

Öğretmenlik Mesleği Genel Yeterliklerindeki Öğretmen Kimliğinin Freire'ye Göre İncelenmesi

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Özet: Bu çalışma Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından 2017 yılında güncellenen Öğretmenlik Mesleği Genel Yeterlikleri dokümanını içerdiği öğretmen kimliği açısından incelemek için yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın amacı dokümandaki öğretmen kimliğini belirlemek ve bu öğretmen kimliğinin eğitimci ve eleştirel pedagojinin kuramcılarında olan Freire'nin çalışmalarındaki öğretmen kimliğini yansıtmayı yansıtmadığını incelemektir. Bu çalışmada içerik analizi yöntemi ile güncel yeterlik belgesi incelenmiş ve belgede yansıtılan öğretmen kimliği ile Freire'nin öğretilerine göre şekillenen iki öğretmen kimliği karşılaştırılmıştır. Freire'ye göre öğretmenler hem profesyonel hem de toplum liderleridirler. Güncel öğretmen yeterlikleri belgesinde öğretmenlerin profesyonellikleri öne çıkarılmış ve yansıtıcı düşünen uzman olarak kimlikleri belirlenmiştir. Ancak öğretmenlerin toplum lideri olma özellikleri çok kısıtlı kalmıştır. Freire öğretmenlerin toplumu dönüştüren uzmanlar olduğunu iddia ederken, toplum lideri olarak öğretmen kimliği güncel öğretmen yeterlikleri belgesinde görülmemiştir. İçerik analizi sonuçları ışığında yeterlik belgesi hakkında bazı tavsiyeler ve gelecekteki araştırma konuları için de önerilerde bulunulacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmenlik mesleği genel yeterlikleri, Öğretmen yeterlikleri, Öğretmen kimliği, Freire ve öğretmen kimliği

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An Investigation of the Teacher Identity in the General Competencies for Teaching Profession in Turkey from a Freirean Perspective

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the teacher identity situated in the current competencies for teachers in Turkey updated by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in 2017. The main aim of the analysis is to identify the situated identity of the teachers in the document and to examine whether the teacher identity in the document reflects Freire's theories and doctrine, who was an educator and an advocate of critical pedagogy. The content analysis is conducted to identify themes and categories in the current document, and they are compared to the two themes in Freire's work. According to Freire, there are two roles of teachers: *teachers as professionals* and *teachers as society leaders*. Teacher professionalism is promoted and teachers are situated as reflective practitioners in the document. However, the emphasis on teacher leadership is highly limited. While Freire emphasizes the transformative role of teachers in society, the theme *teachers as society leaders* is not found in the document. Some suggestions and implications regarding teacher competencies will be presented.

Keywords: Teacher competency document, Teacher competencies, Teacher identity, Freire and teacher identity

Introduction

Nowadays, the call for standardisation in teacher education has been frequently observed (Katz & Snow, 2009). While selecting, promoting, and evaluating teachers, competence documents become reference points for those involved in the process. In addition, teacher educators shape their instruction following the competency statements, and pre-service teachers try to meet them in their practicum course at practice schools. Therefore, the competency documents are essential and may impact teachers' identity.

In 2017, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE hereafter) published the most recent teacher competency document. The document has been designed to fulfil various aims. It will be used for pre-and in-service teacher education, continuing professional development for teachers, career development and rewarding, teacher induction and employment process, and performance evaluation (MEB, 2017, p. 15). The variety of functions of this document makes it a critical document for teacher education and education in general in Turkey. There are few studies on the current document, such as those making comparisons with other countries' competence documents (Akin & Sözen- Özdoğan, 2021) or asking pre-service teachers to evaluate themselves based on the competency document (Tuncer et al., 2019). This paper attempts to analyse the current general competency document for teachers in Turkey from a critical perspective. It aims to identify the situated teacher identity in the document and compare it with an influential educational philosopher Paulo Freire's theory of teacher identity.

First, brief literature on teacher identity will be presented, and tensions and discourses within identity are explored. Afterwards, the relationship between teacher identity and teacher standards will be examined. Then, reviewing Freire's work on teachers, the identity of teachers reflected in

his work will be examined and explained in detail.

