Investigating EFL Student-teachers' Possible Self within the Iranian Teacher Education Context

Mehri Jalali[*]
(corresponding author)
Assistant Professor of TEFL, English Department, Farhangian University,
Tehran, Iran
Email: Mehrijalali2013@yahoo.com

Mojtaba Maghsoudi[**]
Assistant Professor of TEFL, English Department, Farhangian University,
Tehran, Iran
Email: maghsudi@cfu.ac.ir

Ali Akbar Khomeijani Farahani[***]
Associate Professor of Linguistics, Department of English language and Literature, the University of Tehran,
Tehran, Iran
Email: farahani@ut.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

As the teacher's role in language learners' success has always been highly significant, their individual characteristic features have been the focus of attention from different aspects. Among the different features, identity growth is one of the most complicated issues in the applied linguistics domain. The reason is that deciding to learn a second or foreign language brings about a great many changes in one's value and motivation system which in turn may lead to significant identity changes and professional development. Therefore, the current research aimed at investigating an important need of Iranian EFL student-teachers in developing their possible self in light of "the possible-self theory" using quantitative and survey method. To this end, the English teachers' possible-self questionnaire including three sections to measure ideal, ought to, and feared selves developed and validated by Karimi and Norouzi (2019) was distributed among 141 student-teachers using random sampling. The researchers made use of Friedman and Mann-whiney tests and the results showed that the participants' vision of their ideal-self ranked first compared to their ought to-self and their feared-self vision which ranked second and third respectively. The findings of this study benefit EFL student-teachers, teacher educators, professors, curriculum developers and lay the ground for their possible self-perception.

DOI: 10.22059/jflr.2020.300748.725

[*] Mehri Jalali, is Assistant Professor of TEFL in English Department, Farhangian University. She has been teaching English for more than 17 years.
[**] Mojtaba Maghsoudi, is Assistant Professor of TEFL in English Department, Farhangian University. He has been teaching English for more than 20 years.
[***] Ali Akbar Khomeijani Farahani, is Associate Professor of Linguistics in Department of English language and Literature, the University of Tehran. He has been teaching Linguistics and English Language 30 years.

1. Introduction

A glance at the available literature of research on self-knowledge shows a movement away from the conventional conceptualization of self-concept as a one-dimensional and fixed structure (Markus & Nurius, 1986) toward a multidimensional (McFarland, Murray, & Phillipson, 2016) and future-oriented structure in order to represent a better picture of self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Along with the development of self-concept to embrace self-analysis in future states, recent theories of motivation have also focused on connecting the construct to postmodern identity conceptions which promote alternative visions of self (Werbińska, 2017). Recently, including the future aspect in the conceptualization of self, named "possible selves" (Markus & Nurius, 1986) has shown remarkable promise in illustrating second language (L2) learning motivation (e.g., Dörnyei & chan, 2013). Marzano and Heflebower (2012) are of the opinion that using this theory rooted in self-concept psychology (Wurf & Markus, 1991) in classroom can promote self-efficacy and result in acquiring "conative skills" which are self-motivating skills that can help a person in achieving the goals in difficulties. These skills focus on individuals' self-knowledge and their world. The pivotal point in this theory is an individual's "ability to picture [oneself] in a range of potential futures, to evaluate these futures and to aspire toward realizing or avoiding them [as] a powerful force guiding [one's] behavior in and experience of the present" (Augustinos, Walker, & Donaghue, 2006, p. 192). This possible understanding also might help acquiring knowledge at the present time. In Berci's (2007) view "identity is individually constructed, through negotiations with self and others, and is never stable or fixed" (p. 65).

The conducted studies on teachers' identities and selves have attracted more attention from early twenty first century since teachers are regarded as indispensable change agents in education. The findings of these studies indicate the impact that full understanding of teachers' identity development might have on their professional practice and knowledge (e.g. Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000).

Researchers in the field of education believe that teachers' emotional and personal identity should be dealt with to obtain betters understanding of different aspects of their teaching including motivation, commitment and job satisfaction (e.g., Behzadpoor, Ghafar Samar, Akbari, & Kiany, 2019; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Sammons, 2005; Salimi, Mostafaei Alaei, & Najjar Baghseyah, 2016). Recent studies on language teacher's identity have come to focus on intellectual aspects and emotional realities in this profession since these two dimensions together can illustrate language teaching as a socio-cultural reality (Benecsh, 2017; Babanuğlu, 2019; Yılmaz, 2018). On the other hand, teacher education programs also have an essential role in training student-teachers who are enable facing these challenges and guarantee their success in the education field by improving the knowledge of their possible selves (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 2007; Gonzalez-Bravo, 2015; Hiver, 2013).

Referring to the available literature on self-related belief, to date, show that researchers have typically directed their interest toward self-efficacy, self-regulation and self-concept. Unfortunately, developing possible self is often an overlooked aspect of language teacher education (Dyer, 2012), while limited apprehension of teacher' identity growth in case of self-evaluation and self-image can lead to developing inappropriate curriculum (Olsen, 2008; Ölmez-Çağlar, Mirici, & Erten, 2020; Hoban, 2007). Motivated by the need to address this gap, the present study aims to extend the limited studies on improving EFL student-teachers' understanding of their possible selves in the teacher education context of Iran by considering "possible self" theory.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

For the first time, the theory of possible selves was introduced in Marzano and Heflebower's (2012) book, *Teaching and Assessing 21st century skills.* The authors recommended integrating this theory into classrooms in order to cultivate "self-efficacy" and encourage acquisition of conative skills.

