

The Co-Construction of Plurilingual Professional Identity of Prospective Language Teachers at a Turkish State University

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the dialogic negotiation of plurilingual professional identity on the construction of identity, positioning it in the sphere of foreign language learning and foreign language teacher education among pre-service language teachers who come from multifarious and multilingual language ecologies. This is a case study because plurilingual pre-service foreign language teachers' dialogic process of multiple identities in terms of plurilingual and professional identities is reconciled in a multilingual environment. The plurilingual international students coming from multilingual family backgrounds were intended to be chosen as the participants for the present study to explore the dialogic negotiation of plurilingual and professional identity co-construction. In this regard, congruent with the research aims, convenient sampling method was utilized since two international students were close to hand. As for the first step of the data collection process, a language background questionnaire was applied. After the questionnaire, in-depth interviews were organized to have detailed information about their co-construction of professional and plurilingual identities. Briefly, the study concluded that despite their awareness of the current aims of language education, student teachers felt some difficulties in picturing themselves and thinking as language teachers.

Keywords: plurilingual professional identity, dialogic negotiation, (co-)construction of identity, professional practice

Introduction

Presentation & Statement of Purpose

The study explores how plurilingual and professional identities are co-constructed through the dialogic negotiation of identity construction among pre-service language teachers who come from multifarious and multilingual language ecologies and how this dialogic negotiation

contributes to their understanding of identity. Negotiation here has a Bakhtinian stance. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2003) put it, “in a heteroglossic Bakhtinian view assumed here, negotiation does not necessarily involve two or more physical parties – it may also take place ‘within’ individuals, resulting in changes in self representation” (p.21). This study also has acritical nature in the sense that it proposes a synthesis of a cross-disciplinary construct, i.e. identity construction in the individual and public spheres. The aim of the present study is to discuss the *co-construction of plurilingual professional identity* with a special focus on the sphere of foreign language learning and foreign language teacher education.

Background to the Study

In the course of history, monolingual ideology was exclusively perceived as “an original state” (Lüdi and Py, 2009, p. 155), and plurilingualism or multilingualism was believed to be a result of a divine curse during the construction of the tower Babel. Such a monolingual mode was highly legitimate and intended by the policy-makers from the French Revolution to the First World War, with the rise of the concepts/myths of nationality or nationhood. Pluri-/multilingualism is conceived to be a ‘national’ threat to the ‘national’ language(s) and culture(s) within this monolingual state (ibid.). Pluri-/multilingualism is regarded as “a duplication of monolingualism” (Lüdi and Py, 2009, p. 155). Yet, given the advancement in technology, economic flexibility appears to be led by globalization, international education exchange and the growing mobilization possibilities of relatively various language speaking groups caused by migration, languages have densely been in contact in virtue of the increasing “interrelations between individuals, groups, institutions, and societies who use different languages” (House and Rehbein, 2004). This mobilization and globalization phenomenon seems to be triggering a variety of modes of communication, exclusively a multicultural mode in different contexts leading to an individual’s co-construction of a plurilingual identity. A language teacher’s professional identity construction seems to be dialogically affected by the formation of plurilingual identity as a result of an individual’s language background, personal histories and plurilingual ‘self’.

Research Question

A. How are plurilingual and professional identities co-constructed through the dialogic negotiation of identity construction among pre-service language teachers who come from multifarious and multilingual language ecologies?

Literature Review

This section presents the definition of terms to be utilized throughout the paper: *multilingualism*, *plurilingualism* and *polyglotism* along with the definition of *identity*. It also

provides the theoretical framework and relevant studies concerning identity construction in language studies.

Clarification of Differences in Terminology Vol. I: Plurilingualism, Multilingualism or Polyglotism

In a number of field studies in social sciences, there seems to be a kind of “terminological chaos” (Özkırımlı, 2009, p. 23) whilst discussing some controversial concepts and notions. Multilingualism appears to be no other exception to the rule. To understand this “term inflation”, it is enough to scan the titles of the most current publications on the issue: “*plurilingualism*” (Pinho and Andrade, 2009; Stratilaki, 2012), “*multilingualism*” (Rash, 1998; Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese, 2012) and “*polyglotism*” (Leland, 2012).

