

**T.C. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANABİLİM DALI  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ BİLİM DALI**

**EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES OF EFL TEACHERS  
ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**(YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ)**

**Hacer ÇALIŞKAN**

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**Tezi Hazırlayan: Hacer ÇALIŞKAN**

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*To Melike and Nil Betül, My Lovely Angels*

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## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, K-12 okullarında görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim faaliyetlerine yönelik algısını araştırmıştır. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine katılma motivasyonları, mesleki gelişimleriyle ilgili ihtiyaçları ve mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine katılmalarını engelleyen zorluklar da incelenmiştir. Bu araştırmada veri toplama yöntemi olarak, katılımcıların mesleki gelişim algısının derinlemesine araştırılmasını sağlamak için yarı yapılandırılmış, telefon tabanlı bireysel görüşme benimsenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'deki farklı okul tip ve düzeylerinde görev yapan 13 İngilizce öğretmeni oluşturmuştur. Mevcut araştırmanın bulguları, öğretmenlerin çoğunun mesleki gelişimi mevcut gelişime ayak uydurmak ve öğrencilerin başarılarını artırmak için kendilerini geliştirmek olarak gördüğünü göstermiştir. Öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim faaliyetleri ile ilgili tercihleri; diğer öğretmenlerle iş birliği içinde olma ve kendilerini profesyonelce geliştirmek için sosyal medya veya blog tabanlı paylaşım platformlarının kullanımını göstermiştir. Mesleki gelişim etkinliklerine katılmak için motivasyon kaynakları olarak öğretmenlerin neredeyse tamamı içsel motivasyonlarını, özellikle öğrencileri için faydalı olmak için kendilerini geliştirmek olarak dile getirdiler. Sonuçlar, öğretmenlerin etkili bir dil öğretimi için öğretim pratiklerine yönelik, pedagojik ve dil yeterlilik ihtiyaçları olduğunu göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, öğretmenler ağır iş ve müfredat yüklerini mesleki gelişim faaliyetlerine katılmak için bir engel olarak ifade etmişlerdir. Buna ek olarak, öğretmenler MEB ve okul yönetimi tarafından sunulan mesleki gelişim faaliyetlerini etkisiz olarak algıladıkları için, bu faaliyetlere katılma motivasyonlarının olmaması onlar için bir engel teşkil etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mesleki gelişim, mesleki gelişim faaliyetleri, İngilizce öğretmenleri, hizmet içi eğitim.



## ABSTRACT

This study explored the perception of English language teachers serving at K-12 schools towards professional development (PD). Moreover, teachers' motivation in attending PD activities, their needs regarding PD and challenges that hinder their attendance in PD activities were investigated as well. As data collection method, semi-structured, phone-based individual interview was adopted in this research to provide in-depth exploration of the participants' perception of PD. The sample of the study was 13 English language teachers serving at different type and level of schools in Turkey. Findings of the current research showed that most of the teachers regarded PD as keeping up with current development and improve themselves to increase pupils' achievement. Teachers' preferences regarding the PD are; collaboration with other teachers and social media or blog-based sharing to improve themselves professionally. As a motivational source to attend PD activities, nearly all of the teachers expressed their intrinsic motivation in terms of improving themselves especially to become beneficial for their students. The results indicated that teachers had instructional, pedagogical and language proficiency needs for an effective language teaching. However, teachers expressed their burden under heavy workload and curriculum as a barrier to attend PD activities. Furthermore, as the teachers perceive the PD activities offered them by MoNE and school administration as ineffective, their lack of motivation to attend the activities serves as a barrier for them.

**Key Words:** Professional development, professional development activities, English language teachers, in-service training.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ELL: English Language and Literature

ELT: English Language Teaching.

HS: High School

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

PD: Professional Development

PS: Primary School

SS: Secondary School



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## INTRODUCTION

“An education system is only as good as its teachers”  
(UNESCO, 2014: p. 9)

Teacher education has been largely focusing on the issues considering teacher learning, teacher subject knowledge, and teacher professional qualification for the last three decades. Educating competent teacher is a fundamental issue of a national education policy. Moreover, every education system calls for these competencies because teachers are the ones who are responsible for implementing the existing or reformed educational programs. For a better implementation, teachers need to learn how to teach, what to teach and also how to develop and get ready professionally. The quality and proficiency of teachers are mainly considered to have crucial role in learning outcomes and performance of students. Therefore, teachers are required to improve their subject knowledge, skills and they have to continue these improvements throughout their career in order to keep up with current developments in their field and not to fall behind the evolving changes in their field.

Guskey (2000) put forward, “Never before in the history of education has greater importance been attached to the professional development (PD) of educators” (p. 3). The effectiveness and quality of PD programs have great effect on the learning opportunities of students. Therefore, continuance of teacher learning through PD opportunities can contribute to reforms and improvements in educational system. PD approaches that are closely integrated with situative and constructivist theories have been replaced by traditional approaches which are usually viewed as discrete from classroom practices and are away from current learning theories and school reform (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010: p. 550). Teachers’ involvement in PD activities based on such theories contributes them to adopt an innovative perspective on teacher learning, professional practice and educational reforms, which in turn leads to increase teachers’ knowledge and improve their classroom practice, and evidently fosters students’ achievement.

Globalization and internalization have induced people to learn and use English language, which consolidate the English language teachers’ position. Teachers’ proficiency and quality have an important role in students’ performance and learning

outcomes. Hence, language teachers need to re-conceptualize their knowledge base, improve their skills and keep up with current methodological and technological developments. In order to accomplish these desired tasks, teachers need to attend PD activities during their career. Rather than the top-down PD programs, bottom-up teacher PD has been increasing in recent years, which underlies the situation specific PD and involvement of the teacher in making decision regarding the content and process (Borg, 2015: p. 5).



## **CHAPTER I**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter includes four sections. At first, a background to the study is presented. Then, purpose and the significance of the study and research questions are stated. The final section concludes with definition of key terms.

#### **1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

English language teaching (ELT) curriculum has been updated in many countries including Turkey to keep up with the recent developments in the field and also to boost the English language teachers' quality by stressing the importance of their PD process (OECD, 2016: p. 46). The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) carries out in-service teacher education programs via Department of In-Service Training. This unit designs and implements the in-service training activities for teachers serving at public primary secondary and high school levels. In-service training offered by MoNE are two-week seminars at the beginning and end of each academic year. The content of these seminars generally addresses to teachers in every field. Activities specific to English language teachers consist of just minority of these seminars (Koç, 2016: p. 457; Uztosun, 2018: p. 561). Private schools prefer organizing in-service trainings specific to their teachers. The school principal either invites experts to their school or support teachers to attend PD workshops and conferences at different institutions.

In spite of both the ongoing efforts to increase the knowledge and skills of English language teachers in Turkey and up to date language policy reforms, the learners are still away from the desired language proficiency levels (Korkmazgil, 2015: p. 105; Öztürk & Aydın, 2019: p. 187). Taking all these efforts into consideration, there has been research exploring the effectiveness of PD programs (Daloğlu, 2004: p. 677; Ekşi & Aydın, 2013: p. 675; Toprakoğlu, 2017: p. 2; Turhan & Arıkan, 2009: p. 410; Uysal, 2012: p. 19; Uztosun, 2018: p. 557).

## **1.2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Current study was designed to explore the perception of teachers regarding PD. Moreover, their motivation to participate in PD activities, their needs for PD and challenges they faced in attending PD activities were explored. To provide a comprehensive picture, both public school and private school teachers serving at primary, secondary and high school levels were involved. As the aim of the study was to explore teachers' perception in-depth, semi-structured individual interview was adopted to uncover and describe the participants' points of view regarding any structure, meaning and essence of the experience.

## **1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study aims to find answers to following research questions;

1. What are the perceptions of English language teachers towards PD?
2. What motivate English language teachers to participate in PD activities?
3. What do English language teachers need for PD?
4. What challenges do English language teachers face in attending PD activities?

## **1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of PD is as obvious as the presence of continuous change in every field of life including the teaching profession, which requires life-long learning (Avalos, 2011: p, 14). The current study is significant due to two major reasons. Firstly, the studies focusing on the perception of teachers and conducted in Turkey in the last decade are predominantly quantitative studies (e.g. Eksi, 2010; Ozder, 2011; Ozturk, 2008). In spite of an evolving interest in teachers' PD, the studies on teachers' PD experiences in Turkish context are not many and the number of qualitative research has been very scarce (Baser, 2012; Cakmak, 2013; Ozturk & Yıldırım, 2012). Therefore, this issue is still needed to be searched on. Secondly in terms of methodological significance, the participation of teachers from all levels of schools, including private and public, makes this study distinctive because the extant literature



has specifically focused on English teachers working at higher education institutions or public schools (Yılmaz & Arıkan, 2019: p. 20; and Yurtsever, 2013: p. 674).

MoNE Teacher Strategy Document (2017) underlies the prominence of promoting teachers' PD. It is aimed to identify the PD needs of teachers via performance evaluation system and to increase the quality of teachers by means of PD activities from the onset of their career. Given these premises, this study will highlight the teachers' perception, motivation, needs and challenges regarding PD.

## 1.5. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Professional development:** PD is teachers' growth professionally as a result of designing their own learning systematically, which aims to support students learning as well (Postholm, 2012: p. 405).

**Ministry of National Education (MoNE):** It is a ministry of Turkish government. It is responsible for both public and private educational system's supervision via applying a national curriculum.

**Elementary school:** Elementary school includes the first four years of compulsory education in Turkey. The students ages range from 5.5 to 10 years old.

**Secondary school:** Secondary school includes the compulsory education at 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in Turkey. Students' ages range from 10 to 14.

**High school:** The final step of the compulsory education in Turkey is four years of high school. It includes 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The student's ages range from 14 to 18.

**Public school:** Public schools are affiliated to the Ministry of Education and all expenses are met by the state budget. Also, the objectives of education, the curriculum and the content of education are designed and supervised by the Ministry of Education (KIRMIZI, 2014: p. 8).

**Private school:** Private schools are also under the supervision of MoNE. However, in accordance with the law no. 625 on private educational institutions, private schools are run by private entities.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This present section presents the background to the research. It then explains the statement of the problem, the purpose of the research as well as the significance of the research.

#### **2.2. DEFINITION OF PD**

Twenty first century can be characterized as a period of rapid changes and growth in all areas of life. The teaching profession has been certainly taken with this unprecedented speed of development and transmission of knowledge. Using information and communication technologies is supposed to be an inevitable part of teaching process today (OECD, 2009). Teachers need to keep abreast with emerging educational methods and practices and evaluate profiles and needs of the learners more thoroughly (Büyükyavuz, 2016: p. 135). Following up-to-date curriculum change trends, being aware of current second language acquisition research should constitute the priority of the teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2005: p. 20). For those reasons, teachers need to maintain to acquire more information about their field and increase their professional capacity to be more effective teachers. In this respect, PD retains its growing importance in career advancement of teachers. PD has gained importance for three decades. Guskey (2000: p.3) emphasizes that the expansion of our knowledge base in education is growing rapidly and this expansion requires new reforms to comply with this growing knowledge base. Teachers, administrators and all levels of stakeholders in education need to get accustomed to their new roles in education with the help of PD.

First of all, it should be accepted that the necessity of PD for educational institutions is not essential because of their deficiencies, it is essential because of the dynamic feature of education. Guskey (1991: p. 241) is among the ones who mentioned the term 'professional development'. Before him the term was generally referred to as staff development, reform in education, teacher change, educational change and improvement in education. From Guskey's point of view, previous studies generally focused on the inefficiency of PD studies and the way how to improve them. He states that there are dichotomies among the researchers. For example, some researchers put teachers in the center and focus on their daily classroom activities to improve students' learning; some researchers focus on changes from a broader perspective and suggest institutional and systematic changes. In addition, there is view that PD should be teacher-initiated; on the other hand, the alternative approach is that the capacity of teachers and school personnel is not enough to make enhancement for that reason it should be considered with a clear vision beyond the individual. Last, some scholars support the view that gradually increasing changes should be enacted, however; others support that overall changes should be implemented. All these dichotomies in professional development make the situation hard for the reformers to take action (Guskey, 1991: p. 242).

According to Richards and Schmidt (2003) PD is "the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and knowledge and examining his or her teaching systematically" (p.542). Borgs (2003) highlights that learning process of individuals from a cognitive perspective and explained that "teachers are active, decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs" (p. 81). As stated by both scholars; PD is an individualized learning process which takes into consideration one's own context.

Postholm (2012: p.1) defines teacher PD as 'teachers' learning: how they learn to learn and how they apply their knowledge in practice to support pupils' learning'. He reviewed the articles related to PD of teachers and concluded that not only individual but also organizational factors influence teachers' learning. PD activities led by teachers' cooperation were revealed to be more beneficial for teachers.

Moreover, a positive school atmosphere and appreciation of teachers' learning along with collaboration with experts were asserted to effect teacher PD positively (Postholm, 2012: p. 1).

Darling-Hammond and Richardson examine in their review (2009: p. 59) what generally promotes and what does not promote teachers' PD. The review indicates that researching in their subject field and dealing with the ways how to teach it to their students boost teachers' professional learning. As a result of their implementation in study group, they suggest that reading on literature and discussing on it cooperatively is an effective way of PD. Participant teachers also prefer extended PD programs rather than short term ones.

