



**T.C.**

**AKDENİZ UNIVERSITY**

**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
EDUCATION**

**MA  
THESIS**

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TURKISH  
PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS'  
PERCEIVED SENSE OF OCCUPATIONAL  
COMMITMENT**

**FATMA İREM OCAKTAN**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING  
MASTER'S PROGRAM**

**Antalya, 2024**



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**Supervisor:**

**Assoc. Prof. Mustafa CANER**

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**T.C.**  
**AKDENİZ ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ**  
**YABANCI DİLLER ANABİLİM DALI**  
**İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI**

**HİZMET ÖNCESİ TÜRK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİ ADAYLARININ ALGILANAN  
MESLEKİ BAĞLILIK DUYGULARI ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA**

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

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**Antalya, 2024**

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**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİNİN ADI:**

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TURKISH PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS’  
PERCEIVED SENSE OF OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT**

**ONAY:** Bu tez, Enstitü Yönetim Kurulunca belirlenen yukarıdaki jüri üyeleri tarafından uygun görülmüş ve Enstitü Yönetim Kurulunun ..... tarihli ve ..... sayılı kararıyla kabul edilmiştir.

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## ABSTRACT

### A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TURKISH PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' PERCEIVED SENSE OF OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT

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This thesis explores the various factors influencing Turkish pre-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' commitment to their profession, focusing on the complex process of professional identity development through a qualitative approach known as thematic analysis. Data was gathered from 18 pre-service teachers via in-depth, semi-structured interviews to address three central research questions: the key motivational factors for choosing English teaching as a career, the specific experiences that impact professional commitment, and how this commitment shapes attitudes and behaviors towards the profession over time. The findings of this study indicate that pre-service teachers' intrinsic motivation, along with positive past experiences with inspiring and effective teachers, stand out as key factors in their decision to choose the teaching profession. Experiences gained within teacher education programs, particularly during practical training and positive interactions with mentors and students, significantly enhance professional commitment. Conversely, external challenges such as poor working conditions during internships and growing concerns about job security negatively impact commitment. The study highlights the critical need for supportive, resource-rich environments in teacher education programs to foster not only commitment but also a sense of readiness for the profession. Addressing external challenges and providing ongoing support are crucial to maintaining high levels of professional commitment, especially during early career stages. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of teacher identity formation and offers practical recommendations for enhancing pre-service teachers' occupational commitment. Future research should consider conducting longitudinal and comparative studies to expand on these findings and explore this topic in greater depth.

**Keywords:** *teacher identity, professional identity, sense of commitment, perception*

## ÖZET

### HİZMET ÖNCESİ TÜRK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİ ADAYLARININ ALGILANAN MESLEKİ BAĞLILIK DUYGULARI ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

Bu tez, hizmet öncesi İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki bağlılıklarını etkileyen çeşitli faktörleri ve mesleki kimlik gelişiminin karmaşık sürecini temel alarak nitel bir yaklaşım olan tematik analiz ile ele almıştır. Üç ana araştırma sorusunu derinlemesine incelemek amacıyla yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar aracılığıyla 18 hizmet öncesi öğretmenden veri toplanmıştır: İngilizce öğretmenliğini seçme sebepleri, mesleki bağlılığı etkileyen deneyimler ve bu bağlılığın mesleğe yönelik tutumları ve davranışları nasıl şekillendirdiği. Bulgular, hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin mesleği seçmelerinde içsel güdülenmelerinin, ilham verici ve etkili öğretmenlerle yaşadıkları olumlu deneyimlerin belirleyici faktörler olduğunu göstermektedir. Öğretmen yetiştirme programlarındaki deneyimler, özellikle uygulamalı eğitimler ve eğitimciler ile öğrencilerle kurulan olumlu etkileşimler, mesleki bağlılığı önemli ölçüde artırmaktadır. Buna karşılık, staj sırasında karşılaşılan kötü çalışma koşulları ve iş güvenliği ile ilgili artan endişeler, mesleki bağlılığı olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Bu çalışma, öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında hem bağlılığı hem de mesleki yeterlilik hissini teşvik etmek için destekleyici ve kaynak açısından zengin ortamların oluşturulmasının önemini vurgulamaktadır. Dış zorlukların ele alınması ve sürekli desteğin sağlanması, özellikle kariyerin erken dönemlerinde, yüksek düzeyde mesleki bağlılığın sürdürülmesi için kritik öneme sahiptir. Bu araştırma, öğretmen kimliğinin oluşumunu daha derinlemesine anlamaya katkıda bulunmakta ve hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin mesleki bağlılıklarını artırmaya yönelik pratik öneriler sunmaktadır. Gelecekteki araştırmaların, bu bulguları daha fazla derinlemesine incelemek ve doğrulamak için boylamsal ve karşılaştırmalı çalışmalar yapmayı değerlendirmesi önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *öğretmen kimliği, mesleki kimlik, bağlılık duygusu, algı*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ELT: English Language Teaching

TI: Teacher Identity,

LTI: Language Teacher Identity



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

In this section, the delivery of the researcher's reasoning of conducting this study along with the scientific insights revealing the significance of the inquiries via the required background information and problem statement along with the research questions will take place.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Teaching is a profession which entails significant number of layers building both its social and individual aspects. A 'teacher' cannot be evaluated apart from their identity, since their practice also is a mixture of both their personality and ability to teach by owning and actualizing their roles as a teacher (Hedges, 2000; Martel & Wang 2014; Miller, 2009; Roaser et al., 2012). The intricate condition of being a teacher had a simpler status which located teachers as the supplier and the conveyer of the information. Within the scope of this argument, the significant shift of teachers to a professional who built their personality in the area where they performed as a teacher was summarized by Amin (2015, p. 41) as "an imperative that teachers take up more active, inclusive and participatory roles in depicting empathetic and pro-social roles in classrooms". This obligation holds ground regarding the objectives of being a teacher. According to Roaser et. al. (2012) a teacher, as a part of their occupations' modern form, has to be aware of the emotional and cognitive requirements along with the ambiguity of the expected social interactions withhold by focusing on a single student with an attempt to allocate their needs in contemplation of formulating immediate solutions for them with a sudden shift of conducting the same process for all students. Thus, the responsibility of adjusting to sudden occurrences in the classroom, which are exchangeable parts of teaching, are the main agenda of being a teacher and expected from every individual who works as a teacher or who is in training to be a teacher in the future. Thus, in order to understand and theorize the roles, responsibilities and dimensions of what creates a teacher, the concept of teacher identity holds gravity.

Teacher identity involves the integration of personal beliefs, values, and self-concepts with professional roles and responsibilities, which can vary significantly across different contexts and over time (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Similarly, professional

commitment encompasses emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions that are influenced by individual experiences and socio-cultural factors (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Advancing the comprehension of teacher identity, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) conducted a systematic literature review. This thematic analysis consolidated the dynamic nature of teacher identity through the medium of fluidity in terms of the personal experiences and new professional interactions a teacher has throughout their career path (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) also argued that there is an interlinked formation of personal and professional identities triggering this fluidity since once a teacher has an experience modifying either one of these identities, the other one also has an update regarding the matter. This study also had an impact on teacher identity literature by highlighting the fact that contextual factors such as the school environment, interactions with colleagues and students have a vast influence on the development of the teachers' identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

The multifaceted role and the evolving expectations of the society from the teachers create tension and a certain type of challenges for all teachers, especially pre-service teachers. They are positioned in between personal growth and professional development. The process of merging the personal and professional identity withholds its own challenge since the pre-service teachers try to fulfill the requirements of their profession while comprehending the meaning of being an effective educator. Without having in-depth experience of practice, as pointed out by Lamote and Engels (2010, p.4), pre-service teachers “are exposed to the expectations of others, e.g., teacher educators, colleagues, head teachers, the government through national standards – all with images about teachers' roles, competences and professional behaviors”. Throughout the process of teacher training, pre-service teachers perceive the challenges of fulfilling the expectations of teacher educators, colleagues and the national standards without sufficient experience in various ways as a part of their professional identity development which eventually constructs their fully developed ideas, insights, emotions and attitudes regarding their occupation.

The term teacher professionalism includes the qualifications, competencies, ethical standards and competencies which creates the role of a teacher. A dedication to commitment to continuing learning along with establishing a positive and respectful engagement with their students, community and their colleague is a part of teacher professionalism. Additional aspects of teacher professionalism can be highlighted as the alignment of the school guidelines, taking a part in the development in educational field and quality collaboration with peers. Teacher

professionalism also requires dedication towards student growth. Professional teachers are reflective people who aim for a high quality of teaching along with the adaptation of the challenging educational environment and teaching demands (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015). Therefore, it can be stated that teacher professionalism and identity includes multiple agendas and challenges.

Language teacher identity had specifically been impacted by the socio-cultural outlook on the needed proficiency to become a teacher. Language teacher identity (LTI) is a concept which has a potential to evolve as a result of the interaction with a language teacher and their professional environment and personal experiences. While language teachers battle with navigate the challenges of teaching, they develop their self-perception and role conception. LTI encompasses the ongoing evolvement of a language teacher's coping capacity between the intersection of their personal values, institutional expectations, and societal norms. This identity formation process can impact teachers' emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and instructional practices. Factors such as professional development, classroom experiences, and policy changes play crucial roles in shaping and reshaping LTI, highlighting the importance of supportive professional communities (Duff & Uchida, 1997). As discussed by Morgan and Johnson (2005), "among many applied linguists, for a long time language teachers were seen as technicians who needed merely to "apply" the right methodology in order for the learners to acquire the target language" (p. 22). This perception alone was not fulfilling to appreciate the amount of the layers constructing the professional identity of a language teacher such as personal beliefs, professional roles, institutional expectations, and sociocultural contexts (Kanno & Stuart, 2011). In regard of the state of language teacher identity, Kayi-Adar (2020) argued that language teacher identities have been considered along with "the ethnic, racial, cultural, and gendered identities of teachers in historical, sociopolitical, educational, and socio-economic contexts" (p. 282).

These multidimensional hardships create circumstances for the language teachers to develop their professional identity accordingly. As highlighted by Johnson (2009) in regard of the profession of teaching in a generic matter, density and development of a language teacher identity now includes more than the provider of linguistic knowledge.

Thus, it can be mentioned that, EFL teachers develop a professional identity according to the basis of the roles and expectations portrayed. As suggested by Varghese et al. (2005), teacher identity is a part of ongoing construction, negotiation, interaction and influence by a variety of contexts. This reality of teacher identity formation is an evidence of pre-service

teachers' commitments and perceptions are an open target of the experiences, expectations, attitudes and training environment.

Comprehending the nature of the factors impacting pre-service teachers' professional identities is of significance due to many reasons; it has a role as a guidance for education programs and program developers by showing them a pathway for a well-tailored curricula and additional support systems which can offer solutions for specific problems pre-service teachers are facing (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In addition, gathering data would also have the characteristics of a report on potential improvements in overall educational diaspora in the areas of policy making and curriculum development (Freeman & Johnson 1998).

The current research inspects the expectations of pre-service EFL teachers for their future practice since, as pointed out by Dinh (2020), understanding pre-service teachers' experiences and expectations are effective for teacher preparations. Enlightening these expectations and beliefs would also give schools insights and could be valued as motivation for these professionals to create better standards and working environments for EFL teachers along with any other teaching professional or instructor on a broader level to raise the motivation of their employee along with receiving high quality results with the efficiency being raised as a result.

Sense of commitment of language teachers is a significant matter to be able to create an engaging and effective learning environment. It has a meaningful relationship with teachers' dedication to the success of students, professional competence and desire to improve their teaching practices continuously. A sense of commitment which is strong creates a motivation for teachers to discover beyond their standard responsibilities to develop professionally and take part in collaborative activities to enrich their pedagogical skills. This commitment not only contributes to higher student achievement and motivation but also promotes a positive school culture and community. Furthermore, committed teachers are more likely to persist in the profession, contributing to educational stability and continuity (Day, 2004; Klassen & Chiu, 2011).

Occupational commitment also presents itself as an interdisciplinary reflection of professional commitment. Occupational commitment in the context of the present study refers to a teacher's dedication to their career, while professional commitment involves their engagement with specific professional roles and standards. Both are interrelated, influencing job satisfaction, retention, and teaching effectiveness (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Meyer et al., 2006). The present study also inquires the sense of proficiency of the pre-service teachers. This aspect to the current research is going to be a key for determining the reasons behind a high and low sense of proficiency in pre-service teachers in order to use the results to have a better understanding the reasons of being occupationally committed or not.

It can be stated that the sense of commitment of pre-service EFL teachers has a potential of revealing implications of English language teaching and learning with a comprehensive scope by virtue of a professionally satisfied and committed EFL being able to create enhanced learning outcomes of the students (Day, 2004). To conclude, it can be highlighted that analyzing pre-service EFL teachers' sense of commitment is a logical way to investigate solutions for their personal development in a broad context of educational and social context. The present study includes opportunities to have a grasp on the nature of Turkish pre-service English teachers' sense of occupational commitment.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The main agenda of the present study is to create conditions to understand the factors influencing pre-service English language teachers' sense of commitment and professional identity. The lack of job satisfaction and teacher burnout has been ~~the~~ among the concerns in the literature of education (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hong, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Schrier, 2008) due to a plenty of teachers leaving the profession because of the lack of support. This problem is highlighted among language teachers since they also face specific challenges related to their profession such as cultural gap and variety between the students and the target language and the requirements of language proficiency. In addition, it also needs to be highlighted that pre-service teachers are students themselves; thus, comprehending to be an authority in a teaching environment is rather challenging for them to grasp. Even though the sense of commitment plays a significant role in the student outcomes and effective teaching, the ELT literature has a research gap in regard to the perceptions of pre-service teachers in case of looking into occupational commitment specifically. Thus, the present research was

conducted to fill this gap by inquiring the factors impacting on pre-service teachers' sense of commitment.

The comprehensive analysis of pre-service English Language teachers' sense of commitment elucidates fundamental elements and potential factors in the education system that can profoundly influence their professional development. The current research aims to unravel that teacher commitment is not limited to personal satisfaction alone but can also significantly impact crucial components such as pre-service teachers' experiences, expectations and their attitudes towards their future occupation. The present study also aims to contribute to a more effective and sustainable evolution of education systems by offering recommendations to enhance teachers' levels of professional satisfaction. Evaluating the sense of commitment of pre-service EFL teachers is a significant step in understanding their dedication to their profession and how this commitment impacts student success.

This research aims to serve as a guide in understanding the contexts of the systems in which the teaching profession operates, by revealing the nature of the commitment of pre-service EFL teachers to their profession during the emergence and development of their professional identities. It aims to reveal the reasons behind the low commitment of pre-service teachers who are at the end of their 4<sup>th</sup> year drawing attention to both positive and negative conditions and perceptions during professional training and the execution of the profession in order to support program development and enhance comprehension of the institutional systems where the teaching profession is practiced.

In conclusion, this study seeks to comprehend the nature of the sense of commitment of pre-service EFL teachers. The present study aims to undertake strategic initiatives to make education systems more effective, instructive, and successful, by contributing academically.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study is pre-service teachers enrolled in English Language Teaching Program in a state university in the Mediterranean region of Türkiye who are in their 4<sup>th</sup> and final year. The participants are students who successfully completed the 'School Experience I' and 'School Experience II' courses. These courses are internship programs which take place in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> terms consecutively of the English Language Teaching programs in Türkiye. These courses are significant since they outline the scope of the present research due to the fact that they include the internship of pre-service teachers in public schools which provides them

with actual student-teacher dynamics and experience in this regard. This criterion was set by the researcher in order to reach enriched insights from pre-service teachers who also had the experience of teaching. The pre-service teachers also completed their responsibilities regarding their internships and the needs of the courses prior to the date of the research.

The main inquiry of the present research is to reveal the factors impacting pre-service teachers' sense of commitment, the experiences of pre-service teachers which impact their sense of commitment and the impact of their sense of commitment on their attitude towards their profession, English Language Teaching. The scope of the current study includes the final educational year of the pre-service teachers since they are the group to have the experience of teaching thanks to the internship. The scope of the present research is not gender-based in order to have a broad outlook on all pre-service teachers' experiences and insights. Also, this study examines the challenges of pre-service teachers face which has an impact on their sense of commitment along with the positive experiences they have had to be able to see the beneficial aspects of their process. The present research includes the exploration of the expectations of pre-service teachers from their occupation in order to be able to tailor the support they need. The present research excludes a longitudinal examination of the career paths or outcomes of pre-service teachers due to the fact that this study looks into the initial stages of teacher identity formation and the construction of a sense of commitment. In order to reveal the findings of the present study according to its scope, qualitative research design was adopted.

The present research is qualitative since teacher identity and sense of commitment discourses include experiences, insights and comments of participants which are more compatible with a qualitative analysis process. In addition, the design of the present research is descriptive due to the fact that this design gives the researcher a chance to focus on the detailed nature of the highly unique and narrative experiences of the pre-service teachers. Semi-structured interview is the main data collection tool of the present study since this data collection tool enables the researcher to reach open-ended responses of the participants which reflect their insights on a deeper level.

