural aspects, teachers may develop a perspective that being able to assess is a sign of prestige in the professional context for all teachers and the impact of community cannot be disregarded because the school communities or culture in this context may consider teaching practices and assessment as a balanced, unique and equal way of taking actions and making decisions of all teachers, regardless of gender in the ecology of professional setting. It is obvious that being able to take agentic actions related to assessment is essential part of the teaching profession. In conjunction with the findings of the current study, both male and female teachers are likely to make mutual efforts in assessment in the ecology of their teaching context in that they may be supported by the cultural community with regard to the recognition of the importance of education in this context.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Academic Degree

The results show that the ecological assessment agency scores of EFL teachers with bachelor's degrees are significantly lower than those of teachers with postgraduate degree. One important reason may be that teacher assessment agency is achieved as a result of teachers' previous experiences, teachers' trial-errors as well as teachers' agentic pedagogies during their teaching (Estaji, 2024). Since teachers with post-graduate degree can develop their instructional methodology, assessment repertoire, skills and agentic actions more by engaging in scientific research methods, they can also follow contemporary issues and trend-topics in the field and

raise their awareness about the prominence of the ecology of teacher assessment agency. Also, the reason why EFL teachers with post-graduate education achieve higher teacher assessment agency may be linked to the teachers' academic purpose which constructs one of the major components of teacher assessment agency (Estaji & Ghiasvand, 2019; Liyanage et al., 2014; Willis et al., 2019). Another reason may be that contextual conditions and individual abilities of EFL teachers with postgraduate degree allow to develop a higher ecological assessment agency than EFL teachers with a bachelor's degree.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding the Type of School in which They work

This question evaluates if EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency is statistically different with regard to the type of school in which they work. The present study discovered that there is no statistical difference between the ecological assessment agency of EFL teachers working in either public or private schools. Private school EFL teachers can have access to and benefit from diverse materials or recourses, and therefore their ecological assessment agency may be influenced by the school context. On the other hand, state school EFL teachers can encounter challenges that block their capacity and potential to efficiently exert their ecological assessment agency. For instance, teachers in state schools may implement more standardized assessment tests based on the structural elements and this could restrict their agency in the ecological assessment practices. However, given the outcomes of the current research, it could be put forward that the school type does not influence EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency on the grounds that EFL teachers both in private and state schools may actively take part in the assessment and take the same responsibilities or restrictions with staff, examiners and officials in the educational setting. Besides, other factors such as teacher autonomy and the use of agentic voice in their profession may enable these teachers to take actions with the help of their decision-making ability regardless of the school type.

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Work Experience

The research question also investigates if EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency differs in terms of work experience. EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency significantly varied regarding work experience. The ecological assessment agency scores of EFL teachers with 16 and more than 16 years of teaching experience have higher ecological assessment

agency than the teachers having 6-10 years and 11-15 years of experience. This result can be explained by the reason that teachers' iterational experiences have an influence on their efficacy and agency (Altan & Lane, 2018; Bukor, 2013; Wang et al., 2021). Teachers' prior experiences are associated with the agency development of a teacher (Wang et al., 2021). Teachers' profound expertise shapes their actions (Altan & Lane, 2018). The reason why teachers with more than 16 years of work experience achieved greater ecological assessment agency may lie in the fact that experienced teachers tend to develop more subtle comprehension of their students' demands and contextual factors, which contributes to their assessment techniques (Day & Sachs, 2004). Based on the data results of the present study, it can be stated that as work experience increases, teacher ecological assessment agency can develop for EFL teachers with 16 and more than 16 years of work experience. This may also be attributed to teachers' practical knowledge, expertise in diverse assessment tools and autonomy in applying assessment strategies in the ecology of their teaching context. Calderhead (1996) noted in his study that experienced teachers tend to make more effective decisions due to their greater work experience. Experienced teachers are assumed that they are more skilled and equipped compared to novice teachers (Ladd & Sorensen, 2017), and experienced teachers are more competent at making decisions rooted in their prior experiences (Calderhead, 1996; Day et al., 2007).