Day (1999: p. 20) states that getting the degree to become a teacher is essential, but not enough to maintain professional career as a teacher. In order to boost the knowledge, skills and capacities of students, the teachers need to develop their own knowledge, skills and capacities considerably. For that reason, he stresses out the necessity of continuing PD as different kinds of formal and informal opportunities to sustain their growth. In his later studies, he asserts that the more teachers' experience is the more they need to learn; otherwise, experience can hinder professional growth (Day, 2002). This point of view indicates the continuity of professional learning over time in line with one's years of experience. Additionally, Richards and Farrell (2005: p. 22) underlines that pre-service teachers cannot learn everything about their subject fields and actual school atmosphere before serving their professions because of the changing nature of the shareholders of teaching process, which necessitates them to keep abreast of the current development. Similarly, as teachers' teaching quality is crucial, teachers need to improve themselves continuously by engaging in PD programs. The continuity of development is fundamental for both novice and experienced teachers (Wong, 2011: p. 142; Borg, 2018: p.195). First years of teaching can be demanding and stressful for novice teachers and to come over these difficulties they need to improve themselves. For the experienced teachers, the continuity of PD is equally important not to get burn out or to come over burn out feeling. Considering both novice and experienced teachers, participating in PD programs help them both improve and adapt themselves to the changes in the field (Şentuna, 2012: p. 88; Tanış, 2019: p. 122). Efficiency of programs is the striking point of PD programs; therefore,

Avalos (2011: p. 10) stresses that “learning how to learn” and aiming students’ growth are to be core elements of PD.

In a previous study by Luneta (2012: p. 373), PD programs for teachers and their designing, implementation and evaluation and also the failures and shortcomings of these programs from 2000 to 2010 were reviewed. He concludes that the needs of the teachers should be identified before designing PD program, and also success of a PD program is largely dependent on the role of the teacher in that PD program. It means that greater engagement of teachers in PD is likely to enhance the pedagogical and content knowledge needs of teachers and their teaching and learning outcomes (Luneta, 2012: p. 373).

### **2.3. EFFECTIVE PD**

Guskey (1994) stresses the uniqueness of individual and claims that it is not possible to decontextualize the educational environment. Therefore, he comes up with the optimal mix guidelines to get successful results from PD programs to increase the students learning achievements. These guidelines are;

- Recognizing that change is both an individual and organizational process,
- Thinking big but starting small in planning and implementation,
- Working in teams to maintain support,
- Including procedures for feedback on results,
- Providing continued follow up, support and pressure,
- Integrating programs. (Guskey, 1994, p. 5-25)

Lieberman and Wilkins (2006: p. 127) suggest the use of integrated practices for a successful PD strategy. Professional Development Pathways Model includes elementary, middle and secondary schools in both urban and rural districts and this model suggests steps to meet particular needs of each school. As schools vary in their needs, context and composition, the model recommends a flexible PD model regarding individualized, grade-level, subject-area, and team-based PD.

PD focuses on teacher learning and cognition, leading PD designers to adopt more collaborative, comprehensive and socio-constructivist approach instead of traditional and top down point of view (Borg, 2003: p. 83; Freeman, 2002: p. 3). In this sense PD programs require to include some important aspects such as more inquiry, collaboration, and construction of knowledge so that teachers can take more autonomous decisions about their teaching (Korkmazgil, 2015: p. 32). Borg (2015) puts forward that although there are various views about how to design an effective PD program, it needs to include the following features:

“Relevance to the needs of teachers and students; teachers’ active role in shared decision making about content and process; teacher collaboration; institutional support; critical reflection; authenticity through being embedded in the reality of schools and classrooms; coordination with institutional, educational, social and cultural environment; analytical engagement with knowledge; and respect towards teachers’ experience and knowledge.” (p. 961)

According to a report on effective teacher PD released by The Learning Policy Institute, improvement in teacher’s classroom practice through PD is associated with positive learning outcomes of students (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, 2017, p. 4). Bates and Morgan (2018: p. 623-626) suggest seven elements in designing an effective PD program in their review on PD topic from 35 cases. They summarize these seven elements in their study to facilitate the design of PD programs and to increase their efficiency. These seven elements include,

1. Content focused design that is the theory part which needs to be applied to theory.
2. Active learning means engaging and interactive experiences in PD sessions rather than the traditional way of sit and get models.
3. Support for collaboration emphasizes the power of social learning. Collaboration and conversation lead teacher to take action in the classroom.
4. Models of effective practice aims to show instructional practices rather than tell.
5. Coaching and expert support is a great chance for a teacher to be assisted and during the classroom practices and after the class teacher can get tailored feedback to improve himself/herself.

6. Feedback and reflection design is the missing part of most sit and get trainings, but it is one of the most important parts of the PD programs. Feedback is the constructive part of the programs as long as the right conditions are established. Reflection design is the evaluation of the feedback to improve instructional practices.
7. Sustained duration design emphasizes the continuity of PD to increase efficacy.

Guskey (2009) states that “Effective professional development requires considerable time, and that time must be well organized, carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content or pedagogy or both” (p. 499). Garet et al. (2001: p. 915) confirm the assumption that effective teacher PD programs include several various factors such as focusing on content, facilitating active learning and improving the quality of knowledge and skills. They suggested that it is necessary to direct attention to duration of the program and active participation of the teacher to conduct an effective PD program.

#### **2.4. TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER DEVELOPMENT**

Teacher training and teacher development are two prominent terms in teacher education. Although both are designed to support the improvement of teacher thereby the achievement of students, different aspects of them require special interest. The content of teacher training activities is generally designed by experts. Those activities aim short term and immediate goals (Richards and Farrell, 2005: p. 4). For that reason, it can be described as a top-down model. One-shot programs such as in-service trainings, seminars, workshops are some types of teacher training programs. Although training programs are delivery of ‘correct’ teaching practices, they may not reflect actual classroom context (Kennedy, 2002; Akyazı, 2016: p. 70). However, teacher development aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers to enable them to take their own decision over their classroom practices and students’ achievement (Richards & Farrell, 2005: p.4; Stuart, Akyeampong & Croft, 2009; Tsui, 2011: p. 25). Richard and Farrell (2005: p. 6) explain the remarkable features of training as;



Training involves understanding basic concepts and principles as a prerequisite for applying them to teaching and the ability to demonstrate principles and practices in the classroom...The content of training is usually determined by experts and is often available in standard training formats or through prescriptions in methodology books.

On the other hand, teacher development has a broad view of teacher education concerning more about the growth of teacher with long term goals of teacher in their profession (Allwright, 2005: p. 28). Additionally, teacher development via PD activities calls for a constructivist approach through which teachers change their practices to meet their students' needs (Kennedy, 2014: p. 692; King, 2016: p. 590). In this respect teachers need collaboration and support to transform their manner. In light of these definitions, teacher training is the knowledge of how to implement certain concepts and principals into classroom practices while teacher development is teachers' own ability to build on training considering various dimensions of their classroom practice.

As the PD programs focus on student learning and achievement, various needs of teachers, their learning styles and other contextual factors; collaboration and communication are inevitable. These aforementioned characteristics of PD programs arouse the interest of researchers. Current approaches identify teachers as the producer of knowledge rather than the consumer of it. PD programs require teachers to evaluate their own knowledge and to take charge in both content and process of the program, which prompts teachers to contribute to the program, thereby to get more benefit of it (Borg, 2015: p. 14; Guskey, 2009: p. 498).

## **2.5. TYPES OF PD ACTIVITIES**

Richter et al. (2011: p. 116) define PD as being “uptake of formal and informal learning opportunities that deepen and extend teachers’ professional competence, including knowledge, beliefs, motivation and self-regulatory skills”. This definition points out formal and informal ways of PD. Planned and organized programs designed by schools or other organizations are referred as formal. In-service trainings and workshops are the prominent example of formal PD programs. They can be also named

as traditional ways of development. However, informal PD is less-structured, spontaneous, more individualized and context-bounded. Collaborative PD activities and reflective practices are generally referred as informal PD activities.

The extant literature reports various kinds of PD activities and those can be categorized differently. Garet et al. (2001) draw a comprehensive framework including structural elements such as types of participation, duration, form and core elements such as content oriented, active learning opportunities and coherence. Regarding all these elements they describe the following PD activities; workshops/ seminars, action research, case discussions, lesson study, coaching/mentoring.

Another general categorization belongs to Richards and Farrel (2005, p. 14). They draw a framework based on the nature of the activities regarding the context, experience, knowledge and competency of teachers. The framework is comprised of four units which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Table 1 shows the activities and some activities can take part in multiple groups and it can be concluded that teachers can develop themselves but, in some cases, institutions can provide teachers with needed support and opportunities.

**Table 1**

*Activities for PD*

Individual	One to one	Group based	Institutional
Self-monitoring	Peer coaching	Case studies	Workshops
Journal writing	Peer observation	Action research	Action research
Critical incidents	Critical friendships	Journal writing	Teacher support groups
Teaching portfolios	Action research	Teacher support groups	
Action research	Critical incidents		
	Team teaching		

(Richards & Farrel, 2005: p. 14)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) carried out an investigation via Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (2009) and presents PD activities into two groups as more structured, formal activities and less structured, informal activities. More formal, structured activities are presented according to most participated to least participated as courses /workshops, education conferences / seminars, PD-oriented teacher network, individual and/or collaborative research, mentoring and peer observation and coaching, observation visits to other schools, and qualification programs. Less structured, informal activities are informal dialogues with colleagues and reading professional literature. It is stated in the report that the order of the activities can change depending on the participants in different countries.

Guskey (1999) discussed each type thoroughly and maintained that “it’s unlikely that any single model will prove effective for all individuals under all conditions. The appropriateness of any particular model varies depending on the goals, the content, and the context for implementation” (p. 29).

### **2.5.1. Workshops**

Workshops are brief learning opportunities to get particular knowledge and skills. A well-prepared and expert led workshop can be an initiative to experience different types of PD activities to improve their own way of teaching thereby can improve both individually and institutionally (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.23).

Although it is possible to experience both effective and less effective workshops, a beneficial workshop require to have some qualities. Topic of the workshop should be practical with theoretical base and relevant to the participants experience. The participants of a workshop need to be arranged carefully to be avoided a lecture type presentation. The participants should share their ideas and get feedback. Workshop leaders should be knowledgeable about both the workshop subject and the way how the adult learners learn. Activities in a workshop session should be well designed and progress smoothly including different kinds of activities. Follow-up is an essential stage of workshops to see the application of teachers to their classroom practices after

workshop. Last but not least, evaluation part can be a guide to design further effective workshops. (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.25-30)

### **2.5.2. Self-monitoring**

A teacher is generally check out the way of his/her teaching practices to reflect on his/her strengths, weaknesses and the points he/she needs to improve as a teacher. In order to make alteration a teacher needs to observe or monitor himself/herself systematically. Richards and Farrell (2005) call this systematical observation as self-monitoring. Self-monitoring is an objective way of judging oneself and brings awareness to teachers about their teaching in the classroom.

Self-monitoring can be achieved via lesson report, audio-recording a lesson and video-recording a lesson. Lesson report is the teacher's own report after the class about the actual progress of the lesson. Audio-recording and video recordings are similar methods, however; video recording gives more accurate information to teacher to evaluate his/her own teaching philosophy (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.34-48).

### **2.5.3. Teacher support groups**

Collaboration is an essential part of teacher development. A teacher support group is a group of teachers focusing on either one's own issue or a common issue. A teacher support group can achieve several goals together such as material development, coaching, reviewing the curriculum and/or plans, peer coaching, team teaching, classroom observation or action research so on so forth.

Teacher support group can also be referred as *teacher networks*, *learning circles* and *study groups* all of which emphasize the collaboration of teacher for gaining better understanding of teaching philosophy. As it is always stressed designing a PD activity requires being systematic. Group membership, group organization, group size, group meeting place, group goals and troubleshooting are the certain elements of forming a teacher support group. To sum up, designing a teacher support group is an opportunity

for an institution to create a collaboration atmosphere, thus allowing to benefit from experiences of each other (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.51-61).

#### **2.5.4. Keeping a teaching journal**

Teaching journal is a written source of the teaching experiences for commenting, evaluating and discussing about them. Keeping a teaching journal generally helps a teacher expand his/her awareness. Actually, experiences gain value in this way and it would be a great source for other teachers. A successful application of keeping journal necessitate thorough thinking about goals, focus of journal and necessary time to allocate for it (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.68).

#### **2.5.5. Peer observation**

Peer observation is different from recording one's own classroom. Peer observation requires an observer in the classroom, which makes teacher anxious about it. It is an observation of whole class hour or part of it to get a deep insight into teaching, learning and classroom interaction. Using written narrative, field notes or checklist are some ways of collecting data about the class to be observed, thereby making the peer observation more objective and purposeful for a later evaluation or discussion (Cirocki & Farrell, 2017, p. 20).

#### **2.5.6. Teaching portfolios**

Teaching portfolio is a kind of self-directed PD activity that consists of documents and other type of teaching materials. It is a tool for a teacher to evaluate himself/herself and it is a source of reflection and review for future development. Working portfolio and showcase portfolio is different kinds of portfolio. Working portfolio is for reaching an aim and to achieve this aim teacher collects the documents and then evaluate the process according to this portfolio. A showcase portfolio consists of teacher's best practices generally for applying a better position (Bala, Mansor, Stapa & Zakaria, 2012: p. 182; Hismanoglu, 2010: p. 990).