Plurilingualism suggests that language speakers develop a multilingual repertoire in the course of their language experiences to construct a diversity of competences, i.e. communicative, intercultural etc. As for the term plurilingualism, exclusively within the Common European Framework, it is referred as the individual multilingualism, defined as “[t]he ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures” (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 168). For this definition, communicative competence and mutual intelligibility are desired rather than the mastery of the target language. On the other hand, multilingualism can be defined as a mode of communication or language ecology in which plurilingual people interact with each other for a variety of purposes by means of language. In literary, cultural, and philological studies, polyglotism is utilized as a term instead of the constructs *multilingualism* or *plurilingualism*.

In this regard, Lüdi and Py (2009) wrote an article which is a criticism focusing on the relevance of different models, concepts and theoretical frameworks of plurilingualism deviating from the paradigms of monolingual and unilingual paradigms. As stated by Lüdi and Py (2009), “plurilingualism represented, so to say, a duplication of monolingualism, with varying degrees of success” (p. 155). A diachronic historical account of the terms ‘bilingualism’ and ‘plurilingualism’ is presented pertaining to the predominantly long – standing monolingual paradigm. The notion of situated multilingual resources has been discussed following the constructs of becoming plurilingual – being plurilingual and speaking plurilingually. These constructs have been presented in the sense that plurilingual individuals make use of their linguistic repertoire in a variety of plurilingually-mixed manner which is regarded as neither a “third grammar nor universal, special principles governing code-switching. In Lüdi and Py’s (2009) own words, “a theory of plurilingual competence would not, in the final analysis, be different from the theory of language in general” (p. 161). This remark summarized the theoretical framework of the critical paper in a general sense.

House and Rehbein (2004) define the multilingual communication as ‘the use of several languages for the common purposes of participants, multilingual individuals who use language(s) to realize these purposes, the different language systems which interact for these purposes and multilingual communication structures, whose purposes make individuals use several languages’ (p. 1).

Within the scope of the present study, plurilingualism as a construct is utilized in the sense that it stresses individual and social spheres of multilingualism in multilingual communication.

Clarification of Differences in Terminology Vol. II: Multifarious Definitions and Forms of Identity

As stated by Beijaard *et al.* (2004) “the concept of identity has different meanings” (p. 108). However, what is common is that identity is defined as multitudinous processes of “self-representation and belonging” (Ceginskas, 2010, p. 221) which is in constant flux with a dialogic relation with individual’s ‘self’ and ‘identity’. It, being a considerably catch-all term, has been defined by a great number of scholars. On the other hand, an intact and comprehensive definition has not been viable (Zembylas, 2003; Dikilitaş and Yaylı, 2018). Yet, “it remains unclear how exactly the concepts of ‘identity’ and ‘self’ are related (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004, p. 124). In that sense, symbolic interactionist Mead (1934) states that ‘identity’ is related with the ‘self’: “[s]elf can arise only in a social setting where there is social communication; in communicating we learn to assume the roles of others and monitor our actions” (Beijaard *et al.*, 2004, p. 107). The term identity has been studied and somehow shaped by a good number of scholars from various fields such as the prominent psychologist Erikson (1959), the symbolic interactionist Mead (*ibid.*), and teacher educator Beijaard *et al.*, (2004).

In the recent literature, the concept of identity shares four premises: (a) identity is constructed within various and multiple contexts (Rodgers & Scott, 2008); (b) identity is developed “in relationship with others and involves emotions” (p. 733); (c) identity is in a constant flux (in *status nascendi*); and (d) identity is a process of negotiation of meaning “through stories over time” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 733).

In this regard, Noels, Yashima, and Zhang (2011) tried to explain the several factors that affect the identity formation of people. It is stated that identity is a concept that has been directly affected by the society we live in and the community where we belong. Norton and Pavlenko (2019), in this respect, exemplified five identity clusters: multilingual, ethnic, global, postcolonial and gendered identities. Within the scope of this study, however, multilingual identity will be on the focus.

When it comes to the identity formation of a person who is learning another language, there are some other factors that should be taken into account. According to Lambert (1956, 1978), there are two types of bilingualism in terms of identity formation in the process of second language learning. If language learner feels himself/herself as a person belonging to the

minority group that feels inferior to the majority group, s/he may become subtractive bilingual. However, if the learner belongs to a majority group who considers himself/herself superior to the group the language of which s/he is learning, she may become additive bilingual. What is more, if a person is planning to learn a language of a community that s/he admires and the culture of which s/he wants to learn, this might be a motivational factor for the learner and s/he will go through “integrative orientation” because s/he wants to integrate with that culture and community and s/he wants to be part of it.