Discussion of the Results for Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency regarding Membership of a Professional Development Community

The question evaluates whether EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency is statistically different regarding their membership of a professional development community. The current study's results demonstrate that EFL teachers who are members of a professional development community had significantly higher ecological assessment agency than those who are not members of a professional development community. With respect to findings of this study, EFL teachers who are members of a professional development community may improve their critical thinking skills, adaptive thinking, creativity and decision-making skills through discussions, reflective practices and assessment planning with their colleagues in the professional development community where they can find a platform to be open to experience new ideas and practices for their professional development. Participating in such professional development communities can improve EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency in terms of generating solutions to common problems, implementing new ideas in their classrooms,

developing their mentoring and leadership skills, and reflecting on the ecology of the teaching context to handle the assessment issues. Furthermore, numerous studies argue that collaborative and critical reflections affect teacher agency (Ghamoushi, 2024; Huang et al., 2021; Lyons et al., 2016). Thus, teachers direct their attention to collaborative work instead of being isolated in their professional career, and in turn they become more invested and maximize their teaching motivation (Lyons et al., 2016). Teachers may also regard their colleagues as a medium of advancing their assessment skills. It can be said that being a member of a professional development community significantly develops EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency of this study because their ecological assessment agency may be affected by professional interactions and collaborations within a community in a positive way. As a result, teachers can have a stronger sense of ecological assessment agency if they meet with their colleagues on a regular basis and have more active roles in such professional development communities.

Discussion of the Second Research Question: The Effect of EFL Teachers' Professional Identity on Their Ecological Assessment Agency

This research question examines if there is an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency. Based on the Simple Linear Regression Analysis, it was assessed that a 1-point increase in EFL teachers' Professional Identity, which was determined to be the predictor of their Ecological Assessment Agency, leads to a .74-point increase in EFL Teachers' Ecological Assessment Agency. As a consequence, EFL teachers' Professional Identity statistically affects their Ecological Assessment Agency in a positive and significant way. That is, a strong professional identity appears to be a crucial pre-condition for EFL teachers to have ability to adapt and implement assessment practices in their particular ecological contexts. Teachers with a robust professional identity, who tend to regard themselves as active agents in their classroom contexts, are equipped to take significant decisions related to assessment in accordance with teachers' pedagogical beliefs and the students' needs (Norton, 2000).

Kunter et al. (2013) employed the regression analysis to examine instructional practices, including teachers' assessment decisions. Kunter et al.'s study pointed to teachers who hold a powerful professional identity were frequently involved in authentic assessments, and their assessment-related actions were influenced by professional identity. Jansen (2004) conducted a multiple regression model to better understand the way systematic reforms affect teachers' practice of high-stakes tests in assessment practices. Jansen's study revealed that teachers felt

their professional identity as being interfered and affected by external policies, and their assessment agency dramatically impeded. In the context of Australia, the research by Turner (2017) revealed that teachers' positioning significantly constructs their agency practice in the classroom with ease. Furthermore, Lai et al. (2016) conducted an empirical study in China where they identified several aspects, such as influence of society, teacher's professional worth and social positions which are effective to promote agency of a teacher.

Conclusion

The present research examined the effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency. A positive, high and significant correlation was seen between ELTPI and TEAA scores of EFL teachers, and the model that assesses the effect of ELTPI on TEAA explains approximately 52% of TEAA. As a result, EFL teachers' Professional Identity statistically impacts their Ecological Assessment Agency in a positive and significant way. Findings further showed that work experience, academic degree, and membership in a professional development community were found to significantly influence EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency. However, gender and the type of school in which teachers work did not have any impact on their ecological assessment agency. Findings also demonstrate that academic degree and membership in a professional development community significantly influence EFL teacher's professional identity. Nevertheless, gender, the type of school in which teachers work, and work experience did not influence their professional identity.