### **2.5.7. Analyzing critical incidents**

Analyzing critical incident is as its name suggest includes an incident that occurred during the teaching process and requires teacher to focus on it for further development. Analyzing an incident is an opportunity for a teacher to take action and learn from his/her own experience. An incident can be positive or negative as long as it is “critical” that the teacher needs to analyze and reflect on his/her way of teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2005: p.113).

### **2.5.8. Case analysis**

Case studies consists of cases which includes either the teacher’s own experience or another teacher’s experience to discuss on them and reach some basic principles. The cases are not necessarily unfavorable events to find a solution, there can be some favorable cases to reflect on. The analysis of favorable and unfavorable cases is a beneficial experience especially for novice teachers. When teachers discussing a case, it is possible to reach different solutions for a problem or to find out application of good practices.

Case study is different from critical incident regarding how a case is addressed. As a result of whole class analysis critical cases can be focused, however; a case study requires the description of a specific case and collection of necessary methods beforehand (Ortaçtepe & Akyel, 2015, p. 680).

### **2.5.9. Peer coaching**

Peer coaching is the collaboration of two teachers to improve their teaching. During the process one of the teachers takes the coach role and support the other teacher providing feedback and suggestions in a nonjudgmental and constructive way. The goals of the peer coaching process need to be set beforehand to get more beneficial support (Castañeda-Londoño, 2017, p. 95; Stewart, 2014, p. 28).

### **2.5.10. Team teaching**

Team teaching is the process of teaching the same class with a peer. It is important for both teachers to share the responsibility of teaching equally. It should be clearly understood that teaching a class together doesn't mean to have separate parts of the lesson and wait for one's own part to teach while the other teacher is teaching. It is essential to carry out the lesson together to complement each other. The benefit and aim of team teaching are to promote collegiality at school, to give a chance to different levels of teacher to observe each other and benefit from their experience and also a great chance for students to have more interaction with teachers. Prerequisites of team teaching is confidence to each other and a well-planned lesson by sharing the responsibility equally and continuing the lesson smoothly (Chen & Cheng, 2014: p. 44; Canaran & Mirici, 2020: p. 265).

### **2.5.11. Action research**

Action research is a problem-solution based classroom research. It requires time, planning and in some situation collaboration to find practical solution to a classroom issue. First of all, teacher needs to identify the problem and then collects data about the issue such as notes, diaries/journals, recordings, transcripts, diagrams showing the interaction in the classroom. Then he/she sets out an action plan to improve teaching and learning process. After implementing the action research teacher should reflect on the benefits of the action research whether it helps improve the problems in the classroom or not. At the end the teacher can share the findings of the study with his/her colleagues (Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015: p. 132; Edwards & Burns, 2016: p.128).

## **2.6. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER PD**

Teacher learning is an ongoing and complex process which involves factors affecting that process like past experiences, beliefs, ambition, motivation and determination (Freeman and Johnson, 1998: p. 397; Johnson, 2009: p. 3; Olsen, 2008: p. 2). Teacher development is not a phase in experienced teachers' career, it is process which continues throughout one's profession. Rather than a top down staff

development program, English language teacher development is a bottom-up process where the teachers' inner view is importer than the outsiders' view. English language teacher development is the expression of teachers' inner voice according to their needs and choices which are based on their experience in the classroom (Mann, 2005: p. 105).

Avalos (201: p. 18) reviewed the articles published within 10 years (2000- 2010) in *Teaching and Teacher Education* journal on teacher PD. She concluded that a modern and complex in-service training programs that take into consideration the factors affecting teachers' learning replace the traditional in-service training programs. She stated that instead of a unified training program, the designers of the programs need to consider the contextual factors and diversity of cultural, political and social factors of different countries. Lastly the study pointed out that extended training programs that reflect on the real practices and include teacher collaboration such as peer coaching, peer observation, co-learning, feedback, informal talks were regarded more beneficial.

Although in-service trainings are regarded essential programs to promote education, studies show that these programs cannot attain their objectives. Emery (2012: p. 18) conducted a comprehensive study including data from nine countries' primary school English language teachers across the world. She aimed to gather information about the teachers' qualifications, training, teaching experience, and career development. She found out that less than quarter of the participant didn't get any training after English language teacher education and nearly half of the participants believe the efficiency of training programs but they complain about the inadequate number of such trainings. Another study investigating the application of English language teaching curriculum at primary schools in Vietnam revealed that the most of the participant teachers lack of the necessary qualification to implement primary school English language curriculum and needed training regarding the methodology (Nguyen, 2012: p. 127).

Kabilan's (2019: p. 14) nation-wide study aimed to figure out the satisfaction level of English language teachers in Malaysia. His foremost finding is the absence of



adequate number of PD opportunities for teachers. Other than the inadequate number of programs teachers stated their perception toward PD activities as satisfied. Also, findings revealed that when the activities didn't provide teachers with problem solving, creating, decision making and evaluating opportunities, they expressed their ideas as below the satisfactory level. Lastly, findings displayed that teachers mostly appreciated school level PD activities.

### **2.6.1. English Language Teacher PD in Turkey**

In Turkey, all educational institutions are under the administration of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The MoNE is responsible for designing, implementing and supervising all educational services including formal and informal institutions. According to Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Law 1739, a teacher needs to have the knowledge and skills of the field that he/she teaches in general and to have the knowledge and skills about how to teach these knowledge and skills within the scope of the field and to have general cultural knowledge including disciplines of other fields. A number of studies have been carried out in order to resolve the quality and quantity problems in teacher training. Firstly, teacher competencies were determined under the titles of teaching competencies, general culture knowledge and skills, special field knowledge and skills in 1999 by a commission formed by MEB and university representatives (MEB, 2002: p. 24). Before implementing the prepared qualifications, Head of General Teacher Training and Education initiated a new project within the scope of the Support to Basic Education Project supported by the EU in 2002. Head of General Teacher Training and Education have carried out a detailed study to determine general and special field qualifications of the teaching profession. Sub-competencies special to English language teachers are determined as planning and organizing teaching processes, developing language skills, monitoring and assessing language development, cooperation with school, family and society, providing PD (MEB, 2006: p. 13).

Within the years 1998-2005, MoNE served 3201 INSET programs. There are approximately 150,000 ELT teachers and only 122 INSET programs were carried out for them. Considering the number of INSET programs, the programs designed for ELT

teachers is rather insufficient. It is considered that the lack of the qualified trainers and financial factors are main reasons of the insufficient INSET programs (Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2006: 112).

According to the 2013 annual report, 290 INSET activities were carried out in that year and 359,951 teachers participated in those activities. INSET activities categorized into four groups: (a) central activities, (b) distant (online) activities, (c) local activities, and (d) FATİH (Increasing Opportunities and Improvement of Technology Movement) project activities. Once the contents of the activities are analyzed, it is understood that a large number of activities were not related to teaching practice. There are activities such as graphic design, disaster management, decoration, and general English. In 2016, 480 activities were planned but 54 of them were cancelled. 2016 activities offered four activities (teaching methods and techniques, lesson planning, teacher innovation, using technology in teaching English) particularly designed for English language teachers. The 2013 annual report of MoNE reveals data about the effectiveness of INSET programs. According to the report nearly half of the participants agree that the education has a positive impact on their PD. Most of the participants agree that the education is beneficial for them.

In 2019, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of National Education Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development and the British Council. As a pilot project 2400 English teachers from 422 different schools in Ankara will participate in the PD program within the scope of this cooperation (MEB, 2019: p 12). Besides the MoNE's evaluation reports there are other studies on the evaluation of inset programs. Hoş and Topal (2013: p. 34) carried out a systematic review on the studies regarding the PD of EFL teachers in Turkey. They review the journal articles and thesis dissertation about the PD of EFL teachers between 2000 and 2012. Nearly all of the studies they reviewed were carried out at English Preparatory Schools of universities and most of the studies evaluate the PD programs; only a few of them studied on the impact of these programs on EFL teachers. Their review indicates that although teachers believe the importance of PD programs they are not motivated to attend such programs especially when they are compulsory to attend. Inconvenient time and place are other reasons that hinder their participation to PD programs. The

studies they review reveal that EFL teachers are reluctant to participate such programs because the programs are generally prepared as top down model and the needs of the teachers are not taken into consideration. The studies considering the impact of the PD programs highlight the importance of collaboration and sharing experiences.

Bayrakçı (2009: p. 46) carried out a comparative analysis of in-service teacher training both in Turkey and Japan. His study indicated that inadequate number of professional staffs, lack of collaboration among teachers and lack of feedback session during or after the training programs are the main problems of in-service trainings in Turkey. On the other hand, the most powerful tool of Japanese in-service teacher training system is experience and sharing the experience via collaboration. In Japanese education system teachers generally, preferred content specific experience sharing such as peer coaching and other pair-based activities rather than outside in-service sessions such as lecturing.

Uysal (2012: p. 12) conducted a study to evaluate a one week in service training program offered by MoNE. The aim of the program was to familiarize teachers with the new curriculum goals, communicative methods, and special techniques to be used with young learners, coursebook/materials adaptation, why English (L2) should be used in classes and situations where L2 can be used, use of storytelling, drama/dramatization, games, songs to teach English to young learners, learning styles and multiple intelligences. The evaluation of this one-week program revealed that teachers wanted to take part in the planning phase of the program. Moreover, the sit and get transmissive nature of the program brings about the reluctancy of teachers to participate the program.

The studies focusing on the effectiveness of PD programs demonstrate that needs analysis plays a really important role in the effectiveness of the program and the programs are effective as long as they give chance to participants to share their ideas and allow them to collaborate with their peers throughout the program. Moreover, rather than the theoretical content, practical and classroom-oriented PD programs increase the effectiveness of the program (Arslan, Mirici, & Oz, 2019: p. 223; Daloglu, 2004: p. 677; Haznedar, 2010: p. 11). On the other hand, teachers are not satisfied with

the programs because trainers are lack of teaching qualification, they don't offer practical guidance and use only lecturing during the programs. For those reasons teachers state that PD programs don't meet their expectation (Atay, 2008: p. 139; Koç, 2016: p. 455; Unal, 2010: p. 5028; Uztosun, 2018: p. 557). Uztosun (2018: p. 567) suggests that PD programs should promote practice-oriented activities focusing on the teaching context rather than offering new knowledge.

Hoş and Topal (2013: p. 303) conducted a meta-analysis research to review the studies that had been carried out regarding EFL Teachers' PD in Turkey. They reviewed journal articles, thesis and dissertations published between 2000 and 2012 in the literature of EFL teachers' PD and in-service training. Most of the studies in that review were evaluative and almost all of them were implemented at English Preparatory Schools of universities. Findings of their studies revealed that the teachers were lack of motivation to attend the PD programs because they find these programs ineffective. The participants of the study complained about time constraints, designing top-down model of programs without need analysis.

One another study conducted at a private school on the needs of English language teachers regarding in-service training revealed that the in-service needs of English language teachers were uncovered by MoNE and left to the initiative of the private institutions. This study was implemented designed to find out the needs of K1-4 English language teachers needs and design an appropriate PD program. Instead of the old fashioned, top down teacher training methods teachers preferred more intensive and short programs. The teachers expressed that they need to learn practical ideas about how to deal with mixed level classes and how to teach young learners. Rather than lecturing type of PD programs they desire to be offered solution to their problems and difficulties they had in the classroom; share their ideas, and may get hands-on solution and advice (Mede & Isik, 2016: p. 25). A more recent study supports the previous one and stated that the preferences of the teachers considering the input forms include discussion, collaboration and demonstration of practical ideas. Instead of a trainer-centered type of PD program, trainers should guide the teachers and provide them with the necessary feedback (Arslan, Mirici & Oz, 2019: p.223)

Most of the English language teachers criticized the PD programs that MoNe offer as in-service trainings as far from providing practical elements, collaboration, technology use and evaluation (Altun, 2011: p. 33; Deneme & Çelik, 2017: p. 11). Teachers are willing to share their experiences but also need to be motivated to take active role during the PD programs. Most of the teachers stated that rather than offering information transfer way of programs more teacher centered and collaboration-oriented approach should be obtained (Nalan & Gursoy, 2020: p. 380). In another study teachers stated their reluctance to participate in PD programs because they believe that the programs were carried out for the sake of ‘formality’ and they didn’t believe the usefulness of the programs as they were not practical (Yılmaz 2015: p. 71).

The research carried out in Turkey regarding the PD of teachers generally focus on the perception and beliefs of teachers. A great number of studies were conducted either at higher education institutions or at public school context. These studies generally focus on problems of PD (especially in the form of in-service trainings), effectiveness of PD activities or evaluation of PD activities. The results of these studies generally underly teachers’ dissatisfaction of PD and their demand for more individual, collaborative, context-oriented and hands-on PD activities. In this regard the participation of teachers from all levels of schools, including private and public, and also adopting a broad perspective which includes the teachers’ perception, motivation, needs and challenges regarding PD make this study distinctive.