Conative skills concentrate on the knowledge of oneself or the world. Historically, education has come to focus on cognitive skills to gain understanding of the world within. Marzano and Heflebower (2012) suggested adding development of conative skills to prepare our students for the 21st century properly. They proposed several strategies such as *possible-self theory* to stimulate self-efficacy and conative skill development. Derived from self-concept theories in psychology, this theory more recently was applied to the education field (Packard & Conway, 2006).

Directed by the concept of motivation in the second language (Dörnyei, 2005) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgings, 1987), Kubanyiova (2009) has attempted to operationalize language teachers' possible selves as *Ideal Language Teacher Self*, *Ought-to Language Teacher Self*, and *Feared Language Teacher Self*. The ideal self is the positive future reference for the actual self. It is not only a positive image of hopes, self-drawing and dreams, but is also an emotional experience of the person in that desired future condition. Ideal self encompasses the possessions that an individual would ideally desire to own and aims to obtain. The ought to self ,unlike the ideal self, refers to the experiential and mental representation of the features one believes ought to have, according to someone else's opinion of their responsibilities, obligations, and duties (Higgins, 1987). In illustrating either positive or negative points of reference, the value of ought to selves is unparalleled (Higgins, 1996), yet ought to self is centered on extrinsic features like socio-cultural, teacher education plans and other stock holders in the education system (Pizzolato, 2006). In contrast to ideal self, a language teacher's vision of his feared self is a negative future reference for the actual self, and shows an undesired aspect of the self in the future. Therefore, a teacher tries to avoid them at all costs and is always afraid of becoming (Karimi & Norouzi, 2019).

It seems that these aspects of possible self which are connected with incentive, professional development and self-cognition have significant effect on a language teacher's concepts and performance (Kubanyiova, 2009). The

motivational role of these aspects of ability flourishes in directing a teachers' behavior toward ideals and being away from the fears (Hiver, 2013). The self-regulating power of possible self (promotional approach and preventive function) is derived from the tendency to reduce the distance between the ideal and the real self and increase the distance between the real and the feared self; Hence, every teacher feels a combination of these dimensions in herself (Tangen & Beutel, 2017).

The affective and experiential components in these three selves are more prominent than the self-imagination of the probable future states. Because cognitive events are hardly free from emotions (Karademas, 2006), and to the extent that affective states are associated with discrepancies or conflicts within the self-concept (Higgins, 1987), negative or positive images of oneself is an inevitable element of teachers' possible selves (Dabback, 2018). As Erikson has stated (2007), rather than being limited to images, possible selves are ingrained in an essential facet of agency and comprise experiences of individual's agency in a future state of self. Perhaps it is partly because one's possible self is derived from schematic knowledge of past and current experienced states and his or her emotional experiences (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). Despite the fact possible selves' model was rooted in work in typical psychology on the self and motivation theory, they have now become outstanding in the literature on L2 motivation (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013) and have even begun to penetrate into the field of language teacher motivation too (e.g. Kubanyiova, 2009).

So far, this construct has been used in different fields including research on teacher motivation (e.g., Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Roshandel & Hudley, 2018; Tangen & Beutel, 2017) and findings highlight the relevance of possible selves theory to teachers' identity development, resistance to reform, agency, and attrition. Penetrating into the field of language education in the first decade of 21st century, research on possible self was also adopted by teacher education scholars (e.g., Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Mahmoudi- Gahrouei, Tavakoli, & Hamman, 2016) who were not

satisfied with the breakdown of teacher cognition studies to employ systematic interpretation of motivational elements in teacher development.

Regardless of the possible relationship between teachers' possible selves and their teaching quality and professional development, till now few studies have done on language teacher and they have generally inspired by possible selves theory with major insights emerging from Kubanyiova's (2009) model of "possible language teacher selves". In his innovative work, Kubanyiova (2009) planned a teacher development course (twenty hours) to examine conceptual change among in-service EFL teachers in Slovakia. Paying attention to the role of future facets of language teachers' cognition, characterized by defining aims, expectations, and fears, in their professional development, Kubanyiova maintained that the coordination between the input of teacher development creative actions and teachers' goals regarding their future identity is crucial for their conceptual change.

White and Ding (2009) provided further proof verifying the impact of possible selves on language teacher development. In this longitudinal and qualitative research, twenty three experienced teachers were recruited to examine how the interaction between teachers' self-conceptions and their actions affect their e-language learning. Discussing that possible selves "are powerful motivators, shaped and realized within experiences, activities and practices mediated by others" (p. 347), White and Ding resolved that teachers' self-images are significant in their participation in new learning occasions. In another investigation, Hiver (2013) employed semi-structured interviews to search the function of possible selves in professional development of some language teachers. Confirming previous results, the findings verified the motivational role of language teachers' possible selves. He found that the controlling possible selves in working self-concept bring about various motivations for teachers to take part in ongoing teacher development. While those teachers whose feared self was dominant to their working self-concept followed their career professional development to make up for the

insufficiencies of the self and to prevent their feared self. The main motivating force for those teachers whose ideal self, controlled their working self-concept was promotion of the self. These teachers were willing to decline the distance between their ideal selves and actual selves. Kumazava (2013) attempted to study possible selves theory as well. For this purpose, he conducted an interpretive inquiry into the teaching incentive of four novice EFL teachers in one secondary school in Japan. He used narrative analysis for analyzing the interview data and results revealed that the conflicts between the young teachers' different possible selves had negative effect on their motivation in their early years of teaching.