The present research indicated that EFL teachers' professional identity significantly impacts their ecological assessment agency. This influence may stem or result from cultural, social, and structural affordances that affect teachers' assessment actions, beliefs, values, past experiences, power relations, and decision-making processes. As a result, EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency is significantly and positively predicted by their professional identity which may include their relationship with learners, appraisal of their self professionally, as well as their social and cultural practices. The findings also indicate that in ecological contexts, available affordances such as teachers' individual beliefs and sense of belonging may significantly shape and influence their ecological assessment agency. Teacher ecological assessment agency can also be affected by past experiences, future expectations, power relations and identity. For example, EFL teachers can foresee an unexpected situation and negotiate power dynamics among stakeholders by the nature of professional identity related to assessment. Being influenced by professional identity, teachers take agentic actions and play

decisive roles in negotiating both individual and group dynamics. Consequently, a powerful teacher professional identity empowers teacher ecological assessment agency.

This study can also highlight the prominence of dialogical and collaborative knowledge, as well as membership in a professional development community which can positively influence teacher ecological assessment agency through ongoing interactions inside and outside the school context. Teachers are also embedded in socio-political discourses, which affect their identity and agency. As the classroom is a dynamic and nonlinear ecosystem influenced by various factors, relationships and dialogues, teachers need to dialogically engage within the educational discourse to make sense of their assessment roles. Teachers' familiarity with the content, context, pedagogy, students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, and the structure of their educational setting can significantly contribute to their ecological assessment agency. In conclusion, teachers' prior experiences can affect their assessment agency significantly. Furthermore, EFL teachers' future goals, especially related to academic goals along with the available affordance, can have an effect on teacher ecological assessment agency. The significant role of current contextual factors and practical evaluations of EFL teachers can shape their assessment agency as well.

Implications of the Study

Teacher education programs should focus on developing a strong sense of professional identity in the EFL context with the aim of contributing to EFL teachers' ecological assessment agency. For this reason, teacher trainers may recommend and focus on being a member of a professional development community to enhance teachers' current assessment agency in the ecology of their teaching context. Similarly, opportunities for collaboration, engagement and participation in professional development communities should be supported by policy makers so that teachers can raise awareness of and experience the context-sensitive aspects of teacher ecological assessment agency. In order to raise awareness about the role of EFL teachers' professional identity in their ecological assessment agency, face-to-face in-service trainings should be provided for teachers to comprehend the prominence of the interrelation between their professional identity and ecological assessment agency. Hence, seminars, which incorporate and highlight the prominence of the association between the EFL teachers' professional identity and their assessment agency in terms of the ecology of the classroom context and education, should be integrated. In this way, EFL teachers can raise awareness of using their agentic skills and actions to actively make decisions in their assessment and to better the outcomes of the teaching practices for students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. In

this regard, reflective thinking and adaptive thinking activities should be highlighted and promoted in teacher education programs in order to ready teachers for the diverse and dynamic factors that can affect the ecology of their classroom and ecological assessment agency. Finally, teachers should recognize the potential advantages of engaging in professional development communities and professional development activities which can also strengthen their flexibility and adaptability regarding how to evaluate and make decisions about the learning outcomes of their students from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs. In this way, teachers may enhance their teaching quality, assessment capacity, and professionalism.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Concerning the first limitation, EFL teachers in Diyarbakır participated in the present study. Therefore, participating teachers' selection from other cities and regions of Turkey can be considered for further studies. Since this study is quantitative to assess the interplay between two latent variables, the second limitation is that qualitative data collection tools were not employed but for further research, teacher diaries, autobiography writing, narration and interviews as well as reflective journals should be applied to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between English language teacher professional identity and teacher ecological assessment agency. Further research could test the study of other factors or variables that can be significantly impactful on the ecological assessment agency among EFL teachers. From an ecological lens, language teaching assessors and policy-makers might benefit from the findings of the current study and they may put the teacher ecological assessment agency on the agenda for EFL teachers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent Form

You are being asked to consent to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether there is an effect of EFL teachers' professional identity on their ecological assessment agency.

All information you provide for this study will be treated confidentially. The information that you provide will be used for research purposes.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free whether or not to participate in the study. Even if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw from this study at any time. If you confirm that you would like to participate in this study, please sign in. Your signature indicates that you have read the information in this consent and you voluntarily participate.

I voluntarily agree to take part in the study.