## **2.7. SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this part literature review is summarized under four section first is the varying definitions of PD, second is the effective PD, third is the types of PD, and last is the summary of PD research. First, Advancement in technology has boosted the transmission of knowledge, which leads to more inquiry in language acquisition research and changes in curriculum trends. For that reason, teachers need to keep abreast of the development in their field more than ever. This rapid change urge teachers and other stake holders in education take action and grow themselves to adapt the dynamic nature of education. In this respect, all these efforts that teachers have been trying to make for almost three decades could be named PD. Throughout the

literature, teachers' PD was discussed as a process of gaining experience and expanding the knowledge base or taking action according to current context of teaching or a process of learning how to learn. Whatever the researchers have identified the PD, main regard of PD is to boost students' achievement.

Second, effective PD is discussed in literature and research suggest principals for an effective PD. Rather than a strict, top-down and centralized PD models, more flexible, individual and context-bounded way of PD is more beneficial for the development of teachers. Moreover, as the teachers need for PD varies according to their particular teaching environment, need analysis is essential to design an effective PD program. The aim of an effective PD can be summarized as making teachers more autonomous by giving chance them to collaborate, make inquiry and so construct their knowledge base and take decisions on their teaching process. Lastly, feedback and reflection are the essential parts of an effective PD. Unfortunately, these parts of PD are generally neglected in standardized PD programs. Feedback and reflection are actually the constructivist parts of PD, which leads to improvement in instructional practices of teachers.

Third, in the literature same PD activities are categorized differently. They can be classified whether the PD activity is a formal or informal type of PD activity. The activities can be classified as individual, one-to-one, group based and institutional PD. The PD activities can be aligned according to their implementation from more structured to less structured. Namely, PD activities that constitute these categories can be listed as; workshops, self-monitoring, peer coaching, case studies, action research, teacher support groups, team teaching.

Last, in the literature the research generally focused on teachers' beliefs regarding PD and what teachers regard as effective and less effective regarding their PD. Research also focus on evaluating the PD activities that offered teachers as in-service trainings. As a topic of interest, teachers' PD needs comprise an important amount of research. Researchers try to assess teachers' need regarding PD and make suggestions to the responsible officers for effective PD activities. Moreover, in

literature there are studies that deal with the type of PD activity that teachers mostly prefer and case studies where the researcher implements and evaluates that PD activity.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this part of the thesis, the following issues are introduced: Research Design, Researcher's Role, Procedures, Participants, The Development of the Interview Questions, Validity and Reliability, and Data Analysis.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research adopted qualitative research design. Qualitative research methodology is a popular approach in social science used to explore a phenomenon in detail with an interpretivist paradigm (Dornyei, 2007: p. 68; Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, 2011: p. 98; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013: p. 43). According to Creswell and Poth (2018: p. 66), there are five approaches in qualitative research – narrative research, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, and ethnography. In relation to the characteristics of qualitative research, Creswell and Poth (2018: p. 45), point out that data is collected in the natural setting instead of a lab or somewhere else where the participants are given a task or test to complete. Since researchers study in a natural setting, they can focus on the essence of participants' experiences. In addition, observation, interview, document analysis and field study are common ways of data collection tools where the researchers construct their own themes and patterns with a bottom-up (inductive) or top-down (deductive) technique in qualitative research rather than using questionnaire or other instruments that are constructed by other researchers. As qualitative research has an emergent feature, researchers can reorganize the research questions or data collection method according to current condition (Creswell & Poth 2018: p. 7; Gibbs, 2014: p. 277). It gives researcher a chance to elaborate on the issue considering philosophical ground of their research.



While the purpose of quantitative research is to attain analytical and/or static reality, qualitative research is generally regarded as interpretive, naturalistic and constructivist approach, which supports the notion that reality is not single (Creswell and Poth 2018: p. 16). As reality is multiple, and a holistic approach is suitable for that, studies conducted as a qualitative research aims to present a holistic view of the phenomenon being explored. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explains dynamic and complex nature of reality as:

The assumption that there is no single “truth” ... leads us ineluctably toward the insight that there will be no single “conventional” paradigm to which all social scientists might ascribe in some common terms and with mutual understanding. Rather, we stand at the threshold of a history marked by multivocality, contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies, and new textual forms. At some distance down this conjectural path, when its history is written, we will find that this has been the era of emancipation: emancipation from what Hannah Arendt calls “the coerciveness of Truth”, emancipation from hearing only the voices of Western Europe, emancipation from generations of silence, and emancipation from seeing the world in one color (p. 212).

As part of this thesis, among five qualitative approaches, phenomenological approach was employed. Philosophical frameworks demonstrating different views on the presence of reality (ontology), and the meaning of that reality (epistemology) were utilized in this study. Researchers who intend to figure out the way individuals perceive their environment choose to use a qualitative approach to study a phenomenon in detail (Creswell & Poth 2018: p.41; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015: p. 3). Phenomenological research through which one can grasp and describe a person’s or a group of people’s experiences and get deep understanding of them is a systemic approach to make investigation (Giorgi, 1997: p. 142; Moustakas, 1994: p. 18; Van Manen, 1990: p. 42). Phenomenology is designed to explore experiences from the point of the people who experienced them (Giorgi, 2006: p. 306; Selvi, 2008: p. 40; Van Manen, 2016: p. 2).

Taking all aforementioned features of qualitative research into consideration, utilizing phenomenological approach, this study focuses on to explore EFL teachers’

perception of PD process in issues of needs for PD; motivation for attending PD programs; and challenges they face during PD.

### **3.3. RESEARCHER'S ROLE**

Researcher's role is crucial in qualitative research because Patton (2014) states that "in qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument. The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork" (p. 14). Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2018: p.15) express that researchers reflect their own beliefs and paradigms to the research project, which shapes the way qualitative study is conducted. Furthermore, Heideggerian phenomenology regards the researcher as an active participant in the analysis process not a passive knowledge recipient (Khan, 2014: p. 303). Considering the role of the researcher as an active contributor, his/her knowledge, belief and assumptions throughout research process gain great importance.

Furthermore, researcher's attitudes towards participants is quite important in qualitative approaches especially during the conduct of interviews. It is suggested that positive attitude and sensitivity towards participants during interview are essential qualification of researcher (Creswell and Poth, 2018: p. 127). Therefore, researcher should reflect positive attitude and understanding manner towards the participants' varying feeling and reactions. Also, researcher's role is also important to develop good rapport with participants and to stay neutral in interview process. Patton (2002) explains that "Rapport is a stance vis-à-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-à-vis the content of what that person says" (p. 365). Participants must feel comfortable to state their ideas and they must feel what they tell is being understood by the interviewer. It is also important not to judge the participants during the interview and keep neutral throughout the interview process. One another important point is having control over the time without losing control over the focus of interview as Patton (2002) points out;

Control is facilitated by knowing what you want to find out, asking focused questions to get relevant answers, listening attentively to assess the quality and relevance of

responses, and giving appropriate verbal and nonverbal feedback to the person being interviewed (pp. 375-376).

The researcher of the study reported in this thesis is an EFL teacher for eleven years and has done teaching at all levels of schools. She did her best to maintain understanding, sensitive and neutral manner towards the participants and tried to keep control over the time and focused on interview process.

### **3.4. PARTICIPANTS**

Regarding the selection of the study participants, purposive sampling was preferred in order to maintain diversity in sample characteristics as much as possible. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study (Patton, 2014: p. 164). Researcher used purposive sampling technique to reach most-effective and information-rich participants so that she could access particular subset of people (Patton, 2002: p. 265).

In this study, the participants were selected according to their particular profile as; years of experience, gender, level of teaching (primary, secondary or high school), types of institution (public or private schools) and undergraduate degree. In addition to their specific profile, voluntary participation was taken into consideration because participants' willingness to express their ideas are vital to carry out an in-depth interview (Bernard, 2017: p. 168). The demographic information about the participants were displayed in Table 1. To ensure anonymity, the participants were named with pseudonyms, and their school names and locations were not identified.

**Table 2***Characteristics of Study Participants*

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Years of experience</i>	<i>Graduated department</i>	<i>Educational Background</i>	<i>Types of institution</i>	<i>Level of teaching</i>
1	Ela	F	5	ELT	Bachelors	Public	HS
2	Filiz	F	15	ELT	Bachelors	Public	SS
3	Adem	M	14	ELL	Bachelors	Public	HS
4	Can	M	7	ELT	Masters	Public	HS
5	Zubeyde	F	9	ELL	Bachelors	Public	SS
6	Ayşegül	F	11	ELL	Bachelors	Public	SS
7	Melike	F	2	ELT	Masters	Public	PS
8	Damla	F	7	ELT	Bachelors	Public	SS
9	Özge	F	11	ELL	Bachelors	Private	SS
10	Zeynep	F	9	ELL	Bachelors	Private	PR
11	Hande	F	2	ELT	Masters	Private	PR
12	Büşra	F	4	ELT	Bachelors	Private	PR
13	Hilal	M	14	ELT	Bachelors	Private	HS

*Note: HS: High School; SS: Secondary School; PS: Primary School; ELL: English Language and Literature; ELT: English Language Teaching.*

Participants in the study were 13 EFL teachers selected with purposive sampling from different levels and types of school in Turkey. Participant teachers' eight of them were graduated from ELT department and five of them were graduated from ELL department. Considering the academic degrees that the teachers had it was found that 11 of them had bachelor's degree while three of them had master's degree. Eight of the participant teachers are serving at public schools and five of them are at private schools. Five teachers are at PS, five teachers are at SS and 4 teachers are working at

HS levels. Teachers' experience was ranging from two to fifteen. Two of the participants were male and the rest of them were female.

### **3.5. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT**

As the data collection method, semi-structured, phone-based individual interview was adopted in this research to provide in-depth exploration of the participants' perception of PD programs because uncovering and describing the participants' points of view regarding any structure, meaning and essence of the experience can be achieved through in-depth individual interviews (Bernard, 2017: p. 13). Also, Creswell and Poth (2018) states that "Data collection in phenomenological studies consists of in-depth interviews and multiple interviews with participants" (p. 161).

The interviews were audio-taped depending on the consent of the participants. The audio-taped interviews were then transcribed. During the data collection process, the length of the interviews lasted 35 minutes on average. Because of the global pandemic, the interviews had to be held via Zoom meetings.

#### **3.5.1. The Development of the Interview Questions**

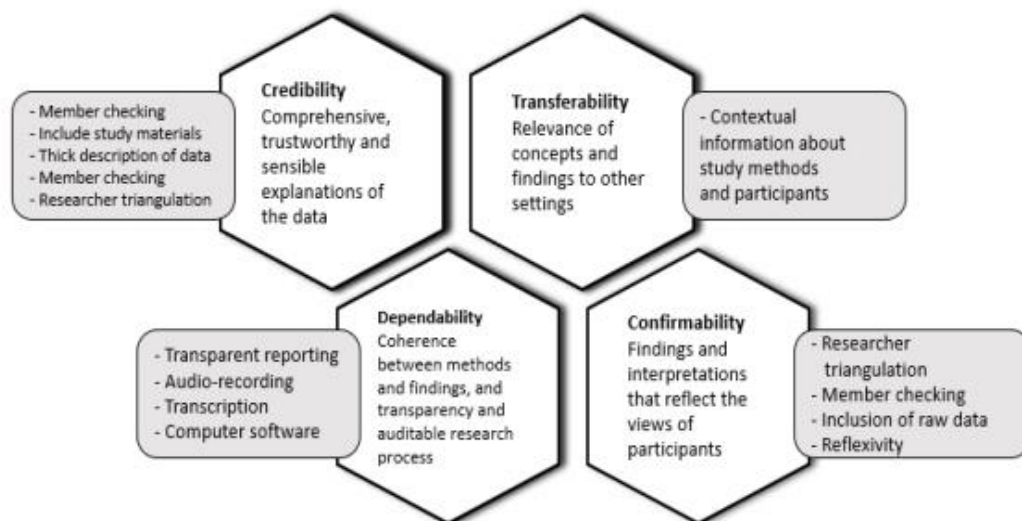
Interview, which is mostly applied in qualitative research, is used as a main data collection tool in the current study. Interviews give chance to researcher to gather direct information about people's feelings, opinions, experiences and knowledge about investigated subject (Patton, 2014: p. 4). Patton (2014: p. 117) offers three approaches to design an interview; the informal conversational interviews, the general interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview. These three approaches to designing interview differ in their flexibility regarding the types of interview items. It is crucial to design an interview which will be neither rigidly structured, nor entirely non-leading. "So it is not possible to avoid structure entirely nor would it be desirable, but it is possible to provide a structure that it flexible enough for interviewees to be able to raise questions and concerns in their own words and form their own perspectives" (Brinkman, 2014: p. 285). The approach that the researcher adopted in

this research is standardized semi-structured interview which allows participants to answer in detail and give chance to researcher to ask follow up questions. Thus, participants would be encouraged to share their ideas, perceptions and experiences clearly and sincerely.

In preparation of interview questions, a number of steps were followed in order. First, the relevant literature regarding PD was reviewed and the common theoretical and practical findings from the respective literature were listed. Second, relying on the extensive literature search, a pool of interview questions was prepared. Then, the researcher took the opinion of two experts who have expertise in PD. In accordance with their suggestions, necessary revisions were made on the questions. Afterwards, two teachers were asked to share their opinions about the clarity and simplicity of the interview questions. Last, the researcher did a pilot study by conducting two independent interview sessions prior to data collection in order to provide content validity and avoid any ambiguity in phraseology of the questions (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008: p. 248). The semi-structured interview protocol is provided in the Appendix.