It is also discussed that identity is multiple and it may depend on the situation and the context where a person uses the language (Norton and Pavlenko, 2019). Thus, identity depends on the context in such situations. What is more, identity in intercultural situations is problematic because the speaker may not achieve effective communication unless s/he has a notion of the host culture perspective and notions.

In terms of the negotiation of identity, Giampapa (2004) explores the negotiation of the identity of three Italian-Canadian youths “with regard to what it means to be and become Italian Canadian in Toronto” (Giampapa, 2004, p. 193). Data were collected through participant observation, interviews (individual, focus group and community-based), shadowing, self-taping, questionnaires, and participants wrote reflections on their experiences. The reasons for selecting these three Italian Canadian participants were stated as follows: (a) they were all born in Canada and have had their own linguistic, educational and cultural experiences; (b) they are all identified in the periphery (in other words, margin) of their own worlds; and (c) they identify themselves with the linguistic and discursive practices within Italian-Canadianness. The data demonstrate that these three Italian Canadians tried to find ways to reconcile their identities in the multifarious spaces as to what it means to be an Italian Canadian.

In a similar vein, De Costa (2016) investigated the dynamics of Singaporean language learners’ language acquisition with a special focus on deeper social issues that characterize the nexus of language identity, policy-making and migration.

There are a good body of studies on teachers’ professional identity in the literature of second/foreign language education (Karataş and Araman, 2013; Dikilitaş and Yaylı, 2018) and primary and secondary teacher education (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Beltman et al., 2015; Assen et al., 2018). Since this study substantially focuses on the dialogic negotiation between plurilingual and professional identities of pre-service teachers, the review of literature is basically confined to the studies exploring the negotiation between plurilingual and professional identities.

As the participants of this study are the prospective teachers, they have already had an evolving professional identity as well as their personal identities. Bouchard and Chevrier (2000) associate teacher professional identity with some terms as the influence and the role of particular dimensions (such as the personal trajectory, experience from practice, social context, lay theories, and personal ambitions) in the construction of Professional identity, and the tools contributing to trainee teachers’ professional identity awareness and development (as cited in

Pinho and Andrade, 2015). Beacco and Byram (2007) also emphasize that teachers' professional identity is not something that stays stable in language teaching due to the recent changes in the field such as plurilingual and intercultural education. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the dialogic negotiation of plurilingual professional identity on the construction of identity, positioning it in the sphere of foreign language learning and foreign language teacher education.

In Achugar's study (2009), the researcher aims at exploring the dialogic negotiation of professional identity through linguistic practices and trajectories of an academic community (a focus on 3 graduate students out of 12 and a professor) from a social constructivist perspective within Systemic Functional Linguistic (Halliday, 1994) theoretical framework in an English-Spanish bilingual creative-writing program in the USA. As for the data collection of this qualitative study, classroom observations were utilized to find a specific exercise in which participants negotiated a particular case in a communicative way. Later, the researcher conducted retrospective interviews with the participants to get a better understanding as to how they constructed their disciplinary knowledge in relation to their professional identity through bilingual linguistic practices. The analysis of discourse practices and trajectories of the participants suggests that the construction of professional identity develops a multifarious spectrum within bilingual contexts in which there is tension between monolingual and personal language ideologies in congruent with national and institutional ones.

Congruent with this study, the aim of the study conducted by Pinho and Andrade (2009) is to investigate a research project called Project EMIP/DL (Didáctica de Línguas: um estudo meta-analítico da investigação em Portugal/Language Didactic) which aimed at getting a better understanding of the dialogic nature of professional development and identity of four prospective language teachers in congruence with the development of "plurilingual awareness and intercomprehension" (p. 313). Pinho and Andrade (2009) intended to shed light on "the developing representations about plurilingualism, intercomprehension and themselves as language teachers" (p. 313). There is a central research question: Are the student teachers able to develop a different self-image as language teachers based on a plurilingual conception of language teaching? These four pre-service language teachers were doing double major both in Portuguese and English language teaching. The native language of all of the participants was reported to be Portuguese while English served as a foreign language in their linguistic repertoire. The study was divided into two main phases: Phase 1 and Phase 2. In the first phase, in congruence with the aims of their study, the researchers analyzed the curriculum and decided to observe Education in Languages and Foreign Language Didactics (FLD) courses offered for the 4th year (2001/2002). The reason for their selection was that these two courses mostly dealt with the issues of plurilingualism and intercomprehension which were relevant for their research aims. As for the data collection, all the pre-service teachers were supposed to keep a learning journal as a course requirement. By doing so, participants were expected to provide clues about the dialogic relationship of their professional development and their plurilingualism and intercomprehension understanding through their opinions, experiences, and feelings. At