In a more recent investigation, Yuan (2016) studied the negative impacts of mentoring on the identity formation of two pre-service language teachers throughout their teaching practicum and concluded that their ideal selves as active learner and communicative teachers were dismantled due to the interactions they had with their mentors. Furthermore, this negative mentoring led to the formation of an ought to self as a feared and follower image of a teacher who is controlled. Therefore, findings of this investigation emphasize the important role of future self-images and mentoring in the formation of identity among pre-service teachers. In a similar case study, Yilmaz (2018) explored the nature and potential dynamism of five pre-service EFL teachers' self-concepts in Turkey. Data were collected by using journal entries and in-depth interviews. The derived major themes indicated that pre-service teachers' self-beliefs negatively affected their EFL self-concept including the use of L1 in teaching English and the important experiences that they had during their practicum.

On the other hand, Sahakyan, Lamb and Chambers' (2018) study revealed that at first, language teacher' ideal-self derives from their own language learning experience and their teachers in the past. However, this cognition changes gradually by experiencing new learning contexts and finding new social identity as an experience language teacher lead them into generating logical and possible ideals. Recently, Olmez-Çaglar, Mirici, and Erten (2020) have

attempted to develop a new tripartite scale to measure EFL teachers' possible selves. Data were collected from 296 senior student-teachers of English who were studying at twelve different universities in Turkey. Findings revealed that the final scale enjoyed psychometric properties in terms of internal consistency reliability and construct validity.

As it can be inferred from the research projects carried out in this field, language teachers' possible selves is a significant and breakthrough issue to obtain a more profound vision on their self-concept. The majority of these studies in this trend focuses on the teachers' incentive and has been mainly of qualitative type. On the other hand, the need for conducting quantitative research regarding the investigation of Iranian student-teachers' opinion in respect to each of the mentioned dimensions is obvious. Therefore, in the current study the main goal has been to find appropriate answers to these questions:

Q1: What is ELT student-teachers' vision on their ought to selves?
Q2: What is ELT student-teachers' vision on their ideal selves?
Q3: What is ELT student-teachers' vision on their feared selves?

3. Method

This research is done quantitatively and as a survey using a questionnaire.

Participants

Totally 141 out of 203 male and female Iranian EFL student-teachers studying at Teacher Education University (Farhangian University), in Markazi province were randomly invited to this study. Their age range was 19-25 and had studied English from two to seven years in language institutes before starting their academic study at this university. Running IELTS language proficiency test determined their proficiency level at intermediate level. Possible Language Teacher Selves questionnaire as the only instrument in this study was distributed among the participants who were majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at two branches of Iranian Teacher Education University (Markazi Province) in 2020 academic year.

For a variety of reasons, the most important of which was the submitted incomplete questionnaires, the present researchers had to extract 8 questionnaires. Therefore, the participants of this study were reduced to 134 people.

Instruments

The Possible Language Teacher Selves Questionnaire (PLTQ) developed by Karimi and Nourozi (2019) included three constructs as Ideal Language Teacher Self, Feared Language Teacher Self and Ought-to Language Teacher Self. This questionnaire was composed of 34 items each with a 6-point response scale (1=very untrue of me; 6=very true of me).

As Karmimi and Nourozi (2019) mentioned, through a convenience sampling procedure, a total of 1711 Iranian teachers were selected to participate in this study which consisted of two major phases including item generation and the scale development/validation phase. For the first phase of study, 101 participants were recruited. The participants included university teachers (n=5), PhD candidates (n=5), institute supervisors (n=5), experienced teachers (n=5), and novice teachers (n=5) who took part in the interviews. Additionally, seven EFL experts were involved in item assessment, five EFL teachers in initial piloting, and 64 teachers were involved in final piloting of the instrument. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 63 and their teaching experience varied from less than one year to 35 years. It seems worth mention that after making sure of the face and content validity of the mentioned questionnaire by five expert colleagues, it went through Exploratory and Confirmatory factor analyses. Finally, the questionnaire with 34 items and three constructs was developed. Its reliability through test re-test indicated (r= 0/91) and Internal consistency through Cronbach's Alpha indicated (α= 0.94) (Karimi &Nourozi, 2019).

In order to eradicate any possible misunderstanding or confusion, the researchers pilot-tested the Language Teacher Selves Questionnaire on twenty five students who had similar characteristics to the participants of the main sample. They were asked to read the items

carefully and identify the items with unclear meaning. The results led to some wording changes and modifications made to make the items appropriate for the target population of the study. Prior to the administration of the pilot test, the PLTQ was judged by five TEFL professors. As a result, some ambiguous items underwent changes and they confirmed the content validity of the mentioned-questionnaire for the purpose of this study. Then, in the next phase of the pilot study, the questionnaire was administered for the purpose of estimating its reliability. The reliability index, assessed by Cronbach's alpha formula, was found to be .91.