### **3.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Validity and reliability of qualitative research via interviews is a topic of discussion. Regarding the validity, Seidman (2006: p. 23) explains that interviews are the tools to understand participants' experiences. Therefore, it is enough to reflect the authenticity of participants' expression to ensure validity. He maintains that as the aim of the interviews is not to test a hypothesis, generalization of the findings is not a topic of discussion. Creswell and Miller (2000: p. 126) present eight validation strategies for qualitative research in their book; "prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying the researcher's bias from the outset of the study, member checking, rich, thick description and external audits". Hanson, Craig, and Tong (2019: p. 1020) assert that validity of data analysis process in qualitative research can be assured by enhancing credibility, conformability, dependability, and transferability of a study. Techniques to enhance these features are presented below;



**Figure 1.** Components of Validity

All these in mind, member checking technique is applied in the current study to ensure credibility. Researcher stored the audio-recordings and transcription in her personal computer for the dependability of the data. Last, to warrant confirmability, researcher sent the transcribed interview data to the participants to check any misunderstanding between the interview text and audio files. Before conducting the interview process, interview questions were piloted in two stages. First of all, the questions designed for the interview were checked by two experts in the field to be sure that the questions in the interview address the right areas that the researcher aims to explore. In the second part of the piloting, a think-aloud-protocol was administered. Three teachers serving at different schools were requested to take part in this protocol. The teachers were asked to read the questions aloud and express their ideas about interview questions. With the help of teachers' feedback and information they expressed, the researcher made the necessary modifications and finalized the formation of interview questions.

In relation to the reliability of data analysis, the coding consistency approach was used. To this end, one expert from the field of ELT independently coded two sample interviews along with the researcher. The gathered themes and codes were compared by the researcher in terms of agreements and disagreements. The overall

coding agreement resulted in 80 %. Last, the researcher and the expert discussed to improve inconsistency in the coding sheets.

### **3.7. DATA ANALYSIS**

In this study, to analyze the data, deductive content analysis was preferred. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), deductive content analysis is defined as "Researchers use deductive thinking in that they build themes that are constantly being checked against the data. The inductive–deductive logic process means that the qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning skills throughout the process of research" (p. 82). Deductive codes are determined beforehand and constructed from research questions, relevant empirical research, theoretical frameworks, data collection tools (Forman, & Damschroder, 2007: p. 48). In deductive reasoning, researcher searches for predetermined codes. There are three phases of deductive and inductive content analysis process: preparation, organizing and reporting (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008: p. 109). As a preparation, all interview audio files were transcribed. In organization part, the pre-determined themes are created in the NVivo 12 software program and the relevant codes were created through ongoing assessment of the interview data. In reporting phase, the themes and relevant codes were reported in an organized manner. The following figure demonstrate an extract from the codebook exported from the NVivo 12 software program, which shows the distribution of the codes and their relevant references.



The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface with a list of codes. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Quick Access, IMPORT (Data, Files, File Classifications, Externals), ORGANIZE (Coding, Cases, Notes), and Memos. The main window displays a table of codes with columns for Name, Files, References, Created on, Created by, Modified on, and Modified by. The 'Positive' code is highlighted in blue.

Name	Files	References	Created on	Created by	Modified on	Modified by
Challenges	1	1	27.01.2021 12:58	OC	23.06.2021 23:08	OC
Organizational	13	35	27.01.2021 13:07	OC	28.01.2021 22:31	OC
personal	4	5	27.01.2021 14:26	OC	28.01.2021 22:18	OC
Motivation	0	0	27.01.2021 12:57	OC	27.01.2021 12:57	OC
Extrinsic	8	10	27.01.2021 13:49	OC	2.02.2021 21:53	OC
Intrinsic	12	16	27.01.2021 13:22	OC	28.01.2021 22:26	OC
Needs	0	0	27.01.2021 12:58	OC	27.01.2021 12:58	OC
Instructional practice	13	31	27.01.2021 13:15	OC	28.01.2021 22:34	OC
Language	7	7	27.01.2021 13:24	OC	2.02.2021 21:59	OC
pedagogical	6	6	27.01.2021 14:11	OC	28.01.2021 22:10	OC
Perception	1	1	27.01.2021 12:57	OC	2.02.2021 21:52	OC
Negative	7	11	27.01.2021 14:09	OC	28.01.2021 22:30	OC
Positive	12	22	27.01.2021 13:01	OC	2.02.2021 22:00	OC

OC 13 Items

**Figure 2.** The Extract from the Codebook

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **4. RESULTS**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The interview data was structured around four main themes, in accordance with four research questions, respectively: 1) Perceptions of teachers about PD; 2) Motivational factors to participate in PD activities; 3) Needs of teachers in PD; 4) Challenges keeping teachers from participating in PD activities.

#### **4.2. PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In exploration of teacher perceptions of PD, two codes emerged as “negative perceptions” and “positive perceptions”. Prior to sharing the respective perceptions, the participants’ various identification of PD was reported and their knowledge about the types of PD was explained. To contextualize the perception of teachers towards PD, the participants were first asked “What does professional development mean for you?”. The researcher assumed that participants’ primary understanding of PD should be explored to cover the rationales shaping their individual perceptions of PD.

**Table 3***Identification of Professional Development by Teachers*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perceived meaning of PD	Following the developments and keep up with them	6
	Gaining experience	5
	Improving yourself	4
	Gaining the abilities to enhance teaching and learning	2
	Seminars organized for teachers	2
	Familiarizing with students and identifying their needs	1
	Not just learning something but applying that knowledge to your teaching.	1
	Being aware of what you need	1
Refreshment	1	

The participants' identification of professional development and related phrases taken from their interviews are presented in Table 1. Nearly half of the participants stated that professional development was to follow the current developments and keep up with them. Actually, their understanding of the term reflects what professional development means literally. Four participants, who have teaching experience less than five years, noted that professional development is to improve yourself. On the other hand, the participants with teaching experience more than five years reported that professional development is to gain experience.

As a novice teacher with two years of teaching experience from a primary public school and pursuing master's degree in ELT, Melike stated:

When I graduated from university I really felt that I was ready for the teaching. We had such a lot of mock lessons that I could even guess the possible teacher-student and student-student talk. Professional development is a process starting just after going into teaching profession because there isn't training any more. You should follow the current developments in your field. I think being aware of the developments and keep abreast of them is what professional development means for me.

Another female teacher working at a private primary school for nine years, Zeynep shared her understanding of PD in the following way:

In my opinion, professional development is to improve yourself professionally and a teacher can achieve this purpose by gaining experience. Gaining experience is really important because each year contributes to your development. Furthermore, school culture is quite crucial in shaping your development. Both the students and their parents' expectation determine how to improve yourself professionally. The more they demand the more you try to improve actually.

With respect to one other identification of PD, as an aspiring teacher going on master's degree in ELT and having five years of teaching experience, Ela from public high school shared her thoughts in the following quote:

Professional development means that a teacher should improve oneself in every field of his/her profession. Before attending master's program, I regarded myself as a well-qualified teacher, but when I started masters' program I realized that in some areas I was really good but I had lots of weak points considering my profession. For that reason, I believe that a teacher should follow the developments in his/her field and try to improve himself/herself.

Like half of the participants, as an experienced public high school teacher with 14 years of teaching experience, Adem identified PD as:

I think professional development is to follow the developments in the professional field and try to keep up with them. Increasing own self-efficacy and language proficiency through experience is also important. I think professional development is to follow the current teaching methods and apply them to lessons.

Along with various identification of professional development by teachers, their exemplification of what exists in professional development also varies. Table 2 provides types of professional development activities that the participants stated.

**Table 4***Types of Professional Development by Teacher Opinions*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Types of professional development activities the participants can name.	Seminar, workshop, in service training	13
	Webinars	3
	Conferences	5
	Journals	5
	Research articles, books	6
	Attending post graduate programs	4
	Certificate programs (CELTA/ British Council)	3
	Exams (National or international language exams)	2
	Teacher support groups (social media groups)	4
	Blogs, internet	2
	Teacher collaboration	3
	Peer observation	6
	Action research	1
	Reflective practice	1

As it is obvious in Table 4, all teachers are acquainted with workshops, seminars and in-service trainings as of professional development activities. It is salient that when the teachers were asked to name the types of professional development activities they know, they all named seminars and workshops. Regarding the details of seminars and workshops, public school teachers shared in-service trainings and private school teachers came up with the seminars or workshops offered by publication companies. The teachers pursuing a master's degree regarded their education as a way of professional development whereas other teachers did not mention post graduate programs as a type of professional development. Furthermore, teachers pursuing their postgraduate programs stated that conferences, research articles and books are some types of professional development.

Four teacher who are working at a private school shared that peer observation (generally more experienced teachers' observation to less experienced one) is a way of professional development. As the researcher was a private school teacher knowing that peer observation is one of the professional development activities and realized that the private school teachers can name peer observation, she asked the public-school teachers whether it is a way of professional development activity or not. Some of their answers are presented below:

Adem (High school teacher with 14 years of teaching experience): I think it can be a chance to observe my colleagues to learn something from their lessons but we don't do such things. I have worked at three different schools before this school, but there was no such practice at my previous schools as well. We are six English teachers in this school. We share our ideas related to our lessons, the books, the students but we haven't observed each other's lessons. It can be beneficial for our improvement; however, my colleagues don't like this idea because being observed at your own class can be something stressful, I think.

Melike (Primary school teacher with two years of teaching experience): Last year was my first year in teaching so I had a supervisor teacher and I had to observe her lessons. I think it is a good practice for novice teachers but it wasn't applicable for me. I am working at a village school and there is not any other English teachers in my school. For that reason, my supervisor teacher was a primary school teacher and I observed her classes. I can say that maybe it didn't contribute to my teaching regarding teaching English but I learned lots of things pedagogically such as classroom management, motivation, communication with the students so on so forth.

#### **4.2.1. Positive Perceptions of PD**

Research Question: *What kind of factors are influential in shaping teachers' perception of PD activities?*

In this part, participants' positive perceptions about the professional development and their opinions regarding the components of a valuable professional

development experience were explored. Table 3 summarizes relevant phrases associated with teachers' positive perception of professional development.

**Table 5**

*Summary of Positive Perception of PD Code*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perception of Professional Development	Positive perception	Contribute to my teaching practice	6
		Like attending PD activities	5
		Further study/deeper understanding	3
		Opportunities to renew yourself	3
		Opportunities to experience good practices	2

As stated in previous part, most of the teachers identify PD activities as a way to improve themselves and keep up with the current developments. Upon asked specifically what they think about the professional development activities that are available for them, they largely articulated that PD activities contributed to their classroom teaching and they liked attending PD activities. It is also understood from the interview transcription that the teachers who think that PD activities are opportunities to renew themselves like attending PD activities and regard PD activities as opportunities to experience good practices as well. Teachers having positive perception of PD exemplified small groups of English language teachers' gathering for collaboration, teacher support groups in social media, internet blogs and videos as PD activities. Here are some example excerpts from the interviews of teacher who believe that PD activities contribute to their classroom teaching.

Serving at a private primary school with four years of experience and being open to new experiences, Büşra shares her thoughts about how her teaching skills can be enhanced through her PD experiences in the following way:

I think our weekly meetings with English language teachers in my school are very beneficial for my improvement. They also contribute to my classroom teaching because

in these meetings we share our materials and activities that we plan to use in our classroom and also share our ideas related to teaching practices. Moreover, the coordinator English teacher observes our classes every term and gives feedback to teachers. In my opinion, getting feedback is really important. For example, last year after my observation, the coordinator told me that it would be better to lower my voice so the students would try to hear me. Since I raised my voice when there was a noise in the classroom. Actually, I was trying to suppress that noise raising my voice. After her feedback I try to do what she advised me and I believe it would be better. Our coordinator gives me and my friends positive feedbacks for our progress.

Having 11 years of teaching experience Ayşegül serves at a public secondary school which is a project school (These schools were established to carry out educational reforms and programs and also aims to conduct national and international projects together with other schools or institutions. The principals of these schools have authority to make their own team.). Hence, it is fair to say that she is a selected teacher and believed to perform better in her field. She shared her experiences about PD in her current school as:

I felt really insecure [professionally] in my first years in teaching. Therefore, I started to search about what I can do to improve my teaching skills and how I can improve professionally. When I searched from internet I found experts and academician in English language teaching and I followed their blogs and read their blogs posts. I think they were really good for my improvement. I learnt lots of activities to use in my classroom from social media groups. The teachers share their good practices in their classrooms and I use them if I believe that they are applicable to my classroom.

Teachers sharing their positive perception of PD as further study/deeper understanding are the ones who are also pursuing their post graduate education. They articulated that master's program as a way of PD is an opportunity for them to increase their understanding in the field of ELT. Hande stated her feelings about PD as "I really like being an English teacher; however, master's program is like a next step in my career because I learnt a lot more about my field."



