

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT**

**CHALLENGES FACING THE TURKISH EFL TEACHERS WORKING WITH
STUDENTS WITH A MIGRATION BACKGROUND: THE CASE OF SYRIAN
REFUGEE LEARNERS**

Kıvılcım SOMUNCUOĞLU

MASTER OF ARTS

ADANA / 2019

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MASTER OF ARTS

ADANA / 2019

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ÖZET

GÖÇ HİKAYESİ OLAN ÖĞRENCİLERE TÜRKİYE’DE İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETEN ÖĞRETMENLERİN KARŞILAŞTIĞI PROBLEMLER: SURIYE’DEN GELEN MÜLTECİ ÖĞRENCİLER ÖRNEĞİ

Kıvılcım SOMUNCUOĞLU

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Ana Bilim Dalı

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Ağustos 2019, 69 sayfa

2019 yılı itibariyle, Suriye’deki savaş neticesinde UNHCR’in sağladığı resmi rakamlara göre 5,631,155 insan ülkelerinden ayrılmak zorunda kalmıştır. Mültecilerin 3,606,737’u ya da %64’ünün Türkiye’de yaşadığı ve bu göçmenlerin %45.1’inin 18 yaş altındaki çocuklardan oluştuğu göz önüne alındığında, eğitime erişimin ne denli önemli olduğu görülebilir; zira okul mülteci çocukların hayatlarının normale dönmesini sağlayacak ve geleceğe umutla bakabilmelerini mümkün kılacaktır. (Beste, 2015). Bu çalışmada, sınıflarında göçmen öğrenciler bulunan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yaşadıkları sorunların belirlenebilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Nitel araştırma teknikleri uygulanarak yapılan çalışmada veri, Gaziantep’te yaşayan 11 İngilizce öğretmenin katılımıyla toplanmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, sınıf gözlemleri ve gözlem sonrası görüşmeler yapılmış; toplanan veri içerik analizi yöntemiyle incelenmiştir. Verinin incelenmesi sonrasında, öğretmenlerin genel tutumunun olumsuz olduğu belirlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda öğretmenlerin ders sırasında kullandıkları dil konusunda karmaşa yaşadıkları, materyal seçimi ve kullanımı konusunda farkındalıklarının düşük olduğu, Türkçe dil becerileri henüz yeterince gelişmemiş göçmen öğrencilerin aleyhine etki gösteren özetleyici değerlendirme yöntemlerini tercih ettikleri ve sınıflarındaki yükselen tansiyonla baş etmekte zorlandıkları görülmüştür. Bu sorunlar karşısında öğretmenlerin kendi başlarına çözüm stratejileri geliştirmeye çalıştıkları ama yardıma ihtiyaç duydukları da görülmüştür. Sistemi daha eşitlikçi hale getirecek kurumsal değişikliklerin yanısıra öğretmenler için sınıf içi uygulamalar konusunda öneriler de içeren kapsamlı bir çokkültürlülük eğitimi verilmesi önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriyeli mülteci öğrenciler, Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğretmenler, sorunlar.

ABSTRACT**CHALLENGES FACING TURKISH EFL TEACHERS WORKING WITH
STUDENTS WITH MIGRATION BACKGROUNDS: THE CASE OF SYRIAN
REFUGEE LEARNERS****Kıvılcım SOMUNCUOĞLU****Master Thesis, Department of English Language Teaching****Supervisor: Rana YILDIRIM****July, 2019, 69 pages**

As of 2019, there are 5,631,155 Syrians in total who fled the country; and 3,606,737 people, or 64% of all the displaced people, are currently residing in Turkey (UNHCR). Since 45.1% of the refugee population is under the age of 18, it is crucial that they have access to education; as schooling enables the refugee children to normalize their lives and gives them hope for the future (Beste, 2015). The objective of this study was to identify the challenges the teachers face in teaching classes with students with migration backgrounds so that the issues stemming from those challenges can be analyzed, and hopefully solutions can be suggested. The study, which was conducted in alignment with qualitative research methodology, reached 11 English Language Teachers working in the Gaziantep province of Turkey. The data were collected through structured interviews, classroom observations and post observation interviews. The collected data were analyzed through content analysis. It was found out that the feelings and opinions of the participating teachers in the face of paradigm shift in their classes following the arrival of the students with migration backgrounds tend to be on the negative side since the in-service training they had received was not sufficient in meeting their needs. As for the challenges they face, it was found that the teachers were confused about medium of instruction, had low awareness in material selection and use, needed assistance in employable methods and techniques, were prone to employing summative assessment techniques that do not favor students with migration backgrounds due to their low proficiency of Turkish and were struggling to deal with the high tension in their classes. In order to face the challenges, the teachers are trying to come up with strategies on their own; however, they are feeling helpless and

overwhelmed. It was suggested that a comprehensive diversity training that addresses includes practical classroom applications be provided for the teachers in addition to institutional changes so that the system can be more egalitarian.

Keywords: Syrian refugee learners, EFL teachers, challenges



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the support, constant encouragement and guidance of my advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rana Yıldırım. Knowing myself, without her unwavering belief that I could do it, I would still be looking at an empty page, not knowing how to proceed. In every step of the way, she supported and guided me. I cannot imagine a better, a more supportive advisor.

Besides my advisor, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the examining committee, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasan Bedir and Assist. Prof. Dr. Duygu İşpınar Akçayolu for their invaluable feedback and recommendations.

I would also like to extend my special thanks to my loving husband Emrah Somuncuoğlu for his support. Although he is not a teacher, he attentively listened and asked so many questions that he is now quite knowledgeable in the area. My grateful thanks also extend to my close friend and colleague Jonathan Bull. Despite his heavy workload, he was always supportive, and graciously answered all the questions I threw his way.

I am also grateful to my dear friends Ömür Ortaovalı and Özgür Sandal, my dear sister Pınar Birincioğlu and my lovely nephew Batu Birincioğlu for their support and the joyful distraction they provided.

Finally I would like to thank my mother and my aunt. They always believed in me, and were by my side. I would not be who I am without them.

This thesis was supported by the Scientific Research Projects Department of Cukurova University, with Project ID: SYL-2018-10101

Kıvılcım SOMUNCUOĞLU

Adana / 2019

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ABBREVIATIONS

UNHCR: The United Nations Refugee Agency

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

OECD: The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

TL: Target Language

TEC: Temporary Education Center

ELT: English Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the problem statement, the purpose and the significance of the study followed by the limitations.

1.1 Problem Statement

Despite the reasons for relocation are varying, it can be argued that immigration on different scales has been a long cherished human tradition across cultures. As such, a group of people settling in a new land is not an act free from repercussions, since the act of immigration comes with cultural, political, linguistic and humanitarian implications (Icduygu, 2016). In parallel, the unprecedented arrival of Syrian immigrants in Turkey starting from 2011 also brought up issues related to culture, politics, language and other humanitarian aspects of people living together.

Historically speaking, Turkish Republic was rarely the destination country for the immigrant groups. Apart from the 384.000 ethnically Turkish people immigrating to Turkey between 1922 and 1938 (Ministry of Interior, Directorate General of Migration Management, 2015), there was no influx of large groups of immigrants settling down in Turkey; thus, arguably the implications of immigration was not a subject matter that was of concern to a large group of people previously.

However, with the arrival of the Syrian immigrants, change became inevitable. By the numbers provided by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR hereafter), as of 2019 there are 5,631,155 Syrians in total who fled the country; and 3,606,737 people, or 64% of all the displaced people, are currently residing in Turkey. Moreover, 45.1% of the refugee population is under the age of 18; thus, it is crucial that they have access to education since schooling enables the refugee children to normalize their lives and gives them hope for the future (Beste, 2015). Also education is the most important tool in preventing what UNICEF calls a lost generation as “such a generation will be unlikely to contribute positively and productively to society and instead risk becoming involved in crime and constitute a threat to societal peace and stability” (Kirişçi, 2014).

Due to an agreement between Ankara and the EU in March 2016, the refugees, no matter what their intended destinations are, are to stay in Turkey (BBC, 2016) even

though it is estimated that a majority of them intends to leave for European destinations eventually. Thus, in addition to the need for a general education, there is also a pressing need for language training when the long term plans of the refugees are taken into account. However, the most important role English Language Teaching can play is providing the students with a much needed psychological pressure valve where their differences are cancelled out in the face of learning a language that is foreign to all the students no matter what their backgrounds are.

While the Syrian children have started to be incorporated into the mainstream schooling system by the 2014 Circular published by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), there is still not a comprehensive body of studies investigating the classroom practices of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Given the area of ELT in Turkey was not free from issues prior to the arrival of groups of learners who are of a migration background, this study is conducted to investigate the challenges faced by Turkish EFL teachers when teaching in classes with students with migration backgrounds; specifically the EFL classes with added Syrian students.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

In this study, the purpose is to analyze the teacher behavior in language classes to flesh out the challenges of teaching students from a different cultural and linguistic background. As argued above, majority of EFL teachers in Turkish context are familiar with working with monolingual classes; and the sudden change is expected to cause some challenges. The purpose of the study is to identify those challenges so that the issues stemming from those challenges can be analyzed, and solutions can be suggested.

In line with the purpose, the following questions guided the study:

1. What are the EFL teacher opinions about the changing class profiles due to the accommodation of students with migration backgrounds?
2. Do they face any challenges posed by this change? If so, what are the challenges regarding;
 - a. the medium of instruction
 - b. materials employed
 - c. methods and techniques
 - d. nature of assessment
 - e. classroom management

- f. other aspects of classroom instruction
- 3. What strategies do the EFL teachers follow to handle the challenges and to accommodate the needs of students with migration backgrounds?

1.3. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the fact that there were no studies investigating the classroom dynamics of EFL classrooms in Turkey following the addition of Syrian students. There have been some studies conducted on the teacher perspective in pre-school level (Mercan Uzun & Butun, 2016) and in primary school classrooms (Aykiri, 2017; Erdem, 2017; Saglam, 2017); however, the state of EFL classes has remained uninvestigated so far.

Additionally, the main trend is to only interview the teachers (Taskin & Erdemli, 2018) or to conduct limited observations (Basar et al. 2018). In this regard, the most important aspect of this study is that it provides insight derived from extensive classroom observations in which what the participants profess can be compared to their actions. In this study, we aimed to delve deeper into the workings of everyday dynamics through extended observations in which the observer's effect can be diminished, and the classes can be observed as close to their natural state as possible.

1.4. Limitations

Even though it is not in line with the scope of the study, the major limitation of this study is the lack of data collected from the students with migration backgrounds. Ideally, the perspectives of the learners who are the reason why there are classroom dynamics to begin with should be investigated and compared to the obtained data in order to get a fuller picture; however, such a study requires extensive efforts of a team rather than a sole researcher..

The number of participants might also be taken as another limitation since the perspectives of 11 participants cannot be summarized as the perspectives of a whole population. Nonetheless, the objective of the study is not to generalize but to report on the findings depicting the specific picture that represents the current research problem under investigation.

1.5. Definition of Terms

In this study, some terminology is used in a fashion that carries a specific meaning. These are as follows;

Students with migration backgrounds is used to refer to students who are in Turkey as refugees or immigrants from Syria.

The terms *immigrant and refugee* are used interchangeably, without taking the widely accepted definitions of the terms into account as the legal status of the Syrians in Turkey is a complex and ongoing process.

Though the term refers to four different states, the term *acculturation* is used to refer only to the integration mode of acculturation.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. A Look into Immigration from an Educational Perspective

Even without the addition of the myriad of issues related to immigration, education itself is a complex system with serious outcomes. In a modern society, the functions of the education can be listed as (a) improving equality of opportunity, (b) enhancing efficient sorting and learning, (c) preparing for labor market allocation, and (d) socializing into active participation in society or civic engagement (Van de Werfhorst et. al., 2015). While it is of utmost importance for the natives of a country, education is even more important for the groups with migration backgrounds as the listed functions of education also hold the key to successful integration.