Literature

Teacher Identity

Identity has been investigated for many years to fully understand the complex nature of second language teachers' beliefs, underlying reasons for their practices, and teaching and learning processes. (Miller, 2009; Gee, 2000; McNally et al., 2006; O'Connor, 2008). Varghese (2006) defines teacher identity as "... the influences on teachers, how individuals see themselves, and how they enact their profession in their settings" (as cited in Miller, 2009, p. 174). Gee (2000) reframes identity as an analytical tool to explore teachers and their professional endeavours. Beijaard et al. (2004) explain that teachers' professional identity is not fixed and is primarily influenced by the teacher roles, the context of the school and society's values. All in all, teacher identity is a social phenomenon, and it is shaped by the context in which teachers work.

Research on teacher identity (Miller, 2009) shows that teachers do not act solely following the principles and theories they learned in pre-service teacher education. Teachers are social beings who construct their own professional /personal knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs in a large and dynamic social environment as they engage in interaction with others. Workplace conditions, curriculum policy, cultural differences, social demographics of the school and the students, institutional practices, teaching resources, and access to professional development opportunities are some factors shaping teacher identity (Miller, 2009, p.175).

These various sources forming identity sometimes cause conflicts. Singh and Richards (2009) draw attention to the tension between pre-service teacher education and real school experience in constructing teacher identities. Contradictions between teachers' long-held beliefs coming from their school years that is the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975 as cited in Legutke & Diefurth 2009, p.210); their pre-service education at the campus and their experiences at the practice school can be the source of tension while constructing an identity. This tension is inevitable and may be helpful for identity construction. Hawkins (2004) states that "a critical sociocultural view sees learning as the remaking of identity in a particular space, through the mediation of new discourses, and knowledge as the ability to use-in-practice" (as cited in Singh & Richards 2009, p. 205). Thus, identity construction is dynamic and can take different shapes considering the context. The teacher identity is a complex issue involving many psychological, social, and contextual factors that may be difficult to identify and analyse.

Relationship Between Identity and Standards

Among the factors affecting teacher identity mentioned above (Miller, 2009), educational policies set by policymakers constitute an essential place. Educational policies are generally reflected in standards and competency documents for teachers. Katz and Snow (2009) describe the standards for teachers and list their benefits:

They set out clear expectations for all involved in the educational expertise, including the public. They provide a “common language” for talking about the process of teaching and learning. For teachers and administrators, they provide guidelines for designing instruction, curricula, and assessment. They also set criteria for program excellence and, perhaps, for promotion and career advancement. For teacher educators, they set out the competencies needed by prospective teachers as they prepare for teaching careers. For students, they set clear performance expectations, assisting them to understand what they should know and be able to do to meet the standards (p.67)

Standards are needed for teachers' professional development, teaching quality improvement and student achievement (Kosnik et al., 2016). However, Flores (2016) highlights that while standards positively affect teacher education in general, there might be some adverse effects.

Apple (2001) finds the standardisation movement dangerous for teachers and teacher education in general. He argues that we are in the era of “conservative modernisation”, which is blend of “neoliberal market reforms, neo-conservative reforms involving strong central cultural authority and new middle-class emphases on technical and managerial solutions to moral and political problems” (p.182). Therefore, turning schools into markets and increasing competition and responsibility among the teachers may lead to inequities and even more marginalise the diverse groups. He states that “the move to create uniform standards for teaching and teacher education to improve the quality of education for all—may not guarantee what the effects of such policies will be in the real world” (p.183).

Hobbel (2009) argues that “teachers often act as if the language of standards is natural, “full of allusions and shared understandings”, although it is not. He analyses the discourse of standards set by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the United States and finds that the discourse of rationality, professionalism and egalitarianism dominate the standards. He further claims that the image of professional teachers gives more responsibility to the teachers without empowering them. For instance, teachers can be easily found responsible for unsuccessful students in high-stakes exams, although they do not have much power and authority in the assessment process. In addition, it is found that progressivism and positivism are promoted so that teachers' jobs can be divided and accurately measured; however, according to Hobbel (2009), “progress and rationality provide policies with blankets that cover inequities” (p.44).