#### 4.2.2. Negative Perceptions of PD

**Table 6**

*Summary of Negative Perception of PD Code*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perception of PD	Negative perception	Doesn't contribute to my improvement	3
		Isn't useful	2
		Doesn't like attending	3

Teachers' negative perceptions of PD were shaped around three main issues. First, they stated that PD activities did not contribute to their improvement; second, they did not think that these activities were useful for them; and third, they did not like attending PD activities. Some of the participating teachers reflected that PD activities offered by MoNE, namely in-service trainings, were away from meeting their needs and therefore the PD activities did not enhance their expertise in the field. Working at a public secondary school and having seven years of teaching experience, Damla expressed: "I don't find in-service trainings useful in any way. The presenters use Turkish during the seminars and the topic of the seminars are not related to ELT so I don't think that those activities contribute to my improvement". Similarly, Filiz (serving 15 years at different levels of public schools):

The programs are too general to address the needs of ELT teachers. I can say that throughout my teaching career, I remember just one seminar directly related to our branch of teaching ... The content of the seminars is important for me. I don't like long and boring presentations.

As another important reason behind the negative perceptions was that teachers did not find PD activities useful. For example, Can, serving for seven years at a public high school expressed his thoughts in the following way: "I think the person who present the seminar is doing it to be able to do it and the people participating the seminars are there because they have to be there. They all waiting for the coffee break." With a different perspective, teachers serving at private schools generally criticized PD activities such as seminars offered by the publication companies. Hilal, serving for

14 years at a private high school, shared her ideas: “I think the seminars offered by the publication companies are not useful. They do that to sell their books because they just make seminars to introduce the units in their books”. In a similar vein, Özge, serving for 11 years at a private primary school, noted:

The things I learnt at the seminars should be applicable to my classroom. If they are not applicable, I don’t find it useful for me. For example, there is no punishment and reward system in my school, therefore the seminars offering me activities appreciating that system are not useful for me. The problem is that the person offering the PD activities is not aware of our needs. ... As I have been working for eleven years, I had to attend exactly the same seminars several times.

### 4.3. MOTIVATION OF TEACHERS ABOUT PD

Research Question: *What kind of factors impact teachers’ motivation to take part in PD activities?*

In this part, the researcher focused on exploring the motivational factors affecting teachers’ participation in PD activities. The interview data yielded that there were two main factors leading teachers to get involved in PD activities as; *intrinsic motivation* and *extrinsic motivation*.

#### 4.3.1. Intrinsic Motivation of PD

Regarding the sources of intrinsic motivation, the researcher identified three issues associated with teachers’ intrinsic motivation. In Table 5, a summary of those issues is displayed along with their frequency.

**Table 7**

*Summary of Sources Regarding Intrinsic Motivation to Participate in PD*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Source of intrinsic motivation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Motivation for PD	Intrinsic	Aspiration to improve myself	8
	motivation of	Be useful for students	4
	PD	Be interested in/open to learning	2

It is evident that most of the teachers' intrinsic motivation to participate in PD activities is related with their aspiration to improve themselves. It is also understood from the excerpts that the teachers who want to improve themselves also desire to influence students in a positive way. Working at a private primary school and having two years of teaching experience, Hande expressed that: "My primary goal in participating in PD activities is myself, because I think that if a teacher improves himself or herself, he/she feels more competent, therefore; it will definitely be a positive situation that affects the students." Similarly, Büşra who works at a private primary school and has four years of experience stated that "First, I think about whether it will contribute to my improvement or not. ... I also participate in these activities to change my perspective and improve myself."

With a different perspective, some teachers expressed their sources of motivation as to be beneficial to their students. Working at a public secondary school and having nine years of teaching experience, Zübeyde stated that "My personal goal in participating in PD activities is to be useful to my students. If my students learn English well, that makes me a good teacher." In a similar vein, Filiz who serves at a public secondary school for fifteen years expressed:

My priority in participating in a PD activity is that I believe it will be really useful. My motivation is to think that the PD activity will benefit to my students, but if it's just an activity that we participate in for the sake of formality, it lowers my motivation. It is important for me whether the activity has a content that will benefit my students or not.

Last, another source of teachers' motivation to participate in PD activities is their interest and being open to learn about their field. Serving at a public high school for five years, teacher Ela shared that "I'm interested in participating in PD activities. ... I like attending in PD activities because I feel well qualified and self-confident."

### 4.3.2. Extrinsic Motivation of PD

Considering the sources of extrinsic motivation, the researcher identified four issues associated with teachers' extrinsic motivation. In Table 6, a summary of those issues was displayed along with their frequency.

**Table 8**

*Summary of Sources Regarding Extrinsic Motivation to Participate in PD*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Source of extrinsic motivation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Motivation for PD	Extrinsic motivation of PD	Organizational demand	4
		Institutional incentives	1
		Making career	1
		Opportunity to go abroad	1

The number of teachers having extrinsic motivation to take part in PD activities is fewer than that of the teachers having intrinsic motivation. While sharing their motivational factors regarding PD activities, four teachers emphasized the expectation of their schools along with their internal motivation. Büşra who works at a private primary school and has four years of teaching experience uttered that “School culture is very important. Expectations of school, parents, and the students are the things that make you feel the need for improvement. The greater the expectation from you, the more you try to improve yourself.” Similarly, Ayşegül, having 11 years of teaching experience at public secondary school which is identified as a project school, expressed her thoughts about PD activities in the following way:

Our principals expect us to carry out project and improve ourselves professionally. Therefore, we share our experiences, materials and lesson plans in our small group meetings and discuss about what can we do more. For these reasons, I think our small group meetings contribute to my development and improve my classroom teaching.

From a different point of view, teacher Zeynep, working at a private primary school for nine years, shared:

Teachers had to attend seminars that school administration mandated, but sometimes I don't like attending because the topic of the PD activity is not novel for me or it's too theoretical, but teachers have no other chance rather than attending the PD activity.

Only one teacher mentioned the idea of incentives as a motivator for attending PD activities. Serving at a public high school for seven years, teacher Can shared his ideas as "Getting extra scores from attending PD activities can be a good motivator to attend such activities and then teachers can use the score to change his/her school. I think it can be a good motivator." One another extrinsic motivation to take part in PD activities is teachers' aspiration to make career in their profession. Teacher Melike who has two years of teaching experience at a primary public school and pursues master's degree in ELT, stated "I appreciate any PD opportunity that contribute to my academic career. ... Having an academic career in ELT motivates me to participate in PD activities." Last, working at a public secondary school and having seven years of teaching experience, teacher Damla seemed to be quite motivated to advance her skills in her profession not only for teaching practices but also for future career plans; she expressed her thoughts "My biggest motivation is to go abroad, so I participate in all kinds of PD activities that can contribute to my career abroad and will make me acceptable there."

#### **4.4. NEEDS OF TEACHERS IN PD**

Research Question: *What are the needs of English Language Teachers in PD activities?*

In this part of the findings, the perceived needs of English language teachers regarding PD activities were presented under three codes; 1) Needs regarding instructional practice; 2) Needs regarding pedagogical skills and knowledge, and 3) Needs regarding language proficiency. The respective three codes with their referring phrases were displayed in Table 7 and Table 8.

#### 4.4.1. PD Needs Regarding Instructional Practices

In this study, *instructional practice needs* as part of PD refer to professional knowledge and skills that a teacher may require to conduct teaching practice in the classroom. In Table 7, a summary of instructional practices needs is displayed along with their frequency.

**Table 9**

*A Summary of Instructional Practices Needs of Teachers*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perceived PD Needs	Instructional Practices Needs	Trainings specific to ELT teachers	5
		Practical trainings	6
		Opportunities to observe good practices	6
		Teaching listening-speaking	3
		Technology use	3
		Assessment	3
		Giving feedback	2
		Error correction	1

Given the analysis of the interview data, teachers from public schools stated that their in-service trainings included topics relevant to all teachers serving at public schools, rather than trainings specific to ELT teachers. For that reason, those trainings cannot be said to serve their needs. Also, participating teachers shared their needs to observe good practices that they can apply to their classroom teaching. They believe that there are both native and non-native professionals and also ELT academicians that can present good examples of teaching practices.

Zübeyde, who works at a public secondary school and has nine years of teaching experience, complained about not having seminars specifically addressing the needs of ELT teachers in her excerpt.

In-service trainings should be conducted for specific to our field. We have general field education and special field education seminars. General field education seminars are too theoretical and special field education seminars are not enough to see good examples of our field. We can have seminars where English teachers from different provinces can also attend and share their ideas. I think this would be very useful for us, so the Ministry of Education should design such activities.

Another female teacher working at a private primary school for nine years, Zeynep found the existing seminars too general and theoretical, therefore stressed her needs of PD activities aligned with particular level of education and curriculum in smaller groups of teachers. She shared her thoughts in the following way.

Theoretical knowledge means nothing to me. Trainers make presentation full of information regarding how to teach English but I'm not preparing for an exam so I don't need that much of information. I don't think those seminars contribute to my development. . . . In addition, I do not think that general seminars are very useful because language teaching differs at all levels, so I think it is very important that there are training sessions in smaller groups in accordance with the level of education.

Using technology is another area that teachers expressed as their needs. That is, the teachers stressed that the technology has been changing rapidly, so learning how to integrate technology into their classroom will be always a subject of need. Having 15 years of teaching experience, Filiz expressed her concerns in the following way.

It has been 15 years since I started my career. I think the students I have now are quite different than the students I had 15 years ago. Their expectations are different...to raise their attention I need to use technology but I don't know that much genuine ways of using technology. For that reason, I want to learn how to prepare different activities using technology.

Quarter of the participating teachers want to learn how to teach listening and speaking more effectively. As reasons of not being able to teach listening and speaking effectively in their classrooms, teachers shared that they have crowded classrooms, different levels of students in the same classroom and insufficient classroom materials. From a different perspective, Damla, working at a public secondary school and having seven years of teaching experience, attributed ineffective teaching of speaking and listening to her lack of skills and knowledge in teaching listening and speaking, and so expressed her needs in the following way.

I wish I could attend practical and applicable trainings that focus on how to teach listening and speaking. We could collaborate with other teachers, maybe we can benefit from their experiences. As we all know, communicative language teaching is always on the agenda but I need to know how to do it in my classroom effectively.

In relation to the ineffectiveness in teaching listening and speaking at classroom, Melike, having two years of teaching experience at a public primary school, noted that “My students really love English classes and they want to participate in lessons, but as the class is very crowded I have difficulty in teaching speaking skills.”

As far as it is understood from the interviews that teachers also want to learn alternative ways of assessment, giving feedback and error correction to increase students’ motivation to participate in classroom activities. They do not want to limit evaluation with just paper and pen examination. Teacher Özge, serving for 11 years at a private primary school, shared her need of PD in the following way.

Assessment is a serious problem for me because I can't make exams to 1, 2 and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students so actually, I don't know different methods to evaluate their progress. I'd like to know more ways in which I can evaluate my students’ performance.

One another idea regarding assessment, giving feedback and error correction was suggested by teacher Ela working at a public high school with five years of teaching experience;



I want to improve myself in giving feedback and error correction. There are different levels of students in the same classroom and I have difficulty in assessing them. Some students get really low grades then I don't want them to demotivate and lose their interest towards my lesson, so I need to learn different ways of giving feedback to make them recognize their errors.

#### 4.4.2. PD Needs Regarding Pedagogical Skills and Knowledge

Pedagogical needs of teachers refer to any method that a teacher needs to design teaching and learning environment. In Table 8, a summary of pedagogical needs was demonstrated along with their frequency.

**Table 10**  
*A Summary of Pedagogical Needs of Teachers*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perceived	Pedagogical	Motivation	4
PD Needs	Needs	Classroom management	4
		Teacher-student interaction	3

As displayed in Table 8, the interview data revealed that teachers expressed their need of increasing student motivation. That is, they need to know practical ways of doing it. For example, teacher Can, working at a public high school with seven years of teaching experience, stated his needs as part of PD activities as: “My students don't like studying English.... They just want to learn what they are responsible in the exam. I want to teach them English and I want to know ways of motivating them to learn English.” In a similar vein, Aysegül who serves at a public secondary school with 11 years of teaching experience, shared her struggle in motivating her students to participate in learning activities in classroom setting.

It is hard for me to motivate students to participate in lessons. They just want to answer the questions; they do not want to have conversation in English. They continue their conversation in their native language. I want to know practical ideas to motivate them.

Classroom management is one of the areas that teachers need PD. Their responses in the interview demonstrate that crowded classrooms, different levels of students and young learners of English bring about classroom management problems, therefore, teachers need PD in sustaining classroom management. Serving at a private primary school with four years of teaching experience, Büşra shared that “While teaching young learners, I have difficulty in maintaining classroom management.” From a different point of view, Adem, who works at a public high school and has 14 years of teaching experience, exemplified classroom management problem with the following excerpt:

There is no proficiency exam deciding the students’ classes according to their level, so when a student have difficulty in understanding the other can easily understand it and while trying to do some more practices, I can lose the control of the classroom.