the end of the course, these journals were collected and investigated by the researchers. By taking these narrative accounts into account, semi-structured stimulated recall interviews were conducted as well. At the end, both the narrative accounts and interview findings were utilized to develop and organize the 2nd phase of the study which was “an intervention plan, which intended to bridge the gap between the subjects of study of Language Didactics (fourth year) and the teaching practice (fifth year)” (Pinho and Andrade, 2009, p. 320). As in that phase of the study, there was an intervention, the researchers were not merely non-participant observers anymore. They were intervening in the course by designing –the presupposed gap – Education Path in Intercomprehension whose design was based on observers. The data were collected from:

- (i) “reflective notebooks;
- (ii) lesson plans and teaching materials;
- (iii) individual and group reports; and
- (iv) verbatim transcriptions of training sessions, planning meetings, classroom observation, and final interview” (Pinho and Andrade, 2009, p. 320). With the analyses of the data collected in two phases, Pinho and Andrade (2009) found out that courses (such as Education in Languages and Foreign Language Didactics) would help pre-service language teachers develop plurilingual professional development to “transform the idealized representations into real ones”, as suggested by Pinho and Andrade (2009, p. 325). In another study conducted by Pinho and Andrade (2015), they tried to determine the effects of an in-service teacher training program on the professional identity formation of the teachers. It is also stated in their paper that identity is context-bound and the identity may reflect some changes in accordance with the context. Thus, so as to achieve their research aim, they chose an inset program called “Languages and education: constructing and sharing training”, the aim of which was the construction of a collaborative teacher education context for learning and transformation of experiences, views and practices in language education, and involved teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. The researchers chose a teacher who attended this program and required that the teacher participant kept a journal about her experiences throughout the inset program. They did a content analysis for the journal kept by one participant teacher and they did coding from the things written. It was found in the study that identity formation is affected by the inset program because during the program teachers learned how to cooperate with each other and they shared some ideas and thoughts with one another. What is more, narration (journal-keeping) also contributed to the professional identity formation of this participant teacher because while she was keeping her diary, she questioned what she had learned previously by trying to combine and relate both her previous experiences and the things that she learned from the inset program.

In addition, Forsman and Hummelstedt-Djedou (2014) studied on the identity formation of children who were coming from different ethnic family backgrounds in a country where

multilingualism was supported. The study took its theoretical framework as the process of ethnic identity construction according to the view of identity as co-constructed, within a social constructionist perspective on learning. This study was conducted in Finland where both Finnish and Swedish languages were taught in schools. This research was carried out in a school where about 25% of the children in the group had at least one parent with another ethnic background than Finland-Swedish or Finnish. The researchers especially focused on the identity formation of children who were coming from immigrant family backgrounds. So as to be able to conduct this study, they put a microphone on the participant children and recorded their conversations both with their peers and teachers on the camera. At the initial steps of the study, the students wondered why certain students were recorded on the camera and they behaved and talked to those students cautiously so as to avoid some conversations that neither their parents nor their teachers favor but at the later stages the children got accustomed to the camera and all the procedure. It was found in the study that both their peers and the teachers supported the identity formation of these little kids by supporting them becoming aware of their differences and they did not feel threatened or intimidated to share their differences both with their peers and their teachers in such a supportive atmosphere.

In line with the studies mentioned above, Ceginkas (2010) explored both the impact of school environments on the negotiation of multilingual identity of the multilingual individuals who grew up in “multilingual habitus” (Kramsch, 2003) and the dialogic nature of multilinguality and identity. The participants were 12 adults who had multilingual and multicultural backgrounds in the sense that their parents come from two different language backgrounds, thus the participants had been exposed to a variety of languages in their social environments since birth. Most of the participants had their schooling in the schools of host countries in which the medium of instruction was delivered in the national or local language of the host country. On the other hand, some participants went to international schools to which a variety of multilingual learners attended so that the national or local language of the host country is not supposed to be the medium at all. As for the data collection, questionnaires and both semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted. The reason for conducting a questionnaire was to gather data in terms of participants’ personal and linguistic background information. Interviews were employed in order to get a deeper understanding of the participants’ negotiation of multilingual identity in different schooling constellations. The interview accounts of the participants show that the negotiation of identity is heavily influenced by the school systems, meaning the ones who had their education in “predominantly homogenous” national or local schools conceived multilinguality as a source of problem for their identity. On the other side, the ones who had attended to international schools where they had contact with their multilingual peers had more favorable attitudes towards their multilingual identity in the study conducted by Pinho and Andrade (2009) which was entitled as “Plurilingual awareness and intercomprehension in the professional knowledge and identity development of language student teachers”.