In addition, it is found out that in the NCATE standards, “all students” is mainly focused on and it is stated that “all students” includes students with exceptionalities and of different ethnic backgrounds”. Therefore, Hobbel (2009) asks the question “different from whom?” and claims that this language creates inequities among the people and only promotes unity rather than diversity. In addition, Newman and Hanauer (2005) analyse NCATE/ TESOL teacher education standards and find them too prescriptive, instrumentalist and impractical to use.

Moreover, Stevens (2010) analyses the standards for qualified teacher status in England, taking a critical approach and concludes that the standards lack the word “critical” and depict teaching as “knowledge transmission”. He further (2010) argues that “the production of education appears to have lost sight of learners and teachers in its inexhaustible quest for official governmental accountability” (p.190). However, Stevens (2010) is optimistic about the contribution of teacher competencies to teacher education. With the support of the teacher education and university, the standards may lead teachers to reflect on their own practice and find solutions. According to him, “it is in fact, quite possible to be a reflexive practitioner and to meet standards” (p.195). Therefore, he suggests using standards as a guide and a tool for supporting teachers to reflect on their actions and conduct research throughout their practices.

McNally et al. (2006) suggest that finding an identity and meeting a standard create conflicting discourses for beginning teachers. Their interviews with first-year teachers did not identify any standard-related discourse. In light of the results, it was concluded that the transition to teaching could not be easily expressed in the language of occupational standards. Therefore, a mutual dialogue between policymakers and teacher educators was suggested to investigate the extent the language of the standards can capture the complex, personal nature of a beginner’s experience. Not only first-year teachers but also experienced teachers are observed to have problems with standards in identifying their identities.

Day et al. (2005) argue that

Policy changes and reformist imperatives have left many teachers themselves being confused about their professional identity, the extent to which they are now able to use their discretionary judgement—arguably at the heart of their sense of professionalism—and about their capacity to carry out the responsibilities associated with their new performativity identities, which challenge traditional notions of professionalism and professional purposes and practices (p.566).

While standards are found necessary to promote teacher professionalism and quality, they are also argued to have limitations due to their dominating and controlling effect on teachers. However, it should be noted that the standards have always been and will be a part of teacher education and the teaching process. The question is how standards can contribute to improving teacher education and student achievement.

Freire and Teacher Identity

Throughout history, philosophers and theoreticians have put forward various theories to improve teacher quality and development. Paulo Freire (1921-1997), a well-known Brazilian educational philosopher, did not directly work on teacher quality; however, his influential work and life reflect an ideal teacher who works with and for their students and the community. Freire believes education is a powerful way to notice, understand and fight against dominating and oppressing forces in society. His way of education, critical pedagogy liberates people and helps them critically understand the world around them (Akkuş & Balıkçı, 2016) and Paulo Freire

depicts a clear teacher identity in his work: transformative, liberating and professional teacher.

In his ground-breaking book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he draws attention to the need for a critical stance towards capitalist education and oppressive authorities holding power in society. In the same book, Freire (1970) uses the metaphor of depositing money into a bank account to describe the current state of teaching. In the banking concept of education, students are considered depositors of knowledge and passive objects of education. Teachers are seen as transmitters and narrators of knowledge, like depositing money into a bank account. They are authorities who hold power and make all the decisions, whereas students are passive receivers of knowledge.

Freire (1970) thinks that “knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p.58). Thus, according to Freire, knowledge in the banking concept of education is “hollow and alienated” (p.57), leading to oppression and enslavement in society. Instead, to combat oppressors, Freire (1970) suggests *problem-posing education* which is an instrument for liberating society and empowering oppressed people. Problem-posing education means producing one’s knowledge to solve problems. It rejects the idea of passively accepting the knowledge people receive. For instance, Freire (1970) taught reading to the workers in a village (at that time it was considered that some marginalized groups such as workers did not need to know how to read and write in Brazil). He taught them not only to read single words but also to understand the world around them to resist the oppression they had been experiencing.