Another eminent issue raised by three teachers was related to communication with students. They need PD in two different areas; one is related to communicating with refugee students the number of which is increasing year by year especially in some province of Turkey, the other is related to building good relationship with students in the early years of teaching career. As an example, serving at a public secondary school with 5 years of teaching experience, Damla is working at a province where the number of refugee students in each classroom is relatively high and she explained this situation with these remarks; “Refugee students have problems in adaptation, they are aggressive and don’t want to attend classroom activities. As we do not understand each other, we cannot communicate. I really want to know how to communicate with them.” As another issue of pedagogical challenges, Hande, working at a private primary school and having two years of teaching experience, expressed her difficulties in communication with young learners.

I had ‘*Teaching English to Young Learners*’ course at university but I didn’t have chance to practice it. As I am not allowed to speak in Turkish at my school, sometimes it is really hard for me to understand the students. I recognize that there is a problem but I don’t know how to deal with it. Then I ask help from elementary class teacher about the problem. I need PD regarding the communication with young learners.

### 4.4.3. Language Proficiency Needs of Teachers

Last, language proficiency needs of teachers refer to the ways required to improve language capabilities of teachers. As displayed in Table 9, two issues emerged as part of the language proficiency needs of teachers.

**Table 11**

*A Summary of Language Proficiency Needs of Teachers*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perceived	Language	Using the language fluently	5
PD Needs	Proficiency Needs	Grading the language	4

The interview data revealed that teachers have some concerns about using English in the classroom. Teachers all accept that the more the students engage with using English the more they progress. On the other hand, especially public-school teachers admitted that they use mostly Turkish in their classroom. They generally put the blame on the fact that their classroom materials do not guide them to increase communication in English and also the lessons allocated to English language courses are not sufficient to cover curriculum, so they use Turkish to keep up with the pace. On the other hand, as private school teachers are observed regularly, the principals are aware of what is going on in the classroom and most of the private schools are more likely to force teachers to use English both in the classroom and also out of the classroom. As for the case of public schools, teachers of these schools are motivated in seminars to use English in their classrooms, then they try to use English but in time they lose their motivation most probably due to the reasons stated above. Furthermore, it is evident in the interviews that teachers use more English in the classes when the students' level of English proficiency increases. The following excerpts reflect the teachers' language proficiency needs. Filiz who serves at a public secondary school for fifteen years, uttered;

I feel incomplete about using more English in class. I usually teach the lesson in Turkish, in fact, at this point I feel incomplete. I'm teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in recent years.

What is expected from me now is that the students should answer English questions correctly in High School Attendance Exams (LGS) they will take at the end of this year. For this reason, we have tests in the lesson and we do that in Turkish. To be honest, I know that the more English students are exposed to, the better they will learn, but unfortunately, I don't do that.

As another teacher serving for 14 years at a private high school, Hilal wished she had been more capable in speaking English and explained her case in the following way.

I notice that some of my students seem to use English more fluently than me. Therefore, I need to focus on improving my own use of English. It will be good for teachers to have more chance to practice the language out of the classroom. As English is not our native tongue we should pay attention to our proficiency of English. I wish I had more chances to increase my proficiency.

Grading the language is another point of focus both for young learners and for multi-level classrooms. Especially, teachers graduated from departments that is not *English Language Teaching* have difficulty in using simplified language. For example, Hande who works at a private primary school with two years of teaching experience, stated that "I have to use English throughout my class time, but sometimes I had difficulty in using simplified language. It would be beneficial for me to have PD regarding that." To explain her case of difficulty in grading the language she used in the class, Ayşegül from a public secondary school with 11 years of teaching experience expressed her feelings as;

I graduated from *English Language and Literature* department and I was accustomed to write and speak advanced and academic English, so it was really hard for me in my first years of teaching to simplified English I use. In time I managed to do it, but it would be useful for me to know how to do it.

## 4.5. CHALLENGES IN PD

Research Question: *What are the challenges of English language teachers in PD activities?*

The interview data revealed that all teachers had positive perception of PD and expressed the importance of PD in their teaching career, but almost all teachers also uttered their concerns and problems regarding the challenges experienced in their PD practices. This theme was analyzed under two codes; personal challenges and organizational challenges in PD activities. Each code and their referring phrases were demonstrated in Table 10 and Table 11.

### 4.5.1. Personal Challenges in PD

As part of challenges of teachers in PD activities, the barriers keeping them away from PD activities are considered. It is figured out that personal challenges of teachers were due to the fact that the current PD activities do not seem appealing for teachers and they cannot spare time for PD activities, as displayed in Table 10.

**Table 12**

*Summary of Personal Challenges in PD Activities*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Challenges in PD Activities	Personal Challenges	Not engaging activities	6
		Not meeting my needs	4
		Time to allocate to family	3

Half of the teachers stated that the content of PD activities they had attended were too theoretical; however, their expectation from a PD activity was to be more engaging. Actually, those teachers are the ones who expressed their negative perceptions of PD activities. Working at a public secondary school and having seven years of teaching experience, Damla expressed;

I have difficulty in staying focused when I feel that I can't apply what I learnt at the PD activity in my classroom. We are not university students listening to a lecture, we are teachers so we should take part actively rather than have a passive role, just listening.

Zeynep, working at a private primary school for nine years, criticized the current conduct of PD activities being as an important challenge for her active participation. She expressed her thoughts;

Engagement is a challenge for me. I feel like the trainers carry out the seminars just to do that. I have attended the same seminar several times. I need something new, which I can apply to my classroom. My school always says that "Teachers professional development is important for us." But they don't offer a good activity. We usually sit and listen the publishing company that we bought our students' books. ... I think, this is my biggest challenge, it should be something engaging. I should feel that I'm learning something.

Another major challenge of the participants is that PD activity does not meet their expectations. They attend those activities just to be attended. Can, serving for seven years at a public high school, did not find PD activities useful and expressed this with the following excerpt;

Everyone attending to those seminars (in-service trainings that are compulsory before the summer holiday ends) is waiting for the coffee break.... The topics are too general....I can say that I can rarely meet my expectation from those seminars. I have been teaching for seven years, I have attended just a few educations related to my field. When I need something regarding my teaching or students I either look for internet or write that to social media groups or ask it to my colleagues.

As teachers don't plan their own PD, they generally expect and are offered PD activities from their school management or broadly from MoNE. For that reason, they mostly expressed that their family would support them in case of a PD activity. Only three female teachers stated that their kids can be a problem for them to attend a PD activity. In this regard, Özge, serving for 11 years at a private primary school, uttered:

I'm working six days at a week. I have a daughter and she misses me a lot. I try to spend time with her whenever it's possible. It's hard for me to find a time and attend a PD activity except from school time.

#### 4.5.2. Organizational Challenges in PD

The participants were asked to describe their experiences regarding the challenges created by their school. Throughout the interviews, it is figured out that teachers often regard PD as a top-down procedure offered by school management. For that reason, they feel obligated to participate in those activities. Moreover, funding, workload and physical distance of the PD opportunities are the perceived challenges of teachers in participating PD activities. Table 11 presents the summary of personal challenges of teachers in PD activities.

**Table 13**

*Summary of Organizational Challenges in PD Activities*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Phrases</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Challenges to PD Activities	Organizational Challenges	Feelings of obligation	3
		Funding	3
		Workload	3
		Physical distance	2

Özge has been working at a private primary school for 11 years and describes her school as the one that cares about the PD of teachers, and so she shared her school's urge for participation in PD activities. She expressed her thoughts;

I love teaching. If I believe that a PD will contribute to my teaching of course I love to attend. Sometimes there are seminars which are not either related to my field or I have attended beforehand. I don't like attending those seminars, but I have to. I think, it's time consuming for me.

As a novice teacher at her second teaching year at a public primary school, Melike had to attend seminars offered by MoNE like all novice teachers in their first year. She shared one of the challenges she experienced:

I decided to attend a conference and I asked permission from the school principle. In fact, there were months to the conference. Then I learnt that there is a '*Disaster Management*' seminar for novice teachers and I had to attend. Although I try to explain that it was an important conference for me and I had to attend and I paid money for it... I really had difficulty to express myself and took permission.

One another challenge to PD for teachers is funding. Teachers, who think that attending a PD activity abroad where the native language is English, regard funding as an important barrier. As an experienced public high school teacher with 14 years of teaching experience, Adem uttered:

I always want to go abroad. I think it's the best way to improve my language proficiency. But I think it is very expensive. I think MoNE should give such a chance to ELT teachers. But I think it is not possible to afford that for teachers.

Teachers' workload is 18 hours to 25 hours of teaching per week, moreover, it's hard for them to rearrange their weekly schedule. For that reason, workload constitutes a barrier for them. Serving at a private primary school with two years of teaching experience, Hande shared that

I am having master's degree in ELT, I can take four classes in each semester. However, I couldn't take off days from the school. The school principle expresses that they appreciated my PD but it is hard to arrange the schedule so I had to arrange my master's classes.

Physical distance is another challenge for the teachers especially for ones who works at rural cities. Ela working at a public high school with five years of teaching experience is one of those teachers and expressed that



I heard about or see the advertisement of the seminars in social media but they are generally in either Ankara or İstanbul or Antalya. I rarely know a seminar in my city so I think it is a barrier for me.



## CHAPTER V

### 5. DISCUSSION

#### 5. 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aimed to discuss the findings of this study in accordance with the respective research questions. Subsequently, implications and suggestions for further studies were provided.

#### 5.2. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS IN REFERENCE TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1

*Teachers' perception of PD.*

One of the purposes of this study is to analyze the perception of teachers regarding PD. In order to analyze the perception of teachers, their understanding of PD and types of PD activities they could name were identified. It was figured out that most of the teachers considered PD as keeping up with current developments in their fields, gaining experience and improving themselves. The obtained findings support the extant literature (Borg, 2018: p. 195; Büyükyavuz, 2016: p. 135; Richards & Farrell, 2005: p. 20; Şentuna, 2012: p. 88; Tanış, 2019: p. 122). Nearly all of the teachers emphasized the importance of collaboration, improvement in both content and pedagogical knowledge and context bounded way of PD rather than top-down, structured, sit and listen activities. These findings are consistent with the previous literature which stresses that PD is an individualized learning process which takes into consideration one's own context and the aim is to enhance the pedagogical and content knowledge needs of teachers and their teaching and learning outcomes (Borg, 2015: p. 961; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009: p. 59; Korkmazgil, 2015: p. 32; Luneta, 2012: p. 373; Richards & Schmidt, 2003: p. 542).

As it is clear that teachers have positive perception towards PD and they highlight the importance of PD in their interview. On the other hand, they have concerns about the effectiveness and quality of PD activities that are offered to them by the institution they served. In particular, the following concerns which are also supported by the previous literature, were shared as not having adequate number of PD activities and trainers that design the activities (Bayrakçı, 2009: p. 19; Kabilan, 2019: p. 46), including general topics rather than classroom oriented activities (Arslan, Mirici, & Oz, 2019: p. 223; Atay, 2008: p. 143; Daloglu, 2004: p. 677; Haznedar, 2010: p. 11; Koç, 2016: p. 463; Uztosun, 2018: p. 557) and not providing practical elements, collaboration, technology use, evaluation and follow-up support (Altun, 2011: p. 855; Deneme & Çelik, 2017: p. 11). Those concerns underlie their negative perceptions toward PD.

### **5.3. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS IN REFERENCE TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2**

#### *Teachers' motivation to participate in PD activities.*

Analyzing the teachers' motivation to participate in PD activities, it's found out that teachers had different types of motivation to take part in PD activities, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Most of the teachers expressed their intrinsic motivation to participate in PD activities as to improve themselves especially to be more professional teachers and enhance their students learning, which is also addressed in the literature (Atmaca, 2017: p. 1692; Öztürk, & Aydın, 2019: p. 209; Kennedy, 2016: p. 953; Tanış & Dikilitaş, 2018: p. 27).

One another finding of this research reveals that teachers mostly expressed their extrinsic motivational source in negative terms. That is, they feel obliged to participate in PD activities, which are offered to them by their institutions. Because of the aforementioned ineffectiveness of the offered PD activities, teachers do not want to attend those activities, which supports the findings of Korkmazgil (2015: p. 73); Yılmaz and Arıkan (2019: p, 20); and Yurtsever (2013: p, 674). However, teachers prefer to be given the opportunity to handle their PD process and they need support

from both their institutions and families. Although they expressed that their families would support them in case of a PD activity that they want to attend, the institutions where they served are not much supportive for providing them necessary facilities like arranging their schedule or funding them to attend PD activities. Therefore, it can be said that they lack of extrinsic motivation which is consistent with the findings of Turhan and Arıkan (2009: p. 7); and Avidov-Ungar (2016: p. 664).

Interestingly, only one teacher who is serving at a project school expressed her situation that the school administration encourages teachers to improve themselves. As far as it's understood from her explanation that project schools are in a kind of competition among each other and they appreciate what the teachers do for themselves and for their students. It can be inferred from the respective situation that school culture is an important impact on teachers' PD, which is aligned with the claims of Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017: p. 21).

Despite the fact that they desire to improve themselves and have control over designing their own PD, the findings reveal that they need extrinsic motivation to achieve these purposes. The research highlights that teachers need guidance and support in designing their PD as reported by several scholars (Drożdżiał-Szelest, 2019: p. 175; Guskey, 2003: p. 749; Hildebrandt & Eom, 2011: p. 421).