The current research was conducted in the ELT department of a public university which is in the Mediterranean region of Türkiye. The participants took part in interviews which lasted five to seven minutes. They were informed of the fact that confidentiality of their identity throughout the study was going to be established.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

Teaching requires patience and hard work. Teachers, regardless of their subject specialty in teaching, face plenty of challenges on a daily basis while doing what they are supposed to do: to teach. Teaching used to have a direct meaning reflecting to what a teacher does. In our modern day, although cultivating to actualize the same aim, teachers are also responsible for creating, moderating and orchestrating the environment where teaching is going to take place.

In order to successfully complete this demanding task, teachers play the role of an authority, caregiver, emotional support, a mirror and sometimes a friend along with being the supplier of the information. This multidimensional task needs a meticulous training along with self-evolvement. The mentioned efforts of teachers point out the personal and professional identities of a teacher. The state of these affairs contribute and reinvent the manner of a teacher's identity.

One of the most significant components of a teacher's professional identity is their sense of commitment (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day et al., 2005; Delima, 2015; Granjo et al. 2021). Considering the rich assignments and responsibilities, there is an overwhelming facet of being a teacher. Thus, enlightening the disposition of sense of commitment has magnitude in the field of teacher identity since this practice has the potential to reveal the reasons that contribute to a strong sense of commitment along with the assets damaging a teacher's willingness to pursue their career. This is also the reality of pre-service teachers (Schrier, 2008). Since their professional identity is in the process of formation, their sense of commitment also evolves throughout their training process.

The significance of the present study is to touch upon pre-service teachers' sense of commitment without directly measuring the commitment levels of the participants and culminate in a quantitative data which would affirm a predictable data set. This study aims to detect the influencing factors and experiences with regard to their sense of commitment along with their attitudes towards their profession.

The sense of commitment differs from the research conducted on job satisfaction discourse or teacher burnout measurements which might have common intersections with the sense of commitment literature. Although sense of commitment can emerge in situations where a teacher is not satisfied with certain aspects of their occupation such as the income or relation with the school management or colleagues similar to the fact that teacher burnout can be triggered by similar factors even though the teacher has a high sense of commitment. Thus,

sense of commitment is especially significant in order to detect the factors which ties the teachers to their profession or what might cause them to move apart from their profession. Depending on the review of the available literature, it was detected that sense of commitment was not a present theme of the related literature in the context of Türkiye. Moreover, the present study specifically looks into the literature of teacher identity formation and elaborates teacher commitment as an exchangeable part of the teacher identity discourse. By examining pre-service teachers' sense of commitment and how it affects their approach to teaching, this study not only fills a significant gap in existing research but also promises to inform and enhance educational practices and teacher preparation programs. Through a focused inquiry into these teachers' experiences and expectations, the research aims to contribute valuable insights that could lead to more effective educational outcomes and foster a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of teacher education.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the critical importance of understanding the sense of commitment among pre-service EFL teachers in Türkiye, a topic that has not been extensively explored in existing literature. By focusing on the formative experiences that shape their commitment and attitudes towards their profession, this research tries to fill the certain gap in educational scholarship. The insights gained from this qualitative inquiry will not only present opportunities to grasp the nature of pre-service English teachers' sense of commitment, but also inform strategies to support the development of committed educational professionals.

## 1.5 Research Questions

These research questions aim to delve into the multifaceted aspects of commitment within the context of teacher education for pre-service EFL teachers in Türkiye. By investigating the factors and experiences that influence pre-service teachers' sense of commitment, as well as the impact of commitment on attitudes towards the teaching profession, this study enriches our understanding of the nature of pre-service teachers' professional identity.

1. What factors influence pre-service EFL teachers' sense of commitment?
2. Which experiences have an impact on pre-service teachers' sense of commitment while they are developing their professional identity?
3. How does the sense of commitment impact pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the profession of teaching?

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The objective of this chapter is to build the foundation of this research with a concrete depiction of its theoretical framework. The sections elaborated in this chapter are “Teacher Identity”, “The Studies on Teacher Identity”, “Language Teacher Identity” and “Teacher Commitment”. The available research in the field and the interdisciplinary studies with their relevant nuances are analyzed and summarized.

#### **2.1 Teacher Identity**

The ‘self’ holds gravity when ‘identity’ is being explored. As an attempt to comprehend both terms, the correspondence should be detected in order to be able to shed light onto the true nature of this relation. The starting point of this process would be the exploration of self. Baumeister (1997) develops an upgraded outlook on the term self as “the direct feeling each person has of privileged access to his or her own thoughts and feelings and sensations”. Regarding the matter, James (1890) summarized what ‘self’ by suggesting that it is the final state of a person as the previously known premises of them being purified: leaving them as the way they are. This represents a social aspect to ‘self’ revealing its’ effect on debunking judgement of others on what we are and what we represent. Morris (1934) pointed out a more controlled aspect of ‘self’ by suggesting that while we practice our ‘self’, it is actively being tailored by us depending on different social cues and contexts. Erikson (1959) pointed out the continuance of the self by highlighting the fact that realizing your ‘self’ is continuing and the same through the time as well as others also realizing the continuity and sameness results in a ‘personal identity’. According to Marcia (1980), personal identity involves the individual’s evolving conception of the self, made up of self-chosen values and commitments, including vocational aspirations, which is particularly relevant in the context of developing teacher identity.

Teacher identity is a significant concept appertaining to the essence of the teaching practice, containing its various and multidimensional aspects alongside the roles a teacher naturally adopts throughout their career path. The concept is and has been meticulously examined and defined recurrently within the scope of educational research (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al. 2004; Martel & Wang, 2014; Reeves, 2018). It is considered that

teacher identity is a concept which comprehends the ongoing and reoccurring nature of teacher identity which is dependent on the teachers' perception of their roles and how they align their personal beliefs, professional roles, social contexts and experiences. Additionally, alongside creating a better understanding of the nature of being a teacher, teacher identity "can be used as a frame or an analytic lens through which to examine aspects of teaching" as a practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 175).

In such wise, teacher identity had a transformation entailed to its extent. Reeves (2018) portrayed the process of the evolution of the concept as "internal, coherent, and fixed to something socially mediated, fragmented, and multiple" (p.1). As a beneficial step to comprehending teacher identity, the relation between 'self' and 'identity has to be revealed. Conforming to this matter, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) stated that "...to comprehend the close connection between identity and the self, the role of emotion in shaping identity, the power of stories and discourse in understanding identity, the role of reflection in shaping identity" (p.176) and this connection need to be examined and elaborated in order to understand the nature of teacher identity.

Beijaard et al. (2004) argues that teacher identity consists of a variety of facets and dimensions. They point out the fact that these dimensions interact and work in conjunction. The first dimension they touched upon was personal identity. This entity involves the personal views, beliefs and experiences of the teachers. These unique aspects have an impact on how teachers perceive their roles and responsibilities. Second dimension discussed in the study was professional identity. It was discovered that professional identity of the teachers comprehends the professional skills and knowledge of the teachers impacting how they themselves and the educational community perceive them in their professional roles. Lastly, contextual identity was the last dimension of teacher identity. According to Beijaard et al. (2004) contextual identity is the idea of teachers' professional identity is under the influence of the social, cultural, expectations of the school and the rest of the educational community. It can be interpreted thanks to this study that the teacher identity concept consists of various dimensions referring to both internal and external factors.

Continuing this trajectory, Izadinia's (2013) study where a systematic analysis on literature review in-which the professional identity formation of pre-service teachers provides additional insights into the evolving concept of teacher's professional identity by revealing the fact that there are various definitions of teacher identity concept with the help incorporation of concepts such as professional commitment, personal beliefs of teaching, self-efficacy and

negotiation of personal and professional values. Izdinia (2013) also supports the discourse in regards to teacher identity: a teacher's previous experiences as a learner and general in-life insights give a shape to their initial professional identity. It was also revealed that teacher identity is also shaped with the help of social interactions with peers, mentors and learners. Therefore, teacher education which is effective when it comes to professional identity development can benefit from guiding pre-service teachers to focus on reflective practices integrated with supportive mentoring which encourage engagement with challenging situations (Izdinia, 2013). Below is a figure revealing the components of teacher's professional identity in accordance to Hanna et al.'s (2019) research before the presentation of the studies on teacher identity.



**Figure 2.1.** *The Components of Teacher's Professional Identity (Hanna et al., 2019)*

### 2.1.1 The Studies on Teacher Identity

This section is devoted to the historical and theoretical development of teacher identity concept in order to portray the development in the discourse with the help of the innovations, inventions, insights and findings of academics to have a better understanding regarding the matter. With the help of this section, the components of the teacher identity concept are going to be revealed with their use and role within this intricate positioning of various dimensions and aspects of the matter.

Lortie (1975) with the help of ethnographic observation and interviews, tried to explore the nature of teacher identity by discussing the term ‘apprenticeship of observation’. According to Lortie (1975), this apprentice of observation creates a cognitive foundation for pre-service teachers long before their formal education of teaching since they had been exposed to the educational practices of their own teachers. This can be elaborated as the process where pre-service teachers create their unique expectations or beliefs with the help of the process where they are actively students. Even though it was a detailed outlook on teaching profession and identity formation, Lortie’s concept (1975) has been critiqued for oversimplifying a such dynamic process, and prompting further research into the nuanced interactions that contribute to a teacher’s professional identity.

Kerby (1991) had a qualitative study on ‘self-identity’ with insights on teacher identity concept. The objective of this research in order to explore how ‘self’ is shaped by the narratives. Narration specifically works as a medium of individuals being able to make interpretations of their own life, thus, it enables one to shape their identity and self-reflection. Thus, it can be deducted from Kerby’s (1991) study that there is a need of open space and encouragement for teachers to reflect on their narratives to keep evolving when it comes to teacher education programs.

Another example of narration being a part of the evaluation of teacher identity concept is Connelly and Clandinin’s (1999) qualitative research by means of examining teachers’ personal and professional identities by their own experiences was run. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) discovered that teacher identity is a narrative-driven concept where narration gives the teachers an open space to articulate their experiences, and develop their identities accordingly as a result of examining their own professional growth. Connelly and Clandinin’s study highlighted the fact that narration is a significant part of teacher identity development and shed light onto the upcoming studies regarding this concept, thus, added dimension to the future literature.

Danielewicz (2001) also delved into the details and various aspects of teacher identity by a qualitative approach to gather the insights of teachers in order to reveal the formation of teacher identity. As a result, it was found that teacher identity formation is a process which is dynamic, ongoing and narrative. Danielewicz (2001) also highlighted that these narratives are continually revised along while a teacher encounters a new experience or a challenge along with opportunities of professional development. This study also introduced the fact that self-reflection is consequential matter in teacher identity formation and evaluation along with

teachers being vocal regarding their experiences and creating a healthy discourse regarding the matter (Danielewicz, 2001).

Sachs (2004) also had an impactful outlook and research on teacher identity with her methodology being theoretical exploration. Similar to what Beijaard et al. (2004) discovered, Sachs (2004) revealed that self-reflection is a helpful and influential medium when it comes to the formation and the development of a teacher's identity by allowing teachers to be able to keep track of their own professional progress along with revisiting and regulating their own beliefs as a teacher throughout their career. In addition, when it comes to teachers' educational values and goals, self-reflection gives them the chance to develop new strategies to align these concepts to establish consistency (Sachs, 2004), similar to what Valli (2003) had pointed out previously in regards to the importance of self-reflection in teacher education by affirming the fact that integrating teacher reflection practices into education programs create an options for teachers to improve their skill to successfully adjust their choices to potential challenges in the classroom.

As a part of the evolution of teacher identity concept, Varghese et al. (2005) got into the depth of teacher identity by enriching the data in the literature by pointing out the variety and abundance of the factors harmonized as driving forces to create and evolve a teacher's identity. Varghese et al. (2005) used sociocultural theory, poststructuralist theory and critical theory as lenses to look into teacher identity. Sociocultural Theory was introduced to the literature by Vygotsky in 1930s originally which argues that cognitive development occurs under the significant impact of social interaction and cultural context (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) which are among the main determiners of teacher identity. As a conclusion of sociocultural theory being a frame, it was revealed that teacher identities constantly form and reform with professional interactions and practices. Poststructuralist theory was founded by Foucault (1972) who argued that there is a dynamic between discourse, knowledge and power which is related to teacher identity due to the fact that teacher identities are also impacted by the societal norms and discourse. As per poststructuralist theory, Varghese et al. (2005) emphasized the fact that teacher identities are constructed and reconstructed due to the fact that constant rearrangement and negotiations. Critical theory was founded by Horkheimer (1972) who emphasized the impact of power and oppression on the identity of a person, which also applies to the identity of the teachers. Lastly, critical theory facilitated the disclosure of ideology, power and inequalities being impactful factors on teacher identity mostly related to the teacher's race, gender and socioeconomic status (Varghese et al., 2005). The findings of Varghese et al. (2005)

has also revealed the fact that teacher education programs also need to be aligned with the multifaceted nature of teacher identity in order to encourage teachers to reflect on, and be mindful of the various political, social and political elements which has an effect on their professional identity.

Day et al. (2006) conducted a longitudinal study where they integrated qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires in order to receive comprehensive data from the participant teachers. It was found that teacher identities are sensitive to the changes of their surroundings such as educational policies, school leadership and the overall social context in which they operate. Therefore, new curriculum standards or updated assessment regulations put teachers in a state where they need to adjust their self-conceptions and teaching approaches to the current standard (Day et al., 2006). The findings also demonstrate the need of consideration on the part of policy makers and authority figures in education to foresee the effects of changes on teacher morale and identity stability. It is implemented that supportive actions for teachers during these transitions are needed (Day et al., 2006). As a result, it was also highlighted that teachers who face systematic challenges in their career path such as difficult student behavior or immense work load experiences fluctuations in their identity which may cause them to doubt their performance, efficiency and commitment (Day et al., 2006). It is also highlighted that major life circumstances such as marriage, personal loss or parenthood also has an impact on a teacher's commitment due to the fact that these situations develop their insights and ideology of education or give them reasoning to consider a different career path (Day et al., 2006).

Similarly, Sammons, Day, Kington, Gu, Stobart and Smees (2007) directed a longitudinal study with the mixed method design by collecting the data via questionnaires and structured interviews which were made with a group of teachers over the years. The teachers were chosen from different backgrounds, educational settings and stages in order to gather a data set which would reflect a variety in results. The study highlighted the fact that professional identities are interlinked with by the personal lives of the teachers since teachers' personal life milestones and challenges found to be impactful on teachers' teaching styles, classroom management, and their relationship with students. (Sammons et al., 2007). Complementary to what Day et al. (2006) discovered, Sammons et al.'s (2007) study also focused on personal life events such as family dynamics, personal health issues, and impactful cases such as bereavement or parenthood which would rearrange a teacher's engagement and emotional attachment into their professional roles. Participant teachers reported the fact that personal development and growth which is gained through personal challenges and experiences create

shifts in their teaching priorities and methods. In addition, Sammons et al (2007) also found out that educational reforms have divergent effects on teachers' professional identity: a group of the participant teachers saw the reforms as a medium of professional development and got positively influenced while another group of participant teachers felt threatened and stressed. Another beneficial outcome of this study was revealing the fact that new teachers experience more fluctuations in their identity while experienced teachers have more stability in their professional identity. Lastly, Sammons et al. (2007) discovered that a teacher with a stable identity progress has a positive impact on student engagement and learning outcomes as a result of a positive learning environment.

Hong (2010) created a study by determining pre-service teachers as the participants to gather in-depth information regarding the teacher identity formation process. This was a significant study since it demonstrated that there is a direct correlation between the clarity and strength of a teacher's professional identity and their probability to keep their career trajectory focused on being a teacher. Thus, it can be stated that the teachers with a well-defined teacher identity are more likely to remain in teaching (Hong, 2010). Another factor when it comes to teacher identity formation this study revealed was the fact that beginner teachers experience situations which do not necessarily align with their professional pre-service training in real life. Hence, this conflict can cause these beginner teachers to quit teaching (Hong, 2010). It was also revealed that support in the phase of teacher identity formation provides beginner teachers with opportunities to navigate the challenging situations a beginner teacher is not familiar with, aside from enabling higher retention rates. This way, Hong (2010) highlighted the fact that education programs with a deeper focus and attempt of having the pre-service teachers to build a strong professional identity eventually reduces the dropouts.

Beauchamp and Thomas (2011) showed another aspect of the matter with the help of case studies to take a look at the nature of teacher identity by focusing on the teacher identity formation phase. This study revealed that a professional teacher identity undergoes a shift from the student mindset of teachers who had just started working as a teacher after the teacher training program, where they are the acquirer of the knowledge to the supplier of the knowledge and the responsible professional of their own classrooms. Contextual factors such as relationships with colleagues, school culture or student interactions are among the main components which shape these shifts. Other influential figures which impact on the emerging professional identities of these teachers are the new and unfamiliar experiences such as having to adapt the theoretical knowledge to practical knowledge, classroom management or trying to

actualize the expectations of the school management (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011). Moreover, the main significance of this study is the fact that a new teacher needs support for a smoother transition from the student mindset while integrating into the teaching profession in order to make sure that identity dissonance is minimized. Lastly, Beauchamp and Thomas (2011) shed light onto the future research with recommending future researchers to focus on the contextual factors which have an impact on teacher identity.