According to Freire, *problem-posing education* is possible with mutual dialogue between students and teachers. Rather than the narrative character of the teaching, the students and teacher should work together to create their own reality and solve their problems. This makes students more autonomous, critical thinkers and more human.

Freire (1970) brings a new approach to the relationships between teachers and students with problem-posing education. He states that

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the students and students-of-the teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach (p.67).

Freire (1970) proposes that students should be as active as teachers and contribute to the learning and teaching process. Freire’s ground-breaking ideas reflect a novel teacher image and identity who work for and with students. He does not impose standards for teachers but his theories and work clearly provide guidance for teachers to transform society.

Freire’s other influential book, *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters who Dare to Teach*, is written for teachers, especially beginning teachers. This book consists of letters and speeches of

Freire. Freire who works for the liberation of his society throughout his life starts with a warning in his book. Freire (2005) points out that he does not want to be imported or exported. He thinks that pedagogical practices can only be exported via re-creation and re-writing. Thus, he confirms that his theories are context-bound and should be only adapted to another context with careful consideration of that society's unique character.

In the book, Freire (2005) defines teachers as cultural workers. Emphasizing the unique character of each culture, he clearly states that teaching is closely related to the culture. Teachers should be aware of the realities of the environment they are working in. Instead of enacting top-down changes without the involvement of the people in society, teachers work with those people for improvement in general. He points out that his ideas and theories should not be exported to another culture. Every society constructs its own realities and meaning which reflects its education system.

To illustrate, Freire (2005) draws attention to the teachers' ascribed roles in Brazil which are coddling and being mother/father to the students. This ascribed role implies that teachers cannot complain about their work conditions or low salaries as mothers and fathers do not complain about their children. Freire (2005) thinks that this ideology prevents teachers from going on a strike to demand better conditions for themselves and the school. According to Freire (2005), teachers should be seen as professionals who can want better working conditions and demand professional rights for themselves. In this way, teachers feel empowered and will be more efficient in their practice.

Another issue related to teacher empowerment is a powerful and liberating pre-service teacher education. If teacher candidates are seen as passive receivers of the knowledge in the pre-service teacher education and if they are not encouraged to consider what they have learnt critically, they will become technicians who follow the steps in a manual. After this kind of education, those new teachers will expect their own students to do the same in their own classes. In order to break this chain, Freire (2005) argues that teacher candidates should critically evaluate their own curriculum and should be actively involved in their own education. They should co-construct the knowledge with their professors and to assess critically top-down theories produced in different contexts.

In addition, progressive teachers should be scientifically prepared, have a taste for teaching, and be role models for students so they should be consistent in their acts, be able to practice theory (praxis) and be critically conscious. Teachers as critically conscious humans should struggle for social justice, equality, liberation, and democracy.

Freire clearly states that education is a political and ideological act; thus, teachers are also politicians. This politician role encompasses critical consciousness that enables teachers to fight for social justice and democracy. Freire (2005) considers teachers as society leaders who work and learn with both their students and the community they live. In other words, Freire's influential doctrine depicts teachers as powerful professionals who work for the people and the school to

transform society They learn with their students and work with/for them to create knowledge together and solve societal problems together.

Freire and his influential philosophical and critical approach affect the studies conducted in Turkey. For instance, Freire's approach and his theories were employed in order to develop dialogue in peace education (Gürsel-Bilgin,2020), investigate adult education (Kaya & Altan, 2019), analyse teacher authority in higher education (Uzay, Bilgiç & Demirkasımoğlu, 2019) and to discuss and define teacher quality (Ayhan & Uysal, 2014). However, the competency document prepared by the MoNE (MEB, 2017) has not been investigated using the Freirean approach before. For this reason, this study is significant since it is the first attempt to analyse the competency document through the lenses of Paulo Freire. Keeping in mind that Freire himself stated that his ideas should not be imported to another context, this study compares the identity of teachers depicted in Freire's work and those enacted in the current competency document for Turkish teachers.

