

**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER AS RESEARCHER:
CONSTRUCTING A BRIDGE BETWEEN PRACTICE AND THEORY**

EMRAH AKDAĞ

A PhD DISSERTATION

ADANA / 2025

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A PhD DISSERTATION

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Emrah AKDAĞ

ÖZET

ARAŞTIRMACI OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİ: PRATİK VE TEORİ ARASINDA BİR KÖPRÜ İNŞA ETMEK

Emrah AKDAĞ

Doktora Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

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Öğretmenlerin yalnızca bilgi aktarıcıları olarak değil, aynı zamanda bilgi üreticileri olarak da yeniden kavramsallaştırılması, eğitimde önemli bir paradigma değişimine yol açmıştır. Bu değişimin temel bir yönü, özellikle araştırmacı-öğretmen rolü perspektifinden, öğretmen kimliğinin yeniden tanımlanmasıdır. Özellikle 21. yüzyılın başlarından itibaren, küresel eğitim politikaları ve öğretmen eğitimi uygulamaları, öğretmenleri sınıf içi uygulamaları sorgulayan, eleştirel düşünen ve sistematik veri toplayarak kararlar alan özerk profesyoneller olarak konumlandırmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, mevcut çalışma İngilizce öğretmenlerinin araştırmaya ilişkin algılarını, uygulama ve araştırma arasındaki ilişkiyi, öğretmenlerin araştırmaya katılımının önündeki engelleri ve öğretmen-araştırmacı kimliğini nasıl geliştirdiklerini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çok aşamalı karma yöntem tasarımı benimseyen çalışma, dört aşamada yürütülmüştür: (a) müfredat döküman analizi, (b) anket yoluyla nicel veri toplama ve analizi, (c) bir eğitim programı ve ardından yürütülen eylem araştırması aracılığıyla nitel veri toplama ve sonunda (d) tüm süreci kapsayan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerin derinlemesine analizi.

İlk aşamada, Türkiye'deki 44 devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce Öğretmenliği (İÖ) lisans programları incelenmiştir. Analiz, müfredatlara araştırma yöntemleri derslerinin dahil edildiğini göstermiştir. Ancak bu derslerin süreleri ve içerikleri üniversiteler arasında bir dereceye kadar farklılık göstermekte olup, bazı programlar daha fazla zaman ayırmakta ve daha kapsamlı içerik sunmaktadır. İkinci aşamada toplanan anket verileri, katılımcı öğretmenlerin ($N = 112$) araştırmayı büyük ölçüde akademik, istatistik temelli ve sınıf içi uygulamalarla ilgisiz bir uğraş olarak algıladıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, araştırma yapma ve okuma oranları ile araştırmayı mesleki gelişim için bir araç olarak

algılama seviyeleri dikkate değer şekilde düşüktür. Zaman kısıtlamaları, teorik bilgi ve kurumsal destek eksikliği ile mesleki izolasyon temel engeller olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Üçüncü aşamada, öğretmen araştırması eğitimi kursuna katılan ve eylem araştırması yapan beş gönüllü öğretmenle derinlemesine çalışmalar yürütülmüştür. Katılımcı öğretmenlerin araştırmaya ilişkin bakış açılarında önemli bir değişiklik yaşadıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Eylem araştırması uygulaması sayesinde sınıf içi sorunlara sistematik çözümler geliştirmiş, reflektif düşünme becerilerini ilerletmiş ve mesleki özerkliklerini güçlendirmişlerdir. Dördüncü aşamada gerçekleştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, katılımcı öğretmenlerin eğitim kursu ve eylem araştırması uygulaması sayesinde araştırmaya karşı olumlu tutumlar geliştirdiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Öğretmenler, karşılaştıkları zorluklara rağmen akran iş birliğinin ve sürdürülebilirliğin önemini vurgulamışlardır. Çalışmanın genel bulguları, sürecin öğretmenlerin yansıtıcı düşünme ve sistematik problem çözme becerilerini geliştirdiğini ve öğretmenlere araştırmacı-öğretmen kimliğinin mesleki gelişim açısından sürdürülebileceğini gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur.