Moving forward in the discourse on teacher identity, Akkerman and Meijer's (2011) research articulated a more nuanced understanding of the concept by a dialogical self-theory. The study introduced a concept within a person called 'I-positions' which represent the roles a teacher employs, their experiences and understandings to create different point of views which engage in dialogues with one another. The key point regarding this matter is the fact that contextual factors such as societal expectations, school environment, community and professional challenges have an influence on these internal dialogues (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Akkerman and Meijer (2011) were among the scholars to point out the fact that teacher identity is a fluid matter which is open to transformations and development, thus, they highlighted that supporting more dialogical approaches when it comes to the development of teacher identity can optimize this process.

Expanding on the foundational concepts previously discussed, Mockler (2011) argued that teacher identity has a role beyond being the determiner of teaching practices: it is also a tool for political engagement and professional advocacy. A teacher can utilize their own identity by reflecting on their own practice and use their insights to shape their own teaching approach and beliefs. It follows that this dual role of teacher identity creates an area for teachers to be able to have an impact on educational policies and their professional identity (Mockler, 2011). Thus, the study in hand represents the power of teacher identity which gives a voice to teachers to use their voice to involve into political matters, and by highlighting the fact that teachers' professional identity is also a supporting force to raise their agency while making decisions regarding teaching.

Izadinia (2014) discovered nuances in regards to teacher identity by observing the literature related to the professional identities of teacher educators. It was found that teacher identities of teacher educators who started the practice a short while ago tend to have self-views which are more negative compared to the experienced teacher educators. Izadinia (2014) also revealed the fact that among the high emotional tensions in teacher educators are caused by real-world problems and challenges which externally impacts the professional teacher identity.

This process reflects itself as second-thoughts in regard to their self-identities as an academic, having hardships when it comes to developing their identity as a researcher, feeling of loneliness, uncertainty, high levels of stress or vulnerability (Izadinia, 2014). In order for teacher identity to develop, certain activities are used, and Izadinia (2014) divided these aspects into two distinct groups as ‘self-support activities’ which allow a teacher educator to make sense of their own identity involving reflective practices shedding light onto their own professional identity development such as critical reflection or self-study research, and ‘community support activities’ which involves the exchange of information among beginner teacher educators, engagement with communities of learning or contexts of support. Izadinia (2014) specifically mentioned that investigating the interaction between teacher educators and student teachers can also lead to valuable information to be a part of teacher identity discourse. It can be interpreted from this study that external and contextual factors are once again highlighted to be influential on the nature of teacher identity.

Yuan and Burns (2017) had a research as two EFL teachers being their sample in order to explore the development of their teacher identities by the participation in a university-school collaborative project. The main focus of the study was to reveal how the identities of these teachers evolved in regard to being more self-reflective and collaborative. The research findings showed that throughout this project, the teachers gained the ability of self-reflection and agency by identifying themselves as influential professionals of their teaching environment and student outcomes. As a result, teachers reinvented their position in the professional context by working on self-reflection. The research enabled them to define themselves as effective educators. Yuan and Burns’ (2017) study underscores the significance of professional growth and the ability of adaptation along with keeping track of a teacher’s development with the help of self-reflection which is an important aspect of teacher identity.

Juutilainen, Metsäpelto, Mäensivu, and Poikkeus (2024) contributed important findings regarding the present-day nature of teacher identity by exploring the agency of first-year pre-service teachers in shaping their teacher identities through a qualitative approach. The methodology entailed conducting thematic interviews with 16 Finnish student teachers and analyzing the data via narrative analysis. This process uncovered a master narrative and two counter-narratives that illustrated how student teachers’ agency played a role in their teacher identity formation. The master narrative revealed that student teachers exercised agency by adhering to their ingrained preconceptions of teaching as practical work, often without significant reflection or questioning. Conversely, the first counter-narrative portrayed student

teachers' agency as evolving their preconceptions in alignment with the institutional, culturally defined story of teaching presented in their teacher education programs. The second counter-narrative highlighted student teachers' efforts to challenge the dominant master narratives of teaching and actively create their own counter-narratives. The study's findings underscore the necessity of acknowledging and deconstructing the master and counter-narratives within teacher education, as these narratives significantly influence the potential forms of teacher identities and agency available to future educators. Juutilainen et al. (2022) recommended that teacher education programs should encourage student teachers to critically reflect on existing narratives to bolster their agency in shaping their professional identities.

In concluding this review of the studies on teacher identity, it becomes evident that the conceptualization and operationalization of this construct have undergone significant transformations from being a broad concept which did not comprehend the reality of teacher identity with its' multidimensional and ongoing aspects to a concept presented with its' dimensions. From the initial perspectives that treated teacher identity as a relatively static and sole construct, recent research has evolved to view it as dynamic, multifaceted, and continually shaped by professional and contextual interactions. The studies reviewed have collectively highlighted that teacher identity is not merely a label one assumes upon entering the profession but a complex interplay of personal and professional experiences that evolve over time. For instance, Beauchamp and Thomas (2011) provided a nuanced understanding of teacher identity by introducing a multi-voiced framework, emphasizing the internal dialogues teachers engage with, which are shaped by different professional contexts. This perspective was instrumental in recognizing the internal conflicts and negotiations that teachers experience, illustrating that identity is not only constructed by external influences but also by internal cognitive processes.

Further, the systematic literature review by Izadinia (2013) synthesized various research findings on pre-service teachers, reinforcing the notion that professional identity formation is critically influenced by teacher education programs. This study underscored the importance of curricular and pedagogical structures in shaping the initial identity perceptions of novice teachers, suggesting that the environments in which teachers learn play as crucial a role as the actual content of their learning. Izadinia (2014) discovered nuances in the professional identities of teacher educators, noting that those new to the practice often have more negative self-views compared to experienced educators. Izadinia (2014) also revealed that high emotional tensions among teacher educators, influenced by real-world challenges, externally impact their professional identities, manifesting as self-doubt, stress, and vulnerability. The study suggested

that both self-support activities, such as critical reflection, and community support activities, like engagement with learning communities, are essential for identity development.

Moreover, Mockler (2011) expanded the discussion by framing teacher identity not just as a tool for practical engagement but as a potent political construct that both shapes and is shaped by professional practice and advocacy. This dual view of teacher identity serves to remind stakeholders that the formation and evolution of teacher identity have significant implications for policy and practice, as it influences how teachers perceive their roles and responsibilities within the educational ecosystem.

The subsequent research by Yuan and Burns (2017) offers valuable perspectives on contemporary teacher identity through their research on two EFL teachers. The study illustrated how self-reflection facilitates professional identity transformation, highlighting teachers' development as agentive and reflective professionals. The collaborative nature of the project supported identity transformation, emphasizing self-reflection's role in professional growth and self-perception enhancement.

Martin and Strom (2016) conducted a study that reviewed the literature on teacher identity concerning teaching English learners (ELs) in English-dominant settings. The study highlighted three primary aspects of teacher identity: characteristics of EL teachers, factors influencing identity development, and contextual influences. The findings suggest that fostering a "linguistically responsive teacher identity," aligned with the Linguistically Responsive Teaching Framework, can enhance instructional practices and support positive attitudes towards language learners and linguistic diversity. The study also emphasizes the importance of diversifying the teacher workforce, integrating reflective practices, and promoting professional identity development for EL teachers.

Juutilainen, Metsäpelto, Mäensivu, and Poikkeus (2024) explored the agency of first-year student teachers in shaping their teacher identities through a narrative inquiry approach. Their study highlighted the significance of master and counter-narratives in teacher education, emphasizing the need for student teachers to critically reflect on existing narratives to bolster their agency in professional identity formation.

The collective insights from these studies not only enrich our understanding of what shapes teacher identity but also challenge educational practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to consider more holistic and dynamic approaches to teacher development. As this field continues to evolve, it holds the promise of yielding deeper insights into the very

essence of teaching and the continuous transformation of those who undertake this profoundly influential profession.

### **2.1.2 Language Teacher Identity**

Language teacher identity has emerged as a critical area of inquiry within the broader field of teacher identity research. This subsection looks into the unique aspects and complexities of language teacher identity, exploring how it is shaped by sociocultural, linguistic, and institutional factors. Language teachers often navigate multifaceted roles, balancing the demands of teaching language skills while fostering cultural understanding and intercultural competence among their students. The development of a language teacher identity is crucial, as it influences instructional practices, classroom management, and teacher-student interactions. By examining recent studies and theoretical perspectives, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to the formation and evolution of language teacher identity. It will also discuss the implications for teacher education programs and professional development, highlighting the need for supportive frameworks that address the specific challenges faced by language educators in diverse educational contexts.

Tsui (2007) conducted a qualitative study in regard of the experiences of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher who is in the middle of a shift from traditional approaches to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). This study demonstrated that the participant professional identity had a transformation caused of the conflictions between the methodology the researcher was accustomed to and the new values and techniques he was trying to integrate into his study. The local cultural practices were in conflict with the CLT approach. The participant teacher assumed that the approach he was trying to employ was not suitable and in alignment with what the students need (Tsui, 2007). The participant teacher experienced professional isolation because of the fact that he did not think that the components and nuances of the new approach was representative of his educational stance even though he successfully adopted the new approach. The participant teacher also revealed that, after his master's studies, he created an eclectic approach where he integrated both traditional approaches and the modern ones to create an education atmosphere which is compatible with his own philosophy. Thus, Tsui's (2007) study revealed that the fact that teacher competence is the root of a language teacher's professional identity formation along with the fact that acquiring new skills should not be the only aspect to focus on; rather, validating and integrating the existing skills of the teacher would be a positive action to be taken.

Martin and Strom (2016) conducted a study that reviewed the literature on teacher identity concerning teaching English learners (ELs) in English-dominant settings. The study highlighted three primary aspects of teacher identity: characteristics of EL teachers, factors influencing identity development, and contextual influences. Firstly, the literature identified essential characteristics for EL teachers, including an awareness of their sociocultural-linguistic identity, sociopolitical consciousness, a commitment to EL learning, and advocacy for ELs. Secondly, the development of teacher identity was linked to reflection, teaching practice, and teachers' personal histories. Thirdly, contextual factors such as language-related education policies and the local school environment significantly influenced teacher identity. The findings suggest that fostering a "linguistically responsive teacher identity," aligned with the Linguistically Responsive Teaching Framework, can enhance instructional practices and support positive attitudes towards language learners and linguistic diversity. The study also emphasizes the importance of diversifying the teacher workforce, integrating reflective practices, and promoting professional identity development for EL teachers. Martin and Strom (2016) have significantly impacted the discourse on teacher identity by providing a comprehensive analysis of the key components essential for teaching English learners in English-dominant contexts. This study bridges the gap between theoretical frameworks and practical applications, highlighting the importance of sociocultural awareness, advocacy, and reflective practices in teacher identity formation. By emphasizing the development of a "linguistically responsive teacher identity," Martin and Strom (2016) underscored the need for educators to adapt their instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of ELs. Furthermore, the study's implications for diversifying the teacher workforce and fostering professional growth have influenced policy discussions and teacher education programs, promoting a more inclusive and effective approach to teaching linguistically diverse students.

Similar to the insights on the concept, Pennington and Richards' (2016) study illuminated and supported significant facets of the modern perspective on teacher identity such as intricate and multifaceted nature of language teacher identity, emphasizing the integration of personal, contextual, and professional factors. The study's methodology comprised a comprehensive review of the literature on identity and teacher identity, particularly in relation to the distinctive characteristics of language teaching. The authors further enriched their analysis by incorporating excerpts from teacher narratives, which vividly illustrated various elements of language teacher identity.

Pennington and Richards' (2016) study identifies several key aspects that constitute language teacher identity. These include language-related identity, which pertains to teachers' affiliation with the language they teach; disciplinary identity, which relates to their engagement with the subject matter; and context-related identity, which encompasses the influence of the teaching environment and institutional setting. Additionally, self-knowledge and awareness are crucial components, reflecting teachers' understanding of their own beliefs, values, and practices. Student-related identity also plays a significant role, highlighting the relational aspect of teaching and the impact of interactions with learners. Furthermore, Pennington and Richards' (2016) discussed how language teacher identity is not static but evolves over time, shaped by teachers' experiences and their participation in teacher education programs. This evolutionary process underscores the dynamic nature of identity, as teachers continually integrate new insights and adapt to changing contexts. By examining these dimensions, Pennington and Richards' (2016) study provides a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay of factors that shape language teacher identity, offering valuable insights into the professional growth and development of language educators. This comprehensive analysis not only enriches the theoretical discourse on teacher identity but also has practical implications for teacher education and professional development programs, emphasizing the need to support teachers in navigating the multifaceted aspects of their professional identities.

Barkhuizen (2017) provided an in-depth exploration of modern teacher identity, emphasizing its complexity and multifaceted nature by discussing the fact that modern teacher identity is a dynamic construct that encompasses various aspects of a teacher's sense of self, including cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical dimensions. Teachers are not passive instruments of larger forces; rather, they exercise their own agency and hold strongly defined views of themselves as educators. He highlighted the fact that the key components of teacher identity include teachers' beliefs, theories, and philosophies about language teaching, as well as their content and pedagogical knowledge. Barkhuizen (2017) continued with arguing that this identity is not static; it is enacted, constructed, negotiated, and projected through interactions with students, colleagues, administrators, and policymakers. These interactions occur in both local and global contexts, illustrating that teacher identity indexes both social structures and human agency, and shifts over time and context. Additionally, teachers' imagined future identities and aspirations significantly influence their current actions. The formation of teacher identity involves both struggle and harmony. It can be contested and resisted, but also accepted and valued, by both the self and others. This dynamic nature means that teacher identity is multiple and can create tensions between different aspects of the self.

The material environment, including teaching materials and classroom spaces, also plays a crucial role in shaping teacher identity. In summary, modern teacher identity is a complex, relational, and evolving construct that is central to understanding teachers' professional development and practices. This intricate interplay of beliefs, interactions, and material contexts underscores the importance of considering the multifaceted nature of teacher identity in the discourse on educational practices and teacher development.

Similarly, Kayi-Aydar (2019) conducted a review with a thematic analyses approach and revealed the nuances of the previous studies on the language teacher identity concept. The research on language teacher identity has been significantly influenced by post-structural approaches, which highlight the diverse and composite nature of teacher identities. Her study depicts language teacher identities as multifaceted, intricate, and evolving, taking into account the ethnic, racial, cultural, and gendered dimensions of teachers in various contexts. Emerging areas within this body of research explore the connections between language teacher identities and agency, as well as the interplay between teacher identities and emotions. Researchers have employed a wide range of contexts and methods, with narrative inquiry being the most frequently used approach. The scholarship on language teacher identity has evolved from focusing primarily on linguistic identities and the native/non-native speaker dichotomy to a broader perspective. This new view encompasses the sociocultural, institutional, and ideological factors that shape teachers' complex and dynamic identities.

Revealing significant insights in regards to the social nature of teacher identity, Nazari and De Costa's (2022) study investigated the impact of a professional development (PD) course, structured around the sharing and discussion of critical incidents (CIs), on the language teacher identity development of a group of teachers. Conducted in a language school in Iran, the study involved 10 teachers who participated in a three-month PD course facilitated via Telegram. Data collection methods included pre- and post-course semi-structured interviews and reflective journals maintained throughout the course. The study's findings revealed that, prior to the course, critical incidents negatively affected the teachers' sense of agency and their emotional well-being. However, post-course, the teachers reported a notable improvement in their agency, particularly in classroom management, and exhibited better emotional regulation when confronted with challenging situations. Furthermore, the teachers enhanced their expertise in narrating and discussing critical incidents, which led them to focus more on higher-order issues pertaining to social and educational contexts. Thus, Nazari and De Costa's study underscores the importance of emotions and agency as integral components of teacher identity,

demonstrating that these aspects are significantly influenced by critical incidents. The findings suggest that incorporating critical incidents into professional development courses can facilitate the (re)construction of teacher identities by equipping teachers with the skills to manage classroom challenges more effectively and regulate their emotions. This approach not only aids in the development of practical classroom skills but also promotes a deeper engagement with broader social and educational issues, thereby contributing to the holistic development of teacher identity.

The studies reviewed in the ‘Studies on Teacher Identity’ section, such as those by Beauchamp and Thomas (2011), Mockler (2011), and Akkerman and Meijer (2011), highlighted the internal dialogues, sociopolitical constructs, and ongoing negotiations that shape teacher identities. Similarly, studies in the discourse of language teacher identity, such as those Derakhshan and Nazari (2022) stress the importance of emotional and contextual influences, as well as the dynamic evolution of identity through experiences and professional development. A key difference lies in the specific focus on language-related factors in language teacher identity. Pennington and Richards (2016) identified aspects such as language-related identity, disciplinary identity, and context-related identity as crucial components. This specificity underscores how language teachers uniquely navigate their professional roles amidst the interplay of linguistic, cultural, and institutional factors. Furthermore, the impact of critical incidents and reflective practices, as discussed by Nazari and De Costa (2022), showcases how language teachers continuously reconstruct their identities to better handle classroom challenges and evolving educational landscapes.