The Methodology

The primary purpose of this study is to analyse the General Competencies for the Teaching Profession prepared by the MoNE (MEB, 2017) in Turkey, considering the situated identity of the teachers. The following research questions will be addressed:

- 1) How is the teacher identity situated/reflected in the current competency document?
- 2) Do the current competencies reflect Freirian theories about teachers' identity? If so, to what extent?

First, this study explores the kind of teacher described in the current competency document. The reason for investigating teacher identity in standards is that the document is thought to guide and influence pre-service teachers, practising teachers, and teacher educators' practices. It is a general reference document that guides teacher education, selection and promotion. Therefore, it is essential to look at the document to see how they situate teacher identity and the implications for all stakeholders in teacher education. And then, the situated identity of teachers will be compared to that presented in Freire's works, especially *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters who Dare to Teach* written for novice teachers. The other purpose of this analysis is to compare the implied identity of teachers in the competency document set by the MoNE in Turkey (MEB, 2017) and the teacher identity described in Freire's letters to the teachers. (Freire,2005).

The Generic Competencies

The document "General Competencies for Teaching Profession" is an official text prepared by the MoNE in Turkey and implemented in 2017. This document is not a subject-specific document, and it involves all teachers regardless of their subject. While in 2006 MoNE prepared a subject-specific competency document for teachers across different branches, in 2017 they produced a single and comprehensive document for all teachers. The document reads that

Instead of determining a subject-specific competency for each subject area, subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge have been added in the general competencies; so, a single, comprehensive text was created. Therefore, every single teacher's subject area is also covered in the competencies. The General Competencies of Teaching Profession has been updated in this context and it now consists of three interrelated competency domains; namely "professional knowledge", "professional skills", and "attitudes and values". These main domains include 11 competencies and 65 indicators related to the competencies. (MEB, 2017, p.13)

Table 1 is taken from the document (MEB, 2017). It shows three broad categories and 11 competencies. The original table also includes 65 indicator sentences defining competencies. Under the professional knowledge domain and content knowledge, there are five indicator sentences. For instance, A1.4 : “She/he classifies the main research methods and techniques of his/her subject field”. In the result section, the related indicator sentences will be given; however, to avoid taking too much space, they will not be presented here.

Table 1

General Competencies for Teaching Profession

A. Professional Knowledge	B. Professional Skills	C. Attitudes and Values
A1. Content Knowledge	B1. Planning of Education and Teaching	C1. National, Moral and Universal Values
She/he has an advanced and critical perspective on theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge in his/her subject field.	She/he plans education and teaching processes effectively.	She/he observes national, moral and universal values.
A2. Pedagogical Content Knowledge	B2. Creating Learning Environments	C2. Approach to Students
She/he has a good knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogical content knowledge of her/his subject area.	She/he prepares appropriate teaching materials and builds an healthy and safe learning environments, where effective learning can be achieved for all students.	She/he has an attitude that supports the development of students.
A3. Knowledge on Legislation	B3. Managing the Teaching and Learning Process	C3. Communication and Cooperation

As an individual and teacher, she/he conducts her/himself according to the legislation related to her/his duties, rights and responsibilities.

She/he manages the teaching and learning process effectively.

She/he establishes an effective communication and cooperation with students, colleagues, families, and other educational stakeholders.

B4. Assessment and Evaluation

C4. Personal and Professional Development

She/he uses the methods, techniques and tools of assessment and evaluation that fit for purpose.

By carrying out self-appraisal she/he participates in personal and professional development activities.

In order to analyse the competency document in Turkey, the content analysis method is adopted. Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from the text. Cohen et al. (2007) further explain that any written material such as documents and interview transcriptions can be analysed by adopting content analysis. In addition, one of the most important attractions of the analysis is that “as the data are in permanent form (texts), verification through reanalysis and replication is possible.” (Cohen et al., p. 674). All in all, Cohen et al. (2007) summarise that:

Content analysis takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to generate or test a theory. It uses systematic, replicable, observable and rule-governed forms of analysis in a theory-dependent system for the application of those categories (p. 675).