However, “immigrants and their children face unique challenges and barriers in educational attainment and access to college compared to their native-born peers” (Migration Policy Institute, 2019). Challenges that students face include interrupted schooling, language and cultural barriers, minority religious beliefs, levels of native education, socioeconomic resources, and the host country's level of acceptance or rejection of the immigrants (Benavides, Midobuche and Kostine-Ritchey, 2012). In line with Benavides et. al. (2012), the OECD report on immigrant education (2015) shows us that the immigrant students (first and second generations) lag behind the native students due to cultural differences and educational issues from the home country, characteristics of the school systems in host countries, socio-economic status, student motivation, level of support from the immigrant parents, psychological well being of the students, concentration of students with migration backgrounds in at-disadvantage areas and schools, language barriers and performance barriers for late arrivers and teacher reported lack of multicultural pedagogy. Figure 1 presents the test results of first and second generation immigrants in OECD countries in comparison with native students.

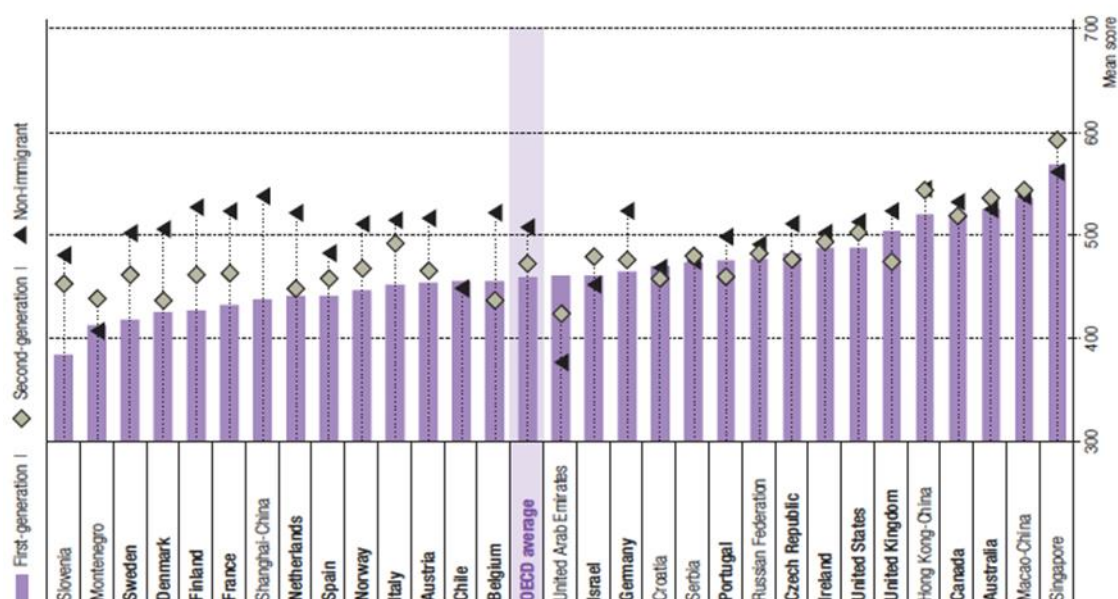


Figure 1. Immigrant students' performance in problem solving, mathematics and reading

Source: OECD, PISA 2012 Database.

In line with the aforementioned findings, BBZ Berlin (2016) report the challenges facing the refugee youth are the difficulty of navigating the system (in Germany), long wait times to get into schools, no coordinated effort by school districts, disrupted education before migration, effect of trauma on learning, language barrier, teacher readiness to deal with trauma and diversity of learners and rising anti-refugee sentiment.

2.2. Culturally Responsive Teaching

Gay (2002) defines culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” and elaborates on the five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching as (a) developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, (b) including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, (c) demonstrating caring and building learning communities, (d) communicating with ethnically diverse students, and (e) responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction.

In line with Gay (2002), Villegas (2002) describes the culturally responsive teacher rather than teaching as an abstract concept. In her definition, a culturally responsive teacher is (a) is socioculturally conscious, that is, [they] recognize that there are multiple ways of perceiving reality and that these ways are influenced by one's location in the social order; (b) has affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds, seeing resources for learning in all students rather than viewing differences as problems to be overcome; (c) sees himself or herself as both responsible for and capable of bringing about educational change that will make schools more responsive to all students; (d) understands how learners construct knowledge and is capable of promoting learners' knowledge construction; (e) knows about the lives of his or her students; and (f) uses his or her knowledge about students' lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar.

2.2.1. Intercultural Competence

Though it may not seem like strictly a teaching related concept, intercultural competence is an important skill that is necessary to build a culturally responsive teaching methodology.

Prior to defining what intercultural competence is, the first step needs to be defining what culture is. Since it is a concept that is at the center, there are naturally various definitions from simplistic to complex. While Patterson (1975) elaborates that culture is *“an identified complex of meanings, symbols, values and norms that are shared consciously or unconsciously by a group of people”*, Thomas (2003) simply defines culture as *“a universal and quite typical orientation system for a society, organization, or group.”* Matsumoto and Juang (2007), on the other hand, refine the concept as *“a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, pursue well-being, and derive meaning from life.”*

Fantini, Arias-Galicia and Guay (2001) define cultural competence as *“language-culture ability individuals develop for use in their native societies”*, they define intercultural competence as *“multiple abilities that allow one to interact effectively and appropriately across cultures”*.

Elaborating on those multiple abilities, Bennett (1986, 1993) conceptualizes intercultural competence as a developmental model (Developmental Model of

Intercultural Sensitivity – DMIS), where there are “six distinct kinds of experience spread across the continuum from ethnocentrism [denial, defense, minimization] to ethnorelativism [acceptance, adaptation, integration]” (Bennett, 2004). In his context, the term ethnocentrism is used to refer to the experience of one’s own culture as “central to reality”, in which the beliefs and behaviors of people remain unquestioned and are experienced as “just the way things are”, while ethnorelativism is considered as the opposite, where the experience of one’s own beliefs and behaviors are just one organization of reality among many viable possibilities.

Given the stages Bennett refines, it needs to be noted that it is possible to find similarities with the contact hypothesis of Allport (1954) who argues the greater the contact between two groups is, the less prejudice there will be. However, it is argued, achieving such equilibrium is dependent on four key conditions, which are equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and support by social and institutional authorities.

2.2.1.1. Equality vs Equity

Reporting the multiculturalism efforts in many school settings as limited to corridors lined with flags, students designed posters representing the national or ethnic origins of families and such [in the US context], Gorski and Swalwell (2015) state that many of such diversity initiatives avoid or whitewash serious equity issues, since such superficial attempts do not aid the students who feel marginalized in making them feel less marginalized. Stressing the need for ‘some’ focus on culture as it is an important aspect of student experience, they also state how culture fetishism undermines education equity (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

To aid the development of equity literacy for educators and students, Gorski (2013) suggests (a) recognizing even subtle forms of bias, discrimination and inequity, (b) responding to bias, discrimination and inequity in a thoughtful and equitable manner, (c) redressing bias, discrimination and inequity, not only by responding to interpersonal bias, but also by studying the ways in which social change happens and (d) cultivating and sustaining bias-free and discrimination-free communities, which requires an understanding that doing so is a basic responsibility for everyone in a civil society.

2.2.2. Deficit Perspective in the Education of Students with Migration Backgrounds

Gorski, (2011) defines deficit perspective as “*approaching students based upon our perceptions of their weaknesses rather than their strenghts*” (p. 2) and notes that the deficit perspective is a symptom of larger socio-political conditions and ideologies borne out of complex socialization processes.

Examining the issue from the orientation, discourse and strategies aspects, Bensimon (2005) characterizes the individuals with deficit perspective as people focusing on the stereotypical characteristics associated with the culture of disadvantage and poverty in order to justify their own lack of preparation, motivation and study skills while blaming students and/or their backgrounds. (p. 99) The usual strategies employed by such individuals, it is noted, are compensatory educational programs, remedial courses, special programs; all focused on fixing the student rather than changing institutions, developing institutional accountability of equitable educational outcomes and changing individuals’ cognitive frames.

Given the students with migration backgrounds are in a new setting where they do not have the established resources the native students have, it can be predicted how the presence of such a perception can lead to serious outcomes since the teacher perception affects the success of the student (Contreras, 2011; Pollock, 2015)

One example of such perspective in action can be the nuanced exclusion of the students due to lack of seemingly trivial elements like access to a computer or a quiet place to study and complete homework (Lombardi, 2016). While those may seem trivial, a parents ability to provide such resources is dependent upon their socioeconomic status (SES) and it may not always be possible for immigrant parents to provide those in their new setting.

2.3. Integration Efforts for the Education of Syrians in Turkey

Noting the main reason of the refusal of European countries to receive immigrants is the hardships they encounter during the integration process, Yıldırımaltp, İslamoğlu and İyem (2017) state the integration efforts in Turkey include the expansion of language courses where Turkish is taught, prepartion of cultural integration programs, establishment of information chairs on the procedures that need to be followed, guidance services, regulations to include the immigrants in education and in workforce.

Stating the initial response of the MoNE was to teach the refugee children a revised version of the Syrian curriculum by 2012, Emin (2016) notes only after 2014 serious steps were started to be taken. By 2014, there were Temporary Education Centers in and sometimes out of refugee camps; however, those were inefficient and insufficient in reaching the population outside the camps since the attendance of out-of-camp refugee students to Temporary Education Centers was at 26% while the rate was at 90% for the children living in camps.

Following the publication of the Strategic Plan for 2015- 2019 where it was stated that *“in order to provide education to refugees and foreigners under temporary protection, there will be regulations and studies aiming to integrate these students to the Turkish educational system”* (MoNE, 2015, p. 37), the refugee students were started to be directed at state schools as the issues with registration were started to get solved.

In the report, Emin (2016) identifies seven areas that cause problems in the education of refugee children. These are (a) access and participation in education, (b) teacher issue, (c) language issue, (d) coordination problems (i.e. bureaucracy), (e) infrastructure, (f) curriculum and materials, and (g) child labor.

2.4. Studies on the Challenges of Teaching in Diverse Settings

In this section, a review of the studies conducted on the challenges of teaching in diverse settings is presented in two main categories. The international challenges are briefly included in order to give an idea about how other countries handle acculturation issues.

2.4.1. International Challenges

While the consensus is to define cultural and linguistic diversity as a “value” and a “resource”, argues Nykiel-Herbert (2010), it is not a clear distinction and often ends in demeaning remarks when addressing the students. Working with 12 Iraqi refugee students (ages 8 through 11) in a New York urban school, she notes that the students had very little schooling prior to their arrival; and even though they were placed in age-appropriate classrooms, they could not fit in due to their interrupted educational background. As a result, 30% of the students were referred to special education services after 12 to 18 months at the school. Despite the challenges with age and interrupted schooling, she states the problem was not stemming from the students but from the teachers. The students were not being given grade-appropriate materials and were being

excluded by their peers and by the teachers as the teachers professed that they did not have the time.

Noting that the non-linguistic challenges are underreported, Hilburn (2014) reports four challenges facing the students with migration backgrounds in addition to the linguistic challenges as (a) a limiting formal curriculum (i.e. one prepared with native students in mind), (b) legal status of immigrants leading to acculturation and academic challenges, (c) the new gateway state factor (since states that were not gateways historically do not yet possess the adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing immigrant population) and (d) the negative impacts of an anti-immigration climate.

Alsubaie (2015) also notes “low academic achievement, adjustment to a new cultural environment and trust problems with self as well as the new culture among the issues that are faced in the training of students with migration backgrounds.

2.4.2. Challenges in the Local Context

Upon the arrival of the Syrian immigrants in Turkey, the education of immigrants became a hot topic. In one of the first studies researching the challenges faced during the acculturation, Polat (2012) reports that his findings indicate challenges in parent attention, differences in educational systems, age differences (between local peers and immigrant students), language and cultural issues. His study is conducted with the participation of 11 teachers, 22 foreigner students and 11 foreign-born parents in Fethiye province of Muğla.