In summary, while the foundational principles of teacher identity research apply broadly across educational contexts, the language teacher identity discourse brings forth additional dimensions related to linguistic and cultural specificity. These insights not only deepen our understanding of what shapes language teacher identity but also highlight the critical need for supportive and adaptive professional development frameworks that cater to the unique challenges faced by language educators. As this field continues to evolve, it promises to yield richer insights into the professional growth and adaptive strategies of language teachers, thereby contributing significantly to the broader educational discourse.

## 2.2 Occupational Commitment

Commitment is a key concept which consists of multiple facets which entails to emotional, behavioral, and cognitive integrals. There are multidimensional definitions of commitment disclosing various aspects of the matter. Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) revealed that commitment initially can be explained as “someone becoming “bound by his actions” or “behaviors that exceed formal and/or normative expectations” (p. 225).

Similarly, according to the Ghemawat (1991), commitment is a constitution where one’s previous decisions create a compulsion regarding the forthcoming decisions. Thus, it can be deducted that commitment can be considered as a driving force for a person to give decisions in the same trajectory with their precious ones. To conclude the attempts to reveal the nature of the commitment without looking into the varieties of the term across principles, another generalized definition would suggest the fact that “a force that binds an individual to a target (social or non-social) and to a course of action of relevance to that target” (Meyer, Becker, & Van Dick, 2006, p. 666).

As suggested earlier, commitment intersects with multiple disciplines, highlighting its broad applicability and depth. This concept, central to both personal and professional development, evolves significantly when applied to specific contexts like the workplace (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Thus, while starting from a broad theoretical base, commitment’s implications extend deeply into the nuances of organizational dynamics.

Regarding organizational commitment, it is off significance to point out the fact that Meyer and Allen (1991) provided a basis created upon the existing literature by conceptualizing organizational commitment and compartmentalizing into 3 main directions: “commitment as an affective attachment to the organization, commitment as a perceived cost associated with leaving the organization and commitment as an obligation to remain in the organization” (p.539). Later recognized that these nuances can be improved and set to be more consequential with the help of an additional aspect: occupational commitment, which was defined as a source which “provides a more complete understanding of a person’s tie to his or her occupation” (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993, p.540). Occupational commitment refers to an individual’s psychological attachment to their profession, distinct from their commitment to any specific employer (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). This type of commitment is crucial as it significantly influences career development, professional identity, and personal satisfaction within one’s chosen field.

Occupational commitment is characterized by three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1990). Affective commitment in this context refers to the emotional attachment and identification with one's profession. It drives professionals to pursue excellence in their field due to genuine interest and satisfaction derived from their work (Meyer et al., 2002). Continuance commitment, on the other hand, involves an awareness of the costs associated with leaving a profession. This dimension of commitment is influenced by factors such as investment in specialized training, perceived lack of alternative career options, and the potential loss of professional status or financial security that might result from a career change (Irving et al., 1997). Professionals with high continuance commitment may remain in their field more because of these costs rather than a heartfelt desire to do so. Normative commitment to a profession entails a sense of obligation to continue in one's career. This may stem from personal values, such as dedication to a vocational calling, or societal expectations, which dictate that once one has embarked on a professional path, it is their duty to contribute to their field (Wiener, 1982). It is also reinforced by professional ethics and the standards set by professional communities, which can dictate a strong sense of responsibility to one's colleagues and the broader industry or public (Mowday et al., 1982).

The types of occupational commitment are not isolated; they interact in complex ways that influence professional behavior and attitudes. For instance, research has shown that affective commitment is positively associated with higher job satisfaction, better performance, and greater professional engagement (Meyer et al., 2002). In contrast, continuance commitment may correlate with a pragmatic but less enthusiastic approach to professional responsibilities, and normative commitment can lead to perseverance through ethical challenges or economic downturns.

While the type of commitments above includes implications for the employer and the organizational authority, professional commitment has a deeper route and understanding for the employee themselves. This research centralizes the deeper roots of professional commitment. Occupational commitment comprehensively encompasses teacher's professional commitment, making it a logical focus for studies exploring teachers' connection with the profession of teaching. While professional commitment highlights a teacher's dedication and responsibility towards their roles and the educational institution they serve, occupational commitment delves deeper into their psychological attachment to the profession as a whole. This broader perspective includes the affective, continuance, and normative dimensions, offering a more holistic understanding of a teacher's commitment.

In summary, occupational commitment provides a comprehensive framework that includes and extends beyond professional commitment, encapsulating the emotional, practical, and ethical dimensions of a teacher's dedication to their career. By focusing on occupational commitment, this study acknowledges the multifaceted nature of teachers' connections to their profession, offering a more nuanced understanding of the factors that drive their commitment and influence their professional growth and satisfaction. This broader perspective is essential for developing strategies to support and sustain teacher commitment in the long term, ultimately enhancing the quality of education.

### **2.2.1 Teacher's Professional Commitment**

Teacher's professional commitment is a significant aspect of educational research, directly influencing teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and overall school improvement. It refers to the dedication, responsibility, and loyalty that teachers exhibit towards their profession, their students, and their educational institutions. This subsection aims to explore the multifaceted nature of teacher commitment, examining its definitions, dimensions, antecedents, and implications for practice.

Professional commitment in teaching has been defined in various ways, but it generally encompasses a teacher's psychological attachment to their profession and their determination to exert effort in their professional roles. According to Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993), commitment can be categorized into three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment and identification with the profession; continuance commitment involves awareness of the costs associated with leaving the profession; and normative commitment is the sense of obligation to remain in the profession.

According to Woods (1981), a developed teacher identity is the key to a quality teacher commitment. The fact that teacher commitment being a part and a factor of teacher's professional identity is accepted by many scholars in the field (Lamote & Engles, 2010; Canrinus et al. 2012; Beijaard et al. 2000; Hanna et al. 2019). Day, Elliot and Kington (2005) also discussed that commitment can be more accurately viewed as a layered phenomenon which consists of a set of fundamental, relatively stable values grounded in personal beliefs, self-concepts, roles, and identities. These core values are subject to challenge and evolution, influenced by changes that are socially and politically constructed. Klassen and Chiu (2011) similarly highlighted the relation of the effective factors of teacher commitment with the involvement of personal factors: Personal characteristics such as self-efficacy, job satisfaction,

and intrinsic motivation play crucial roles in fostering professional commitment. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of challenges, exhibit higher levels of commitment, and contribute positively to their schools.

Day (2008) get into the depth of professional factors by arguing that professional development opportunities, teacher autonomy, and supportive collegial relationships significantly influence commitment levels (Day, 2008). Continuous professional growth and the ability to make independent decisions about classroom practices enhance teachers' attachment to their profession. Moreover, Firestone and Pennel (1993) highlighted that school culture, leadership support, and working conditions are critical organizational determinants of teacher commitment. Schools that foster a positive and collaborative environment, provide strong leadership, and ensure favorable working conditions tend to have more committed teachers. Teacher commitment also has profound implications for educational practice. Highly committed teachers are more likely to implement innovative teaching strategies, engage in continuous professional development, and contribute to a positive school climate. Their dedication can lead to improved student achievement and overall school performance (Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010).

Regarding student achievement, it can be said that committed teachers are often more effective in their instructional practices, which positively impacts student learning outcomes. Research by Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) indicates that teacher commitment is closely linked to student achievement, particularly in terms of academic performance and engagement. Also, teacher retention has a connection to professional commitment which is also a crucial factor in teacher retention. Teachers who feel a strong attachment to their profession and their schools are less likely to leave the profession. This reduces turnover rates and ensures stability within the educational system (Ingersoll, 2001). Overall school improvement is intricate with the collective commitment of teachers within a school, which can drive school improvement initiatives. Committed teachers are more likely to participate in school reform efforts, collaborate with colleagues, and support the implementation of new policies and practices (Fullan, 2007). Despite its importance, fostering teacher commitment presents several challenges. Issues such as inadequate compensation, high workloads, and lack of administrative support can undermine teacher commitment. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive strategies that include improving working conditions, providing meaningful professional development, and ensuring supportive leadership.

Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to understand the evolution of teacher commitment over time and its long-term effects on educational outcomes. Additionally, exploring the role of emerging factors such as digital technologies and changing educational policies on teacher commitment can provide valuable insights for contemporary educational practices.

### **2.3 The Context of Türkiye**

The Turkish context of teacher identity literature includes a good number of quality studies (Göktepe & Kunt, 2021; Karaman, 2016; Kimsesiz, 2023; Küçükali, 2017; Taner & Karaman, 2013). The literature in Türkiye in regards to teacher identity mainly includes the perception of in-service teachers, which targets both novice and experienced teachers. There are themes of teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and their general conception, which are visible parts of the literature.

Göktepe and Kunt (2021) explored the professional identity of in-service English language teachers through the lens of social and cultural influences. Their study highlighted the complex interplay between teachers' personal beliefs and external expectations, emphasizing the impact of societal norms on teacher identity formation. Similarly, Karaman (2016) investigated the evolving identities of novice teachers as they transitioned from pre-service training to the realities of the classroom. This study underscored the importance of mentorship and professional development opportunities in shaping teacher identity during the early stages of their careers.

Kimsesiz (2023) delved into the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that influence teachers' professional commitment. This research pointed out that job satisfaction is closely linked to a teacher's sense of identity, with a particular focus on how institutional support and recognition contribute to a positive professional self-concept. Küçükali (2017), on the other hand, examined the relationship between teacher identity and job satisfaction, finding that teachers who perceive their work as meaningful and aligned with their personal values are more likely to experience high levels of job satisfaction and commitment to the profession.

Taner and Karaman (2013) provided a comprehensive overview of how job satisfaction and teacher motivation intersect with professional identity in the Turkish context. Their study emphasized that teachers who are motivated by a strong sense of purpose and who derive satisfaction from their work are more resilient in the face of challenges and more committed to their roles.

Similar to the scope of the present study, the Turkish context includes studies looking into the reasoning behind pre-service teachers' decision-making processes regarding their future careers (Öztürk-Akar, 2012). Öztürk-Akar (2012) explored the factors that influence pre-service teachers' career choices, revealing that personal values, perceived job security, and societal expectations play significant roles in their decision-making. This study also highlighted the importance of self-efficacy beliefs and the perceived relevance of the teaching profession in shaping career intentions.

Moreover, the literature also includes the perceptions of teachers regarding their careers as English language teachers (Coşkuner, 2001). Coşkuner (2001) conducted an in-depth analysis of English language teachers' professional identities, focusing on how they negotiate their roles in a context where English is a foreign language. The study found that teachers often face challenges related to professional recognition and status, which can impact their commitment and satisfaction.

In addition, the state of preparedness of pre-service teachers in the context of Türkiye is also a theme seen in the literature (Çelik & Topkaya, 2023). Çelik and Topkaya (2023) investigated the readiness of pre-service teachers to enter the profession, examining the effectiveness of teacher education programs in equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge. Their findings suggest that while many pre-service teachers feel confident in their subject matter knowledge, they often express concerns about classroom management and the practical aspects of teaching, which can influence their sense of professional identity.

The sense of commitment, with a theoretical framework directly related to occupational commitment as a basis for teacher identity and teachers' professional commitment, lacks representation in the teacher identity and ELT literature in Türkiye. This gap suggests a need for further research that explicitly connects occupational commitment with the broader construct of teacher identity, particularly in the context of English language teaching. Such studies could provide valuable insights into how commitment to the profession shapes and is shaped by teachers' evolving identities, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of teacher identity in Türkiye.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will outline the overall nature of the study by detailing the rationale behind the chosen methodology and study design. To offer a clear and thorough understanding of the research, it will present the research design, criteria for participant selection, the sampling method utilized, the research context, as well as the procedures for data collection and the tools used for data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In this study, a descriptive qualitative research design was employed to explore the intricacies of teacher identity and teacher's professional commitment. The choice of the descriptive qualitative design with the use of semi-structured interviews is well-suited to uncover the depth and complexity inherent in these constructs. This section elucidates the rationale behind this methodological choice and highlights why qualitative research is particularly effective for investigating the nuanced dimensions of teacher identity and commitment.

A descriptive qualitative design was chosen to be able to deliver the perspectives of the participants in the most enriched way possible. The main use of the descriptive qualitative design is to explore the intricate, contextual and subjective matters which cannot be quantified such as teacher identity and the sense of commitment of pre-service teachers in the context of this study. This design created a pathway for the researcher to be able to portray the diversity and richness of the participants' insights and thoughts in regard to their sense of commitment. The rationale for using a descriptive qualitative approach includes its flexibility in data collection and analysis, its ability to generate hypotheses for future research, and its capacity to provide a nuanced and holistic view of the subject under study (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Sandelowski, 2000).

### **3.1.2 Rationale for Qualitative Research**

One of the primary advantages of qualitative research is its ability to provide rich, detailed data that can capture the complexity of human experiences. Moreover, qualitative research is highly sensitive to context, which is crucial for understanding teacher identity and professional commitment. Qualitative methods enable researchers to consider these contextual factors and understand how they interact with individual teachers' experiences. This contextual sensitivity is essential for capturing the dynamic and situated nature of teacher identity and commitment (Yin, 2011). In addition, the flexibility of qualitative research allows for the adaptation of research questions and methods as new insights emerge during the study (Merriam, 2009). This adaptability is particularly valuable in exploring complex constructs like teacher identity and commitment, which may evolve over the course of the research. The use of a qualitative approach enabled the researchers to respond to emerging themes and adjust their focus to capture the most relevant and meaningful aspects of teachers' experiences. Teacher identity and professional commitment are inherently tied to emotions and personal narratives. Qualitative research excels in capturing these emotional and narrative dimensions, providing a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive their roles and responsibilities (Kelchtermans, 2009). Thus, the present study also aims to reach and detect these dimensions to reveal the aspects for teacher identity. In order to accomplish this aim, a semi-structured interview was created and utilized. Therefore, based on the reasons outlined above, descriptive qualitative research design is employed in this research in order to reveal the richness of the participants' insights.

The table 3.1 summarizes the strategy of research methodology and data gathering and data analysis procedures of the present study

**Table 3.1.**

*The Strategy of Data Collection and Analysis Process*

| Research Questions                                                                                                                       | Methods                                                 | Data Collection Tool      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Q1: Which factors influence pre-service EFL teachers' sense of commitment?                                                               | Qualitative Approach<br>(Thematic Analysis/Open Coding) | Semi-structured Interview |
| Q2: Which experiences have an impact on pre-service teachers' sense of commitment while they are developing their professional identity? | Qualitative Approach<br>(Thematic Analysis/Open Coding) | Semi-structured Interview |
| Q3: How does the sense of commitment impacts pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the profession of teaching?                         | Qualitative Approach<br>(Thematic Analysis/Open Coding) | Semi-structured Interview |

### 3.2 Participants and Sampling

The present study focuses on pre-service teachers enrolled in their 4th year of the English Language Teaching Department at a public university. The rationale behind selecting participants from the 4th year is grounded in their successful completion of the 'School Experience I' and 'School Experience II' courses. These courses provide valuable practical teaching experience, allowing the researcher to gather enriched insights from students who have firsthand experience in teaching environments. The participants completed these courses since this study was conducted in the ending of the participants 8<sup>th</sup> and last term.

The sampling method employed in this study is convenience sampling. This method was chosen due to the specific demographic targeted - EFL pre-service teachers in Türkiye - which poses unique challenges related to participant availability and willingness. Convenience sampling not only facilitated sufficient participation to achieve data saturation but also provided valuable insights into this particular subgroup, which is underrepresented in existing literature. This approach ensures that the study captures the nuances and specific experiences of pre-

service teachers, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of their professional commitment and identity formation.

Furthermore, the choice of convenience sampling aligns with the study's objectives by allowing the researcher to access a readily available pool of participants, ensuring timely and efficient data collection. Given the logistical and practical constraints often encountered in educational research, especially within specific cultural and institutional contexts, this method proved effective in balancing the need for rich, detailed data with the feasibility of the research process.

Among 70 preservice EFL teachers who corresponds the criteria of sample selection, 18 pre-service teachers were volunteered to participate. Overall, the methodological choices made in this study are designed to maximize the depth and breadth of insights into the professional commitment and identity of pre-service teachers, providing a foundation for understanding the factors that influence their development and readiness for the teaching profession.

Even though the analysis and discussion of the study did not include a gender-based nature, the alphanumeric codes of the participants were created with the gender demographics of the participants. Four of the participants were male and fourteen of the participants were female.

### **3.3 Data Collection Tool**

The main data gathering tool of the present study is semi-structured interviews with participants. To gather comprehensive and reliable data, a semi-structured interview comprising 13 items were designed by the researcher, aligning closely with the three main research questions. Follow-up questions were asked to the participants in cases of ambiguity or need of elaboration. Initially, an item pool of 30 questions was created related to the available literature. The questions were then grouped within themselves according to their direct relation to the research questions. The final 13 items were presented to the supervision of two experts in the field of ELT and the items were refined according to their opinions to reach their final status.