Procedures

After approaching the university authorities in order to get their consent for doing the research, the purpose of the study was explained to them first. Afterward, before starting data collection, the students consented to take part in the study, as well. Then the participants were informed that their answers would be kept confidential and would not have any effect on their course evaluation. Then, the Possible Language Teacher Selves questionnaire as the only instrument in this study was distributed among 141 Iranian EFL student-teachers studying in Teacher Education University (Farhangian University), in Markazi province. The randomly selected participants were majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at two branches of Iranian Teacher Education University (Markazi Province) in 2020 academic year.

4. Data analysis

Students' responses to the Possible Language Teacher Selves Questionnaire statements were analyzed through main statistical tests as a Kruskal-Wallis test, Mann Whiteny and Chi-Square.

5. Findings

Descriptive findings of the current study revealed that the participants were in the age range of 18 to 25 years. About 52 percent (n = 75) of the patricians were undergraduate male students-teachers and 47 percent (59) were undergraduate female students-teachers who were majoring in Teacher Education University (Farhangian University) of Arak.

Table 2: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests of Normality Results for Data Distribution

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov(a)		
	Statistic	N	Sig.
Ought to Language Teacher Self	0.100	134	0.0001
Ideal Language Teacher Self	0.127	134	0.0001
Feared language teacher self	0.079	134	0.039

a Lilliefors Significance Correction

According to Table 2, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the data distribution was not normal (0.5> p. value). Therefore, the binomial nonparametric test was recommended to answer the posed questions.

Table 3: *Investigating the Participants' Selves towards All Components and Their Ranking*

		Category	N	Observed Prop	Test Prop	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Rank	Rank
Feared language teacher self	I do not like to become a teacher whose students have a greater command of English than she/he does	>3	68	0.51	0.50	0.931	10.17	34
		≤3	66	0.49				
	It worries me if I become a teacher whose students make fun of his/her English accent.	>3	69	0.51	0.50	0.796	10.47	33
		≤3	65	0.49				
	I am afraid of becoming a teacher whose students do not admire his/her proficiency.	>3	67	0.50	0.50	1	11.16	32
		≤3	67	0.50				
	I am afraid of becoming a teacher whose classes are known as stressful	>3	85	0.63	0.50	0.002	13.72	31
		≤3	49	0.37				
	I am afraid of becoming a teacher whose students do not enjoy his/her classes.	>3	109	0.81	0.50	0.0001	18.08	17
		≤3	25	0.19				
	I am afraid of becoming a teacher who treats students as objects.	>3	98	0.73	0.50	0.0001	16.47	23
		≤3	36	0.27				
	It frightens me if I become a teacher who humiliates students.	>3	96	0.72	0.50	0.0001	17.22	22
		≤3	38	0.28				

	Statement		Count	Prop.				Rank
	I am afraid of becoming an uncaring teacher.	>3	106	0.79	0.50	0.0001	18.37	16
		≤3	38	0.21				
	I am afraid of becoming a teacher who feels exhausted by the thought of another day at work.	>3	93	0.69	0.50	0.0001	14.17	30
		≤3	41	0.31				
	I am afraid of becoming a teacher who is tired of preparing lesson plans for every class.	>3	81	0.60	0.50	0.019	14.5	29
		≤3	53	0.40				
	I fear becoming a teacher who uses the same teaching methods in all classes.	>3	93	0.69	0.50	0.0001	15.68	27
		≤3	41	0.31				
	I don't like to become a teacher who is afraid of new challenges (for example new courses).	>3	105	0.78	0.50	0.0001	17.96	18
		≤3	29	0.22				
	I don't like to become a teacher who gets tired of learning.	>3	112	0.84	0.50	0.0001	20.2	6
		≤3	22	0.16				
Ideal Language Teacher Self	I wish to have a native-like accent because I think that English teachers must be role models for their students in accent/pronunciation.	>3	118	0.88	0.50	0.0001	19.85	8
		≤3	16	0.12				
	I have a strong desire to have a perfect command of English vocabulary/idioms.	>3	128	0.96	0.50	0.0001	21.15	3
		≤3	6	0.04				
	I would like to have a perfect command of English grammar.	>3	123	0.92	0.50	0.0001	19.76	9
		≤3	11	0.08				
	I would like to become a teacher who is admired by his/her students.	>3	125	0.93	0.50	0.0001	21.72	2
		≤3	9	0.07				
	I would feel great if students appreciate me as a punctual teacher.	>3	125	0.93	0.50	0.0001	17.68	19
		≤3	9	0.07				
	I would feel great if students appreciate my patience.	>3	124	0.93	0.50	0.0001	18.73	14
		≤3	10	0.07				
	I would feel great if students remember me as an energetic teacher.	>3	127	0.95	0.50	0.0001	21.03	4
		≤3	7	0.05				
	When I think about future, I desire to teach at more prestigious institutes/schools.	>3	109	0.81	0.50	0.0001	16.07	24
		≤3	25	0.19				
	To keep up with innovations in teaching, I would like to participate in workshops and conferences on pedagogical issues.	>3	126	0.94	0.50	0.0001	18.80	13
		≤3	8	0.06				
	I would like to continue my studies and obtain higher academic degrees.	>3	126	0.94	0.50	0.0001	22.94	1
		≤3	8	0.06				
	I can imagine myself as a teacher who can develop the ability to masterfully use technology in his/her classes.	>3	121	0.90	0.50	0.0001	18.69	15
		≤3	13	0.10				
	I can imagine myself as a teacher who can create various learning opportunities in his classes.	>3	127	0.95	0.50	0.0001	18.88	12
		≤3	7	0.05				
	I can imagine myself as a creative teacher who can adopt various strategies to facilitate the learning process.	>3	117	0.87	0.50	0.0001	17.50	21
		≤3	17	0.13				
	I would like to become a teacher who considers students' learning styles and preferences.	>3	122	0.91	0.50	0.0001	19.12	11
		≤3	12	0.09				
	I imagine myself as a teacher who has his own repertoire of supplementary teaching materials.	>3	115	0.86	0.50	0.0001	15.75	25
		≤3	19	0.14				
Ought to Language Teacher Self	I think my students would expect me to give equal attention to them.	>3	120	0.90	0.50	0.0001	19.95	7
		≤3	14	0.10				
	I think my students would expect me to create a stress-free classroom atmosphere.	>3	125	0.93	0.50	0.0001	20.91	5
		≤3	9	0.07				
	I think my students would expect me to take into account their needs.	>3	124	0.93	0.50	0.0001	19.41	10
		≤3	10	0.07				
	I think the school/institute managers would expect me to conform to regulations.	>3	116	0.87	0.50	0.0001	15.58	28
		≤3	18	0.13				
	I think institute/school managers would expect me to use various strategies to keep students motivated.	>3	121	0.90	0.50	0.0001	17.67	20
		≤3	13	0.10				
	I would like to prepare lesson plans every session because I think institute/school managers would expect me to be prepared.	>3	114	0.85	0.50	0.0001	15.73	26
		≤3	20	0.15				