Krippendorff (2004) also suggests that each text has multiple meanings, and each reader can make multiple readings and interpretations. Therefore, each text should be analysed keeping these questions in mind: “asking who is saying what to whom and how, the reasons for, and purposes behind, the communication, and the context of communication and its effect” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 675).

The content analysis method is selected to analyse the competencies to interpret the situated identity of teachers in the documents. The competency document is written in Turkish, and an English version is also available on the official website of the MoNE. For the analysis, the Turkish -original- document was used. The steps were followed to conduct the analysis. First, the researcher read the document and introductory sections several times to get a general sense of the material. In this reading process, the researcher assigned codes to the competency indicators and

employed en Vivo coding (Creswell, 2012). The researcher then tried to eliminate overlapping codes and put them under the two themes suggested by Freire (2015). *Teachers as professionals* and *teachers as society leaders* were the general themes adopted from Freire (2015). To increase the reliability of the analysis, an external audit (Creswell, 2012) who held a PhD in English Language Teaching was invited to analyse the competency document and evaluate the researchers' analysis. The external audit read the competency document, checked the themes, and agreed that the analysis was appropriate.

The Results

Teachers as Professionals

The content analysis results indicate that teachers are considered professionals with professional knowledge and skills. Professionalism is highlighted in the document frequently by referring to several aspects. First, teachers are viewed as professionals who have the excellent command of their field and follow recent developments in their field. They are not depicted as passive practitioners. They are seen as reflective teachers who “She/he construe with the reflections of fundamental theories and approaches to his/her subject field.” (Indicator A1.2). As stated in the A2.4 competency statement “She/he compares and contrasts various teaching strategies, methods, and techniques that can be used in the teaching of his/her subject area”. In other words, teachers as professionals can make their own decisions and they are seen as empowered practitioners in their field. This decision-making role of the teacher is emphasised in another competence statement “She/he makes decisions on how to benefit from the national and moral values in his/her subject area” (A2.6). This is in line with the teacher identity depicted in Freire’s works. He also refers to the teachers as *progressive* professionals who are scientifically well-prepared. In this sense, the document situates teachers as professionals who seek knowledge to gain expertise in their areas.

Second, in the document, teachers are portrayed as “reflective practitioners” (Schön, 1983). For instance, “She/he re-arranges the teaching and learning processes in accordance with the assessment and evaluation results.” In this competency indicator, teachers are considered professionals who evaluate their work and practice, reach some conclusions, and take action accordingly (B4.5). The document encourages teachers to change their practice if it does not work. This might be in line with Freirean teacher identity to some extent. Freire (2015) depicted teachers who learn with and from their students. Although the document does not have a clear competency indicator stating learning from students, it might lead teachers to engage in reflection which is a form of teacher learning.

Freire (2005) also thinks that teachers should be reflective practitioners in their professional and daily lives. The term *critical consciousness* is also related to critical thinking and reflection. The competency document reflects a critical attitude in the content knowledge domain: A.1. content knowledge reads: “She/he has an advanced and critical perspective on theoretical,

methodological and factual knowledge in her/his subject field”. In other words, expert knowledge is clearly emphasised in the document.

Continuous learning as an essential feature of teachers’ professionalism is also emphasised in a few statements. To illustrate, C4.3. reads: “She/he involves in activities to improve himself/herself personally and professionally.” It means the document encourages teachers to engage in professional development activities. In addition, the document envisions a teacher who updates themselves and is aware of the world. For instance, C4.7. reads: “She/he follows national and global agenda.” Or, C4.5. reads “ She/he participates in cultural and artistic activities”. These statements do not explicitly point out the activities the teachers should participate in; however, they situate teachers as active individuals aware of the recent national and global developments. When Freire’s works are examined, it is clearly seen that he envisages a teacher who develops *critical consciousness*. It means teachers are fully aware of the world and examine everything critically. In addition, they can put this knowledge of the world into practice and work with people around them for the betterment of society. It might be argued that the current competency document does not involve such a comprehensive and transformative understanding of learning and development.