The reasoning behind using semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool is to enable the pre-service teachers to share their insights, experiences and concerns without filter and with freedom of open-ended nature of the tool. This tool allows participants to share their stories and express their emotions, offering a comprehensive view of their professional journey and the factors that influence their sense of commitment. As mentioned, the data collection tool was designed to ensure a thorough and consistent exploration of the research questions. This process of development and validation ensures that the data collected would be reliable and reflective of the participants' true experiences and perspectives.

### **3.4 Data Gathering Procedure**

The interviews took place face-to-face with the 18 participants. Firstly, the researcher made a presentation in regard to the research in order to enlighten the participants. The interview was conducted in the participants L1 in order to prevent any possible speaking and/or pronunciation anxiety. All the participants consented and volunteered to be a part of the study. All of the participants were informed and ensured regarding the fact that their identity would be a %100 confidential before the interview started. They were informed regarding the fact that they could leave the interview or stop the researcher whenever they feel uncomfortable. The researcher then, had one-on-one interviews with the participants along with asking for their permission to start a voice recording by highlighting the fact that the recordings were also going to be preserved and not going to be published/exposed. The participants were also informed that the interview was going to take approximately 5 to 7 minutes. The data was collected in two days and approximately two hours were spent for data collection each day. The interviews took place in a quiet classroom at the ELT department building in a state university. The interviews were transcribed in accordance to the voice recordings consequently.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study utilized a thematic analysis methodology, which is particularly well-suited for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method allowed for a systematic examination of the data collected from the structured interviews, providing deep insights into the professional commitment and identity of pre-service teachers. The process involved open coding to categorize and interpret

the data, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Below is the figure representing the data analysis process of the present study by visualizing how Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method was integrated into the process.

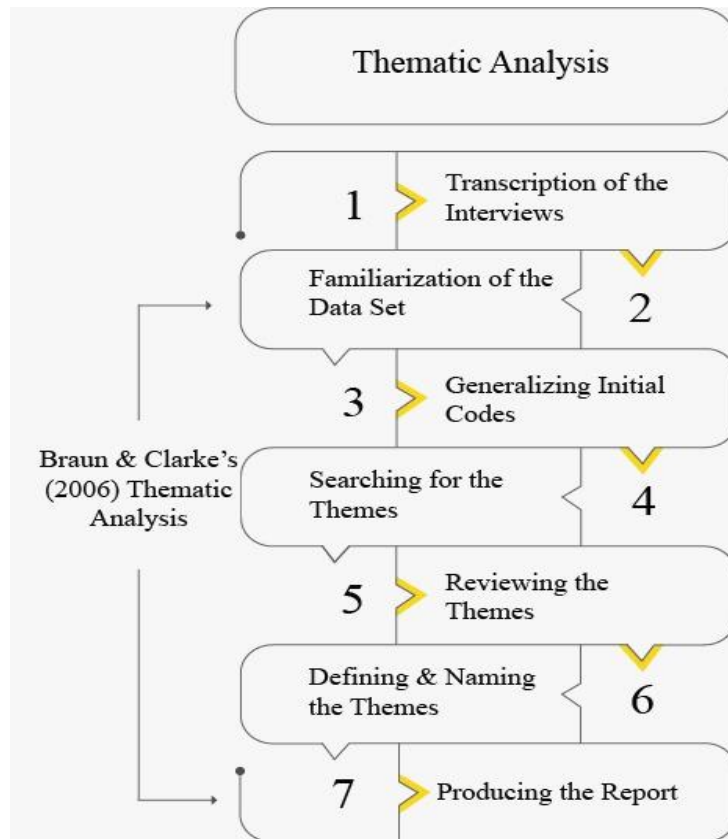


**Figure 3.1.** *Thematic analysis process of the current study*

The first step was the transcription of the recordings of the interviews. The familiarization process occurred where the researcher reads the transcriptions multiple times to see the initial patterns and themes. Following familiarization, the data was subjected to open coding, a process where the data is broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Each transcript was carefully coded line by line to capture the essence of the participants' statements. Codes were assigned to segments of data that appeared significant or relevant to the research questions. This initial coding process was open and flexible, allowing new codes to emerge as the data was reviewed.

In this stage, initial codes were generated systematically across the entire data set. These codes were short phrases or labels that described the content of the data segments. The goal was to capture key features of the data that were relevant to the research questions. This process involved iterating between the data and the codes to refine and adjust the coding scheme (Saldaña, 2016).

After generating the initial codes, the next step was to search for themes. Themes are patterns of meaning that capture something significant about the data in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes were collated into potential themes, and all the relevant coded data extracts were gathered within these themes. This stage involved analyzing the codes and considering how they could be combined to form overarching themes.

The themes were then reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the coded data and the overall data set. This involved two levels of review: checking the themes against the coded extracts and considering the themes in relation to the entire data set. Themes that did not fit well with the data were refined, split, or merged as necessary. This process ensured that the themes were coherent and provided a comprehensive representation of the data.

Once the themes were reviewed and refined, the next step was to define and name them. This involved writing detailed analyses for each theme, describing the story that each theme told about the data. Clear definitions and names for each theme were established to capture the essence of the themes and how they relate to the research questions

The final stage of thematic analysis involved producing the report, which includes the final themes and their supporting data extracts. This report presents a coherent, compelling, and detailed account of the data, highlighting the key findings related to teacher identity and professional commitment. The thematic analysis provided a structured yet flexible framework for interpreting the complex and nuanced data, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Lastly, among the sub-themes, there were items such as 'positive outlook', 'negative outlook' and 'neutral attitude' which were used in the data analysis procedure in a fluid manner. In order to prevent the ambiguity in the dataset in regards to these polarizing inquiries (interview items), additional latent analysis was done to portray the data into a schema.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Helsinki Declaration. In every step of the data collection process, the participants were informed in regards to the confidentiality. The interview created by the researcher was confirmed to be applicable via expert opinion forms. The participants' pronouns were kept neutral throughout the data analysis of the study in order to get rid of the gender-based bias and strengthen confidentiality.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness and Credibility**

Trustworthiness of a study encompasses the quality and the rigor of the research process by validating the fact that the findings are confirmable, dependable and transferable. Credibility, on the other hand, portrays the confidence in the truth of the study's findings via accurate representation of data.

The data of the present research was themed and coded by the researcher. A research assistant who is actively working in the ELT department of a state university in Türkiye who conducted multiple studies along with a master's thesis which included the implementation of thematic analysis and open coding has taken the role of an external coder in the present study. The external coder and the researcher had a training session in regard to the data set and the scope of the present study. The external coder created the codes of the 10% of the transcripts along with checking the themes and the codes of the present study in order to detect if there are any mistakes or misleading information. They confirmed the current status of the themes and the codes of the present research are correctly classified and represented in their true form within the scope.

As mentioned, the confidentiality of the participants' identities was taken seriously. Thus, alphanumeric codes were used representing the participants throughout the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This chapter consists of objective reporting of the findings collected which was based on the thematic analysis of collected data via a semi-structured interview which consists of 13 Items.

**Table 4.1.**

*Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Items*

| Research Questions                                                                                                                        | Corresponding Interview Items                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RQ1: What factors influence pre-service EFL teachers' sense of commitment?                                                                | Item 1. What factors affected you to choose the English language teaching occupation?                                                   |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 8. Do you think you have the qualifications required to be an English teacher?                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 9. What are your expectations of the English teaching occupation?                                                                  |
| RQ2: Which experiences have an impact on pre-service teachers' sense of commitment while they are developing their professional identity? | Item 6. What past experiences have positively impacted your commitment to the English language profession?                              |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 7. What past experiences have negatively impacted your commitment to the English language profession?                              |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 11. What past experiences have impacted your decision of being an English teacher?                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 12. How do your experiences in the English Teaching department impact on your dedication to the profession?                        |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 13. Did the professional development you gained during the English Teaching department affect your commitment to English teaching? |
| RQ3: How does the sense of commitment impact pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the profession of teaching?                          | Item 2. Is English language teaching the ideal occupation for you?                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 3. Can you imagine yourself enjoying the English teaching occupation?                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 4. If you could choose again, would you choose English language teaching occupation?                                               |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 5. Do you find the idea of teaching English exciting?                                                                              |
|                                                                                                                                           | Item 10. Do you plan on working as an English teacher in the future?                                                                    |

## 4.1 Themes

This subsection is designed to reveal the themes and the sub-themes created in accordance with the transcriptions of interview recordings of the participants. The table below represents the themes and the sub-themes of the dataset created after the transcription and familiarization process.

**Table 4.2.**

### *Themes of the Dataset*

| Themes                                          | Sub-themes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Personal Motivation and Self-Perception      | 1.1 Percieved aptitude and passion for language learning or teaching<br>1.2 Intrinsic motivation: enjoyment, spirituality, childhood dream<br>1.2 Dedication<br>1.4 Success in English Language despite failure in other subjects as a student                                                |
| 2. External Influences and Experiences          | 2.1 Positive reference to pre-service teacher's own experience with their own teacher in the past<br>2.2. Positive feedback and positive interaction with children<br>2.3 Satisfaction of touching someones's life                                                                            |
| 3. Professional Challenges and Barriers         | 3.1 Lack of experience<br>3.2 Low self-efficacy<br>3.3 Insufficient resources: financial, confidence, prestige<br>3.4 Negative reference to the future: hopelessness, anxiety, fear of not being appointed<br>3.5 Negative impact of external factors, mobbing<br>3.6 Poor working conditions |
| 4. Professional Environment and Support Systems | 4.1 Good working conditions: comfort, secure environment, expectation of financial resources<br>4.2 Positive impact of external factors: extrinsic motivation                                                                                                                                 |
| 5. Growth and Development                       | 5.1 Personal development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 6. Others                                       | 6.1 Negative outlook<br>6.2 Positive outlook<br>6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

#### 4.2 RQ1: What factors influence pre-service EFL teachers' sense of commitment?

As mentioned before (see Table 4.1.), the Items corresponding to the first research question is Item 1, Item 8 and Item 9 of the semi-structured interview. This subsection is prepared to reveal the results in regard to the specific Items.

The first Item of the interview is “What factors affected you to choose the English language teaching occupation?” and it aims to reveal the factors impacted the participants while they were choosing their future profession. The table below represents the frequency and the percentage of the sub-themes which were present in the case of Item 1.

**Table 4.3.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 1*

| Sub-themes                                                                                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1.1 Percieved aptitude and passion for English language learning or teaching                      | 10        | 55,55%     |
| 2.1 Positive reference to pre-service teacher's own experience with their own teacher in the past | 9         | 50%        |
| 1.4 Success in English language despite failure in other subjects as a student                    | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 1.2 Intrinsic motivation: enjoyment, spirituality, childhood dream                                | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 2.2 Positive feedback and positive interaction with children                                      | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 4.2 Positive impact of external factors: extrinsic motivation                                     | 3         | 16.77%     |
| 4.1 Good working conditions: comfort, secure environment, expectation of financial resources      | 3         | 16.77%     |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                              | 2         | 11.11%     |

The findings of Item 1 include common grounds for participants when it comes to factors impacted their decision-making in regard to their future career in order to receive clues of their current commitment. More than half of the participants (n=10, 55.55%) thought that they had a natural skill and passion towards learning languages, specifically English Language. They mentioned that this skill was among the factors influencing them to make their decision.

*First of all, I really love teaching. I enjoy being able to teach something to others. And I believe that I have a talent for it. (P4F)*

*I was always successful in English class, and it was always the class I participated in the most. (P6F)*

*Since middle school, English has always been my favorite subject. It was also the subject I excelled in the most. Additionally, I always got along well with my English teachers, liked them, and felt close to them. All of these factors influenced my decision. (P9F)*

*I've always had a deep love and affinity for languages since childhood. Even from a young age, I've been drawn to them. Additionally, although it might sound cliché, my middle school English teacher played a significant role in instilling this passion in me. I liked her very much. So, I can say these factors influenced my decision. (P13F)*

Half of the participants (n=9, 50%) mentioned that they had a strong relationship with their English teacher during their student years which had been a milestone in their journey of becoming an English Language Teacher.

*At first, I didn't choose it (teaching career) with much enthusiasm. It was something I thought I could do, so I chose it. But later, a teacher changed my mind. I was attending a course just before starting university. There was an English teacher there who really impressed me with her helpfulness. She made me realize that I had made the right choice and that this was definitely what I needed to do. (P7F)*

*I always loved my English teachers. (P11F)*

One of the participants (5.55%) mentioned the fact that English was the only subject they could succeed at during their student years along with ~~the~~ having a natural inclination for the English Language.

*When I was a student in elementary school, I had an English teacher whom I loved very much. I participated very actively in English class because of her, which gave me an affinity for the English language. Later, thanks to her, I had an opportunity to experience living abroad. This happened when I was in middle school. At that time, I already decided in my mind that I wanted to become an English teacher. After that, I never changed my mind and continued on that path. Also, my math skills were poor, which was another factor that led me towards*

*English. No, from the very beginning, I only wanted to become an English teacher because I loved it very much. (P1F)*

Three of the participants (16.77%) mentioned that they perceive to have an intrinsic motivation towards English Language.

*The main reason is actually intrinsic motivation. I had a lot of it; there was no need for any external influence. We started learning English in the 4th grade. Since then, despite having many different English teachers, I always remained committed. (P8F)*

Two of the participants (11.11%) mentioned the fact that they wanted to be an English Teacher since they had positive feedbacks from their tutoring and internship students.

*At first, it was mainly because I got along well with children and realized that I could have fun with them. Besides that, my English teachers in middle school were actually good. Maybe that had a little contribution, but I can't say it was entirely because of them. That's basically it. (P18M)*

Three of the participants (16.77%) mentioned that external factors were an important factor for them to decide to be an English Teacher.

*At first, my family influenced me a bit. Back then, I wasn't really considering teaching, but they wanted me to become a teacher, especially because I knew English. They told me to pursue teaching. Also, living in Antalya was a significant factor. Most of it was because of that. It's the classic family mindset: "Lean on the government, my daughter.". (P5F)*

Three of the participants (16.77%) shared that among the reasons they choose English teaching as a career is the good working conditions.

*You know, because it has a lot of vacation time. Of course, that's if we get appointed. There are constant holidays, and also, I like children. I'm not very attached, but I generally like kids, so that's why. (P14F).*

Likewise, two of the participants had a rather neutral approach although mentioning that they had a natural inclination for the English Language.

*I chose the language department when I realized that other fields were not a good fit for me. (P10F)*

Interview Item 8 is “Do you think you have the qualifications required to be an English teacher?” and it aims to reveal participants’ perceived qualification and confidence in order to receive insights in regards to their perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 8.

**Table 4.4.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 8*

| Sub-themes             | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook   | 13        | 72.22%     |
| 3.1 Lack of experience | 10        | 55.55%     |
| 3.2 Low self-efficacy  | 4         | 22.3%      |
| 6.1 Negative outlook   | 4         | 22.3%      |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude   | 1         | 5.55%      |

Here, the nature of the Item 8 has a nature which inquires responses of ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘neutral’. Since the positive outlook, negative outlook and neutral attitude sub-themes have the roles of determiners in this Item, an additional latent analysis was conducted to reveal the answers.

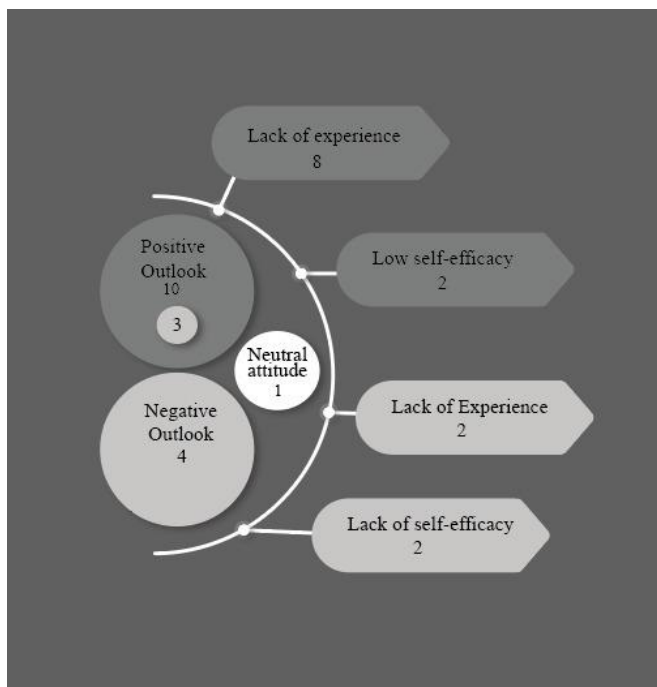


**Figure 4.2.** *Latent Analysis of the Results of Item 8*

Most of the participants (n=13, 72.22%) had a positive outlook on their competence of language teaching.

*I think so, yes. I mean, I consider it theoretically. I'm not sure how well I can apply it in practice, but I do think I am qualified. (P11F)*

Almost the half of the participants (n=10, 55.55%) mentioned that they lacked sufficient experience either they are positive or negative in regards to their perceived qualification.