Mevcut araştırma, öğretmenlerin araştırmaya katılımını artırmak için yalnızca bilgi aktarımını değil, aynı zamanda motivasyonel faktörleri ve kurumsal desteği de ele alan çok boyutlu stratejilerin gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Araştırma sonunda, araştırmacı-öğretmen kimliğinin oluşumunun, yapılandırılmış mesleki gelişim uygulamaları, yansıtıcı öğrenme ortamları ve iş birlikçi okul kültürü aracılığıyla sürdürülebileceği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğretmen araştırması, araştırmacı-öğretmen kimliği, eylem araştırması, yansıtıcı uygulama.

ABSTRACT**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER AS RESEARCHER:
CONSTRUCTING A BRIDGE BETWEEN PRACTICE AND THEORY****Emrah AKDAĞ****Ph.D. Dissertation, English Language Teaching Department****Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Zuhale OKAN****December 2025, 220 pages**

The reconceptualisation of teachers not solely as conveyors of knowledge, but as producers of knowledge as well, has brought about a substantial paradigm shift in education. A key aspect of this shift is the redefinition of teacher identity, particularly through the perspective of the teacher-researcher role. Especially since the early 21st century, global educational policies and teacher education practices have aimed to position teachers as autonomous professionals who question classroom practices, think critically and make decisions through systematically collecting data. In this regard, the current study aims to understand English language teachers' perceptions of research, the relationship between practice and research, the obstacles to teachers' engagement with research, and how they develop a teacher-researcher identity. Adopting a multiphase mixed method design, the study was conducted in four stages: (a) document analysis of curricula, (b) quantitative data collection and analysis through a survey, (c) qualitative data collection and analysis through a training course and subsequent action research, and finally (d) a thorough analysis of semi-structured interviews covering the entire process.

Within the first phase, English Language Teaching (ELT) undergraduate programmes of 44 state universities in Türkiye were examined. The analysis demonstrated that Research Methods courses are included in the curricula. However, the duration and content of these courses vary among universities to some extent, with some programmes that allocate more time and offer more comprehensive content. The survey data collected in the second phase revealed that the teacher respondents ($N = 112$) perceived research as an endeavour that is largely academic, statistically based, and irrelevant to classroom practices. Additionally, the rates of conducting and reading research, as well as perceiving research as a tool for professional development, were

notably low. Time constraints, lack of theoretical knowledge and institutional support, and professional isolation emerged as primary obstacles. Within the third phase, in-depth studies were conducted with five volunteer teachers who took part in a teacher research training course and engaged in action research. The participant teachers were observed to experience a significant change in their perspectives on research. Through action research implementation, they developed systematic solutions to classroom-related problems, enhanced their reflective thinking skills, and fostered professional autonomy. The semi-structured interviews, conducted in the fourth phase, revealed that the participant teachers developed positive attitudes towards research thanks to the training course and action research practice. The teachers emphasised the significance of peer collaboration and sustainability despite the challenges they encountered. Overall findings of the study demonstrated that the entire process enhanced the teachers' reflective thinking and systematic problem-solving skills, as well as highlighting to teachers that the teacher-researcher identity could be sustainable regarding professional development.

The current research reveals that multidimensional strategies addressing not only knowledge transfer but also motivational factors and institutional support are necessary to enhance teachers' engagement in research. As a consequence of the study, the formation of the teacher-researcher identity can be sustained through structured professional development initiatives, reflective learning environments and collaborative school cultures.

Keywords: Teacher research, teacher-researcher identity, action research, reflective practice.

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Emrah AKDAĞ

Adana, 2025



To my sweet daughter, Duru...

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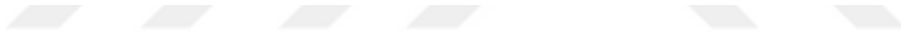
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ABBREVIATIONS

AITSL	: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
EBA	: Eğitim Bilişim Ağı / Education Informatics Network
ELT	: English Language Teaching
EPI	: English Proficiency Index
L1	: Native Language
L2	: Second Language
MONE	: Ministry of National Education
OECD	: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TEPAV	: Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı / The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Türkiye
TUBİTAK	: Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu / The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye
YÖK	: Yükseköğretim Kurulu / The Council of Higher Education
ZPD	: The Zone of Proximal Development



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter covers the overall framework of the study. It begins with the background to the study, explaining the context and motivation behind the study. Afterwards, the statement of the problem identifies the main issue to be explored. The purpose of the study and the research questions clarify the focus and the direction of the research. The significance of the study highlights the current research's potential contributions to the field. Additionally, the limitations of the study are acknowledged, and the key terms are presented under the operational definitions section.