Freire (2015) asserts that teachers are not “coddling parents”. Freire (2015) uses this metaphor to argue that parenting and teaching are completely different and teachers cannot be expected to parent a child. For instance, parents are not supposed to go on strike to demand their rights; however, teachers must be able to have this right. They have their individual and professional rights as practitioners. When the current document is examined, it is seen that, one competency area is devoted to the *knowledge of legislation* (A3) in the document under the domain of professional knowledge. There are five competency indicators in this category. For instance A3.1. reads: “ She/he accounts for his/her rights and responsibilities as a citizen”. Or A3.4. reads “ She/he accounts for the legislation related to the teaching profession.” The last statement involves other stakeholders: She/he recognizes the rights and responsibilities of educational stakeholders (A.3.5). The verbs used in this section “account for, recognize” imply that teachers are expected to know their rights; however, they do not reflect Freirean approach completely. It seems that the document situates teachers who know their rights, duties and obligations. It does not guide teachers in the further steps.

Freire (1970) highlights the importance of the relationship teachers build and maintain with their students. His doctrine's main themes are mutual dialogue, respect, and love for the students. When the current competency document is analysed, the reflection of this approach is visible. For instance B2.5. reads: “She/he organizes democratic learning environments where students communicate effectively.” In addition, the document emphasises individual differences. B2.3. reads: “She/he organizes the learning environments by considering the individual differences and students’ needs”. Knowing students’ lives and being aware of their realities are also mentioned in Freire’s work to a great extent. With regards to this, B3.4. reads: “She/he makes learning relevant to the daily lives of the students.”

The competency document involves several indicator statements on values and attitudes, which Freire emphasises to a great extent. To illustrate a few: C1.2. reads: “She/he respects individual and cultural differences.”. C2.1. “She/he values every student as a human being and individual” or C3.3. “She/he builds relations with others through empathy and tolerance”. Those concepts are hard to define and measure but the document reflects a teacher who shows tolerance, and empathy and loves students. The emphasis on values and attitudes echoes Freire’s teaching philosophy.

Teachers as Society Leaders

Freire (2005) defines teachers as cultural workers and politicians. He believes that teachers have the power to transform society in collaboration with the people. When the competency document was analysed from this perspective, it was shown that there is little emphasis on this aspect of teacher identity.

There is a particular emphasis on the teacher’s relationship with students, the environment and institutions. However, teachers are not situated as “leaders” in the competency statements. They are expected to be aware of the different contextual features of the nearby environment. To illustrate, B3.6 reads: “She/he takes into account the natural, cultural, and socioeconomic characteristics of the environment she/he is working in his/her practices.” They are also expected to work in collaboration with other stakeholders as stated in B3.8: “She/he cooperates with the related persons, institutions, organisations, and colleagues when carrying out the educational activities”. However, as it is clearly seen, they are not constructed as leaders or guides in this process. Regarding the relationship with other people, they are considered equal colleagues who should be willing to share knowledge and experience as C3.4. states: “She/he is open to sharing knowledge and experience with his/her colleagues”. As the last indicator sentence suggests they are expected to participate in activities related to school development. C3.6. reads: “She/he participates in activities intended for school development actively”. However, they are not expected to take the initiative and plan activities for the betterment of the school. It seems that their role is limited to following orders and rules.

Table 2 below summarises the themes in the competence documents.

Table 2.

The themes identified in competencies for teachers

Freirean approach	Teachers as professionals	Teachers as society leaders	
Themes in the competency document	Teacher and profession	Knowledgeable in the subject matter and pedagogy Reflective practitioner Continuous professional development	Collaborator with colleagues and other stakeholders Attending activities to develop the school.
	Teacher and students	Know students' needs and interests Act as guide, model, opportunity provider	

Discussion and Implications

First of all, it should be noted that Freire (1970) finds top-down requirements or competency statements that are not prepared through mutual dialogue with teachers and policymakers as oppressive. Moreover, Freire always emphasises that teaching is a culture-bound work, so his doctrine and theories might not work successfully in other contexts. It means that a competence document for Turkish teachers does not have to reflect a teacher identity similar to the one in Freire's works. Finally, preparing a simple, short but comprehensive competency document regarding the teaching profession is a highly demanding task. A simple document may not cover every aspect of the teaching profession. Keeping these concerns in mind, a brief discussion of the current competency document for Turkish teachers will be presented here.