*I think so. I already believe I've improved over the years. But of course, I have shortcomings, I'm aware of that. I think I'll handle them over time because I'm still quite inexperienced in this area. I believe it will get better over time. (P9F)*

*I don't really think so at the moment. I feel like I need more experience. (P14F)*

In detail, 61.53% of the participants who had a positive outlook towards their qualification also highlighted the fact that they also think they lack sufficient experience in the field.

Half of the participants who had a negative outlook on their qualification (n=2) were concerned due to the fact that they lacked the needed experience while the other half (n=2) had a low self-efficacy.

Some of the participants (n=4, 22.3%) shared answers which portrayed a perceived low self-efficacy.

*Sometimes, I feel very inadequate. For instance, when I'm about to explain something at work, I forget a very simple word. It just doesn't come to my mind at that moment. I try not to let the kids notice, but I get really upset. (P10F)*

Similarly, some of the participants (n=4, 22.3%) shared a negative outlook towards their competence of language teaching.

*Not at all. I mean, maybe I can overcome some processes psychologically, but I don't know if I am sufficient in terms of knowledge. I feel a bit lacking in this during my internship as well. (P12M)*

A few of the participants (n=1, 5.55%) had a neutral attitude towards the question.

*I mean, nothing has happened so far. (P18M)*

Interview Item 9 is “What are your expectations from English teaching occupation?” which aims to reveal participants’ expectations of their future career in order to detect the factors which are significant to reveal their perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 9.

**Table 4.5.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 9*

| Sub-themes                                                                                   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 4.1 Good working conditions: comfort, secure environment, expectation of financial resources | 8         | 44.5%      |
| 2.3 Satisfaction of touching someone’s life                                                  | 5         | 27.77%     |
| 1.2 Intrinsic motivation: enjoyment, spirituality, childhood dream                           | 5         | 27.77%     |
| 3.4 Negative reference to the future: hopelessness, anxiety, fear of not being appointed     | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 3.5 Negative impact of external factors, etc.                                                | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 2.2. Positive feedback and positive interaction with children                                | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 5.1 Personal development                                                                     | 1         | 5.55%      |

Most of the participants (n=8, 44.5%) thought that they expect good working conditions such as comfort, secure environment and financial resources.

*My expectations... As already mentioned, the salary—we don’t even count that, it’s something that should be there anyway. Apart from that, I already expect to get this from being an English teacher. I expect to gain a sense of fulfillment, a spiritual feeling. I strongly believe I will get this while teaching children. They call it self-actualization, and I believe I will find it there. (P6F)*

*I mean, my expectations... At least to live safely. (P11F)*

Several of the participants (n=5, 27.77%) mentioned that the perception of touching someone’s life to improve them is an expectation of them to be an English Teacher.

*Now, the idea of being able to make a difference in a child's life actually motivates me a lot. I mean, if I can leave an impact on them, how wonderful that would be; it might even be enough for me, I can say. (P13F)*

A number of the participants (n=5, 27.77%) highlighted the fact that they wanted English Teaching to be a career which will motivate them intrinsically in various ways such as spirituality or enjoyment.

*My expectations are (from English teaching career) definitely to be happy and satisfied, both materially and spiritually. Especially spiritually. I don't think there are many options for spiritual happiness, although there might be many for material wealth. (P12M)*

A certain number of the participants (n=2, 11.11%) shared negative references to their future related to English teaching profession when they were asked about their expectations from English teaching profession.

*Both to improve myself in this field and to overcome the challenges I see as obstacles if I am to pursue this profession. (P3F)*

A few of the participants (n=2, 11.11%) were concerned of the negative impact of the external factors in regards to English Teaching.

*I think there will be issues arising from external factors beyond my control. Other than that, there is nothing else. (P1F)*

A limited number of the participants (n=1, 5.55%) mentioned that they were specifically looking for quality interaction with students and positive feedback received from them.

*If it's directly related to teaching English, having good interaction in the classroom, being able to see that I can teach, and receiving that positive feedback from students could be among my expectations. (P1F)*

Again, a small number of the participants (n=1, 5.55%) mentioned that they were expecting to receive personal development via being an English Teacher.

*Of course, I have high expectations regarding language, specifically English teaching. Right now, I am learning a language through my studies, and I can use it elsewhere as well. (P17F)*

#### 4.3 RQ2: Which experiences have an impact on participants' sense of commitment while they are developing their professional identity?

The second research question corresponds with the following Items: Item 6, Item 7, Item 11, Item 12 and Item 13. In order to portray the results of the second research question, mentioned Items are going to be examined.

Item 6 is “What past experiences have positively impacted your commitment to the English language profession?” which aims to reveal participants' experiences which affected their perceived sense of commitment positively. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 6.

**Table 4.6.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 6*

| Sub-themes                                                                                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                              | 15        | 83.33%     |
| 2.2. Positive feedback and positive interaction with children                                     | 11        | 61.11%     |
| 2.1 Positive reference to pre-service teacher's own experience with their own teacher in the past | 6         | 33.33%     |
| 2.3 Satisfaction of touching someone's life                                                       | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 6.1 Negative outlook                                                                              | 1         | 5.55%      |

Since Item 6 was another specific example where ‘positive outlook’ aligned with the nature of the question. Thus, in order to clarify the actual data, a Latent analysis was created.

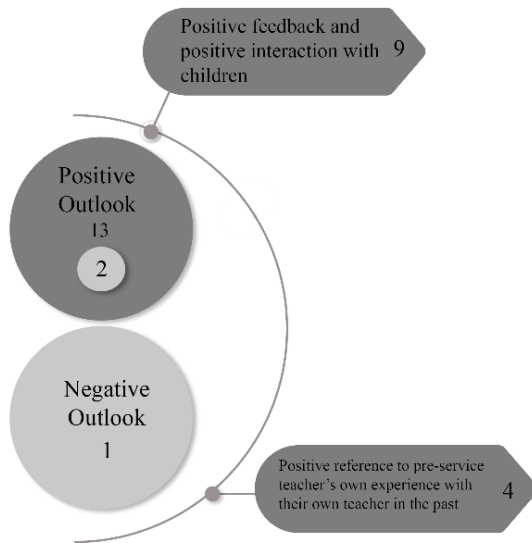


**Figure 4.3.** *Latent Analysis of the Results of Item 6*

Neutral attitude sub-theme was not present in Item 6. A big percentage of the participants ( $n=15$ , 83.33%) shared their positive outlooks. Most of the participants who had positive outlooks ( $n=9$ , 60%) mentioned that receiving positive feedback from the students and positively engaging with them were among the experiences which positively affected their commitment to English teaching career.

*Receiving feedback. When I get positive feedback, especially from individuals I give private lessons to, it really motivates me. (P3F)*

*My communication with students during my internship, seeing their love and respect for me, also motivates me in the same way. So, I can say these things. (P9F)*

Some of the participants ( $n=4$ , 26.66%) among the participants who had positive outlooks mentioned that their previous experiences with their own teachers in the past were among the positive experiences which impacted their commitment to English teaching.

*I normally never considered teaching. I had no intention of becoming a teacher after graduation. But thanks to my teacher, I was somewhat positively influenced. (P2M)*

A number of all the participants (n=2, 11.11%) who participated independently mentioned that there is a positive relation with their commitment to English teaching and their experiences of positive feedback received from the students.

A few of all the participants (n=2, 11.11%) who participated also independently mentioned that their experiences with their teacher in the past was an important factor on their commitment to English teaching.

A single participant (5.55%) teacher independently mentioned that they think their experiences of feeling the satisfaction of touching someone's life was an experience which positively affected their Professional commitment to English teaching.

Lastly, a single participant (5.55%) mentioned that they do not have a positive experience which impacts their commitment to English teaching.

Item 7 is "What past experiences have negatively impacted your commitment to the English language profession?" which aims to reveal participants' experiences which affected their perceived sense of commitment negatively. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 7.

**Table 4.7.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 7*

| Sub-themes                                                                               | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 3.6 Poor working conditions                                                              | 8         | 44.44%     |
| 3.5 3.5 Negative impact of external factors, mobbing                                     | 4         | 22.22%     |
| 3.4 Negative reference to the future: hopelessness, anxiety, fear of not being appointed | 4         | 22.22%     |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                     | 3         | 16.66%     |
| 6.1 Negative Outlook                                                                     | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 3.2 Low self-efficacy                                                                    | 1         | 5.55%      |

Almost half of the participants (n=8, 44.44%) mentioned that their experiences with poor working conditions during their internships negatively influence their commitment to English teaching.

*What negatively affects me are definitely my relationships with my internship students and the difficulties I encountered during my teacher training. Additionally, my obligations to the young people or those I teach contribute to this. Because of this, I'm not sure if I can bear this burden. (P12M)*

Hearing the themes such as mobbing was an example of an experience which negatively affected the commitment of some of the participants (n=4, 22.22%).

*I've heard a lot about different negative aspects of it (language teaching) as well, due to my friends' experiences. For example, there can be mobbing in colleges. (P4F)*

Some part of the participants (n=4, 22.22%) mentioned that experiencing situations which creates anxiety or hopelessness has a negative impact on their professional commitment.

*This also happens during the internship. As I said, students not seeing you as a teacher, meaning you can't establish that authority. And as I mentioned, the issue of not being able to get appointed due to nepotism. These kinds of things. (P11F)*

A small part of the participants (n=3, 16.66%) had a neutral attitude when asked the experiences which negatively affect their professional identity.

*I can't think of any negative experiences; there aren't any, maybe, I suppose. (P6F)*

A small number of the participants (n=2, 11.11%) mentioned that they did not have a negative experience to report and a scarce number of the participants (n=1, 5.55%) mentioned the experiences represent low self-efficacy, which negatively affect their professional commitment to their profession.

*What negatively affects me... I can't really call it a negative experience, but sometimes when I give exams at the place where I work, and some students get low scores, it affects me negatively. I think, "Am I not doing my job well?", "Am I not teaching effectively?" This affects me a bit negatively. I see faults in myself. (P17F)*

Interview Item 11 is “Item 11. What past experiences have impacted your decision of being an English teacher?” which aims to reveal participants’ past experiences which had a positive or negative impact on perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 11.

**Table 4.8.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 11*

| Sub-themes                                                                                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 2.1 Positive reference to pre-service teacher’s own experience with their own teacher in the past | 11        | 61.11%     |
| 1.1 Percieved aptitude and passion for language learning or teaching                              | 4         | 22.22%     |
| 1.4 Success in English Language despite failure in other subjects as a student                    | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 1.2 Intrinsic motivation: enjoyment, spirituality, childhood dream                                | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                              | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 4.2 Positive impact of external factors: extrinsic motivation                                     | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 4.1 Good working conditions: comfort, secure environment, expectation of financial resources      | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                              | 1         | 5.55%      |

More than half of the participants (n=11, 61.11%) shared the fact that among the past experiences they had in order to choose English teaching as a career was the positive memories and experiences with their teachers in the past.

*The decision to become an English teacher... As I said, my teacher... I’ll repeat this. For example, when I first saw them, I thought, yes, I can be a teacher like that. (P6F)*

*Most of my interactions with my English teachers were very good so far. (P5F)*

*My secondary school teacher whom I am still in contact with. (P13F)*

Some of the participants (n=4, 22.22%) shared that their natural inclination and perceived aptitude and passion for language learning was a driving force for them to choose English teaching career.

*So, I took the YDT (Foreign Language Test) for the first time. At our school, there was only one language class. I performed better than most of them.*  
(P10F)

Other themes observed as results of Item 11 were picked by only one participant (n=1, 5.55%). A pre-service teacher mentioned that in their past, they were showed success in English as a subject compared to the others. Thus, they decided to pursue English Teaching career. Another pre-service teacher mentioned that they always had an intrinsic motivation for English language, which eventually leaded them to English teaching career. A pre-service teacher shared the fact that they always had a positive outlook on English teaching. Also, a pre-service teacher mentioned that they had memories with people who surrounded them were teachers, thus, external factors were among their past experiences which impacted them choosing English teaching as a career. Good working conditions were observed by a pre-service teacher which impacted decision. Lastly, a pre-service teacher had a neutral attitude regarding the matter.

Interview Item 12 is “How do your experiences in the English Teaching department impact on your dedication to the profession?” which aims to reveal participants’ thoughts and insights on the impact of their experiences in the ELT department on their perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 12.

**Table 4.9.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 12*

| Sub-themes                                                                                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                              | 12        | 66.66%     |
| 5.1 Personal development                                                                          | 3         | 16.66%     |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                              | 3         | 11.11%     |
| 2.1 Positive reference to pre-service teacher’s own experience with their own teacher in the past | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 3.5 Negative impact of external factors                                                           | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 2.2. Positive feedback and positive interaction with children                                     | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.1 Lack of experience                                                                            | 1         | 5.55%      |

Most of the participants (n=12, 66.66%) mentioned that their experiences in the English Language Teaching department affected their dedication to their profession positively.

*It influences me very positively because we have many theoretical and practical courses. Thanks to these courses, we improve and become better at teaching. So, my courses have definitely helped and influenced me a lot in this regard. In a good way, of course. (P9F)*

Some of the participants (n=3, 16.66%) shared that they had the chance to develop personally in the department.

*In the first two years, we took theoretical courses. In the third and fourth years, we started focusing more on presentations. Even though at first I was very nervous and shaky in front of the class, I started to really enjoy it later on. In fact, sometimes I get anxious when it's not my turn or when I can't explain things during my internship. Because I really want to express myself directly. (P8F)*

Some of the participants (n=3, 16.66%) had a neutral attitude towards the question.

*My communication with the professors was very positive. Because of this, it may have strengthened my commitment to teaching academically. However, I'm not sure if my internship slightly decreased my commitment. (P5F)*

A number of the participants (n=2, 11.11%) mentioned that there was the negative impact of the external factors which influenced their experience in the department.

*I believe it has positively impacted my commitment to my profession. Even though we had remote learning during the pandemic, apart from that, we had three years of on-campus experience. In total, including preparatory classes, we studied for five years, but two of those years were online due to the pandemic and earthquake, so I don't count them. Despite having only three years of experience at the faculty, which is a short time, our presentations and classes were very interactive and I think they developed us significantly in a positive way. Even though it was only three years, I believe it was enough to improve us. (P6F)*

A few of the participants (n=2, 11.11%) shared that they had a positive interaction with their professors at the faculty.

*I am very happy with my communication with the professors here. The activities we do here, such as microteaching, are very beneficial. I think these also have a positive impact. (P3F)*

One of the participants mentioned that the positive interaction with the students is a nice example of what department provided them with.

Lastly, one of the participants (n=1, 5.55%) shared that they feel lack of experience.

Interview Item 13 is “Did the professional development you gained during the English Language Teaching department affect your commitment to English teaching?” which aims to reveal participants’ thoughts and insights on the impact on the educational process at the ELT department to detect its impact on their perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 13.

**Table 4.10.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 13*

| Sub-themes                                                                                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                              | 14        | 77.77%     |
| 5.1 Personal development                                                                          | 8         | 44.44%     |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                              | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 2.2. Positive feedback and positive interaction with children                                     | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 2.1 Positive reference to pre-service teacher’s own experience with their own teacher in the past | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 6.1 Negative outlook                                                                              | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.1 Lack of experience                                                                            | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.5 Negative impact of external factors                                                           | 1         | 5.55%      |

Since Item 13 is among the inquiries with a polar nature, a latent analysis is created to be able to get rid of the ambiguity.

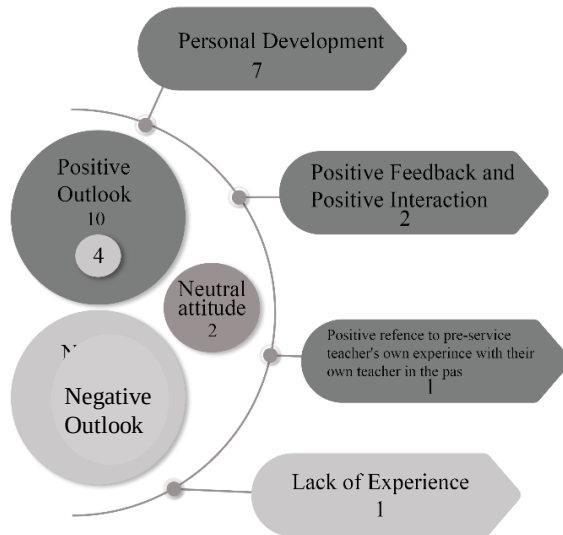


**Figure 4.4.** Latent Analysis of the Results of Item 13

A big percentage of the participants (n=14, 77.77%) had a positive outlook when asked if the professional development they gained during the English Teaching department affect their commitment to English teaching. Half of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=7) highlighted the fact that their professional commitment was positively influenced due to the personal development they went through at English teaching department.

*Yes, it influenced me. For example, the Classroom Management course taught me a lot. During my internship, I received feedback on this as well. I learned how to manage the classroom effectively here. (P10F)*

Some of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=2, 14.28%) mentioned that the fact that they learned to establish positive interaction with students in the department is a positive learning outcome.

*We learned how to communicate with students and how to conduct lessons for children. (P8F)*

Small part of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=1, 7.14%) shared that the positive relationship with their professors was significantly impactful when they consider their time in the department.