In a phenomenological study they conducted in Denizli with 16 teachers and 5 administrators working in primary schools, Sarıtaş, Şahin and Çatalbaş (2016) report the challenges faced in the education of foreigner students to be five dimensional. They list the challenges as (a) language-related problems, (b) behavioral problems, (c) problems stemming from problematic MoNE-school cooperation, (d) issues stemming from undesirable level of parent-school cooperation and (e) educational issues. Noting that they have trouble communicating with their students, the participants report that their biggest problem is the lack of Turkish language skills of Syrian, Afghan and Iranian born students as it leads to limited participation in the class. The second biggest issue, and the most detailed one, is the behavioral problems. Participants state that the behavioral problems include violent tendencies, gang building, aggression, sexually inappropriate behaviors, not abiding by the rules, and issues related to developmental

differences (some of the students are reported to be older than their classmates; thus, probably here the authors refer to the age difference between students). While Afghan and Iranian parents, who are of higher socio-economic status, pay attention to the education of their children, the participants report the Syrian parents are not attentive. As for the educational issues, the reported challenges are; not doing homework, not bringing in books to the class, indifference to the class, avoiding responsibility and low attendance. However, it is noted the problems are usually encountered on Syrian students while Afghan and Iranian born students fit in better. The MoNE-related problems, on the other hand, reveal the issues in planning. By the regulations of the MoNE, the students are placed in age-appropriate classes no matter how interrupted their previous schooling is or how proficient they are in the local language, leading to serious problems in the classroom.

Approaching the issue in a more socio-political context, Yavuz and Mızrak (2016) state that despite the work done by the MoNE to reach the refugee population, the access to education among the refugee population is still leaving much to be desired and they comment that the underlying causes of the issue are the poverty among the refugee population due to displacement and the issues in the accreditation of the degrees since refugees cannot find work fitting their skills without proper documentation, leading to a lower socio-economic status for their families. To aid the problem, they suggest increased cooperation and coordination between governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Balkar, Şahin and Işıklı-Babahan (2016), on the other hand, approached the issue from a different perspective, and conducted a qualitative study to determine the challenges the Syrian teachers working at Temporary Education Centers (TECs) face. The study was conducted in Gaziantep with the participation of seven TEC coordinators; and the findings indicated that the classroom management was an area that the teachers needed help with in terms of their professional development. Additionally, the participants noted the low wages affected their practice negatively. It was also reported that the identification of the teacher competence, the accreditation of the degrees obtained in Syria and the adaptation of the teachers into a disciplined working environment were among the challenges that were faced.

Focusing on the teacher perspective on preschool level, Mercan-Uzun and Bütün (2016) conducted their study with six preschool teachers in Samsun, and found out that the most pressing problem the teachers face is the lack of Turkish skills of Syrian

children. They report that the lack of language skills lead to a communication breakdown with the teachers and with their peers; hence, the refugee children cannot socialize with their peers, and are excluded.

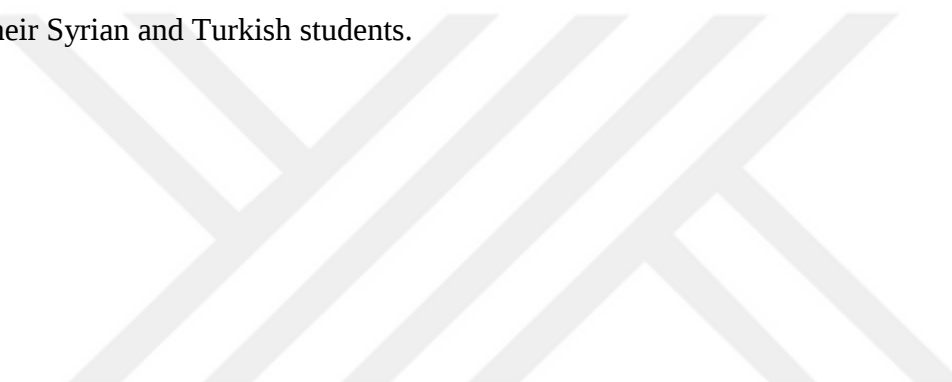
In his review on the issue of the education of Syrian refugees, Tanrikulu (2017) identifies a hefty list of challenges and suggest several solutions that are (a) [Turkish] language training of the refugees, (b) registration issues at schools, (c) interrupted schooling of refugee children and high drop out and low attendance rates due to being placed at age-appropriate classes with no pre-training, (d) risk of marginalization of vulnerable groups by terrorist organization should they not be integrated in the school system, (e) accreditation issues, (f) the need for extensive permits and reports for the education of refugees with special needs, (g) need for trauma assistance, (h) lack of materials for Turkish language training, (i) placement of refugee teachers, (j) prevention of dropping out, (k) encouraging refugee students to high schools that provide religious education since they can utilize their Arabic skills, (l) inter-institution coordination so that transition processes can be more seamless, (m) orientation training for teachers and administrations at schools, (n) cultural differences and concerns surrounding assimilation, (o) need for a more diverse curriculum, (p) providing refugees with information on their civic rights, (r) vocational training opportunities for refugees, (s) acculturation opportunities, (t) the need for monetary support, and such.

In the study they conducted with 30 principals working at different schools in Istanbul, Levent and Çayak (2017) found that the faced challenges include linguistic challenges, bureaucratic issues faced during the registration of the students, acculturation issues, lack of identification documents, and accreditation.

In view of the data from their 2018 study, Kardeş and Akman report that the challenges the teachers face in classroom settings with students with migration backgrounds are (a) linguistic issues, which they worded as the problems in the acquisition of Turkish by the students with migration backgrounds, (b) challenges in acculturation and fitting in the school culture, (c) teachers' feeling of inadequacy in the face of changing classroom settings, (c) lack of changes to accomodate students with migration backgrounds, and (e) inadequacy of the curriculum to meet the needs of students with migration backgrounds. Reporting there is an urgent need to provide the students with support in learning the local language and during the pre-school education, they suggest the MoNE provide social support services to reduce the effects of trauma that the children faced.

In their study on teaching Turkish to Syrian students on primary school level, Bulut, Kanat-Soysal and Gülçiçek (2018) worked with 14 home teachers working in different cities, and found out that the teachers instruct the Syrian students the same way they do the native students (equality perspective), especially during Turkish classes since they do not know how to solve the language problem they face as a result of not receiving any sort of training in terms of Teaching Turkish as a Second Language.

In line with the previous findings, Kuzu-Jafari, Tonga and Kışla's (2018) study, which was conducted in Istanbul and Bursa with 35 participants, also report the language issue to be the biggest problem the teachers face. However, their participants, who are teaching at the primary school level, note that the lack of language proficiency prevents a cultural fusion even though they report they do not face any cultural clash between their Syrian and Turkish students.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter, the design of the study, and why certain design choices are made over others; the participants, and the sampling strategies employed; data collection tools, and how they are developed and tailored to fit the needs of the study; and the procedure of the data collection, and the data analysis strategies employed are described and detailed.

3.1. Research Paradigm and Design

While the issue of multicultural classrooms is a subject getting more and more attention worldwide as a result of the population mobility in the 21st century, it has been a relatively untapped subject in Turkish EFL context. Thus, to be able to do justice to the pioneering nature of the subject matter, this study is designed to be a descriptive and constructivist qualitative research.

The term descriptive in research refers to describing a given state of affairs as fully and carefully as possible (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012), rather than suggesting pre-established solutions, aligning with the objective of this study of determining the perspective of the teachers and the strategies they employ to conquer the day-to-day challenges they face. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the term “descriptive” does not fully capture the scope of the study since qualitative research itself is a descriptive process (Merriam, 2009). As the study aims to describe the perspectives and the classroom practices of language teachers rather than offering didactic solutions, it has been decided that a descriptive study can define the process effectively.

However, given the nature of the epistemology guiding the study, it could also be appropriate to describe the study in question as a constructivist one as the it was aimed to understand the social perspective of the participants as it is that perspective guiding how they make sense of the world they engage in. (Crotty, 1998)

Unlike quantitative research, which is generally based on the belief that facts and feelings can be separated, and the world is a single reality made up of facts that can be discovered; qualitative inquiry assumes that the world is made up of multiple realities, socially constructed by different individual views of the same situation (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012; Merriam, 2009). In other words, while quantitative

studies are searching for an ultimate truth, qualitative research values and seeks the subjective. Since this study explores the potential challenges that EFL teachers face because they now have learners with migration backgrounds, and strategies employed by those teachers to overcome those challenges, qualitative inquiry is thought to be more suitable to investigate the issue, as it will allow the future researchers to have a foundation on which they can base their assumptions to start off.

3.2. Participants

In this study, a variety of sampling strategies are employed to collect data that sufficiently describe the situation of the EFL classes with students with migration backgrounds.

3.2.1. Sample Size

The issue of an appropriate sample size is not a question that can easily be answered when it comes to qualitative studies. While Marshall (1996) states that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research questions, Patton (2002) emphasizes that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Based on their definitions, it can be said that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is big enough to reach a data saturation where no new themes start to emerge.

In order to achieve data saturation, different sample sizes are employed during different stages of data collection. For the initial interviews, 11 teachers from various educational backgrounds participated in the study. The strategies employed to recruit the teachers are detailed in the section 3.2.2. For the classroom observation stage of the study, five teachers working at the same school were approached, and those same teachers participated in the post-observation interviews.

3.2.2. Sampling Strategies

Sample or participant selection process might be called the most crucial section of a qualitative study since the data that is to be provided by the participants will make up the essence of the research. However, in qualitative studies, the goal is not to find the representative of a larger population as it is in quantitative studies. Rather, it is to focus on selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study (Patton, 2002). This type of participant or sample selection is called purposive

sampling (Chein, 1981), judgment sampling (Marshall, 1996), purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002), or non-probability sampling (Merriam, 2009).

With the objective of selecting information-rich cases, following the formulation of the research questions, two criteria are set to determine the desired qualities of the prospective participants, as suggested by Merriam (2009). The selection criteria for the participants are that

- (a) they need to be EFL teachers, and
- (b) they need to be working with students with migration backgrounds.

Though convenient sampling strategies, where the sample is selected on the basis of convenience; be it money, time or another resource, are chastised for leading to poor quality data (Patton, 2002); as a starting point the first two participants are selected and inquired on the basis of convenience. The first two teachers who participated in the initial interview were colleagues of a teacher that the researcher had known prior to the study, and based on her suggestion, the first two participants are contacted and recruited. After the identification of the first two participants, they were asked to refer to their colleagues whom they deem to be data-rich, in line with the principles of snowball/chain sampling strategies. Therefore, the employed sampling strategies can be defined as an amalgamation of convenience sampling, snowball/chain sampling and criterion sampling.

For the classroom observation and post-observation stages of the research, upon the invitation of one of the participants of the interview stage, seven teachers out of the 15 EFL teachers working at the same school as the participant were contacted. Five of the contacted participants consented to have their classrooms observed. Following the completion of the classroom observations, the same participants took part in the post-observation interviews in which they were asked to clarify the choices they made during the observed classes.

3.3. Setting

The universe of the study is a MoNE middle school in Gaziantep city of Turkey. The school, located in a lower-middle to middle class part of the city, was also a pilot school where the new education policies of the MoNE are piloted.

The school, as the headmaster stated, has over 100 teachers teaching various disciplines and has about 2,500 students who arrive at two shifts.

Since it is a pilot school, it was observed that there is an abundance of resources. All the classrooms are furnished with technological equipment (i.e. smart boards, computers, sound systems). When they received extra funding the previous year, the English Teaching Department Coordinator states (hereafter referred as the Coordinator), they decided to build an “English Street” on one of the hallways, where there are screens above doors that continuously show changing vocabulary elements chosen from the text books.