Table 3 shows that the student-teachers' selves toward all components have been above the average score (p. Value< 0.05), except the following ones which were moderate (p. Value>0.05):

1) They feared that their students may get a greater command of English than their teachers do. 2) The participants feared that they may become teachers whose students make fun of their English accent. 3) They were afraid of becoming teachers whose students do not admire their proficiency.

The highest average ratings of teacher-students' perceptions of each factor are respectively as follows:

1. I would like to continue my studies and obtain higher academic degrees, 2. I would like to become a teacher who is admired by his/her students, 3. I have a strong desire to have a perfect command of English vocabulary/idioms, 4. I would feel great if students remember me as an energetic teacher, 5. I think my students would expect me to create a stress-free classroom atmosphere, 6. I don't like to become a teacher who gets tired of learning, 7. I think my students would expect me to give equal attention to them, 8. I wish to have a native-like accent because I think that English teachers must be role models for their students in accent/pronunciation, 9. I would like to have a perfect command of English grammar, 10. I think my students would expect me to give equal attention to them, 11. I would like to become a teacher who considers students' learning styles and preferences, 12. I can imagine myself as a teacher who can create various learning opportunities in his classes, 13. The desire to participate in conferences on educational topics to have innovation in teaching, 14. I would feel great if students appreciate my patience, 15. The desire to master the ability to use technology in the classroom, 16. I am afraid of becoming an uncaring teacher, 17. I am afraid of becoming a teacher whose students do not enjoy his/her classes, 18. I don't like to become a teacher who is afraid of new challenges (for example new courses), 19. I would feel great if students appreciate me as a punctual teacher, 20. Belief in the need to use different strategies to motivate students at the request of the educational institution, 21. I can imagine myself as a creative teacher who can adopt various strategies to facilitate the learning process, 22. It frightens me if I become a teacher who humiliates students, 23. I am afraid of becoming a teacher who treats students as objects, 24. When I think about future, I desire to teach at more prestigious institutes/schools, 25. The desire to have a unique treasury of teaching aids, 26. I would like to prepare lesson plans every session because I think institute/school managers would expect me to be prepared, 27. I fear becoming a teacher who uses the same teaching methods in all classes, 28. I think the school/institute managers would expect me to conform to regulations, 29. I am afraid of becoming a teacher who is tired of preparing lesson plans for every class, 30. I am afraid of becoming a teacher who feels exhausted by the thought of another day at work, 31. I am afraid of becoming a teacher whose classes are known as stressful, 32. I am afraid of becoming a teacher whose students do not admire his/her proficiency, 33. It worries me if I become a teacher whose students make fun of his/her English accent, 34. I do not like to become a teacher whose students have a greater command of English than she/he does.

The findings confirm the existence of a significant difference between the mean ratings (p.value <0.05).