Participant signature

Date

If you have any comments and questions about the study, please contact the researcher.

Thank you very much for your contribution.

Önder ÖZTUTUŞ

Not: Bu anketin etik izni Çağ Üniversitesi Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulunun 21.11.2024 tarih ve E-81570533-044-2400012757 sayılı kararıyla alınmıştır.

Appendix B: Personal Information Form

Dear Participant,

This study is a part of my Master's Thesis at Çağ University. The information you provide will be utilized for research purposes. Your responses to the "Personal Information Form," "English Language Teacher Professional Identity Scale" and "Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency Questionnaire" will significantly contribute to the study.

Thank you very much for your contribution.

Önder ÖZTUTUŞ

Çağ University, Master's Student, English Language Education

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

Academic Degree: ☐ Bachelor's degree ☐ Post-graduate degree

Type of school in which you work: ☐ State ☐ Private

Work Experience: ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ + 16

Are you a member of a professional development community? ☐ Yes ☐ No



Appendix C: English Language Teacher Professional Identity Scale (ELTPIS)

Please check the box that best expresses your belief about each item according to the following descriptions:

**Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Slightly Disagree=3 Slightly Agree = 4 Agree=5
Strongly Agree = 6**

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
As an ELT teacher.....							
1	I should examine the theoretical principles and instructional strategies proposed by scholars in order to see if they are appropriate for my teaching context.						
2	I should take responsibility for my own professional development (e.g., by attending conferences, workshops, reading books and articles).						
3	I should act as a problem-solver (identify, examine, and solve the challenges) of my classroom practice.						
4	If I make any changes to the classroom content and process, I believe I should investigate their effects and outcomes through some form of classroom research.						
5	I should develop the research skills that help me to explore problems in and outside the classroom which may affect my teaching practice.						
6	I should develop my knowledge to use technology as a teaching-learning tool (e.g., possible uses of software, online discussion, blogs).						

7	I should not only use theories produced by scholars but also develop my views of teaching and use them in my teaching practice.						
8	I should develop my knowledge of other relevant disciplines in addition to EFL teaching (e.g., linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics).						
9	I must fully follow the set syllabi, textbooks, and lesson plans in schools in which I teach.						
10	I should join language teacher communities and actively participate in their activities (e.g., joint events, seminars, panels).						
11	I must confine myself to the specific values, norms of practice, and patterns of social participation of the school in which I teach.						
12	I must give high priority to the interests and benefits of the school where I teach.						
13	I should willingly interact with the other teachers and share my knowledge, experiences, and resources with them.						
14	I should learn from my colleagues through, for example, observing their classes and asking for their feedback on my teaching practice.						
15	I must have a good understanding of the institutional context (e.g., the ethos, policies, rules, rewards) in which I teach.						
16	I believe that the school's goals and policies have a great impact on the way I teach.						
17	I should educate myself and my students about forms of inequality and injustice.						

18	I should use different language teaching strategies to develop a sense of community among my learners (e.g., using group-based activities, changing seating arrangements).						
19	I should improve my students' intercultural understanding by familiarizing them with English-speaking and non-English speaking cultures.						
20	I should have a critical approach toward different aspects of my teaching (e.g., sociocultural, institutional, pedagogical, political).						
21	I should help my students to become critical thinkers (e.g., through problem-posing activities).						
22	I should think of social events as learning resources when selecting classroom materials.						
23	I should encourage learners to critically <u>analyze</u> and discuss the content (e.g., cultural, social elements) of the classroom language textbooks.						
24	I should evaluate my views of teaching, the way I teach and the outcomes of my teaching.						
25	I should be aware of how my background (e.g., age, gender, culture, learning and teaching experience) affects my teaching views and practices.						
26	I should think about the ideas that shape my teaching behaviour.						
27	I should question the assumptions and values (e.g., personal teaching beliefs, teaching philosophy) I bring to teaching.						
28	I should be able to revise my teaching practice continually based on my own evaluation.						