As the Coordinator notes, prior to the arrival of the students with migration backgrounds, the school was quite monocultural and monolingual with a student body comprising mainly of students from Gaziantep and a small minority from surrounding cities. However, being the biggest middle school of the neighborhood, which hosts a population of 113,000 (Kinacilar, 2016), the school also attracted a sizeable population of students with migration backgrounds from 2016 onwards.

Again according to the information provided by the Coordinator, there were about 10 students with migration backgrounds in each class during the fall semester of the 2017-2018 school year; however, the administration decided to gather these students whose Turkish speaking skills were subpar (the decision making criteria are not available) in immigrant-only classes where the students are to be taught Turkish. Consequently, at the time of the observations there were approximately five students with migration backgrounds in each observed class.

3.4. Data Collection

As Merriam (2009) notes; “qualitative inquiry, which focuses on meaning in context, requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to the underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data.”. Since the objective of the study is to reach beyond the face value of the situation at hand, it was decided to utilize a three-pronged approach in data collection.

During the first stage of the data collection, volunteering participants were reached via phone, and they were informed about the objectives and method of the study. Upon their agreement, the researcher negotiated the time and place to meet with the participants. While some participants chose to participate in informal settings such as cafeterias, some chose to conduct the interviews at the schools they work at due to

convenience. The interviews were recorded with the explicit permission of the participants so that they can be transcribed later.

For the second stage, it was planned to have one class hour of observation per participant. However, later due to the multi-faceted nature of instruction, it was decided that five class hours per participant would allow the researcher to access richer data in addition to allowing the researcher to ‘get in’ the mood of the classes so that the observer’s effect can be reduced. For this stage, five teachers working at a middle school agreed to participate. In order to gain access to classrooms for observations, the intended participants were presented with consent forms (Appendix 2). Upon receiving their consent, through formal channels, we asked for permission from the local branch of the MoNE. Since the objective was to identify the challenges the teacher’s face, it was not deemed necessary to obtain permission from the parents of the students, as the data collection was limited to observation schedules and field notes, which did not violate the privacy of the students.

During the last stage of data collection, based on the observation notes taken during the classes, a follow-up, post-observation interview was designed, and held with the teachers with a view to ensuring their member check (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), the researcher’s observation notes pertaining to their classroom behaviors and the motives behind these actions.

3.4.1 Instruments

As mentioned above, for the instrumentation a three-pronged approach was decided upon; however, prior to reaching the final form of the instruments utilized, several different instrumentation options were visited, and the ones selected were revised in order to curb any items that might be deemed leading or biased as the goal here is to understand the perspective of the participants and see how they make sense of the world they live in (Crotty, 1998).

In line with the objective of the study, it was decided that structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations would provide more in depth data as well as allowing the participants to express themselves more freely than they would with questionnaires or other data collection tools that are usually associated with quantitative research methodologies.

Utilizing structured interviews instead of more commonly employed semi-structured interviews was deemed more proper since on-the-spot questions might take a

“leading” turn. In this regard, the decision to utilize structured interviews can be taken as an attempt at reducing any unforeseen bias that might stem from the researcher herself. However, during the interviews, when the participants following a stream of consciousness went beyond the scope of the questions directed at them, they were not interrupted.

The non-participant observations, designed as the second step of the data collection process were chosen to function on two very close levels. The first reason why observations were conducted is that the data they provided functioned as a reliability tool, affirming and expanding the interview data. The second function of the observations was to witness the classroom practices as a third party to find out whether they affirm the interview data.

The function of the post-observation interviews, on the other hand, was to provide the participants with the opportunity to elaborate on the data through member checking.

Through combining three tools to complement each other, put differently, through triangulation of data obtained from the data collection tools, it was aimed to paint a clearer picture, where the conclusions derived from the data can be supported in multiple and reliable ways.

3.4.1.1. Interviews

It was decided that using interviews as the first step of the data collection is more appropriate than classroom observations as it will allow the researcher to form an idea regarding the beliefs of the participants prior to seeing them in action, thus ensuring an unbiased approach.

The first step taken to design the interview process was to decide upon what aspects of the instruction were to be included in. Since what we are interested in finding out is the various aspects of classroom instruction with which the EFL teachers feel challenged due to the accommodation of students with migration backgrounds in their classrooms, we decided to start by examining the materials acquired during a Cambridge University ELT Certification program (CELTA) as the program aims to investigate and improve various aspects of instruction. Following formation of the first draft of the interview questions to be asked, the questions were further refined to eliminate leading forms. Reaching a second version of the question set, the researcher asked her former colleagues to provide feedback on how the set of questions can be

further improved. After the questions were organized in two groups based on their feedback, the questions were tried in a pilot interview with a foreign language instructor from Gaziantep University who also has students with migration backgrounds in her classroom. During the pilot interview, the number of questions was further reduced, and the language was further modified to eliminate leading forms that might affect the participants' responses. (See Appendix I for the Interview Questions)

During the interviews, the 11 participants were asked a set of questions designed to investigate their perspective on the students with migrant backgrounds issue. The participants were asked whether they have received any training on working in diverse settings, how they perceive the students with migrant backgrounds and if they had any previous knowledge about the culture of the students with migrant backgrounds. On the third and the last portion of the interviews, the participants were asked a set of questions on various aspects of their classroom instruction. The questions asked were about the general conduct of the teachers, their preferred medium of instruction, material adaptation, assessment, teaching methodology, and issues they face (if they do) in classroom management and whether they need help.

The interview questions were originally prepared in English. However, since the aim was to accommodate the participants in a manner that enables them to express themselves as they like, the questions were later translated into Turkish which were cross checked by a former colleague who is proficient in both languages. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. During the conduct of the interviews, the participants were given the option of choosing the language they want.

3.4.1.2. Observation Schedules

Initially it was planned to have one hour of classroom observation per participant; however, given several aspects of classroom instruction were to be observed, it would have been hard to collect data that would shed light into the research questions under investigation. Thus, the participants working at the same school, where the bulk of the data is gathered, were asked whether they would be interested in having an observer in their classrooms for multiple hours; upon their agreement, a five hour each observation schedule that is also in line with the interview questions is prepared. (See Appendix 3 for the Observation Schedules)

The task of the observer for the first hour of observations was to identify the employed methodology. One of the reasons why methodology was chosen as the focus

of the first task to see if it compares to what the MoNE recommends. Additionally, focusing on several aspects of the classroom instruction at the same time is thought to provide the observer with a holistic and reliable insight as to the approach of the participant. During this task, the grading of the language according to the level of the learners, grouping of the students, instructions, monitoring, error correction, elicitation of the target language, concept checking, providing the learners with opportunities to practice the new language and the feedback giving techniques of the participants were decided to be observed. The researcher kept descriptive and detailed field notes so that the data collected through the checklists can be supported for reliability purposes in addition to providing the opportunity to compare the classroom practices to what was professed during the interviews.

For the focus of the second and third hours of observation, the languages utilized during the instruction and the occurrences of code-switching were observed. During the second hour of the observations, the observer was to take notes on the languages utilized in the classroom. The rationale for the task was to see whether the students with migration backgrounds were employing their native languages to better their learning experience. (Swain, 2000; Nation, 2003; Pan, 2010) Paralleling the rationale of the second hour observations, the third hour observations were designed to keep track of the code-switching occurrences within the classroom.

The objective of the fourth observation task was to delve into the nature of the material utilized in the classroom. When the learners can associate the new language to what they already know through familiar subject matters, it is generally assumed that a better learning can be achieved (Burns, 2018) as the published materials do not always fulfill the needs of the learners (Halim & Halim, 2016). With that in mind, it was observed whether the participants are modifying their materials in any way to incorporate elements from the cultures of the learners, and whether they are bringing in supplementary material to expand the prescribed material in any way.

The fifth and the last observation task aimed to see the rapport that is built between the teacher and the learners. Adapted from Wilson and Ryan's (2015) Professor-Student Rapport Scale, the observation task was designed to break down rapport, which can also be taken as an abstract concept, to better understand the nature of the relationship the teacher and the students form. (Ryan, 2014)

3.4.1.3. Post-Observation Interviews

While the rest of the tasks were kept to be structured to allow the participants to express themselves without any kind of leading, it can be argued that the last data collection tool was unstructured as it was based on the data collected using the first two tools. To validate, verify, or assess the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Doyle, 2007), member checking, also called respondent validation or participant validation, the method of returning an interview or analyzed data to a participant, was employed. Using the field notes taken by the researcher, the participants were invited to elaborate on several aspects of their instruction as well as to explain certain decisions they made during the class.

3.4.2. The Procedure

Following the design of the first data collection tool, i.e. the interview, the first participants were reached out and the interviews were conducted in a setting of their own choosing. As mentioned above, after the scope and the objective of the study were explained, the participants were asked if they would be comfortable with a recording so that what they provide can be transcribed later. The data they provided were later transcribed, and coded.

For the observation portion of the data collection, the initial step was to ask for participant consent. Following their consent, we asked for a formal permission from the local branch of the MoNE. Upon the arrival of the permission slip, the school was contacted to gain information on the schedules of the participants so that they could be informed them of the process. Each of the participants was given a copy of the observation schedules and was informed that there will also be field notes taken. They were also assured that they were welcome to have a copy of the field notes.

While the school in question had a pilot program where the 5th graders received intense language training (15 hours a week), the participant teachers were also teaching different grades using the standard MoNE curriculum. Prior to the start of the observations, participants stated they would feel more comfortable if their classes with the intensive program were observed. Their rationale was that the student with migrant backgrounds population was bigger in those classes and they also had a better rapport with the classes in question.

The observations were conducted on a span of a month with two or three hours each day. When the participants did not feel comfortable with having one particular

class observed, they stated that beforehand; and the timing of the observations were reorganized to accommodate their wishes.

Because of their heavy workload, the post-observation interviews could not always be conducted right after the observed classes. To remedy that, using the filed notes and observation schedules, a tailored set of questions for each participant were prepared, and they were interviewed again at the end of the observations.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings acquired through the aforementioned data collection tools are presented. The names of the participants were changed in order to protect their privacy. The findings are presented in relation to the research questions that guided the study;

1. What are the EFL teacher opinions about the changing class profiles due to the accommodation of students with migration backgrounds?
2. Do they face any challenges posed by this change? If so, what are the challenges regarding;
 - a. the medium of instruction
 - b. materials employed
 - c. methods and techniques
 - d. nature of assessment
 - e. classroom management
 - f. other aspects of classroom instruction
3. What strategies do the EFL teachers follow to handle the challenges and to accommodate the needs of students with migration backgrounds?

4.1. Turkish EFL Teachers' Opinions on the Changing Classroom Profiles

During the interview process, the participating EFL teachers were asked to state their opinions and how they feel regarding the arrival of the students with migrant backgrounds in their classes. Throughout the transcripts of the 11 interviews, three common themes, which are concern, helplessness and indifference emerged. Table 1 shows the frequency of the three themes concerning the teachers' opinions and feelings as well as how these feelings play an important role in their dealing with the new classroom setting:

Table 1.

The feelings and opinions of Turkish EFL teachers in the face of changing classroom profiles.

Themes	F	Excerpt
Concern	7/11	Canan: <i>As a teacher I don't think of them as different from other students. I try (to include them in) but we cannot say we are successful. If we had been successful, we would have integrated these kids somehow.</i>
Helplessness	5/11	Kemal: <i>I am facing a problem but I don't have the experience that can show me how to deal with it. I have to come up with a solution. [...] Are we successful? I don't think we have been successful in the educational context. Both our own citizens and the Syrian students in our schools faced challenges.</i>
Indifference	4/11	Ayşe: <i>"I mean they just sit around because they can't speak Turkish. I already have a lot of students to deal with. If they want (to be included), they need to learn Turkish.</i>

4.1.1. Theme 1: Concern

The most common feeling described by the respondents is concern in the face of the changing demographics of their classes. Even though seven of the respondents defined how they feel as concern, what they mean when saying 'concern' is fundamentally different from each other.