#### **5.4. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS IN REFERENCE TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

*Teachers' needs to participate in PD activities.*

Regarding the perceived PD needs of teachers, the research findings put forward that teachers' perceived PD needs can be classified under three main groups; instructional needs which refer to knowledge and skills that a teacher may require to take action in the classroom, pedagogical needs which refer to any method that a teacher needs to design teaching and learning environment and language proficiency need which refers to any action required to improve language capabilities of teachers. Findings revealed that the most frequently articulated needs of teachers are *practical*

*trainings and opportunities to observe good practices.* It is apparent that theory and practice are integral part of each other. Theoretical input is the underlying base for teachers' practices; however, what the teachers need in their PD activities is to have practical ideas and example practices to make sense of underlying theory so teachers would have opportunities to discuss whether they can use these practices in their classroom or how to adapt them for their settings. On the other hand, the findings revealed that the teachers' PD activities consisted of theoretical presentation which needs to be improved via integrating practical sessions. One another mostly expressed need of teachers is to observe good practices which is also similar to the need mentioned above. As the teachers mostly identified PD as keeping up with current development, they need to observe good practices that reflect current trends in their field. These results are consistent with the literature exploring the PD needs of teachers (Çelik, Bayraktar-Çepni & İlyas, 2013: p. 1867; Kabilan & Veratharaju, 2013: p. 246).

How to teach listening and speaking more efficiently, give feedback and assess the students' performance consisted of the rest of the teachers' instructional needs for PD. Because of the crowded classrooms, heavy curriculum and burden of national exams, inefficient classroom materials and lack of target language exposure cause teachers to use L1 in the classroom and adopt a more traditional way of classroom teaching. Actually, teachers are aware of the fact that they need to find out ways to increase allocated time for listening and speaking and ways to teach them more efficiently. Moreover, giving feedback and assessing students' performance are the areas that the teachers need to improve themselves to increase pupils' achievement without discouraging them. These results are also echoed by the scholars in the field (Hos & Topal, 2013: p. 300; Yeşilçınar & Çakır, 2018; p. 72; Zein, 2017: p. 309).

The findings revealed that teachers' pedagogical needs for PD comprise *classroom management, motivation, and interaction with students.* Especially, teachers who have experience less than five years stated those areas that they want to improve themselves. Teachers echoed the underlying causes of their pedagogical needs as dealing with young learners is difficult to handle and also having various levels of students in the same classroom makes the classroom management hard, lastly interaction with migrant students is an issue that teachers need PD. The findings are consistent with Zein (2016: p. 11); Gokmenoglu, Clark and Kiraz (2016: p. 114) and

Arslan (2018: p. 138) who stated that classroom management, motivation and interaction with students are issues in which teachers need PD.

Last category of teachers' PD needs is language proficiency. It's found out that nearly half of the teachers expressed their needs for improving their language and fluency. Teachers who graduated from faculties other than English Language Teaching, and ELT graduates who didn't have "*Teaching Young Learners*" course stated that they had difficulty in grading their language according to students' levels especially for young learners. As the teachers have limited opportunities to practice their language, they need PD regarding their language proficiency. They mentioned their need to meet native trainers during the seminars and workshops. Parallel to the current research, there are studies reporting teachers' language proficiency needs (Abalı, 2013: p. 184; Arslan, Mirici, & Oz, 2019: p. 239; Negi, 2016; p. 45).

## **5.5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS IN REFERENCE TO RESEARCH QUESTION 4**

*Teachers' challenges in participating in PD activities.*

Although teachers have positive perception towards PD, they do not much carry out self-initiated PD activities. They generally attend to seminars, workshops and in-service trainings that the school administration or MoNE provided for them. As they expressed the ineffectiveness of PD activities that were offered for them and they attended those activities because of obligation, last research question sought answer to teachers' barriers in attending PD activities that they would like to participate in. It is found out that challenges to PD can be classified into two issues; organizational and personal challenges which are also highlighted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017: p. 13).

It can be concluded from the findings that both organizational and personal challenges are highly interwoven. As the offered PD activities are centralized by either MoNE or publishing companies, half of the teachers uttered that the PD activities were not engaging and did not meet their needs. Other challenges are their families, funding,

workload, physical distance and obligation to attend those activities offered them by the school administration. The findings revealed that teachers complained about top-down, sit and get PD activities. They need more involvement and control over deciding the type of PD activity that they want to attend. These findings were also revealed by other scholars in the field (Hiřmanođlu & Hiřmanođlu, 2010: p. 30; Korkmazgil, 2015: p. 182; Özbilgin, Erkmn & Karaman, 2016: p. 63; Soodmand & Ghasemi, 2020: p. 119).



## **CONCLUSION**

### **Introduction**

This section presents a summary of the research in respect to the research questions explored. Moreover, the pedagogical implications of the research and recommendations were included. Lastly, limitations of the research and suggestions for further research were stated.

### **Summary of the Research**

This study explored the perception of English language teachers serving at K-12 schools towards PD. Moreover, teachers' motivation in attending PD activities, their needs regarding PD and challenges that hinder their attendance in PD activities were investigated as well. As data collection method, semi-structured, phone-based individual interview was adopted in this research to provide in-depth exploration of the participants perception of PD. The sample of the study was 13 English language teachers serving at different type and level of schools in Turkey. In addition to their specific profile, voluntary participation was taken into consideration because participants' willingness to express their ideas are vital to carry out an in-depth interview.

#### **Research Question 1: What is the perception of English language teachers towards PD?**

To reveal the perception of teachers towards PD, teachers' understanding of PD and PD activities that they can name were identified. It can be concluded that most of the teachers regarded PD as keeping up with current development and improve themselves to increase pupils' achievement. They generally could name seminars, workshops and in-service trainings as a way of PD. Although they have positive perception towards PD, they have some concerns regarding the PD activities they were offered by either school administration or MoNE. Too theoretical, sit and listen, not engaging and repetitive PD activities are some of their consideration regarding PD.



Although they feel responsible for their PD, they are not content with the PD activities they can attend. On the other hand, it needs to be underlined that teachers considered collaboration with other teachers and social media or blog-based sharing as a way of PD. They expressed that they could benefit from each other. Moreover, social media groups and blogs that share their classroom practices served their purpose of PD.

One another point is that although teachers have positive perception towards PD, they generally expect from the school administration or MoNE to offer them PD activities. It can be asserted that they don't make effort to plan their self PD except for the novice teachers that carry out their MA degree to contribute to their PD.

### **Research Question 2: What motivate English language teachers to participate in PD activities?**

All teachers participating this research show their willingness to improve themselves in their profession. The motivational source of their willingness is classified as intrinsic and extrinsic. Nearly all of the teachers expressed their intrinsic motivation in terms of improving themselves especially to become beneficial for their students. They are aware of the fact that they need to improve themselves to keep up with current development; however, they were not much motivated to attend PD activities that the governing system or school administration suggest for them. They feel obligation to participate in PD activities that were offered them, which constitutes the extrinsic motivational source of their attendance to PD activities. They are eager to various types of PD activities that improve their practice and address their specific and immediate needs.

### **Research Question 3: What do English language teachers need for PD?**

The research findings indicated that teachers had instructional, pedagogical and language proficiency needs. Considering their instructional needs, they need PD activities that are designed specific to language teachers and present practical ideas that the teachers can apply in their classrooms. They expressed their needs to observe good examples of teaching practices, which implies that they give importance to credible and experienced trainers in their fields. As the teachers preferred that their

needs should be addressed specifically, it may be asserted that they want to have autonomy and control over choosing the most convenient PD activity for themselves. Furthermore, it can be concluded that designing PD activities addressing teachers' immediate needs may increase their motivation to attend such PD activities.

Although teachers care about their PD, most of them mentioned that they attended PD activities for the sake of attendance. Therefore, it might be deduced that teachers are well aware of what they need and they prefer attending teacher-centered and bottom-up designed PD activities.

As the current educational policy emphasize the importance of communicative competence, teachers need to improve English proficiency to enhance their and their students' oral communication skills. For that reason, they expressed that it would be beneficial for them to attend PD activities that are presented them by native trainers. Moreover, they need to be given chance to attend seminars, trainings and workshops abroad to have more opportunity to practice English language.

### **Research Question 3: What challenges do English language teachers face in attending PD activities?**

Teachers are positioned to be the policy makers in practice according to Ministry of Education. Therefore, teachers' PD is crucial for an effective language teaching. However, teachers expressed their burden under heavy workload and curriculum as a barrier to their policy maker position in practice. Because of their workload teachers have problems with time management so it can be well inferred that they have difficulty in arranging self-designed PD activity out of their school context. Furthermore, as the teachers perceive the PD activities offered them by MoNE and school administration as ineffective, their lack of motivation to attend the activities serves as a barrier for them. Moreover, obligation to attend ineffective PD activities hinders teachers' benefiting from them.

## **Implications of the Research**

Regarding the findings of this current research and the extant literature on PD of English teachers, the following implications were deduced for the improvement of English teachers in their profession:

- Teachers have positive perception towards their PD but they are lack of knowledge about how to design PD activities. For that reason, they expect from MoNE and school administration to arrange effective PD activities. Therefore, it's crucial to raise teachers' awareness considering types of alternative PD activities rather than seminars, workshops and in-service trainings. Furthermore, they can be enlightened about self-initiated PD activities to improve themselves.
- As the teachers appreciate collaboration among themselves, policy makers should organize PD activities that strengthen their collaboration and transform that collaboration into a systematic way of PD.
- For the efficiency of PD activities, both teachers and students' needs should be taken into consideration. Therefore, rather than centralized PD programs, school-based, immediate need-oriented PD activities would contribute to the improvement of teachers.
- Rather than on-shot PD activities that the teachers currently offered, teachers should both be encouraged for and acquainted with sustained formal and informal ways of PD.
- Instead of theory-based PD activities practice-based PD activities should be delivered to give teachers opportunity to observe good and up-to-date samples of English teaching practices. Moreover, teachers' involvement would increase the effectiveness of PD activities.
- Last, feedback, evaluation and follow-up support need to be provided after PD activities in order to promote new knowledge to teaching practice.

## **Suggestion for Further Research**

The findings and limitations of the current research can suggest guidance to further research. First of all, a larger number of participants and more longitudinal research can provide a more in-depth understanding of teachers' perception towards

PD. Further research can provide a comprehensive understanding by exploring the policy makers and administrators' perception towards PD and their decision-making process in designing PD activities for the teachers.

### **Limitations of the Research**

Current research has several limitations which suggest that interpretation of the findings requires caution. Main limitation of the study is the number of participants. As there are various levels and school types that the teachers serve, increasing the number of teachers representing that variety would contribute the generalization of the findings. Moreover, this phenomenological research focused on exploring the perception of teachers regarding PD. For that reason, it should be noticed that the PD needs of the teachers were 'perceived' needs. In order to explore their actual needs their classroom practices should be observed in detail.

This phenomenological research administered in-depth semi-structured interviews to analyze English language teachers' perception of PD, their motivational sources to attend PD activities, their needs for PD and challenges they face with attending PD activities. Therefore, it would contribute to enhancement in planning PD activities. On the other hand, more in-depth and longitudinal research would be more beneficial for the policy makers to arrange PD activities.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Interview Questions

#### PERCEPTION

1. Do you believe that you were well-prepared for teaching English when you graduated from university?
2. What do you feel about Professional Development?
3. What types of Professional development activities you can name?
4. What types of Professional development activities have you attended so far?
5. What types of professional development activities do you believe to be beneficial for your development?
6. In your opinion, what makes a Professional Development opportunity valuable?
7. Do you enjoy attending a Professional Development activity?
8. How often do you attend to a Professional Development activity?

#### MOTIVATION

1. What are your reasons (motivation) to attend a PD activity?
  - Impact my students' learning
  - Impact my teaching
  - Enhance my knowledge
  - It's school policy (compulsory, incentivized)
  - Promotion within the school
  - Compensation for work-load
2. What kind of support do you get from your institution, colleagues and your family to participate in PD activity?
3. What kind of support do you think can be provided to increase your participation in Professional Development activities?

#### NEEDS

1. In which areas do you feel strong regarding your teaching English and your manner in the classroom?
2. In which areas do you need to improve yourself? / why would you like to attend PD activities?
  - Keep up with current development
  - Teaching 4 skills
  - Language proficiency
  - L-1 use
  - Assessment and evaluation
  - Giving feedback
  - Increasing motivation
  - Use of technology
  - Classroom management

## CHALLENGES

1. What are the factors that prevent you from taking Professional Development?
  - Administrators, tradition of PD, cost, time, workload, family.
  - Low self-motivation, PD activity doesn't meet my expectation.
2. Do you remember any specific situation that prevented you to participate in a Professional Development activity?
3. What do you do to overcome these difficulties?



## **CURRICULUM VITAE**

### Work Experience:

2009 – 2017                      Ceceli Schools English Language Teacher

### Education:

Master’s Degree:                Kocaeli University English Language Teaching (2018- 2021)

Bachelor’s Degree:              Başkent University English Language Teaching (2005- 2009)

High School:                      Alparslan Anatolian High School/ ANKARA (2001-2005)

### Research:

Genç, E., Çalışkan, H., & Yüksel, D. Language assessment literacy level of EFL teachers: a focus on writing and speaking assessment knowledge of the teachers. *Sakarya University Journal of Education*, 10(2), 274-291.

### Certificate:

2015                      Cambridge **CELTA (Pass B)**