International Conference on Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language, GlobELT 2016, 14-17 April 2016, Antalya, Turkey

Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Professional Self-Concept: English Teaching Efficacy, Self Reported English Proficiency and Pedagogical strategies: A Case Study in Turkish Context

Nuray Alagözlü[a],*

ªHacettepe University, Ankara 06800, Turkey

Abstract

This study touches upon one of the prominent problems in foreign language teacher education in Turkey: professional self-concept. Among the obstacles in growing competent language teachers and maintaining their quality are their self-perceptions regarding the efficacy of their teaching and their proficiency levels. Besides external factors like educational conditions, pre/in-service training, workplace facilities, teachers self- perceptions regarding their teaching efficacy and ability must be considered to improve teacher competencies. Teachers' beliefs in their efficacy are shown to have a role in their personal growth and professional success. To delve into Turkey millieu in depth, following Eslami (2008), the present study examines pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of their teaching efficacy regarding their personal capabilities to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and of their English language proficiency levels in Turkish context. For data collection, a modified version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was used to assess perceived efficacy for classroom management, and instructional strategies. In addition, self-reported proficiency and pedagogical strategies scales used by Chacón (2005) were also used. The present study pinpoints that pre-service language teachers should be encouraged and informed through awareness-raising procedures to improve their self-concept, which will in turn enhance their personal and professional growth.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy; Language Proficiency; Teacher Education

* Corresponding author.
   E-mail address: nurayalagozlu@gmail.com

1. Introduction

"Possunt quia posse videntur"
"Those who are able, are seen to be able" (literally)
"They can because they think they can"
            (Virgil, a Roman poet; author of the epic poem `Aeneid' from 70-19 BC)

Self concept is a new concept. However, we are all familiar with it as apparent in Virgil's words. Self-Concept is a general term that simply refers to a collection of an individual's beliefs about himself that includes how he views, evaluates or perceives himself regarding his attributes and who/what the self is" (Baumeister, 1999). Self-concept is also one's reflection formed as a result of the interactions with others and their reactions to him as first coined by Cooley (1902) with the concept of the "looking glass self" which explains that we see ourselves reflected in other people's reactions to us and then form our self-concept based on how we believe other people see us (A Primer on Communication, n.d.). Self concept is the perceived self of an individual with an evaluative judgment based on culture. It is the formation of self through the experiences with the environmental reinforcements and the significant others (Shavelson et al., 1976). In the construction of self concept how the traits of the individual are evaluated by the others designates the value of the individual, either positive or negative.

Skaalvik (1997) in his review of the related literature lists several aspects related to the construction of "self-concept".

Frames of reference. There are several standards or criteria to judge one's own traits and accomplishment. Which trait of the individual is to be validated is determined through social comparison to contruct a viable self concept. often serves as the most potent source of information for self-concept. Frames of reference play a particularly important role in the development of academic self-concept (Marsh, 1986, 1987).

(2) *Causal attributions*. The attributions associated with the individuals failures and successes are important in that they affect how he views himself.

(3) *Reflected appraisals from significant others* are made use of to construct self-concept. The belief of how the others view the individual lead the individual to view himself in the same way

(4) *Mastery experiences* which are self-schemas created from individual's past experiences in a particular domain. (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003 pp. 3-4).

(5) *Psychological centrality*. Rosenberg (1979), in his analysis of selfesteem, claimed that self-esteem is based on self-assessments of qualities that are perceived as important or psychologically central by individuals.

Self concept and self efficacy are used interchangibly, there are conceptual and empirical differences between them. Some researchers think that self concept is the generalized form of self efficacy while the others argue that self efficacy is a par t or a kind of self-concept. In essence, they represent different views of oneself

To Bandura (1977),

> perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of
> action required to produce given attainments. . . Such beliefs influence the course of action people choose to pursue, how much effort they put forth in given endeavors, how long they will persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, their resilience to adversity, whether their thought patterns are self-hindering or self-aiding, how much stress and depression they experience in coping with taxing environmental demands, and the level of accomplishments they realize (p. 3).

Self –concept is multi-dimensional and hierarchical in a way that it covers various domain-specific self-concept perceptions (e.g., academic, physical, social) (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Bornholt & Goodnow, 1999a; Byrne, 2002; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2002). Shavelson's hierarchical model (Shavelson et al., 1976) splits self-concept into academic and nonacademic branches. Academic self concept is related to the knowledge of subject matters, academic performance, the like whereas non-academic self-concept relates to social, emotional and physical aspects of self like gender roles and racial identity (Pajares &Schunk, 2001). The distinction between self concept and efficacy applies here as well. Self concept is at con   the other s at task level beliefs. Defining "*academic self-concept" as an individual's perception of self-efficacy in academic subjects* (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; DiPerna & Elliott, 1999; MacMillan, Gresham & Bocian, 1998; Snow et al., 1996), Eccles (2005) highlights seven primary features of self-concept: organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative and differentiable.

Academic self-concept has an important aspect of success in personal development as well as in professional life. Learners having different self concepts were shown to demonstrate different levels of achievements at school