Four teachers say they feel concerned because they observe the students with migrant backgrounds get excluded by their native peers because they lack Turkish language skills. By the account reported by these participants, when the students with migrant groups are in small numbers, the exclusion leads to isolation. In one case, Deniz reported a teenager girl dropping out of school after three months because she could not become a part of the classroom dynamic as she was not a Turkish speaker. When students with migrant backgrounds are in larger numbers, it was reported that

they form their own group in the face of exclusion and respond to it by excluding others, leading to raising tension in the school. As Kemal and Esin report, they find themselves in the middle of a ‘gang fight’ almost every class break. Given each of their classes comprises of more than 40 students, all respondents state they are worried because they sense the negativity is going to lead to bigger issues in the future.

The other group of concerned respondents has not elaborated on any specific issue mentioned by the others, but stated that the arrival of the students with migrant backgrounds led to an unpleasant change in the classroom dynamics. Fatih states that he is worried that the students with migrant backgrounds are going to disrupt and corrupt ‘our’ educational system.

In one extreme case, a respondent reported she feels concerned because of the country of origin of the students with migrant backgrounds. She reports a mentally unstable student (who was later institutionalized) threatening a native student with furnishing him with bombs, and says she does not feel comfortable with their presence in her classes even though she reports that she tries to incorporate them.

4.1.2. Theme 2: Helplessness

Another feeling the respondents report is that they feel helpless and overwhelmed. As reported by all 11 of the participants, none of them were informed prior to the arrival of the students with migrant backgrounds in their classes. They state they found themselves facing a new environment without any preparation, and are trying to cope with the day to day issues as best as they can. Barring two, the respondents stated that they had received in-service training as a preparation for accommodating the students who migrated from Syria in their classrooms. However, they reported that the training did not go beyond giving some suggestions as to having positive attitude towards those students. Thus, they stressed that they need more ‘serious’, ‘relevant’ and ‘comprehensive’ training that focuses on the various aspects of classroom instruction geared towards the changing conditions of the classrooms including those students.

Another reported reason why the participants feel helpless is that they feel stuck in-between. Stating there is a racial tension at school between students, Kemal states he feels compelled to do something, but he simply does not know what. He reports that he, like his colleagues, already had had a heavy workload and an overcrowding problem,

and the addition of the hostility between students was making it very hard to navigate his day-to-day problems.

Gamze reports that her native students tended to use racial slurs to address their classmates with migrant backgrounds instead of addressing them with their names. Feeling angry, she tried warning her students that such behavior was not acceptable and banned the use of such terminology in her classes. However, she noted, she heard that some of her colleagues were addressing the students using such terminology, leading to an overwhelming sense of helplessness on her account.

4.1.3. Theme 3: Indifference

Another theme found in the testimonies of four of the participants is indifference to the presence of students with migration backgrounds. Describing their feelings, the four respondents stated they believe if the students with migrant backgrounds want to be integrated; they should put the effort and learn to fit in, signaling they will not be the party that takes a step.

Admitting there are issues in the classrooms, Canan states that parents of the students with migrant backgrounds resist to their children learning Turkish or receiving education at a Turkish school. She notes she cannot communicate with the students because they do not speak Turkish, and adds that the unwillingness of the students stops her from trying further since there is not much she can do when the parents do not teach Turkish to their children.

In line with the statements of Canan, another teacher, Halil also noted in the post-observation interview that he does not feel a need to modify his behavior, as it is the students with the migrant backgrounds who need to adapt if they want to integrate in the system as it was observed that he conducts his classes entirely for the native students and mainly in Turkish.

4.2. The Challenges of Working with Students with Migration Backgrounds

The findings obtained from both the initial and post-observation interviews and the classroom observations provided evidence with regards to the challenges the participating EFL teachers encounter in their classrooms. There is also evidence showing that the reason for the challenges that the teachers face, as they reported, is the lack of proper training. They said although they were provided statistics and were given speeches on the humanitarian aspects of the immigration process during the in-service

trainings they received, they attest they did not receive training that could be translated into classroom practices so that they can handle classrooms with students with different migration backgrounds, leading to feelings of concern, helplessness, and in a few cases indifference.

Of the 11 respondents to the interview portion of the study (five of those were also observed), nine received in-service training. In Table 2, some of the responses of the participants regarding the content of the training can be seen;

Table 2.

Participant accounts on the content of in-service training

Participant	Excerpt
Halil	<i>"We talked about Syrians for a whole week."</i>
Fatih	<i>[During the training seminar] We sat down. We did breathing exercises. We did some physical exercises. We meditated. [...] The training focused on empathizing. We were told to put ourselves in their shoes. 'You were at war. You lost your family.' We were advised to share these sentiments with the native students. There was no information regarding what can be done during classroom instruction. We did not learn anything related to methodology.</i>
Esin	<i>"We were told to empathize and to follow the news. Then we had an exam. [...] The in-service training... How should I put this? ... was not very effective."</i>
Kemal	<i>"We received a training but the trainer himself/herself do not know what they are doing. On paper, it was a training effort for the teachers with foreign born, or Syrian, students in their classes. It lasted four days but the trainer does not know any more than we do. They attended some training and then were tasked with this. [The content was] How many Syrians are there in Turkey? Why are they here? What happened? I am the one who attended the training and I am saying this in all honesty; there is nothing I can use in a classroom in what they say. It did not help at all. We had to develop our own methodology when faced with these students in our classes."</i>

Canan

“The in-service training was a course to develop a project. We got together and discussed what can be done and shared our experiences. It was a kind of brainstorming. Everybody shared their opinions. We wrote down what we think of when we hear the word refugee. We watched a movie. An Italian movie called ‘my land’. It was a movie that says the refugees are not saved; they are excluded and are not integrated into the society. Then we had an activity. We tried putting together a newspaper. About refugees. How they can be introduced to the society, what we can do for them. We glued newspaper clippings on a paper and formed our own newspaper. It is still going on. Next week, we will have an exam where we will be asked questions about refugees. We will get a grade that will be introduced to the system as an in-service training.”

4.2.1. Challenges Regarding the Medium of Instruction

Depending on the age of the student group the participants work with, their preferred medium of instruction, and the frequency of employed code-switching differ.

Betül reports that she prefers utilizing as much English as she can during instruction; however, she notes that she has not changed into a more English-heavy methodology because of the arrival of the students with migration backgrounds, and is doing what she has always done. She also notes that she code-switches to Turkish when she needs to introduce meta-language depending on the level of the learners. Since she does not speak the native language of the students with migrant backgrounds, she says she needs to depend on the kindness of students if there are bilingual students in the class. –She says sometimes she has students from the Hatay Province of Turkey in her classes and they are usually bilingual due to the diverse make up of the city- .

Esin, on the other hand, stated that even though she prefers to utilize as much English as possible, she couldn’t employ as much as English as she wants. She is working with a pilot group of students who are receiving a 15-hours-a-week intensive English course in addition to regular 4-hours-a-week classes with other grades. She reports the students complain to their parents that they cannot follow if she conducts an English-heavy class with communication as the goal, and the parents and administration pressure her to code switch more often as the native students are taking national tests at

the end of their programs, which are more grammar oriented. Since she was also a participant of the observation portion of the data collection process, what she reported can also be verified through the field notes. In line with her statements, it was observed that the students were not very cooperative when she tried using English to communicate in two occasions. Rebuffed, she was seen to translate what she had said into Turkish so as to encourage student participation.

The other interviewees also state they code-switch when they need to introduce new language (i.e. grammar and vocabulary). Though it is not a challenge in itself as code-switching was a technique the participants reported to have used even before the arrival of the students with migration backgrounds, the fact that they code-switch causes the participants to feel they are doing something they should not since the students with migration backgrounds do not speak Turkish and are largely ignored when the teacher code-switches.

Since utilizing the native language can be deemed a part of the language learning process, as the first language can create a less threatening atmosphere (Solhi and Büyükyazı, 2011), one hour of the observations was dedicated to see what languages were being employed in the classes, to see if the students with migration backgrounds are using their own language during the classes. As elaborated in section 4.3.2, the students with migration backgrounds were not observed to be utilizing their native languages.

To build upon the findings of the aforementioned observation, another hour of the observations was dedicated to find out the function of the code-switching. As the participating teachers are bilingual only, it is normal that the results indicate that the teachers are only code-switching between Turkish and English. However, even though there were a minimum of three and a maximum of five students with migration backgrounds present during the observations, it was observed that they do not employ their native language at all. Rather they keep to themselves and stay clear of participating. Through the chart kept to track the utterances in different languages (See Appendix 3), the percentage of each language used was tried to be measured. Since recording the audio from the whole class would have required permission from all of the parents of the students; therefore, would have been rather impractical, we chose to pick a 10-minute period from each class where detailed field notes on the utterances are taken. Table 3 depicts the amount of target language, i.e. English, used in class in percentages:

Table 3.

Percentage of English utterances in classes

Teacher	%
Fatih	64%
Gamze	61%
Esin	50%
Kemal	47%
Halil	37%

When asked to elaborate on the percentages during the post-observation interviews, Gamze and Fatih stated they prefer utilizing as much Target Language as possible since it functions on two levels; employing English as the medium of instruction provides native students with an opportunity to have exposure to the Target Language, and it makes the students with migration backgrounds feel accommodated. Esin stated that she tries not using English as the main mode of communication as she wants to make sure the native students can follow. Kemal also said he prefers using English, which was verified through the notes taken for his other observation hours.

Halil, however, says he prefers using as much Turkish as he can since he treats English as the content of the class and the English utterances were usually read-alouds so that the students can translate into Turkish. As for accommodating the students with migration backgrounds, he says they can acquire Turkish this way as they are exposed to the language.

4.2.2. Challenges Regarding the Employed Materials

Data related to whether or not having students with migrant backgrounds causes the EFL teachers face any challenges in terms of materials they use in the classroom were acquired from the interviews and classroom observations. The findings clearly show that there is a serious lack of awareness regarding material adaptation, and the participants perceive material as something that needs to be utilized as is. Thus, it seems hard to pinpoint a challenge stemming from the arrival of students with migrant backgrounds regarding the utilized materials. Table 4 presents the interview responses the question whether the presence of the students with migration backgrounds affects their material selection and if they need any supplementary materials;

Table 4.

Participant accounts on the challenges of material selection

Does the presence of the students with migrant backgrounds affect your material selection? Do you need or use any supplementary materials?	
Betül	<i>(When choosing my materials) I chose the ones where the exercises are of different kinds. I don't prefer working with one type of exercises. I choose materials that are similar to what we ask in the exams. [...] But the presence of a student from a different country does not really affect the way I teach or the materials I employ. I follow our own system. I expect them to adapt.</i>
Esin	<i>We make the students purchase books for the optional English classes. We give worksheets and do multiple choice questions in class. We utilize smart boards a lot; I can say they are on all the time. The presence of these students affects me. They do not buy the books. They don't bring the books they have.</i>
Deniz	<i>There was no change in my material selection because I use the smart boards. I use audio, videos, visuals and presentations. I carry on as I always do.</i>
Canan	<i>I do not (adapt my materials). I treat them like I treat the normal (i.e. local) students.</i>
Ebru	<i>Supplementary material... I don't think they affect my choices. Because I don't use supplementary materials.</i>

Based on the data from the interviews, it can be said the participants do not modify their materials; thus, are not facing any challenges regarding material modification. As the excerpts suggest, material modification is not an area of the instruction that the participants had given any thought. In addition to the interviews, one hour of the observations was dedicated to find out whether the employed material is modified to be more culturally sensitive, or in any way. And in line with the interview data, the observation data also suggest that the participants did not adapt their material in any form. The listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary exercises were conducted

as they were suggested in the book. Thus the presence of the students with migration backgrounds had no effect on the material selection and adaptation.

The only participant to employ any supplementary material was Halil, who brought Turkish and English subtitled cartoons to the class and asked the native students to translate English texts to Turkish and explain why certain verbs were conjugated the way they do.