*It influenced me because, in general, our department professors are very good. The experiences they share, the lessons they teach, and the theoretical knowledge they provide have a significant impact beyond just practical matters. Even for a negative event that might occur in practice (they showed us in advance), they would say, "You might experience something like this. Be prepared." This kind of guidance provides a foundation for dealing with practical challenges. (P11F)*

A number of all the participants who took part in the research (n=2, 11.11%) had a neutral attitude towards the question.

*Honestly, it didn't have much of an impact on my sense of commitment. (P4F)*

A single participant who took part in the research (5.55%) also highlighted the negative effect of external factors as shown below.

*The process was quite problematic for us. The first year was entirely remote, the second year was hybrid, and the third year was disrupted by the earthquake. (P5F)*

Lastly, a single participant (5.55%) had a negative outlook due to the fact that they could not be physically present in the faculty for a certain period.

#### 4.4 RQ3: How does the sense of commitment impacts participants' attitudes towards the profession of teaching?

The third research question corresponds with the following Items: Item 2, Item 3, Item 4, Item 5 and Item 10. In order to portray the results of the third research question, mentioned Items are going to be examined.

Interview Item 2 is “Is English language teaching the ideal occupation for you?” which aims to detect if participants personal and professional identities align in order to establish a meaning connection between their willingness and perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 2.

**Table 4.11.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 2*

| Sub-themes                                                                                   | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                         | 11        | 61.11%     |
| 1.1 Percieved aptitude and passion for language learning or teaching                         | 8         | 44.44%     |
| 4.1 Good working conditions: comfort, secure environment, expectation of financial resources | 3         | 16.66%     |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                         | 3         | 16.66%     |
| 1.2 Intrinsic motivation: enjoyment, spirituality, childhood dream                           | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 1.2 Dedication                                                                               | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.2 Low self-efficacy                                                                        | 1         | 5.55%      |

Item 2 also has a binary system including ‘yes’ and ‘no’ themes, thus, a Latent analysis was created.

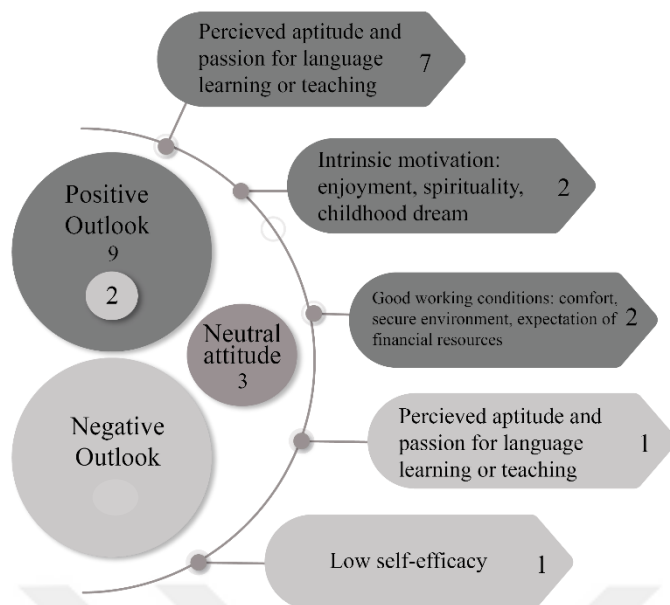


**Figure 4.5. Latent Analysis of the Results of Item 2**

Many of the participants (n=11, 61.11%) had a positive outlook when asked if English teaching was the ideal option for them or not. 63.63% of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=7) also mentioned that they had a positive aptitude and passion for language teaching or learning.

*I think for now, yes. Because I love teaching. I know English, but I was wondering if I should be an English teacher. But now I'm sure. Yes, I'll definitely pursue English teaching. (P8F)*

Some of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=2, 18.18%) shared that they think English teaching is the ideal occupation for them due to the fact that they have intrinsic motivation.

*Yes, because I've always wanted this since I was a child. (P13F)*

A number of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=2, 18.18%) mentioned that they picked this career due to the good working conditions.

*Yes, English teaching. I thought about this a lot because it wasn't something I originally wanted. After the pandemic, I decided to study English teaching. I realized I always wanted to work, but especially during the pandemic, I saw many people losing their jobs while those in the public sector were more secure. So, I decided this is the path I would take. (P15F)*

Some part of all the participants who participated (n=3, 16.66%) had a neutral outlook regarding the matter.

*I can't say exactly yes. I could have done something else as well. (P3F)*

One of all the participants (n=1, 5.55%) who participated also referred to dedication.

Again, one of all the participants who participated had a negative outlook to the inquiry due to the lack of self-efficacy.

Interview Item 3 is “Can you imagine yourself enjoying the English teaching occupation?” which aims to detect if participants have a positive outlook on their career trajectory as an English Language teacher as a determiner of their perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 3.

**Table 4.12.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 3*

| Sub-themes                                                                               | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                     | 13        | 72.22%     |
| 2.2. Positive feedback and positive interaction with children                            | 7         | 38.88%     |
| 1.2 Intrinsic motivation: enjoyment, spirituality, childhood dream                       | 5         | 27.77%     |
| 6.1 Negative outlook                                                                     | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 3.4 Negative reference to the future: hopelessness, anxiety, fear of not being appointed | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                     | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 3.5 Negative impact of external factors                                                  | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 3.6 Poor working conditions                                                              | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 1.1 Perceived aptitude and passion for language learning or teaching                     | 1         | 5.55%      |

Item 3 also required Latent Analysis due to the fact that it also had a binary nature.

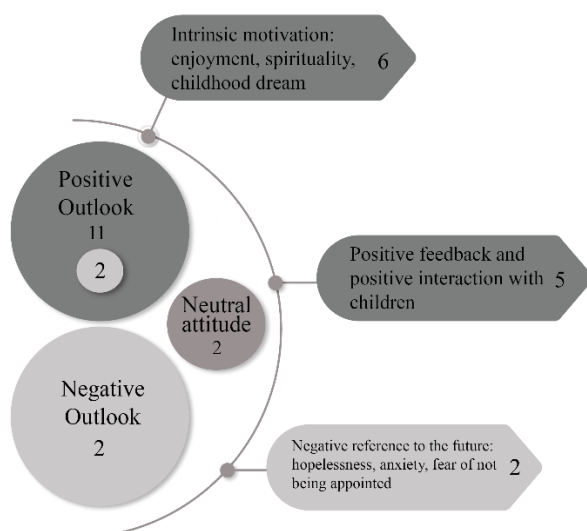


**Figure 4.6. Latent Analysis of the Results of Item 3**

72.22% of the participants had a positive outlook when it comes to being able to imagining themselves enjoying English teaching occupation. Almost half of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=6, 46.15%) referred to intrinsic motivation end enthusiasm.

*I do it with love. We are already going for internships. It's just that sometimes I find it challenging, which is normal since we're just starting. But overall, I do it with great enjoyment and enthusiasm. (P9F)*

A part of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=5, 38.46%) mentioned that the enjoyment of their occupation derives from the positive feedback and interaction with students.

*I can imagine it because I love children. I enjoy taking care of them and being involved with them. That's why I can picture myself in this role. (P13F)*

A number of all the participants who participated (n=2, 11.11%) had a neutral attitude.

Some of all the participants who participated (n=2, 11.11%) directly mentioned their concerns with a reference to the future without revealing a concrete yes or no answer.

*This doesn't apply to being appointed. I mean, I love the language and I love teaching, but I don't have a dream or plan to get appointed. Even if I did, I don't think I could easily get appointed under the current conditions in this country, because of things like nepotism and other issues. That's why I think I might focus more on the academic side, staying involved with the language and teaching when needed. (P11F)*

A few of all the participants who participated (n=2, 11.11%) were concerned of the negative impact of the external factors.

*In Turkey, there is a particular risk when students' families, especially with younger children, are involved. We constantly see reports of violence against teachers in the news. They are trying to address this issue with new laws, I believe. (P5F)*

A participant (5.55%) also mentioned poor working conditions that they were concerned of.

Lastly, a participant (5.55%) teacher answered that they already had a perceived aptitude and passion for English teaching.

Interview Item 4 is “If you could choose again, would you choose English language teaching occupation?” which aims to detect if participants would consider the same career trajectory as an English Language teacher after their experiences as a pre-service teacher so far. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 4.

**Table 4.13.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 4*

| Sub-themes                                                                               | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                     | 15        | 83.33%     |
| 6.3 Neutral attitude                                                                     | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 6.1 Negative outlook                                                                     | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.4 Negative reference to the future: hopelessness, anxiety, fear of not being appointed | 1         | 5.55%      |

Item 4 is also an inquiry inquiring a direct ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question. That is why a Latent Analysis was done.

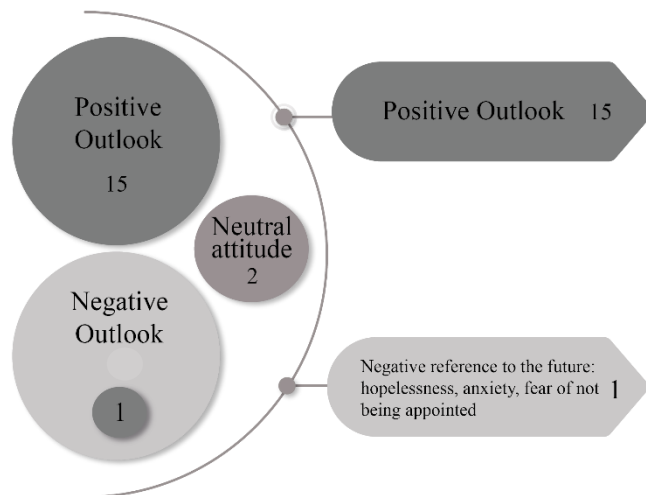


**Figure 4.7. Latent Analysis of the Results of Item 4**

A vast majority of the participants (n=15, 83.33%) had a positive outlook when asked if they would choose their occupation again.

A number of the participants (n=2, 11.11%) had a neutral approach.

*Both yes and no. As I said, I do it with love. When we go to internships, I enjoy it. I enjoy teaching. But as I mentioned, it's not a profession where I can say with certainty, "I couldn't do any other job; this is definitely the one I want." So, it's both yes and no. (P3F)*

Only one participant (5.55%) mentioned that they wouldn't choose English teacher as a career if they had another chance referred to negative reference to the future.

*I might not have chosen it. The reason wouldn't be that I don't love the profession, but because of my concerns about the future. (P1F)*

Interview Item 5 is “Do you find the idea of teaching English exciting?” which aims to reveal the emotional aspect of the participants perceived sense of commitment. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 5.

**Table 4.14.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 5*

| Sub-themes                                                                                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook                                                                              | 17        | 94.44%     |
| 2.2. Positive feedback and positive interaction with children                                     | 8         | 44.44%     |
| 2.3 Satisfaction of touching someones's life                                                      | 4         | 22.22%     |
| 1.1 Percieved aptitude and passion for language learning or teaching                              | 2         | 11.11%     |
| 2.1 Positive reference to pre-service teacher's own experience with their own teacher in the past | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 6.1 Negative outlook                                                                              | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.3 Insufficient resources: financial, confidence, prestige                                       | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.4 Negative reference to the future: hopelessness, anxiety, fear of not being appointed          | 1         | 5.55%      |
| 3.5 Negative impact of external factors                                                           | 1         | 5.55%      |

Similarly, Item 5 also required a Latent Analysis due to the fact that positive outlook and negative outlook sub-themes take the role of ‘yes’ and ‘no’ as direct answers to the inquiry.

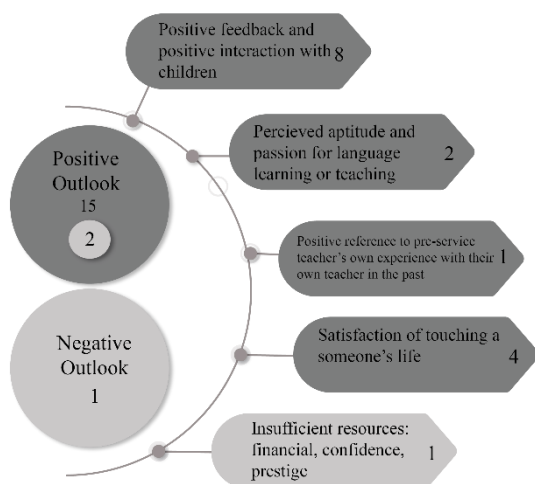


**Figure 4.8. Latent Analysis of the Results of Item 5**

Most of the participants (n=17, 94.44%) had a positive outlook when asked if they find the idea of teaching English exciting. Some part of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=8, 47.05%) mentioned that they do find the idea excited due to the positive feedback they received and engagements they established with students so far.

*Teaching children seems more exciting because... adults already know some things. Therefore, they may not be as grateful as children. (P2M)*

Some of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=2, 11.76%) mentioned that they find the idea exciting due to the fact that they already have a perceived aptitude and passion for language teaching and learning

A few part of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=1, 5.88%) mentioned that their high school teacher's excitement was a positive impact on their willingness to pursue this career at the moment.

A number of the participants who had a positive outlook (n=4, 23.52%) mentioned that touching someone's life is one of the resources of their excitement.

*Yes, very much so. As I mentioned earlier, I want to teach English to children and touch their lives much more than I do with adults. (P6F)*

One of the participants (5.55%) had a negative outlook and highlighted that they do not find the idea of teaching English excited.

Another pre-service teacher (5.55%) referred to the insufficient resources.

*I shouldn't have to worry about the future, and my financial resources shouldn't be limited. When I chose this profession, the uncertainty about getting appointed after university, financial difficulties, and the value given to teachers in the country all played a part. (P1F)*

One of the participants (5.55%) gave an answer referring to negative themes such as anxiety and hopelessness.

Lastly, one of the participants (5.55%) mentioned the impact of negative external factors.

Interview Item 10 is “Do you plan on working as an English teacher in the future?” which aims to concretize the information in regard to the participants’ future career trajectory. The table below shows the frequency and percentage of each sub-theme present in the dataset in regards to Item 10.

**Table 4.15.**

*Frequency and the Percentages of the sub-themes for Interview Item 10*

| Sub-themes           | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| 6.2 Positive outlook | 17        | 94.44%     |
| 6.1 Negative outlook | 1         | 5.55%      |

Almost all of the participants (n=17, 99.44%) actively plan to work as an English teacher.

*Yes. Even if not in the public sector, I definitely consider other fields. (P11F)*

*Yes, I do. I put effort to achieve this. (P1F)*

One of the participants (5.55%) directly said ‘No’ to the inquiry.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION, CONSLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This chapter was created to take a deeper look into the findings and to be able to discuss the results thoroughly along with the conclusion and suggestions for future research.

#### **5.1 Discussion**

One of the main aims of this research is to understand the factors which influence pre-service EFL teachers' sense of commitment. The first item prepared to gather pre-service teachers' insights was Item 1 (see Table 4.1.). The reasoning behind this research question is to better understand why pre-service teachers choose English teaching as a career. The themes present in the findings of this item are 'Personal Motivation and Self-perception' along with 'External Influences and Experiences'. The prominent sub-themes were 'Perceived aptitude and passion for English language learning or teaching', and 'Positive reference to pre-service teacher's own experience with their own teacher in the past'. This is a direct indicator of the fact that among the factors which influence pre-service teachers' sense of commitment is having the perception of having an ongoing talent for English teaching. Similar to the present study's findings, Glutsch and König (2019) found that subject-specific interest and intrinsic motivation is a significant indicator of a strong sense of commitment. Pre-service teachers mainly shared a meaningful connection between their reasons to pursue this occupation to begin with. Moreover, their positive engagement and admiration towards their teachers in the past is among the reasons why they chose English Teaching as a career. Also, external factors such as being surrounded by other teachers who are content with their career was another reason for pre-service teachers to have a positive outlook on their future career. Pre-service teachers also mentioned that the good working conditions of English teaching career is another reason to be an English teacher.

The second item corresponding to the first research question was Item 8 (see Table 4.1.). The majority of the pre-service teachers thought that they had the sufficient qualification to be an English teacher. Although most of the students who perceived themselves as qualified also mentioned that they had a lack of experience. In addition, the pre-service teachers think that gaining professional experience is going to be a positive development for the future. Negative outlook was also part of the results. Some of the pre-service teachers shared that they were not

qualified due to the lack of experience. Thus, getting experienced in the field and raising their sense of qualification is a way of strengthening their sense of commitment. In addition, Hobson and Malderez (2013) found that pre-service teachers often feel the insufficiency of the practical experience. Due to the fact that practical experience plays a critical role in shaping a teacher's sense of competence and self-efficacy, the lack of such experience can hinder pre-service teachers from fully developing their professional identity. This insufficiency can contribute to feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt, which in turn may affect their commitment to the teaching profession. As Hobson and Malderez (2013) suggest, the disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application is a significant challenge for pre-service teachers. This gap emphasizes the importance of integrating more hands-on teaching opportunities within teacher education programs. By doing so, pre-service teachers can build confidence in their abilities, which not only enhances their sense of qualification but also fosters a stronger commitment to their future careers as educators. The data from Item 8, therefore, highlights the necessity of bridging the experience gap to ensure that future teachers feel both qualified and committed to their roles.