Table 4: The Results of the Factor Ranking Test Using Friedman Test

factor	Category	N	Observed Prop	Test Prop	Exact Sig. ((2-tailed	Mean Rank	Rank	Chi-Square	Sig.
Ought to Language Teacher Self	>3	128	0.96	0.50	0.0001	2.10	2		
	≤3	6	0.04						
Ideal Language Teacher Self	>3	128	0.96	0.50	0.0001	2.31	1	42.151	0.0001
	≤3	6	0.04						
Feared language teacher self	>3	110	0.82	0.50	0.0001	1.59	3		
	≤3	24	0.18						

As table 4 indicates, 128 out of 134 student-teachers had consensus on what they ought to be. Since, the value of the student-teachers' attitude towards what they should be (0.96) is higher than the value of the test (0.50), therefore, the participants' attitude is higher than the average and desirable expectation (p <0.05). The highest average referred to the item: I think my students would expect me to create a stress-free classroom atmosphere and the lowest average referred to the item: I think the school/institute managers would expect me to conform to regulations.

It was also indicated that 128 student-teachers had an agreement about their self-ideal. Since, the value of the student-teachers' attitude towards their ideal self (0.96) is higher than the value of the test (0.50), therefore, the participants' attitude is higher than the average and desirable expectation (p <0.05). The highest average in the ideal self, referrers to the item:' I would like to continue my studies and obtain higher academic degrees and the lowest average is related to the item: I imagine myself

as a teacher who has his own repertoire of supplementary teaching materials.

On the other hand, 110 student-teachers agreed with what they feared, and 24 of them were less than average. That is, they gave positive responses to what they do not like to be. Since the value of the student-teachers' attitude towards what they are afraid of is 0.82 which is more than the value of the test (0.50), therefore, the participants' attitude is higher than the average and desirable expectation (p <0.05). The biggest fear of student-teachers referred to the item: I don't like to become a teacher who gets tired of learning and the smallest fear of them referred to item: It worries me if I become a teacher whose students make fun of his/her English accent.

The results of Friedman's ranking test showed that the student-teachers' attitudes were ranked as follows: ideal-self, ought to-self and feared-self. The chi-square test confirms the existence of a significant difference between the mean ratios (p.value <0.05).
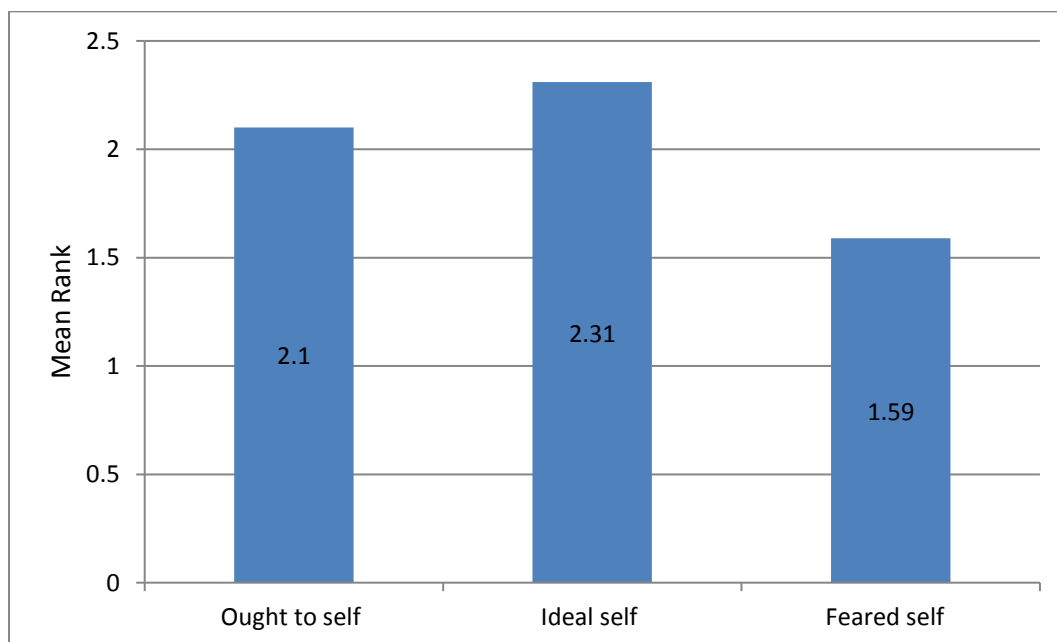

Figure 1. English student-students' attitude ratings relative to each factor

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The obtained data from the questionnaire showed that majority of the student-teachers have a positive attitude toward their ought to selves whether in students' or institute/school's managers (0.96 which is higher than the value of the test, 0.50). More than other necessities specified in the questionnaire, they think they should create a stress-free classroom atmosphere as their students would expect. However, they are not so much positive about following various strategies which are determined by the institute/school strategies to keep students motivated. In line with these findings, Demirezen & Özönder (2016) indicated that when teachers feel that accepting their responsibilities plays an important role in their professional development, try to improve their technical knowledge and use the approaches, theories, and new and appropriate methods in teaching language to create a creative and lively learning context. Kubanyiova (2007) was of the opinion that unlike ideal self, the motivating capacity of ought to self in generating interest and willingness to decrease discrepancy between real self and expectations of the educational system derives from external motives. Therefore, the negative results of avoiding these obligations encourages language teacher to follow logical educational requirements.