Stratilaki’s study (2012) also investigates the dialogic linguistic and social representations of bi/multilinguals in terms of specific social contexts (prestigious school environments)

in which learners employed multiple linguistic identities which were *status nascendi*. The phenomena discussed in this article are multilingual competence, linguistic representation, and interaction. The data were collected from three French-German bilingual High Schools in which plurilingual programmes (French-German) were employed, and German and French shared equal status, meaning that these two languages were utilized as the media of instruction. As a language policy, all students are supposed to learn more than two languages to develop metalinguistic awareness by making use of two or more languages in a communicative manner. Interestingly, there is no reference to the number of the students who participated in the study in spite of the fact that they are said to be female and male students whose ages range between 16 and 19 years. It is stated that these participants were chosen through a “strict selection criteria” (Stratilaki, 2012, p. 194) process:

- (1) by taking their answers in a bilingual questionnaire (consisting of 25 open questions),
- (2) and “according to their trajectory as multilingual learners and speakers” (Stratilaki, 2012, p. 194).

On selecting the participants, data were collected through “informal recorded interviews”. The central questions of the study are:

- (1) Within a school setting, what are the dominant representations regarding multilingualism as a strategic advantage in language learning and use?
- (2) What is the influence of these representations on the development of multilingual competence and discourse strategies that learners apply in language use?

As a result of this study, the reasons for language choice and use of plurilingual speakers – and learners at the same time – in multilingual constellations are heavily affected by a number of pragmatic and semantic factors including learners’ trajectories, their life experience, linguistic practices and their social roles as plurilingual interlocutors.

Methodology

Our research is a descriptive qualitative case study as we analyzed a case in which plurilingual pre-service foreign language teachers’ dialogic process of multiple identities in terms of plurilingual and professional identities is reconciled in a multilingual environment. Creswell (2013) defined the case study as “qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case)” (p.103) considering variables that affect this process such as the context and data collection tools that will facilitate the collection of data that will be analyzed in depth.

The Study: Context, Participants and Data Collection Tools

Context

The context and participant information of the study is to be presented before analyzing the empirical data. The department of foreign language education in a public Turkish university that accepts international students especially coming from the post-Soviet republics such as Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Southeastern countries like Malaysia.

As for the general information and policies of the Department of Foreign Language Education, the website of the program reads as follows (METU, FLE, 2020):

Taking into consideration the latest developments in the field, students are provided with a solid foundation in the English language, English literature, methodology, educational sciences and linguistics in order to make them fully qualified teachers of English in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions.

Given the history of the institution, the Department of Foreign Language Education was founded in 1982. “During the 1982-83 academic years, the department also worked on the design of an undergraduate curriculum to be submitted to the Higher Education Council for approval and to be implemented during the following academic year. However, the Higher Education Council designed its own curriculum and distributed it to all Faculties of Education for implementation during the 1983-84 academic years”. (METU, FLE, 2020)

International students who graduate from a high school are supposed to accomplish the criteria set by the Higher Education Council for the university entrance in Turkey, especially the public university under investigation for the present study. (Turkish Higher Education Council (YOK, 2020). In addition, they are required to take the minimum score for exemption from the 1-year English preparatory program provided by the Department of Basic English as the medium of instruction is English in the state university for which the international students apply for their higher education. (METU, DBE, 2020).

Participants

The plurilingual international students coming from multilingual family backgrounds were intended to be chosen as the participants for the present study in order to explore how plurilingual and professional identities are co-constructed through the dialogic negotiation of identity construction among pre-service language teachers who come from multifarious and multilingual language ecologies and how this dialogic negotiation contributes to their understanding of identity. In this regard, twelve international students from post-Soviet and southeastern countries were selected by means of convenient sampling (Creswell, 2011). They were informed of the aims and design of the study and asked whether they would participate in the study. *Three international students (EGu, FaD, and SaM)* accepted to participate in the

study. As for the first step, first of all, we conducted a language background questionnaire “developed for a TÜBİTAK research project to shed light on their family background (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) (Project Number: 110K432)” (Akkuş, 2013, p. 45). After the questionnaire, we also had interviews with two of them to have detailed information about their linguistic and family backgrounds. One of the participants was from the post-Soviet country, Kyrgyzstan, where people speak Russian both as a regional Lingua Franca and official language. They also make use of their vernacular native languages such as Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik and Kazakh languages with their family members as well. This participant was coded as **P1**. The other participant is from one of the far eastern countries, the Philippines, where they speak English as an official language along with other so many different tribal languages. This participant was coded as **P2**. Both participants learned English during their schooling starting from their early teenage years.