1.2. Background to the Study

In the contemporary world, English has become a global language commonly used as a lingua franca, with the effect of globalisation, and plays a key role in many areas. The educational system in Türkiye has been shaped and conducted according to this fact. Therefore, English is given specific importance in our country, and it is taught at state schools from an early age. Integrated into the educational system in Türkiye since the 1980s, English teaching has undergone a number of distinct reform processes. Particularly in 1997, when compulsory education was extended to eight years, English teaching was reduced to the 4th grade at primary schools. In 2012, the "4+4+4" system was introduced, and English started to be taught from the 2nd grade. However, there are still certain problems in providing and maintaining English proficiency (Kırkgöz, 2017). International evaluations also indicate that our country has not been able to reach the desired level of English proficiency. For instance, in Education First's 2024 English Proficiency Index, Türkiye ranked 65th out of 116 countries and second to last among European countries (EPI, 2024). This situation calls for a re-evaluation of English teaching in Türkiye concerning its quality and efficiency, as well as adopting contemporary approaches.

Teachers are undoubtedly the most essential component in the English teaching phenomenon. English language teachers receive their education at faculties for years and are equipped with a vast array of knowledge when graduating. Yet, they need to adapt

themselves to the requirements of the age and adjust their teaching practices accordingly. Nonetheless, the current situation of English teaching in Türkiye implies some shortcomings (Taşçı, 2023). A number of studies have revealed that curriculum changes have an effect on teachers' decision-making processes at the implementation level and that some teachers have difficulty in adapting curriculum goals to material selection (Aksoy, 2020). Furthermore, English language teachers in Türkiye were reported to encounter multidimensional challenges such as curriculum pressure, crowded classes, lack of time and equipment (Valizadeh, 2021), low student motivation and classroom management (Ayaz et al., 2019), which negatively affect the quality of teaching. Besides, it was revealed that teachers experience a serious disconnection between theory and practice (Sali & Keçik, 2018). Thus, it is quite pivotal to accurately identify the problems causing this situation to occur.

One of the most cited issues contributing to the problems and drawbacks in English teaching is the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice (Borg, 2003; Farrell, 2015; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards, 2006; Wyatt, 2016). A significant number of teachers have difficulty in integrating theoretical knowledge into classroom practice, and this situation affects student achievement rather negatively (Borg, 2015; Farrell, 2013; Freeman, 2016). Especially in Türkiye, multiple field analyses on the implementation of the secondary school English curriculum that changed in 2017 demonstrated that teachers were unable to reflect the objectives of the curriculum in their lesson plans properly and that this inconsistency created a significant gap in students' learning outcomes (Aksoy, 2020). In addition, there are findings indicating that teachers' pedagogical awareness and quality of practice significantly increased when they adopted reflective practice and teacher-researcher identity (Uyar & Daşkın, 2024). In this regard, it should be seen as a critical step for English language teachers to combine theory and practice by adopting a teacher-researcher identity to improve the quality of teaching (Burns, 2019).

Some initiatives to support teacher development have recently been put into action in Türkiye. In this context, the Ministry of National Education (MONE) has been carrying out several projects to support teachers not merely as knowledge conveyors but also as researchers with professional autonomy (Özer & Çelik, 2024). Especially programmes like "English Together" aim to enable teachers to develop as learning individuals in professional learning communities (MEB, 2019). Nevertheless, for these initiatives to have a sustainable impact highly depends on teachers' reviewing their pedagogical

practices systematically and internalising reflective thinking (Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2016). In this respect, the concept of “teacher research” comes to the fore. Teacher research methodology allows teachers to approach their classroom practices not just as practitioners but as researchers as well (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Borg, 2010). Teachers who adopt a teacher-researcher identity become capable of evaluating their methods and techniques critically and adapting to contextual facts, thereby establishing more effective learning environments (Borg, 2019; Burns & Westmacott, 2018).