4.2.3. Challenges Regarding the Employed Methods and Techniques

The issue of employed methods and techniques is another problematic one like the material problem as the participants are not clear in their responses and when inquired, they chose to discuss the medium of instruction they employ almost exclusively. During the interview, the participants were asked;

- a) If there has been any change in the way they teach due to internal (because you as a teacher feel a need) or external (a demand from students etc.) factors?
- b) to describe their preferred methodology and employed techniques.

Nine of the respondents stated that they did not feel a need to change their conduct due to any internal or external factors and are not utilizing any new techniques to accommodate the students with migration backgrounds. Betül elaborates that it is the students with migration backgrounds who should adapt to our system as they are the guests, while Ebru said she did not feel a need as she does not perceive the students with migration backgrounds differently from the native students.

It was also observed that the respondents did not feel comfortable with the question on methodology, and avoided replying. Instead they described the changes they incorporated into their preferred medium of instruction. Canan responded as; *“I started speaking slower. For example, when I am speaking English, most of our students do not understand. Because they don’t understand, they don’t react. So I started using Turkish and English together. I started speaking slower. I try to go to those students (their desks) and do the activities and homework I assign with them. I sometimes call them to my desk to help. Because I do not want them feel excluded.[sic]”*

In line with Canan’s statement, Deniz reported that she started not employing Turkish in the classes with students with migration backgrounds. She states; *“I already*

speak English in my classes. I use English but when I am introducing language (grammar), I was using L1 for clarity. In those classes, I was not doing that. I was speaking English exclusively”.

4.2.4. Challenges Regarding the Nature of Assessment

From what can be inferred from the accounts of the participants, the only form of assessment employed in the classrooms is summative assessment. Apart from Ebru, who does not conduct exams and Betül, whose exams are prepared by a centralized testing office, the emergent theme based on the accounts of the remaining of the nine respondents is a low rate of academic success.

Esin states the students with migration backgrounds are not on par with their native peers as they have serious literacy (alphabet related) issues that become more prominent during the exams. Building on the literacy issue, Canan reports that they are holding centralized and departmental exams where individual teachers are not preparing their own exams but a group prepares an exam to be conducted school-wide and as the students of the same school, the students with migration backgrounds are taking those exams like their native peers no matter what their Turkish speaking skills are. She states *“this is a negative thing for them. Their academic success [rate] is really low.”*

During the observed hours, there were no exams conducted.

4.2.5. Challenges Regarding the Classroom Management

Classroom management is reported to be the most problematic aspect of classroom instruction, with issues spanning from isolation to students being overly enthusiastic, sometimes in the context of the same interview.

Approaching the issue very matter-of-factly, Esin simply states; *“the classrooms were already crowded and noisy with more than 40 students in each. And they got noisier with the addition of five or six Syrians.”* with which Halil agrees and says the classes are too crowded to deal with students individually.

Even though stating *“they are isolated and are quietly sitting at a corner”* while she is making a general statement, Canan also complains about a particular student she has as follows;

“Bashar, a 9th grader, is a bit distracting. He is always on the move and that tires me out a bit. I mean, he is not different from other kids. He is distracting in

the same way. But he asks a lot of questions and chews gum in class. I mean, he is older (than the rest of the students). He failed and repeated a class. He should be quieter and calmer but he is the most distracting one. The other students also say that."

Reporting that the students tried to be as welcoming as possible when new students came in, Deniz notes there are some cultural issues that she finds a bit hard to navigate. She states the female students avoid interaction with male students, leading to other students reacting by largely ignoring them.

As she is working with older students, Betül reports a different host of issues stemming from native students. She reports the native students talk loudly amongst themselves about how students with migration backgrounds are getting special treatment from the state; making sure the students with migration backgrounds are hearing. She states that such occurrences leads to raising tension in the class, making it harder for her to just proceed with her job.

Interestingly, Kemal, who works with a group of 12 year olds, reports a similar issue. He states the native students, who are not old enough to come to such conclusions on their own, complain that the students with migration backgrounds are thriving on our taxes and such complaints make it harder for him to avoid sensitive issues with children.

Along those lines, Gamze reported she prefers incorporating as much as group work and pair work into her conduct but is having issues with the native students reacting. She stated; *"Utilizing Group Work and Pair Work turned out to be a negative application as the natives students did not want to be in the same group or be paired with Syrian students. I cannot allow such discrimination in my class but they are too young for me to be harsh. So I tried to overcome the issue gently, by listening and making them empathize."*

Fatih reports that there are issues stemming from the behavior of students with migration backgrounds. He explains; *"It was not like this at the beginning. We (he and the native students) thought of them as 'ensar/muhacir' (religious terms for immigrant) and treated them accordingly but seeing how comfortable they are..."*.

Stating the racial slurs are a serious problem, Gamze, who had issues with group dynamics, also notes; *"At the beginning of the school year, I noticed that the students were referring to their classmates as 'Suri' as if they don't have names. I immediately*

put a stop to that. That is not a behavior I can condone. It had to end after my intervention. They have names. You will address them by their names. If you can't pronounce their names, address them as 'friends'. I forced my students to empathize. Unfortunately I had to force them; I wish I didn't have to, I wish the conditions were different. This happened in 5/E. I later heard from the students that one of my colleagues was mocking the students by using that slur. But I can only control my classroom. I warned them and it never happened again. Obviously this doesn't mean we sorted out all the issues. We only managed to sort out one facet of a multifaceted problem."

4.2.6. Challenges Regarding the Other Aspects of Instruction

As for the miscellaneous challenges that the participants face in classrooms with students with migration backgrounds, it can be said the three emergent themes are the challenges based on lack of proficiency with the local language, i.e. Turkish, ethnicity based tensions and cultural issues.

Probably the most commonly cited challenge that the participants report is the lack of proficiency of the students with migration backgrounds' in the local language (i.e. Turkish), as it leads to problems within and without the classroom; with the teachers and with the native students.

Stating there are not a lot of students with migration backgrounds at the school where she works, Canan notes that there is the risk of cliques forming if the students are in larger numbers, which is an issue noted by Kemal, Esin and Halil as an actuality in the setting they are working at. Thus ethnicity-based tension can be noted as one of the challenges of working in such settings.

Another important challenge noted by the participants is the cultural issues which sometimes leaves the participants confused, helpless and even angry. Fatma reports that she needs to deal with behavioral issues that she is not equipped to deal with. In one instance, she walks into the student bathroom to find a student spraying others with the hose he found in the bathroom. She explains that the native students stop when they are doing something that can be deemed as mischievous in the presence of authority, but the students with migration backgrounds do not care for the classroom dynamics and hierarchy that she is used to. She said she tried reaching the parents of the said child but they did not cooperate. Sounding fed up, she asked what she needs to do

as she does not want to incorporate corporal punishment but she states she is at the end of her wit.

4.3. The Challenges Evidenced through Classroom Observations

As detailed in section 3.4.1.2., during the data collection, a total of 25 hours were observed. Despite the fact that the participants were asked to member check the observation data, it can still be perceived as the personal observations of the researcher. Thus, the findings from the observation data are detailed on their own.

4.3.1. The Nature of Observed Methodology

During the first hour of the observations, one of the goals was to identify the employed methodology so that it could be compared to what was professed during the interviews. With that in mind, the first observation hour aimed to observe the grading of the TL according to the student level, grouping of the students, giving clear and understandable instructions, monitoring the students, eliciting the TL, concept checking to see if the learning occurred, providing the students with opportunities to practice the new language, and giving feedback.

It was hard to make generalizations based on the observation data, since each participant had their own style of teaching. However, it is possible to say the general tendency (four out of five participants) was to follow the textbook; hence, the role of the teacher in the classroom was to explain what activity was going to be conducted next and how. As a result, it was hard to assess the grading of the language according to the student level since it was almost always controlled.

It was observed that there was a tendency among the participants to code-switch into Turkish when they needed to communicate with the students; hence, the utilization of English was limited to reading aloud from the textbook. And the tendency to code-switch extended to instructions as well..

Due to their preferred medium of instruction, the participants; with the exception of Gamze who tried employing as much TL as she can, generally preferred to read the instructions aloud in English. Later on, the instructions were translated by the teacher or by volunteering students. The students were provided with immediate error correction with pronunciation and grammar mistakes. Eliciting the target language and concept checking were not preferred techniques. However, teachers utilized effective feedback

in the form of affirming the students to boost the student confidence when they provided correct answers.

The group work/pair work was not a technique that was utilized by any of the participants. Hence, the main direction of the interaction in the classroom was between the teacher and the students.

When the participants were asked to elaborate on their preferences during the post-observation interview, there emerged two themes. First, it was stated that they needed to keep up with the curriculum; thus, employing techniques like elicitation or group work were too time consuming in their context. Moreover, the minimum number of the students in their classes was 38. Hence, it was noted that it was hard to manage such a large crowd when employing more communicative techniques. The participants were aware of the changing demographics in their classrooms, and they knew they were not being sufficiently inclusive; however, they professed the time limitation ties their hands.

4.3.2. Utilization of Different Languages in the Classroom

During the second hour of the observations, the question that we sought the answer out was how different languages are utilized in the classroom. With that in mind, an observation schedule that allowed taking notes whenever there occurred a code-switch was prepared.

Although there was a minimum of four students with migration backgrounds in each class, there were no utterances in Arabic.

Through analysis of the notes, it was found out that the students did not employ English as a means of communication. Their utterances were limited to read-alouds from their textbook. Inquiries were made in Turkish, and the teachers responded to questions in Turkish when they needed to communicate.

4.3.3. The Function of Code-Switching

In the third hour of the observations, the function of the code-switching in the classroom was observed. In line with the findings of section 4.3.2., the code-switching happened only in the Turkish-English set; with students with migration backgrounds preferring to stay clear of the dynamic.

Apart from the apparent function of code-switching, which is to convey a message to the students, another function was observed. Two of the five teachers were employing code-switching as a means of affirming the students. When the student

uttered/read a sentence in English, the teacher affirmed by translating the sentence to Turkish; implying they were satisfied with the student production.

4.3.4. Multicultural Exploitation of the Employed Material

During the fourth hour of the observations; in line with the findings of section 4.2.2., it was observed that the participants preferred not modifying or adapting their materials.

Due to some problems encountered at the beginning of the school year, there was an abundance of materials in the classes. Since the preparatory program was being piloted with 5th graders, the MoNE provided the school with textbooks from British publishers in addition to the MoNE prepared course books that were utilized in all MoNE schools. However the books arrived towards the end of the first semester due to a planning error; thus, some of the teachers asked the students to buy different textbooks, adding to the variety of the materials employed.

When the participants were asked about material adaptation and modification during the post-observation interviews, it was stated that they had a variety of materials to choose from, nulling the need for adapting/modifying.

4.3.5. The Rapport

During the fifth and the final hour of the observations, the rapport of the participants with their students was observed with the help of an observation schedule adapted from the professor-student rapport scale of Wilson and Ryan (2012). The objective of the observation was to see how rapport plays out in the new, multicultural setting the teachers are conducting their classes in.

Generally speaking, it can be said the nature of the rapport in the classrooms was highly positive. The participants were very kind and receptive towards their students. They were understanding and very tolerant of questions. The students enjoyed a setting where their efforts did not go unnoticed.

However, it also needs to be noted that the students with migration backgrounds were largely not a part of the classroom dynamic. In no point during the observations, the students were explicitly excluded. Regardless, in line with the indifference sentiment shared by the participants during the interviews, there was no effort to include them in as well. If the students with migration backgrounds made the effort to participate, they were included in. One student, who was fluent in Turkish, was a particularly prominent example as she was very loquacious and eager to participate.

Nonetheless, there were also examples of students quietly sitting at the back of the class, waiting for the bell to ring.

4.4. The Strategies Employed by the Teachers to Overcome the Challenges

Given the content of the in-service training, it can be argued that the participants are more or less left to their own devices to deal with the changing paradigms. In order to accommodate students with migration backgrounds, there are several strategies employed by the participants; which are using more colorful materials, using music, using more auditory techniques, finding materials that are culturally distant to both groups (i.e. material that is prepared with Western cultural codes in mind), and peer coaching as well as simplifying the exams and preparing bilingual exams (Turkish and English).