They were both taking a degree in the teaching of English (as a foreign language) at the time of the study. Two of the participants were male and between 21 and 22 years old, who had started their courses in the 2012-2013 academic year.

Data Collection Tools/Instruments

In this study, two different data collection tools were used: a questionnaire that was used to select the participants that would be interviewed individually with the interview questions prepared by the researchers.

The participants were interviewed to make them reflect on their identities better. The language used in the interviews was English because it was the lingua franca between the researcher and the participant. The interview questions were inspired from a language background questionnaire “developed by Sağın-Şimşek and Cedden-Edipoğlu for a TÜBİTAK research project to shed light on their family background (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) (Project Number: 110K432)” (Akkuş, 2013, p. 45). The questions were created by the researchers but the questionnaire questions gave some idea about what to ask during the individual interviews (See Appendix for more information).

These participants were also observed in their departmental courses so as to determine how their identities had been shaped, especially their professional identity and how their identities that are affected by their multicultural family backgrounds were reflected in the lessons as to whether they participated and contributed to the lessons. Observation checklist was formed by the researchers according to the reviews read in the relevant literature and observations were made accordingly (See Appendix for more information).

During the interviews, students were encouraged to share as many experiences, anecdotes from their lives as possible to better understand what they had gone through all through their personal and educational lives so that it would be possible to make logical guesses about

their identity formations. The importance of such data collection tools especially for identity formation studies was emphasized by several researchers like Withrell and Noddings (1991):

Teachers' personal identity can be brought to self-awareness through narrative self-reflection. [...] Self-knowledge not only assumes that one can establish one's own personal identity by means of stories, but also assumes that one can be accountable narratively for how one has developed as a person, as a teacher—for how one has become what one has become. [...] by means of stories, teachers justify the manner in which their character, wishes and interests have grown and changed as a result of past circumstances, decisions, and formative experiences in specific circumstances (as cited in Leitch 2006, p. 550).

Data Analysis

Data collected through interviews were kept in audio recordings. Those recordings were transcribed by one of the researchers to better analyze the data. These transcriptions were sent to the other researcher to check the accuracy. Later these transcriptions were examined in detail by both of these researchers at the same time to find certain categories to present the findings of the study Gall et al. (2003) defined a category as “a construct that refers to a certain type of phenomenon mentioned in the database” (p. 454). After the analysis of the transcriptions, certain categories were found and the researchers reached a consensus on the ones that will be presented in the following section of the paper.

After determining the categories, the researcher who did the interviews revealed these categories to these two different participants to assure that the right conclusions had been reached by means of the analysis for member-checking purposes, which requires “the researcher to ask one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account” (Creswell, 2011, p. 259). These were the necessary steps that must be taken for a qualitative case study defined by Gall et al. (2003) as “a process of examining case study data closely in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied” (p. 453). What is more, direct quotations were also taken from the transcriptions to support the constructs found after the analysis and they were presented in the results because Gall et al. (2003) stated that “direct quotes of the remarks by the case study participants were particularly effective because they clarify the emic perspective, that is, the meaning of the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants” (p. 469).

Along with the quotations, the contextual factors of both the participants and the place where this case study was conducted were also provided because Mackey and Gass (2005) highlight the importance of thick description for qualitative studies which are context – specific most of the time.

Results

According to the data collected for the purpose of this study, the construction of plurilingual professional identity of prospective language teachers was affected by several factors such as context, language attitude and the experiences of the prospective teachers

The Impact of Language Policy, Context and Background

It can easily be understood from the interviews conducted with these two different participant prospective teachers coming from multilingual countries that the language policy of the country where they were grown up affects the identity formation of these student teachers. If people are raised in a multilingual country where more than one language is official, they are already ready to speak more than one language. P1 explained the situation by saying:

We have two official languages: Russian and Kyrgyz. Russian is more specific in the capital, Bishkek. In small villages, they don't speak Russian. In the south, they speak Uzbek. It is our neighbour country so there is a lot of people from Uzbekistan.