On the other hand, the findings of the current study showed that majority of the student-teachers (n = 128) have positive opinion toward the items in the ideal-self section of the questionnaire. They believe that they can obtain a perfect command of English and become a professional language teacher who has an acceptable social status. Moreover, they think that they can be teachers who are interested in their professional development and are able to become expert in teaching second languages. The highest average belongs to the respondents' tendency to continue their studies and obtain higher academic degrees which confirms their desire to become expert in their field. In addition, they do not consider their own educational success due to teaching specific courses either. The results of the present study are direct contradiction with previous findings in the field of professional development of teachers in which the patterns of teacher education worries have changed their trend from self to others and do not consider teachers' cognition of deal-selves as effective factor in their career success (Conway & Clark, 2003). Having ideal criteria can cause teachers to trust their capabilities and be able to use and teach a second language effectively (Hiver, 2013). According to Oyserman, Bybee, and Terry (2006), decisions for self-improvement are not driven by underlying mental goals; they are formed by knowing the ideals which help student-teachers to be successful in the future, behave their students fairly, and be ready to assist them in achieving a positive attitude toward learning a second language.

Along with the findings of Sahakyan, Lamb, and Chambers (2018), results of the present research confirms the positive effect of teaching experience on creation of logical ideals. Findings also show that ELT student-teachers' vision on their feared self is lower than their ideal and ought to selves (0.82); however, this vision is still higher than the desired level. The participants' positive answer to the items of all three sections of the questionnaire including, becoming an inexpert/unknowledgeable, uncaring/demotivated and professionally fatigue teacher confirm findings of the previous studies which showed the significant role of the students in generating a language teacher's self-image (Kumazawa, 2013). In Olmez-Çaglar, Mirici, and Erten's (2020) view, those language teachers' whose vision on their feared selves is stronger than other dimensions are willing to compensate their inadequacy through in-service trainings. They are afraid of becoming teachers whose students do not admire their proficiency. Similar to the results of the studies in this paradigm of research (e.g., Babanuğlu, 2017; Smid, 2018; Yuan, 2016), a further finding of this study asserts that student-teachers' knowledge of their feared future career status is a positive sign their attempt to increase their distance with a teacher who has a greater command of English than he/she does, whose classes are known as stressful, uses the same teaching methods in all classes, and whose students do not enjoy his/her classes.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that ELT student-teachers might have less problems with the expectations of educational system through having a better cognition of their possible selves. They can overcome their feared selves by improving their technical knowledge and having a higher command of English. As Babanuğlu (2017) has argued, by gaining this vision student-teachers can improve their identity and agency and have more incentive to develop professionally in the future. Having high expectations of themselves helps them to become eager to learn from their more experienced colleagues, have a good relationship with parents and try to renew their knowledge and learn new teaching strategies.

Similar to other research projects, the current study faced some limitations. For instance, student-teachers' gender was not into account in their possible selves. Similarly, the impact of the mentorship experiences in the teacher training system on the formation of this three dimensional cognition due to time limitation in carrying out longitudinal studies was not taken into consideration. Therefore, in the future research, the domain of this study can be extended in such a way that the impact of teaching experience in changing the ideals, fears, the amount of commitment to the educational requirements are specified. In the meantime the use of interviews and observations can result in more accurate and generalizable findings.

References

Augustinos, M., Walker, I., & Donaghue, N. (2006). *Social cognition.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage publications.

Babanuğlu, M. P. (2019). A study on possible selves of Turkish Pre-service EFL Teachers. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) 8*(4), 39-48.

Behzadpoor, F., Ghafar Samar, R., Akbari, R., & Kiany, G.R. (2019). The Development of reflective practice among novice English language teachers: The role of reflective journals. *Journal of Foreign Language Research, 9*(2), 365-398.

Beijaard, D., Verloop, N., & Vermunt, J. (2000). Teachers' perceptions of professional identity. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *1*, 281-294.

Benesch, S. (2017). *Emotions in English language teaching: Exploring teachers' emotion labor.* New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.

Berci, M. E. (2007). The autobiographical metaphor: An invaluable approach to teacher development. *Journal of Educational Thought*, *41*(1), 65-76.

Boyatzis, R., & Akrivou, E. (2006). The ideal self as driver of intentional change. *Journal of Management Development*, *25*(4), 624–642.

Conway, P., & Clark, C. (2003). The journey inward and outward: A re-examination of Fuller's concerns-based model of teacher development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *19*(3), 465–482.

Dabback, W. (2018). A longitudinal perspective of early career music teachers: Contexts, interactions, and possible selves. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 27*(2), 52-66.

Day, C., Kington, A., Stobart, G. & Sammons, P. (2005). The personal and professional selves of teachers: Stable and unstable identities. *British Educational Research Journal*, *32*(4), 601-616.

Demirezen, M. & Ozonder, Ö. (2016). Turkish English teachers' professional teacher self as one of the possible selves. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 23*(2), 451-458.

Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dornyei, Z., & Chan, L. (2013). Motivation and vision: An analysis of future L2 self-images, sensory styles, and imagery capacity across two target languages. *Language Learning, 63*(3), 437–462.