Esin says she increased the amount of listening tracks she uses, and is incorporating more technological materials such as videos, songs and cartoons because she hopes she can entice the students more so they can participate more actively.

Ebru says she is avoiding introducing the written forms until she is sure the students learnt the pronunciation of the new language she is teaching because of student literacy issues.

In the exams teachers are incorporating more visuals and are writing the instructions in two languages (Turkish and English) hoping the students will understand one or the other.

Noting culture and language are inseparable, Gamze says she chooses more English-speaking culture oriented materials so that the students can find a common ground. –Not your culture, not my culture.- She also uses music and kinaesthetic activities as a form of rapport building since she believes students will interact and form bonds when having fun. She says sometimes the students dance or sing during her classes.

When one of her colleagues was complaining that the students do not pay attention, she also suggested using some kind of made up language that she christened Turkilish – A sentence in half English, half Turkish as a strategy that she picked up from one of her professors when she was a student as it attracts the students immediately.

Another strategy employed by participants is peer coaching. It is reported that they ask a better achieving student to coach another one who is struggling and the strategy is reported to reduce the tension in the class, and form bonds among students.

A recommended strategy for classroom management issues is utilizing team building. Halil suggests that a team games where there is one student with a migration background in each team can help releasing tensions among the student body.



CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

As noted above, the purpose of this study was to identify the challenges Turkish EFL teachers face following the arrival of students with migration backgrounds in their classes. To guide the study, the following research questions were posed.

1. What are the EFL teacher opinions about the changing class profiles due to the accommodation of students with migration backgrounds?
2. Do they face any challenges posed by this change? If so, what are the challenges regarding;
 - a. the medium of instruction
 - b. materials employed
 - c. methods and techniques
 - d. nature of assessment
 - e. classroom management
 - f. other aspects of classroom instruction
3. What strategies do the EFL teachers follow to handle the challenges and to accommodate the needs of students with migration backgrounds?

In this chapter of the study, the discussion related to the findings presented in the previous chapter is given in accordance with the research questions.

5.1. Turkish EFL Teachers' Opinions on the Changing Classroom Profiles

An examination of the themes emerged from the content analysis of the interview data shows that the teachers' opinions on the changing classroom settings (i.e. following the arrival of the students with migration backgrounds) are on the negative end of the scale as the reported feelings and opinions are *concern*, *helplessness* and *indifference*.

Since seven of the 11 participants stated they felt concerned in the face of their changing classroom profiles, it is the most commonly reported opinion. However, as noted in the findings section, the participants' sources of concern differ from each other. The first group is concerned for the well being of the students since they observe the students with migration backgrounds to get excluded by their native peers due to the language barrier and the input the native students get at home, and they feel inadequate

because they have not received training that can help them solve the day-to-day issues they face. The other, more worrying group is the one that is prejudiced towards the students with migration backgrounds. This group perceives the addition of students with a different background than theirs as a negative addition to their setting.

While concern in the face of change is not a negative attitude in itself, the presence of the second group is worrying as the attitude can aggravate exclusion and isolation that is already reported to be present. As reported in Nykiel-Herbert (2010), such negativity by teachers leads the students to react in a negative way in return, while a more constructive approach will aid the student academically and psychologically.

The second emergent theme, helplessness, is stemming from the unpreparedness of the teachers. As reported, neither the MoNE nor the school administrations informed the teachers that there will be serious changes in their student demographics. They were given a general in-service training that was described as “inefficient” and not “teaching-related” and that was provided months after they started working with students with migration backgrounds. Given the situation the teachers found themselves in, it is only natural they feel helpless and overwhelmed. However, initiation of a comprehensive program that addresses not only the awareness aspect of the culturally responsive pedagogy but the skill and knowledge dimensions as well can help the teachers boost their confidence and overcome most of the issues they face.

The final theme, indifference, though disturbing, can also be taken as stemming from a lack of training on the teachers’ end. When the reports of native students not being happy with the introduction of the students with migration backgrounds in their classes taken into account, it can be argued the teachers need to act not only as teachers but also as mediators. At this point, it is beneficial to remember that increased contact between groups is known to lead to reduced prejudice (Allport, 1954; Bennett, 2004), and the teachers are in a unique position to enforce increased contact through group work and pair work, especially in the ELT context where the aforementioned techniques already have established usage. Thus, it is possible to argue the classroom dynamics can function beyond subject teaching-learning dichotomy.

5.2. The Challenges of Working with Students with Migration Backgrounds

In order to be able to paint a fuller picture, the challenges of working with students with migration backgrounds were investigated under five different titles.

5.2.1. Challenges Regarding the Medium of Instruction

During the investigation of the challenges regarding the medium of instruction issue, it was found that the teachers need the students to have a certain level of Turkish competence since they need to talk about meta-language when teaching, and express that it is not possible to do that without code-switching.

While the need for Turkish is obvious, it still needs to be remarked that it is not as necessary in the ELT context as it is with other disciplines. Upon the advent of Communicative Language Teaching methodology, the trend was to conduct classes entirely in the TL since CLT stresses the significance of language function rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary (Harmer, 2001, p.84). Clearly, CLT has a set of problems in itself since it requires an uncontrolled range of language use on the part of the students thus expecting the teacher to be able to respond to any and every language problem which may come up. Nonetheless, it is an established methodology that can be deemed to be more fitting to multilingual classroom settings. It was also the observed methodology in Gamze's class who reported almost no challenges barring the use of racial slurs by the students, which she stopped.

One important problem with what is suggested here is the testing based language teaching system in Turkey. As Esin reported, she cannot utilize as much English as she wants in her classes because the students and the parents complain that the students do not understand, thus are going to fail in the state exams, which is a fair criticism since the exam is grammar and vocabulary based. Hence, what is needed is an institutional change that favors function over form in order to be able to achieve more inclusive classrooms. On the EF English Proficiency Index, Turkey is on the 73rd place among 88 countries with a 'very low proficiency' score (EF English Proficiency Index, 2018), it can be argued the institutional changes that can be brought due to the arrival of a group that does not speak the local language might function as a trigger to better the situation.

5.2.2. Challenges Regarding Employed Materials

During the investigation of the material issue, the goal was to see whether teachers are tailoring the pre-made material to fit the needs of their classes since they are now multicultural. However, it was found out that material adaptation was not an area where the teachers had a high awareness. When asked whether they utilize any sort of change, majority of the participants stated they do not see the point of it, and it was

also observed that the books were used with no change. The teachers choose a book at the beginning of the school year, or are provided with one, and they simply use the book as is without adapting in any way to make it culturally sensitive, or even fitting to the needs of the native students. While it is convenient to use textbooks, *using textbooks are insufficient to guarantee learning outcomes* (Warouw, 2014, p. 169) since *they may not reflect students' needs* (Richards, 2007, p. 255).

Though it is easy to blame the state of the employed materials on the teacher, at this point it needs to be disclosed that the teachers already have a very heavy teaching schedule, and they profess they do not have the time to plan and adapt materials properly.

One solution to the problem at hand might be providing the teachers with a lighter workload (which needs to be done on the MoNE level) while also giving them the opportunity to pursue, or even encourage them to pursue, continuous professional development options.

5.2.3. Challenges Regarding Employed Methods and Techniques

The challenges faced in used methods and techniques were another part of the research that unearthed some awareness issues. As stated in section 4.2.3, nine of the eleven respondents reported they did not feel a need to change their conduct, despite the arrival of students with a completely different set of needs.

It was also noticed that the participants were not comfortable with the questions on their methodological choices, and the responses they provided bordered irrelevant as it focused on what their preferred medium of instruction is.

One possible explanation for such a trend could be sought out in the way the teachers utilize their textbooks. Ur (1996) states that the *over-easiness that is brought upon by dependance on textbooks make it too easy for teachers to [just] follow a coursebook uncritically instead of using their own initiative; (...) thus functioning merely as mediators of its content* (p.185). Taking it a step further, Richards (2007) warns that *textbooks can deskill teachers, reducing them to that of a technician whose primary function is to present materials prepared by others* (p. 255).

Another issue that needs to be addressed is the statement that it is the job of the student to adapt to the system. Teaching is a profession that aims to guide the students to learn a subject, and though student motivation plays an important role in the learning process (Ur, 1996), it is the job of the teacher to guide the learner, and leaving the

students unassisted simply does not align with the objective of the profession. Additionally, “immigrant children and adolescents are faced not only with normative developmental challenges such as doing well in school, but also acculturative challenges. They must deal with the tasks of learning the language, values, beliefs, behaviors, and customs of the receiving society, in addition to those of their home culture” (Oppedal, 2006 in Motti-Stefanidi and Masten, 2013, p. 127). Thus it is simply unacceptable to leave the whole task of acculturation on the shoulders of the learners.

5.2.4. Challenges Regarding the Nature of Assessment

As noted in section 4.2.4, the professed form of assessment in the classes is summative. Brown (2004) defines summative assessment as a means measure, or summarize, what a student has grasped. A summation of what a student has learned implies looking back and taking stock of how well that student has accomplished objectives (p. 6).

Since the Turkish language proficiency of the students with migration backgrounds is reported to be on the lower end, it is not surprising that their academic success is [reported to be] on the lower end as well.

One possible solution to the issue at hand can be to change the assessment of the students with migration backgrounds into more alternative methods. Instead of providing the students with standardized, timed, multiple choice exams that present decontextualized test items, Brown (2004) suggests alternative assessment methods that are continuous and long-term, enabling an untimed, free response format with contextualized communicative tasks.

5.2.5. Challenges Regarding Classroom Management

An examination of the findings present us with the fact that most of the challenges the teachers face in classroom management are not stemming from students with migration backgrounds but from the attitude of native students toward their peers. Both in university and in middle school settings, it was reported that native students are unhappy with the ‘special treatment’ that the immigrants are receiving from the state; mainly thanks to the xenophobic rumors spreading online. In the classroom setting such rumors translate to name-calling (racial slurs), excluding, and fights.

Although there are volunteer organizations such as teyit.org trying to debunk the rumors by providing factual data, their reach is limited. While it might be naïve to

assume such an approach will pay off, since Mittelmeier, Rientes, Tempelaar and Whitelock, (2018) report the students' willingness to cooperate is based on academic success, one solution can be increasing the amount of group work and pair work in the classrooms, hoping it will lower the level of prejudice by enhancing knowledge about the outgroup, reducing anxiety about intergroup contact and increasing empathy and perspective taking (Allport, 1954).

5.2.6. Challenges Regarding the Other Aspects of Instruction

While the need for learning Turkish as a second language (or what the local language of the host country is) is crucial for a successful integration (Krumm and Plutzer, 2008), its necessity in English Language Teaching is questionable. As mentioned in section 5.2.1., there are already established methodologies on how to teach the TL using TL, and if the teachers are helped out of the testing and catching up with the curriculum cycles, they can put what they have learned into practice.

The ethnicity-based problems, on the other hand, cannot be solved in the classroom by teachers alone while there are strategies the teachers can employ and are employing. In the face of her students using racial slurs to address their classmates, Gamze took a head-on approach and she reports students stopped using insults, at least in her presence.

The cultural problems, however, are not easy to navigate. While it was decided to refer to the students with migration backgrounds as such in order to be more inclusive by avoiding the stigma that comes with the word refugee, it does not change the fact that these children and their families have undergone some ordeal and are deeply traumatized. Bahçeşehir study of Syrian refugee children in Turkey presents a horrifying picture. Of the 367 children who participated in the study, 79% experienced death in the family, 60% have seen someone get kicked, shot at, or physically hurt, 30% themselves have been kicked, shot at, or physically hurt, 45% exhibit symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder, 44% exhibit symptoms of depression, 25% experiences daily pains in limbs and 20% experience daily headaches (Özer, Şirin and Oppdeal, 2016). The portrait the aforementioned findings present would be devastating for any adult; hence, it is only natural the children to exhibit non-normative behavior. And it would be only too easy to attribute their behavior to culture. What can be done to aid the children is to provide stable and safe environments (Fazel, Singh, Doll and Grann, 2012; Kia-Keating and Ellis, 2007) and avoid culturalist approaches that provide

generic and stereotypical information that will not apply to individual students (Nieto, 1996).