It can be concluded for the case of P1 that not only the language policy but also the context also affects the language preference of the participants. In other words, by saying context, people who are around as well as the place where you live both have a striking impact on the language choice of the participants. P1 said:

When I came to Turkey, I met some other people that came from different parts of Kyrgyzstan where people speak the Kyrgyz language. Though I grew up in Bishkek where Russian is the dominant language spoken by all the people living there, I started to speak Turkish with my compatriots living in Turkey.

It can be understood from the quote that the combination of both where you are and whom you are with has a great effect on the language choice of the participant. What is more, the influence of background, especially parental one, cannot be denied because the language of the family plays a key role in the language that you speak. P2 articulates:

In our house when we speak with our mother, we use the language of my mother. With my father, the only one that knows the language of my father is me and I also have a younger sister. We have other siblings and they don't know the language. Because in my case, I stayed for 4 years in the village of my father and then I moved to the city of my mother. When I was around 7 or 8 years old, we move to the other city which is Disenbenga, where we live now and they also use different languages so I need to learn them. Wherever you go in the Philippines you can speak Tagalog you might survive but it is also difficult because in the remote areas they don't know Tagalog.

It can be understood the family background and its culture also affects the language choice of the person.

The Impact of Language Attitude

The attitudes of people towards the languages spoken also affect the choice of languages. Socially widely accepted languages are much more preferred as P2 says:

If you are going to ask me which book to read, a Tagalog one or my own native languages from my mother and father so you are going to give me four books. I am almost certain I am 100 % sure that I am going to read the English one. Because I wouldn't understand the same book with another language as I have been exposed to English books at school and I have been educated in English and the language of education was English so it is natural for me to choose English books.

This shows that the participant is directed to a more prestigious language if he is asked to choose a language to learn something.

The Impact of (Mono-or Pluri-Lingual) Language Identity

The ways people are exposed to different languages also are determinants of the language identity. How people have acquired different languages also shapes their character. Even the sequence of learning different languages is an important factor for a person to be able to consider himself/herself as a monolingual or multilingual. (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2003) That is why these participants were also asked whether they felt multilingual and how this process affected their identity. They both stated that different languages that they were exposed to in different contexts at different times had a considerable effect on the way they claim themselves as multilingual. P1 explained:

Well, I am a monolingual in terms of the way I learned the language but I feel as a bilingual because my second language is dominating over the first language. If you consider all the languages, maybe I am a multilingual but I don't know. I haven't thought about it before coming here. So, it is a bit difficult question.

Thus, it can be understood that although he learned different languages at different times, he felt as a multilingual because of the way he was exposed and the ways he used the languages.

Facilitative Role of Plurilingual Identity on Profession

As these participants had an experience of learning different languages as their second and third languages, they claimed that this facilitated their language learning. Thus, their previous learning with other languages made it easier for them to learn English and understand the

learners of English as well as the difficulties that one may face during the learning process of the English language. P2 explained the situation:

I got my school experience and I just thought. I think it really helped me a lot because knowing English since... I am not saying I know English since kindergarden but then I was learning English since I was kindergarden and using it for every day I think it helped me a lot. Also, the languages, for instance, the Chewakano it really helped me a lot when I was learning Italian.

It can be inferred from this quotation that learning another language besides one's first language either as a second or a foreign language might make it easier for the person to learn another language because it is significant for a language learner to know how to learn another language. Thus, this might be an advantage for a teacher who already

knows how to learn another language easily because s/he can transfer what s/he has already experienced in learning a language to his/her students easily and become more tolerant of his/her students.

Experience as a Mediator for Plurilingual Identity and Professional Identity

Along with their experiences with language learning, these participants had some teaching practice in their practicum schools for one of their departmental courses called "school experience". Therefore, they had the chance to teach students English and they were asked whether this teaching experience together with their multilingual identity had something meaningful for their professional identity. They both said that this school experience course with its "micro teaching" practices along with their multilingualism highly contributed to their teaching skills that they will use in their profession, which will be part of their professional identity. They both said that they got aware of their linguistic skills and how to teach them to the students with this practice. P1 elaborated on the issue by saying:

Last year during our community service course we were going to Sincan. There is ODTÜ ortaokulu. I started teaching there. Actually, during high school, I was giving extra lessons to other girls. I always try to integrate other cultures to make students learn about other cultures. One of the factors that my students are so attentive to me is that I am foreigner. Also, I got aware of the interplay of plurilingual and professional identities in myteaching.