Dornyei, Z., & Kubanyiova, M. (2014). *Motivating learners, motivating teachers: Building vision in the language classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dyer, E. (2012). Supporting teacher retention and development through teaching possible selves. *Teacher Education and Knowledge-Preservice: Brief Research Reports*, *34*, 705-708. Retrieved from http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/docs/publications/1803936005511183419713d.pdf

Erikson, M. (2007). The meaning of the future: Toward a more specific definition of possible selves. *Review of General Psychology*, *11*(4), 348–358.

Fullan, M., & Stiegelbauer, S. M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gonzalez-Bravo, J.A, (2015). *Investigating the development of possible selves in teacher education: Candidate perceptions of hopes, fears, and strategies.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kansas, USA: Kansas State University.

Higgins, E.T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review, 94*(2), 319-340.

Higgins, E. (1996). The 'self–digest': Self-knowledge serving self-regulatory functions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*(8), 1062–1083.

Hiver, F. (2013). The interplay of possible language teacher selves in professional development choices. *Language Teaching Research, 17*(2), 210–227.

Hoban, G. (2007). Considerations for designing coherent teacher education programs. In J. Butcher & L. McDonald (Eds.), *Making a difference: Challenges for teachers, teaching and teacher education* (pp. 173–187). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Johnston, B. (2008). *Values in English language teaching*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Karimi, N.M., & Norouzi, (2019). Developing and validating three measures of possible language teacher selves. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 62*, 49-60.

Karademas, E. (2006). Self-efficacy, social support and well-being: The mediating role of optimism. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *40*, 1281–1290.

Kubanyiova, M. (2007). Teacher development in action: An empirically-based model of promoting conceptual change in in-service language teachers in Slovakia. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK.

Kubanyiova, M. (2009). Possible selves in language teacher development. In Z. Dornyei, & E. Ushioda (Eds.). *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 314–332). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Kumazawa, M. (2013). Gaps too large: Four novice EFL teachers' self-concept and motivation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 33*, 45–55.

Mahmoudi-Gahrouei, V., Tavakoli, M., & Hamman, D. (2016). Understanding what is possible across a career: Professional identity development beyond transition to teaching. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 17*(4), 581–597.

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986). Possible selves. *American Psychologist*, *41*(5), 954-969.

Marzano, R. J., & Heflebower, T. (2012). *Teaching & assessing 21st century skills*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.

McFarland, L., Murray, E., & Phillipson, S. (2016). Student-teacher relationships and student self-concepts: Relations with teacher and student gender. *Australian Journal of Education, 60*(1), 5-25.

Miller, K., & Shifflet, R. (2016). How memories of school inform pre–service teachers feared and desired selves as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 53*(3), 20–29.

Olmez-Çaglar, F., Mirici, I. H., & Erten, I. H (2020). Measuring possible language teacher selves: A Scale Development Study. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET). 7*(1), 327-353.

Olsen, B. (2008). *Teaching what they learn, learning what they live.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Oyserman, D., Bybee, D., & Terry, K. (2006). Possible selves and academic outcomes: How and when possible selves impel action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 188–204.

Packard, B. W., & Conway, P. F. (2006). Methodological choice and its consequences for possible selves research. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 6*(3), 251-271.

Pizzolato, J. (2006). Achieving college student possible selves: Navigating the space between commitment and achievement of long-term identity goals. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *12*(2), 57–69.

Roshandel, S., & Hudley, C. (2018). Role of teachers in influencing the development of adolescents' possible selves. *Learning Environments Research, 21*(2), 211–228.

Sahakyan, T., Lamb, M., & Chambers, G. (2018). Language teacher motivation: From the ideal to the feasible self. In S. Mercer & A. Kostoulas (Eds.), *language teacher psychology* (pp. 53-70). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Salimi, E.S., Mostafaei Alaei, M. Najjar Baghseyah, R. (2017). Past, present, and aspirational identity of English language teachers: Teaching experience and its influence on professional identity. *Journal of Foreign Language Research, 6*(2), 303-320.

Smid, D. (2018). Hungarian pre-service teachers' motivation to become English teachers: Validating a questionnaire. *Journal of Adult Learning, Knowledge and Innovation, 2*(1), 19-32.

Tangen, D., & Beutel, D. (2017). Pre-service teachers' perceptions of self as inclusive educators. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 21*(1), 63-72.

Werbińska, D. (2017). Possible selves and student teachers' autonomous identity. In M. Pawlak, A. Mystkowska-Wiertelak, & J. Bielak (Eds.), *Autonomy in second language learning: Managing the Resources* (pp. 179–196). Switzerland: Springer.

White, C., & Ding, A. (2009). Identity and self in e-language teaching. In Z. Dornyei, & E. Ushioda (Eds.). *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 333–349). Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

Wurf, E, & Markus, H. R. (1991). Possible selves and the psychology of personal growth. In D. J. Ozer & J. M. Healy (Eds.), *Perspectives in personality,* Vol. 3: Part A: Self and emotion; Part B; Approaches to understanding lives, (pp. 39-62). London: Kingsley.

Yilmaz, C. (2018). Investigating pre-service EFL teachers' self-concepts within the framework of teaching practicum in Turkish context. *English Language Teaching, 11*(2), 156-163.

Yuan, E. R. (2016). The dark side of mentoring on pre-service language teachers' identity formation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 55*(7), 188–197.