29	I should develop an awareness of my teaching strengths and weaknesses.						
30	I should know about my students' backgrounds (e.g., linguistic, cultural background).						
31	I should know about different factors (e.g., personal, educational, socio-political, cultural) which impact my students' language learning.						
32	I should engage my students' sense of who they are and how they relate to the world they live in through activities (e.g., real activities of daily living, writing diaries).						
33	I should use classroom techniques that encourage students to think deeply about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.						
34	I should consider learners' interests, learning needs (e.g., social-emotional, linguistic needs), and life experiences when selecting classroom content and topics.						
35	I should involve my learners, where possible, in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning in order to learn on their own (e.g., using cooperating learning, learners' self-report).						
36	I should have a knowledge of the relationship between the English language form, its meaning, and its use in real life.						
37	I should know how different varieties of the English language are used in multilingual and multicultural contexts.						
38	I should know how the English language is used to express social, cultural, political, and ideological meanings.						

39	I should be proficient in English textual analysis (e.g., cohesion, lexical relation).						
40	I should examine the teaching materials to see how linguistic content is handled (e.g., authenticity).						
41	I should be able to speak about English itself (e.g., how it works, how it is analysed).						
42	I should have adequate knowledge of different aspects of the English language (e.g., phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, pragmatics).						

□



Appendix D: Teacher Ecological Assessment Agency Questionnaire (TEAA)

Please answer each question by ticking the box corresponding to the option that best describes you.

1: Strongly Disagree 2: Disagree 3: Undecided 4: Agree 5: Strongly Agree

	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I draw on my prior experience of conducting assessment to manage common challenges of L2 assessment.					
2	My personal attitudes, beliefs, and values influence and direct my classroom assessment tasks/practices.					
3	My assessment knowledge, expertise, and identity determine the type of assessment that I use in my class.					
4	I try to use my past behavioural patterns to cope with emerging dilemmas in my assessment practices.					
5	I draw on my past personal and professional experiences to forecast possible challenges in assessing L2 students.					
6	I employ my previous personal and professional experiences to identify practical and relevant assessment practices in my class.					
7	I make use of my assessment-related experiences to modify my assessment techniques/practices.					
8	Teachers with sufficient professional experiences solve their daily assessment problems more efficiently.					
9	Teachers with higher academic qualifications have more innovation to improve their assessment.					
10	School's policies influence my assessment decisions and practices.					

11	I use my prior experiences to respond to the assessment policies of the school where I work.					
12	I am eager to help my students gain better scores in low and high-stakes exams.					
13	I make efforts to stick to my assessment goals and plans in my class.					
14	Students' engagement and academic success are important to me in assessment.					
15	I pre-specify long-term goals in my assessment plans to obtain desired outcomes.					
16	I do my best to involve my students in the classroom assessment processes.					
17	I intend to raise my students' academic performance by taking assessment for learning approaches in my tests.					
18	Teachers' ways of thinking and understanding of L2 assessment shapes their autonomy and agency in classroom assessment practices.					
19	Teachers' simplistic view of L2 education and assessment prevents them from taking principled actions.					
20	I use collaborative reflections with my colleagues to improve my assessment skills and practices.					
21	I solve my assessment problems and setbacks by doing deep self-reflection.					
22	Teachers' professional context influences their assessment decisions/practices in the class.					
23	School managers should include L2 teachers' voice and power into account to generate a principled assessment.					
24	School authorities should offer assessment-related courses to L2 teachers to improve their assessment literacy and identity.					
25	School leaders should assist L2 teachers set assessment goals that improve students' achievement.					

26	School principals and managers influence L2 teachers' assessment knowledge and methods.					
27	School principals and managers influence L2 teachers' assessment decisions and practices in the class.					
28	An academic context that encourages horizontal social relationships instead of hierarchical ones facilitates L2 teachers' assessment innovations.					
29	An innovative working environment helps L2 teachers to make sound assessment-related decisions and take principled actions.					
30	Working in democratic and positive environments that encourage social relationships fosters assessment agency and effectiveness.					
31	L2 teachers need to connect with the wider professional discourses/communities of language testing and assessment.					
32	There must be established a friendly and strong professional discourse in academia to promote teachers' assessment agency in the class.					