It can be understood that this prospective teacher has used his multilingual background as an advantage in his class by integrating the culture teaching in his lesson. Also, his multilingual background has attracted the attention of the students who were willing to learn about their teacher, which had positively made a contribution to the flow of the lesson according to the

participant. Hence, his multilingualism has become an inevitable part of his teaching identity that he will use in his teaching career.

Conclusion & Discussion

Congruent with the relevant literature (Pavlenko and Blacledge, 2003; Achugar, 2009; Ceginkas, 2010; Pavlenko, 2019), it can be concluded from this study that the identity of the plurilingual professional identity of the prospective teachers coming from multilingual language backgrounds is affected by several factors such as context, language attitude and the experiences of the prospective teachers which are the determinant constructs of the data analysis presented in the “results” section.

Context is one of the main factors affecting the language choice of these participants because the people whom they spent their time affected the language preference of these participants. The language choice highly differs when they are with their friends or family members or even with their teachers. Therefore, it can be stated that identity is developed “in *relationship* with others and involves *emotions*” (Rodgers and Scott, 2008, p. 733).

Along with the people around, the place or the country where they lived also affected their language choice because P1 stated that he mostly preferred to speak Russian with his Kyrgyz friends in Kyrgyzistan whereas he chose to speak Turkish in Turkey with the ones living in Turkey. Not only different countries but also different regions in the same country had a strong impact on the language choice of the participants. P2 mentioned that he switched codes according to the region where he stayed at that moment. Therefore, it can be concluded that identity is constructed within various and multiple multilingual contexts (Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

Language attitude is also another variable that affects the identity construction of the participants because the importance given to the language spoken in one specific region makes people tend to use that language of importance or prestige. Take the case of P1 and P2, who have both the liability to speak Russian and English respectively due to the status given to these two powerful languages in Kyrgyzistan for the former and in the Philippines for the latter. Even though there is no rule that one language is superior to others, some languages might be considered as more powerful and prestigious than other because of the sociopolitical and socioeconomic power of the people speaking that language of the country, which affects the identity formation because people using that language feel themselves closer to that language and the users of it.

Experiences of the participants with the language that they use also affect their identity formation. Past experiences during the learning of that language also have something to do with the identity of the speakers. As these participants were teacher candidates, it was natural for their learning experiences to have an influence on their teaching methodology as well. As they were both grown in a multilingual environment, this aspect of their language learning was



reflected in their teaching as well because they integrated culture teaching with their language teaching in their practicum schools which made a great contribution to their professional identity, they both claimed. It can be understood that identity is a process of negotiation of meaning “through stories over time” (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 733). As they take departmental courses and do their teaching practices, their professional identity will be shaped in accordance with the new experiences that they have gone through in professional settings as well.



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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Guides focusing on Language and Family Background

Where are you from? What kind of a state structure does the country in which you were born and grew up (central or federal) have? Can you describe the environment where you grew up?

What are the official language(s) of the country (if there is any)? What do you think about it? Which languages are spoken in this neighborhood and in your family (father and mother)? Which one(s) is/are dominantly used? Is it the case all over the country? Is it the case for your family (too)? Why do you think it is the socially-dominant language?

Interview Guides focusing on Plurilingual Identity

Which language(s) do you feel yourself closest to? Why? How do you define yourself linguistically? Do you define yourself as a bilingual or plurilingual? Why/why not? In which environments and conditions did you learn the languages you speak? In which situations do you speak them?

What do you think about multilingualism/plurilingualism?

Interview Guides focusing on Educational Background

Can you tell us the languages you used/have been using during your education? (kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary education)? Why did you use these languages in these institutions? To be more clear, can you define the dynamics of these institutions?

Sub-question: Did you use the same language(s) with your friends as the one(s) you used with your teachers?

Interview Guides focusing on Professional Identity

How did you decide to study English Language Teaching profession? Did your plurilingual background affect your decision to be an ELT expert?

Sub-questions: How do you reflect your plurilingual identity on the courses that you have been teaching in terms of course participation?

How do you reflect your plurilingual identity in your micro or macro – teaching for your School Experience course?

APPENDIX B

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

The pre-service teacher

Observable actions	Impact on plurilingual identity	Impact on Professional identity
Concords teaching points with multilingualism		
Relates his/her multilingual background with teaching		
Allows students to code – mix in the classroom environment (if appropriate)		
Takes multilingual context into consideration in planning and implementing the course plan		

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