5.3. The Strategies Employed by the Teachers to Overcome the Challenges

As presented in section 4.2., Table 2, the in-service training the teachers had received is far from effective. As a result, it can be argued that the teachers are more or less left to their own devices, and are trying to come up with strategies to face the challenges the new paradigms in their classrooms. Currently, the employed strategies include using materials that are more visual and auditory-oriented in order to attract students, using material that is equally distant to both groups (i.e. western culture oriented materials) to create a sense of equality, peer coaching and simplifying the exams.

While the mentioned strategies are well-meaning, they are not sufficient in meeting the needs of the students with migration backgrounds. A comprehensive training program developed to increase skill, awareness and knowledge of teachers (Gay, 2002) in the issue of multicultural classrooms will result in a better acculturation. On the ‘how’ of creating what they describe as culturally mediated instruction, The Education Alliance of Brown University (2019) suggests (a) researching students’ experiences with learning and teaching styles by asking educators who come from the same cultural background as the students about effective ways to teach them, visiting the communities of students to find out how they interact and learn in that environment, asking students to set their own goals for a project and interviewing the parents about how and what students learn from them; (b) devising and implementing different ways for students to be successful in achieving developmental milestones by ensuring success through setting realistic, yet rigorous, goals for individual students, allowing students to set their own goals for a project and allowing the use of the students’ first language to enhance learning, and (c) creating an environment that encourages and embraces culture by employing patterns of management familiar to students, allowing students opportunities to share their cultural knowledge, questioning and challenging students on their beliefs and actions, and teaching students to question and challenge their own beliefs and actions.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the conclusion to the study, its pedagogical implications and the suggestions for future research are presented.

6.1. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to identify the challenges the teachers face in teaching classes with students with migration backgrounds, so that the issues stemming from those challenges can be analyzed, and hopefully solutions can be suggested. Through the content analysis of the data collected through interviews, classroom observations and post-observation interviews, it was found out that the feelings and opinions of the participating teachers in the face of paradigm shift in their classes following the arrival of the students with migration backgrounds tend to be on the negative side since the in-service training they received was not sufficient in meeting their needs.

As for the challenges they face, it was found that the teachers are confused about medium of instruction, have low awareness in material selection and use, need assistance in employable methods and techniques, are prone to employing summative assessment techniques that do not favor students with migration backgrounds due to their low proficiency of Turkish, and are struggling to deal with the high tension in their classes. In order to face the challenges, the teachers are trying to come up with strategies on their own but they are feeling helpless and overwhelmed.

6.2. Pedagogical Implications

This study aimed to shed light to the challenges the teachers face in teaching classes with students with migration backgrounds. The major outcome of the study is that it might function as a foundation in the development of a training program for teachers as it was reported that there is a pressing need for a comprehensive program that provides insight in classroom applications.

As education is on the frontline of the integration process, the main findings of the study yield us with information that there is more we can do in assisting both the teachers and the students. Since the current policy, in a way, leaves the teachers alone

in coming up with strategies to better assist students, they are concerned and are feeling helpless, which sometimes leads to indifference towards students.

At the time of the data collection of this study, the in-service training the teachers working at the MoNE schools addressed only the awareness dimension of the culturally responsive pedagogy that Gay (2002) suggested. A more comprehensive program that also addresses the knowledge and the skill dimensions of the culturally responsive pedagogy can aid the teachers in facing the challenges they come across on a daily basis.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of such a culturally responsive pedagogy, the universities can assist the MoNE in the development of such a program. The education of children with migration backgrounds is an issue with psychological, sociological and political dimensions in addition to the pedagogical implications; and the academic support from the universities can help designing a more comprehensive program.

Throughout this thesis, it was mentioned that there is a pressing need for institutional changes. In addition to the necessity of a comprehensive training program, the teachers were also observed to be in dire need of sufficient time during which they can plan and prepare more fitting lessons. One way of achieving that might be lessening the teaching hours so that the teachers can have scheduled planning hours.

In addition to a culturally responsive pedagogy training, it might be a good idea to provide continuous professional development opportunities to teachers in areas they feel they need help. Though their contexts are different, the foreign language schools of many universities provide the instructors with continuous professional development opportunities based on the demands of the instructors.

However, possibly the most important change that needs to be incorporated is the addition of a comprehensive culturally responsive pedagogy training into the curriculums of education faculties, no matter the discipline. Giving teachers the opportunity to familiarize with the pedagogy at an early stage of their career will enable them to internalize and develop more fruitfully.

Through cooperation and implementing changes to accommodate all learners, it is possible to provide a better schooling for the students and a less stressful work environment for the teachers.

6.3. Suggestions for Future Research

This study only aimed to shed light on the teacher perspective; however, the student perspective is just as important in analyzing the needs. Thus, future studies conducted to find out the needs from the students' perspective will not only aid figuring out the needs but also will provide the students with migration backgrounds with representation.

As culture plays a significant role in the learning styles of the students, it is also possible to conduct such a study with the contribution of teachers who are of the same culture as the students with migration backgrounds to find out what teaching methodologies can be utilized and how.

Based on the findings from such a study with perspectives of both the learners and the teachers, it is possible to develop a culturally responsive pedagogy that is more suited to the local context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The Initial Interview Questions

Cukurova University, English Language Teaching Department, Master's Thesis Study, Interview

The following questions are posed for the data collection section of a Master's Thesis Study on Challenges Facing Turkish Efl Teachers Working With Students From A Migration Background: The Case Of Syrian Refugee Learners. The collected data will be used for the aforementioned study and your name will be anonymized to protect your privacy.

Kıvılcım Somuncuoğlu

Demographics

Age

Teaching experience in years

Educational background

Questions on Students with Migration Backgrounds

How many Syrian students do you have in your classes?

When did you first have Syrian students?

Were you informed on the arrival of your new students?

Did you know anything about the Syrian refugees prior to their arrival in your classroom? (Language, culture, customs etc.)

Does the presence of students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds pose any challenges in your classes? If yes, can you elaborate on the nature of those challenges?

Have you received training during your Bachelor's or while working? If yes, what was the content of the training?

Method Questions

Have you effected change in your conduct due to the arrival of these students?

Have you effected change in the medium of instruction and medium of communication due to the arrival of these students? Why?

Does the presence of students with migration backgrounds affect your material selection? Do you need or use any supplementary materials?

How would you describe your teaching methodology? What sort of techniques do you employ? (to accommodate these students)

How do you assess your students? Is there a change in your method of assessment?

Has the presence of students with migration backgrounds caused a change in your method of assessment?

Has the presence of students with migration backgrounds caused any issues in classroom management? If yes, how do you cope?

What is your communication with these students like? (Within and without the classroom)

Do you need help? What sort of help would be the most beneficial?

Appendix 2. The Consent Form



AYDINLATILMIŞ ONAM FORMU

1. ARAŞTIRMAYA DAİR BİLGİ

Sayın gönüllü,

Bu form ile Çukurova Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Anabilim Dalı alanı bünyesinde hazırlanan bir tez çalışmasının veri toplama adımına katkıda bulunmak üzere davet ediliyorsunuz.

“Farklı Dil ve Kültür Geçmişleri olan Öğrencilere Türkiye’de İngilizce Öğreten Öğretmenlerin Karşılaştıkları Problemler: Suriye’den Gelen Mülteci Öğrenciler Örneği” başlıklı bu çalışmayla, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, sınıf içi paradigmaların değişimi sonrasındaki sınıf içi uygulamalarının nasıl şekillendiği, ve buna bağlı olarak karşılaştıkları zorlukların incelenmesi ve ileride yapılacak çalışmalar için bir temel oluşturulması amaçlanmaktadır.

Bu bağlamda veri toplama amacıyla bir dizi (5 ders saati) sınıf gözlemi planlanmıştır. Bu gözlemler sırasında, katılımcı İngilizce öğretmenin kullandığı/tercih ettiği metodoloji, sınıftaki kod-değişiminin (code-switch) ne şekilde ve hangi koşullarda kullanıldığı, materyal kullanımı ve öğretmen-öğrenci ilişkisi gözlemlenecektir. Kullanılacak olan gözlem formlarının birer kopyası ekte size sunulacaktır.

Gözlemler sırasında, araştırmacı Kıvılcım Somuncuoğlu herhangi bir şekilde derse müdahale etmeyecek, dersin akışını bozmayacaktır.

2. GİZLİLİK

Araştırmaya katılım tümüyle gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır. Araştırmada yer almayı reddedebilirsiniz ya da başladıktan sonra yarıda bırakabilirsiniz. Araştırmadan elde edilen veri yalnızca bilimsel amaçlarla (tez çalışması, makaleler) kullanılacaktır. Söz konusu çalışmalar sırasında veriniz tam anlamıyla anonim olarak, size işaret edebilecek herhangi bir öge barındırmayacak şekilde kullanılacak olup, gizliliğiniz korunacaktır.

3. ONAY

Yukarıda yer alan araştırmaya başlanmadan önce gönüllülere verilmesi gereken bilgileri içeren metni okudum. Eksik kaldığını düşündüğüm konularda sorularımı araştırmacıya sordum ve doyurucu yanıtlar aldım. Yazılı ve sözlü olarak tarafıma sunulan tüm açıklamaları ayrıntılarıyla anladım. Çalışmaya katılmayı isteyip istemediğim konusunda karar verebilmem için yeterince zaman tanındı.

Bu koşullar altında, araştırma kapsamında elde edilen şahsıma ait verinin bilimsel amaçla kullanılmasını, gizlilik kurallarına uyulmak kaydıyla sunulmasını ve yayımlanmasını hiçbir baskı ve zorlama altında kalmaksızın, kendi özgür irademle kabul ettiğimi beyan ederim.

Katılımcı

Araştırmacı

Appendix 3. The Observation Schedules

1. What is the nature of the observed methodology? Does inclusivity add up to the employed/observed methodology? How so?

	OBSERVATION SCHEDULE ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYED METHODOLOGY	FIELD NOTES
1	Grading of the language acc. to the student level	
2	Grouping the students	
3	Clear and understandable instructions	
4	Monitoring effectively	
5	Effective error correction	
6	Elicitation of the target language	
7	Concept checking	
8	Providing Ss with opportunities to practice the new language	
9	Effective feedback	

Adapted from Cambridge CELTA Observation Tasks

2. How are different languages utilized in the classroom?

Utilization of Different Languages in Multilingual Classrooms					
Language			Speaker		Purpose
L1	L2	L3	Teacher	Student	

3. What is the function of code-switch in the classroom? What leads to code-switch? Who code-switches to what end?

Code Switching in Multilingual Classrooms				
Who code-switches?				
What leads to code-switch?				
From what language to what language?				
Who reacts to code-switch? How?				

4. How is the employed material exploited in a multicultural sense?

Multicultural utilization of the employed material		
Is the prescribed material modified in any way? How?	What is the nature of the supplementary material if any employed?	Are there any elements of Ss' native culture incorporated into the utilized material?

5. What is the teacher rapport with different individuals and groups like?

Teacher-Student Rapport Schedule		
Categories	Assessment	Notes
T gets along with the Ss.		
T is helpful and friendly.		
T is understanding		
T can communicate expectations to the Ss		
T is aware of the Ss' effort		
T encourages questions & comments from the Ss		
T makes the class enjoyable		
T has a positive body language and eye contact.		
T is confident.		
T is fair		
T spends extra time to go over a concept when a S needs.		

Adapted from Wilson and Ryan (2012). Professor-Student Rapport Scale.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Potsdam University, Postdam - Germany

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