It seems that teachers are expected to reflect on their practice and engage in different professional activities. Situating teachers as reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983) means that teachers are required to think about their practice and solve their in-class problems through reflection. In this sense, the document reflects this teacher role and identity. Freire (2015) also posits that teachers should be student teachers. It means that they should never cease to learn. In this sense teachers as life-long learners as professionals can be inferred from the current competency document.

The content analysis of the competency document for teachers in Turkey indicates that teachers are situated as professionals who demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the subject matter and the pedagogy, maintain good communication with students and colleagues and know students well. They are expected to know their rights as professionals or be aware of the environment's cultural, social, and economic characteristics, and they are expected to participate in various educational activities. However, it seems that the competence document does not situate teachers as leaders who can suggest solutions to problems and solve problems like Freire imagined teachers in his

work. While Freire (2005) emphasizes the role of teachers in the transformation of society, the competency statements do not entirely reflect this ideology. The teachers are expected to “account for” the rules, “participate” in different educational activities or “collaborate” with other colleagues. Those verbs indicate that they are not expected to lead or guide others to make changes or even voice their own problems.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study, the former competency document published by MoNe in 2006 (which is still available on the website) situates teachers as professionals who can “make suggestions” regarding their rights, duties, and responsibilities (A.8.2 in MEB, 2006, p.20). Or in the same document, A.7.2 reads: “s/he prepares and conducts action research to develop the school” (MEB, 2006, p.19). It seems that the former competency document (MEB, 2006) describes teachers who can express their demands and suggest solutions regarding their profession. However, in the recent document (MEB, 2017) teachers are only required to “know” their rights, responsibilities, and duties. The recent document does not specify the further steps or actions for teachers as the former document did. For this purpose, it seems that the recent teacher competency document does not reflect the Freirean approach regarding teacher leadership such as the transformation of society.

Research on teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004, Miller, 2009) shows that institutional rules influence teacher identity. Since this competency document is prepared for the teacher selection and induction process, it will affect teachers’ professional lives. Pre-service teachers’ practicum performance is also evaluated based on the same document. Therefore, teacher educators are supposed to consider the competency indicators while they evaluate teacher candidates. The pre-service teachers may want to meet the criteria presented there. The pre-service teacher education curriculum is also shaped considering the document. In this sense, it is highly important to analyse the document from various perspectives.

This study analyses the document in terms of the situated teacher identity and attempts to answer the question of whether the teacher identity situated in the document reflects the Freirean approach. It is found that teacher professionalism is promoted in the document, but teacher leadership is not found. While Freire emphasizes the transformative role of teachers in society, the competency document does not reflect this teacher role.

This study may present some suggestions for the stakeholders in education. Considering the importance of the current competency document for teachers, policymakers may think about updating the document considering research on teacher identity and teacher learning. They may add another component regarding teacher leadership to encourage teachers to take the initiative more when they encounter problems in their practice, the school and the immediate environment. In addition, there might be some statements regarding teachers’ roles outside of the school and the transformative power of teachers to initiate change in society.

There might be further studies regarding the competency document. The current literature

shows that the functions of the recent competency document should be clearly stated (Tuğluk & Kürtmen, 2018). The stakeholders should be informed regarding the use of the document, and they might be asked to report on their own experiences with the document (e.g. how they use it or how they understand the document) Another research topic might be the comparison of the documents published in 2006 and the recent one (2017) to explore the changes with regard to the teacher roles and identity. The differences between the two documents might provide a picture of changing understanding of teacher identity in society. In addition, a subject-specific teacher competency document might be needed (Tuğluk & Kürtmen, 2018). Perspectives from different stakeholders can be taken to produce an updated version of the competency document.

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