The third item corresponding to the first research question is Item 9 (see Table 4.1.). Most of the pre-service teachers shared that good working conditions, including comfort, security, and financial resources are among their expectations of English teaching career. One pre-service teacher mentioned the expectation of spiritual fulfillment and self-actualization from teaching, while another pre-service teacher focused on the basic need for safety. These responses highlight the necessity for secure and well-resourced environments to maintain teacher commitment.

Several pre-service teachers mentioned the importance of making a meaningful difference in students' lives. One pre-service teacher mentioned a deep motivation from the potential to positively impact children's lives, indicating that this intrinsic motivation is crucial for pursuing long-term commitment in teaching. Some of the pre-service teachers highlighted intrinsic motivation, such as spirituality or enjoyment, as key expectations. One of the pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of both material and spiritual satisfaction, suggesting that those who find intrinsic joy in their work are more likely to sustain their commitment. A few pre-service teachers mentioned their concerns about the English teaching profession, mentioning challenges and external factors beyond their control. These answers reflect the uncertainties and potential challenges faced by new teachers, which can negatively impact their commitment. Positive interaction with students and receiving feedback were

highlighted as essential expectations. One of the pre-service teachers mentioned the importance of good interaction in the classroom and receiving positive feedback from students. Additionally, one of the pre-service teachers mentioned the importance of personal development through being an English teacher, indicating that growth opportunities are important for maintaining commitment.

To conclude, the results of the first research question indicated that pre-service teachers' sense of commitment is influenced by perceived aptitude and passion for English teaching and learning, positive relationship/engagement with their own teacher in the past, good working conditions, the ability to impact students' lives, intrinsic motivation, concerns about the profession, positive interaction and feedback, and opportunities for personal development. These factors collectively shape their expectations and commitment to the teaching profession.

The second research question was also designed to be a lens which reveals the experiences of the pre-service teachers which impacts on their sense of commitment. First item to correspond with this research question was Item 6 (see Table 4.1.). This item inquires the positive experiences teachers have which impacts their sense of commitment. Many pre-service teachers mentioned that receiving positive feedback and engaging well with students positively impacted their commitment. One of the pre-service teachers highlighted the motivation from private lesson feedback, while another pre-service teacher mentioned the positive impact of good communication during internships. These interactions validate and inspire pre-service teachers, enhancing their dedication to the profession. An important part of the pre-service teachers indicated that their own teachers significantly influenced their commitment to teaching. One of the pre-service teachers, initially uninterested in teaching, was positively influenced by their teacher. Additionally, the literature reviewed by Watt and Richardson (2008) supports the idea that positive past experiences with inspiring teachers significantly impact career choice and commitment along with intrinsic factors. Additionally, the literature reviewed by Watt and Richardson (2008) supports the idea that positive past experiences with inspiring teachers significantly impact career choice and commitment. These experiences, often rooted in the admiration and respect for a mentor or a role model, serve as powerful motivators for individuals to pursue teaching. They reinforce intrinsic factors such as a sense of calling or a desire to make a difference, which are central to a teacher's commitment to the profession. The influence of inspiring teachers is not merely anecdotal but is consistently reflected in research as a key element in the decision to enter and remain in the teaching profession. Thus, the presence of these positive experiences during the formative years of pre-service teachers

can act as a catalyst, strengthening their resolve and deepening their dedication to the teaching career.

Thus, how role models can ignite a passion for teaching is highlighted by reinforcing the commitment to becoming a teacher. A few pre-service teachers mentioned that the intrinsic satisfaction of making a difference in students' lives positively influenced their commitment. One of the pre-service teachers mentioned the joy of impacting students as a key motivator by reflecting the fact that emotional rewards of teaching that enhance professional fulfillment. One of the pre-service teachers reported no positive experiences affecting their commitment, indicating variability in individual experiences and the need for more supportive environments to motivate all pre-service teachers. According to the results of the Item 6 (see Table 4.6.), positive feedback, inspiring teachers, and intrinsic satisfaction are key experiences that foster pre-service teachers' commitment to their profession. These factors are off significance when it comes to developing their own professional identity and their dedication to teaching. Educational institutions can enhance commitment by encouraging positive student-teacher interactions, recognizing impactful role models, and providing opportunities for intrinsic satisfaction.

According to the data collected via Item 7, a significant number of pre-service teachers (44.44%) reported that poor working conditions during internships negatively affected their commitment to English teaching. For example, one pre-service teacher mentioned that challenging relationships with students and the pressures of teacher training made them doubt their ability to handle the burden. Another noted hearing about negative aspects such as mobbing, which further affected their commitment. Additionally, some pre-service teachers highlighted experiences that create anxiety or hopelessness, such as struggles with student authority and nepotism, as detrimental to their professional commitment. A few pre-service teachers expressed neutral attitudes or mentioned they had no significant negative experiences. One pre-service teacher discussed how low student scores on exams led them to question their teaching efficacy, impacting their sense of professional commitment.

Third item which corresponds to the second research question is Item 11 (see Table 4.1.) This item attempts to unveil the past experiences pre-service teachers had. Many pre-service teachers reported that positive memories with their own teachers played a crucial role in their decision to pursue English teaching. Other influences included individual success in English, intrinsic motivation for the language, being surrounded by teachers, good working conditions, and neutral attitudes towards the matter. These findings highlight that personal experiences,

such as positive role models, natural talent, and supportive environments, significantly influence pre-service teachers' commitment and the development of their professional identity. This emphasizes the importance of fostering positive educational experiences and environments for aspiring teachers.

The findings of the present study revealed that most pre-service teachers reported that their experiences in the ELT department positively influenced their dedication to the profession. They highlighted the value of theoretical and practical courses, which improved their teaching skills and overall confidence. For example, one pre-service teacher mentioned how these courses significantly helped them grow as a teacher.

Several pre-service teachers shared that their personal development was significantly enhanced by the educational program, particularly through activities like presentations. Although these activities initially made them nervous, they eventually found them to be both enjoyable and beneficial. While some pre-service teachers maintained a neutral attitude, noting that positive interactions with professors strengthened their academic commitment, they felt that their internship experiences had a less clear impact. Additionally, some pre-service teachers discussed the negative influence of external factors, such as the pandemic and natural disasters, which disrupted their on-campus learning. Despite these challenges, they still regarded their limited in-person experiences as highly valuable. Positive interactions with professors and engaging in microteaching activities were also highlighted as key factors in fostering a supportive and enriching learning environment. One pre-service teacher emphasized the importance of positive student interactions facilitated by the department, while another expressed concerns about a lack of experience.

These findings emphasize the critical role of comprehensive and supportive academic experiences in shaping pre-service teachers' commitment to their profession. Positive interactions, both within the classroom and with faculty, combined with practical teaching opportunities, are essential for developing a strong professional identity.

Fifth item which corresponds to the second research question is Item 13 (see Table 4.1.). Item 13 specifically focuses on the professional development gained in the English Language Teaching department. A Significant majority of pre-service teachers reported that their professional development positively influenced their commitment to English teaching. Many of the pre-service teachers highlighted the fact that they had most of the personal growth experiences, such as learning effective classroom management during courses and internships. Darling-Hammond (2006) and Zeichner (2010) highlight the significance of practical training, resonating with our findings on internships and hands-on experiences. One of the pre-service teacher mentioned that the valuable feedback and skills acquired in classroom management was crucial to their commitment. Other pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of learning to establish positive interactions with students, which enhanced their teaching practice. Additionally, the positive relationships with department professors were revealed as a significantly impactful aspect, with some of the pre-service teachers appreciating the practical and theoretical guidance provided by their professors. A few pre-service teachers had a neutral attitude, indicating that their experiences did not significantly impact their sense of commitment. One of the pre-service teachers noted the challenges caused by external factors, such as remote learning and the challenging atmosphere caused by the earthquake, affected their professional commitment negatively. These findings demonstrate that professional development experiences, especially those involving practical skills, positive student interactions, and supportive professor relationships, are crucial in fostering pre-service teachers' commitment to their profession. Lortie (1975) and Ingersoll (2001) also underscore the importance of positive mentorship, which the current study also confirms.

Third research question was created to see the impact of sense of commitment on pre-service teachers' attitudes towards their profession. This research question differs from the others in the nature of its items; all the items created for this research question has polarity as in 'yes', 'no' or 'neutral' approaches being dependent points. Thus, all the items which correlates to the third research question are going to be discussed together below. Item 2, Item 3, Item 4, Item 5 and Item 10 (see Table 4.1.) are the correlating items with research question 3.

Many pre-service teachers consider English teaching their ideal occupation due to a positive aptitude and passion for the language, intrinsic motivation, and good working conditions. One pre-service teacher noted a newly developing willingness about pursuing English teaching who is driven by a love for the subject and secure career prospects observed

during the pandemic. However, a few of the pre-service teachers expressed neutrality or concerns about self-efficacy and dedication.

A majority of pre-service teachers mentioned that they can see themselves enjoying the English teaching profession since they are driven by intrinsic motivation, enthusiasm, and positive interactions with students similar to the findings of Klassen and Tze (2014) and Watt and Richardson (2008) who also emphasize intrinsic motivation's crucial role in teacher commitment, similar to this studies' pre-service teachers' experiences. Despite this fact, some of the pre-service teachers noted concerns about future challenges and negative external factors, such as poor working conditions.

Most pre-service teachers confirmed that they would choose English teaching as a career again, by mentioning their enjoyment and commitment. However, a few pre-service teachers had mixed feelings or they would consider other professions due to future uncertainties.

For a vast majority of the pre-service teachers, the idea of teaching English is exciting mainly due to the positive feedback of their internship/private students and the satisfactory feeling of touching their lives. Some of the pre-service teachers mentioned their own passion and aptitude for teaching, while others were influenced by inspiring teachers. A few of the pre-service teachers highlighted concerns about insufficient resources and future anxieties.

Almost all of the pre-service teachers have a future career trajectory where they will work as an English teacher, whether in public or private sectors. Only one pre-service teacher explicitly stated the fact that they had no plans to pursue a teaching career.

Overall, these findings suggest that a strong sense of commitment, shaped by intrinsic motivation, positive interactions, and supportive environments, positively influences pre-service teachers' attitudes towards their profession. However, external challenges and future uncertainties can negatively impact this commitment.

By synthesizing these insights, it becomes clear that intrinsic motivation, mentorship, and practical experience are foundational for teacher commitment. At the same time, addressing contemporary challenges like global disruptions is essential for developing resilient and committed educators. The findings of this study align with and expand upon existing literature. However, the results of the present study involve the impact of recent global events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and concerns about job security, which are less prominently featured in earlier studies.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This study aimed to explore the factors influencing pre-service EFL teachers' sense of commitment and how this commitment impacts their attitudes towards the teaching profession. Through a detailed analysis of pre-service teachers' experiences and perceptions, several key insights were revealed that shed light on the development of their professional identity and commitment to English teaching.

The findings indicate that personal experiences, such as positive interactions with former teachers, play a significant role in shaping pre-service teachers' commitment. Many pre-service teachers reported that their decision to pursue English teaching was heavily influenced by the inspiring and supportive nature of their own teachers. This highlights the importance of role models in the educational journey and suggests that positive mentorship can significantly enhance a pre-service teacher's sense of commitment.

Intrinsic motivation emerged as another significant component positively impacting pre-service teachers' sense of commitment (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Watt & Richardson, 2008). Pre-service teachers who demonstrated a natural inclination and passion for language learning were more likely to express a strong commitment to the profession. This intrinsic motivation often stemmed from personal experiences and a genuine love for the English language, reinforcing the idea that passion for the subject matter is a crucial component of professional commitment.

The professional development experiences within the English Teaching department were also very significant. The courses and the internships program provided the pre-service teachers with skills and information which they found highly valuable. The supportive role of their professors and their engagement with internship students further improved their dedication, which is an indicator of the importance of academic environment.

Despite the overall positive outlook, the study also identified several challenges. External factors, such as the pandemic and natural disasters caused significant disruptions to the learning process, affecting some pre-service teachers' sense of commitment. Pre-service teachers' concerns about future job security, and inadequate resources were also noted.

It was also found that pre-service teachers' sense of commitment also had an impact on their attitudes towards their future career. Those with a strong sense of commitment were more likely to view English teaching as an ideal occupation, envision themselves enjoying the profession, and express a desire to continue in the field. Conversely, those with a lower sense of commitment often cited concerns about future uncertainties and external challenges.

The positive communication and connection between pre-service teachers and their professors play a crucial role in enhancing their perceived sense of commitment. This study highlights how such relationships contribute significantly to the professional development and identity formation of future teachers. By focusing on the experiences of pre-service EFL teachers in Türkiye, this research underscores the importance of supportive academic environments in fostering commitment. The findings emphasize the need for teacher education programs to cultivate strong mentor-mentee relationships to better prepare pre-service teachers for their careers.

In conclusion, it is highlighted via the current study that components such as positive role models, intrinsic motivation, professional development via the education they concluded, and supportive academic environments are significant aspects of a pre-service teacher's sense of commitment. Offering solutions to external problems and challenges and providing pre-service teachers with support is a way of further enhancing their commitment in order to create teachers who are dedicated and motivated. These insights are crucial for teacher education programs aiming to cultivate committed and effective educators who can make a meaningful impact in the field of English language teaching.

### **5.3 Limitations of the Study**

The current research was conducted with a sample size of 18 pre-service teachers which is relatively small when the nature of the insights which are being examined considered. This type of situations results in a considerable limitation of findings.

Certain external factors such as COVID-19 or natural disasters had a significant role on the sense of commitment of pre-service teachers according to the findings. Thus, the findings might indicate different results in another time period where the impact of these unfortunate incidents is not present.

The study mainly portrayed the nature of the positive components influencing a pre-service teacher's sense of commitment. Negative components need to be looked into in order to reveal their driving force and nature.

The current research was conducted through a limited time period. A longitudinal study would expand the data which would capture the progress of a pre-service teacher's sense of commitment and teacher identity development and reveal more profound insights.

To conclude, it can be said that even though the current study offers quality insights regarding pre-service teachers' sense of commitment, addressing the limitations in hand would enhance the applicability and quality of the findings.

### **5.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research needs to focus on samples which are larger in order to be able to generalize the data and receive a diverse dataset. In addition, a longitudinal approach of data collection could show the future researchers different aspects of the sense of commitment of pre-service teachers since pre-service teachers also develop insights throughout the process and gain more experience.

Mixed-method approach can also give future researchers a chance to support qualitative findings with the help of quantitative ones; this way, the collected data would also have more layers and depth.

The current study included data which were mainly positive and reflected on positive experiences. Thus, examining the aspects which negatively impacts the sense of commitment of pre-service teachers would expand the literature.

The studies which look into pre-service teachers' teacher identity and teacher commitment mainly revolve around teacher identity formation. Looking into more specific aspects of teacher identity such as future career trajectory, sense of commitment or teacher's self-image would improve the discourse of teacher identity.



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## APPENDICES

### **Appendix-1. Semi-structured Interview Revealing the Pre-service Teachers' Sense of Occupational Commitment**

#### *Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Items*

Item 1. Which factors affected you to choose English language teaching occupation?

Item 2. Is English language teaching the ideal occupation for you?

Item 3. Can you imagine yourself enjoying the English teaching occupation?

Item 4. If you could choose again, would you choose English language teaching occupation?

Item 5. Do you find the idea of teaching English exciting?

Item 6. What are among your experiences which affected positively on your commitment to English teaching?

Item 7. What are among your experiences which affected negatively on your commitment to English teaching?

Item 8. Do you think you have the qualifications required to be an EFL teacher?

Item 9. What are your expectations from English teaching occupation?

Item 10. Do you plan on working as an EFL teacher in the future?

Item 11. What are your past experiences which affected your decision of being an EFL teacher?

Item 12. How do your experiences in the English Teaching department affect your dedication to the profession?

Item 13. Did the professional development you gained during the English Teaching department affect your commitment to English teaching?

## ÖZGEÇMİŞ

### Kişisel Bilgiler

Adı Soyadı: Fatma İrem OCAKTAN

### Eğitim Bilgileri

Lisans Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Yabancı Diller Anabilim Dalı  
İngilizce Öğretmenliği Programı (2017-2021)

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Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı (2021- 2024)

### İş Deneyimi:

## BİLDİRİM

Hazırladığım tezin/raporun tamamen kendi çalışmam olduğunu ve her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi taahhüt eder, tezimin/raporumun kâğıt ve elektronik kopyalarının Akdeniz Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü arşivlerinde aşağıda belirttiğim koşullarda saklanmasına izin verdiğimi onaylarım:

- ☐ Tezimin/Raporumun tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.
- ☐ Tezim/Raporum sadece Akdeniz Üniversitesi yerleşkelerinden erişime açılabilir.
- ☐ Tezimin/Raporumun ..... yıl süreyle erişime açılmasını istemiyorum. Bu sürenin sonunda uzatma için başvuruda bulunmadığım takdirde, tezimin/raporumun tamamı her yerden erişime açılabilir.

25.07.2024

**Fatma İrem OCAKTAN**

## İNTİHAL RAPORU

# A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON TURKISH PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' PERCEIVED SENSE OF OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT

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