Although the teacher research approach is yet to be institutionalised in Türkiye, various in-service training programmes reveal the potential of this model. In a study based on university-school collaborative action research, Kırkgöz and Yaşar (2020) found that English language teachers rebuilt their pedagogical approaches and experienced a transformation in their professional identities. Similarly, Bozkuş (2018) investigated the impacts of a dynamic development model based on action research on their decision-making and implementation processes and found that the teachers adopted research-based development strategies. In a case study, Yüzbaşıoğlu (2016) reported that the teachers who participated in classroom research began to reflect on the teaching process and foster a shared evaluation culture. In such research, it is observed that teachers who work in collaboration with professional communities can transform their individual experience into collective knowledge production (Alan, 2016).

In conclusion, the professional development of English teachers should not be limited to the education they receive at faculties or the seminars they attend within the profession. In addition to these, the teacher research methodology should be introduced to teachers, through which they will turn their classroom practices into research topics. In this manner, it might be possible for teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Based on the circumstances mentioned above, this study aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice in language teaching by introducing the concept of teacher research to a group of English language teachers, supported with collaborative action research.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

In Türkiye, the English teaching phenomenon has not been able to reach the desired level in regard to student outcomes even though it has been at the centre of education

policies for decades (Demirpolat, 2015; EPI, 2024; Kırkgöz, 2017; TEPAV, 2013). Students have difficulty in utilising English effectively as a communication tool after high school, even after university (Dağtan & Cabaroğlu, 2021; Güneş & Sarıgöz, 2021; Kamaşak & Sahan, 2024). One of the reasons for this situation might be that teachers adopt a teaching perspective based on central exams and curriculum content instead of producing pedagogical reflection (Basok, 2020; Taşçı, 2023). No matter what the reasons are, English language teachers in Türkiye should adopt innovative, critical, and reflective approaches in their classroom practices (Aktekin, 2019; Akyıldız & Şahin, 2024; Temiz, 2024).

In this context, the idea that teachers should not solely implement the curriculum but also become reflective thinkers, pedagogical decision makers, and producers of knowledge has gained importance (Borg, 2013). Nonetheless, the structural, cultural, and professional conditions to encourage teachers to undertake such roles are not adequately supportive in Türkiye (Tanış & Dikilitaş, 2018; Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2016). Particularly, the unsupportive nature of the school atmosphere lessens teachers' sense of autonomy and their tendency to think in a research-focused manner (Çolak & Altınkurt, 2017).

In traditional teacher education programmes, the introduction of research methods to prospective teachers largely remains at a theoretical level, and the translation of research knowledge into classroom practices is often neglected by teachers (Gümüşok et al., 2024; Özmutlu, 2022; Ünalı & Baykara, 2023). Boran (2018) contends that practice-based research models have not been sufficiently institutionalised in teacher education faculties in Türkiye, and student teachers experience difficulty in relating research to practice. This situation creates an obstacle for teachers to embrace a research-based perspective in their individual and professional development (Aktekin, 2019). In addition, Velioğlu and Özdemir (2023) emphasise that teachers' motivation to conduct research is low and add that collegial learning communities should be empowered for the teacher-researcher model to be accomplished.

There has been a growing body of research involving teachers; yet, as most of these studies in the classroom were not carried out by the teachers or at least in partnership with them, they also did not address the requirements or resolve the issues faced by the language teachers (Borg, 2010). Hence, the adoption of a classroom-centred research paradigm, which positions teachers as the investigators of their teaching, is most likely to overcome the barriers between theory and practice. In particular, dissemination of practice-based methods like "action research" will make it possible for teachers to reflect

on the data from their pedagogical contexts and transform their professions (Kemmis et al., 2014).

In this sense, the current study also aims to provide a thorough understanding of English language teachers' perceptions of research in a particular area in Türkiye and to reveal the potential contributions of research experience to teachers' individual and professional development, besides the quality of English teaching. Aligning with this purpose, the study is expected to provide a multilayered analysis in terms of teacher development through professional identity formation and enhancing the quality of teaching.

1.4. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to contribute, albeit small, to closing the gap between theory and practice by supporting English language teachers in the development of a teacher-researcher identity. So as to achieve this target, a research design consisting of various stages was formed. These stages include delving into the background knowledge and perspectives of high school English teachers in the central districts of Adana regarding research in a multidimensional way, and also designing and implementing a teacher research training course and finally revealing the effects of the implementation on the teachers' research-based thinking and practice skills. The study comprises four stages structured according to the multiphase mixed method design by Creswell (2009).

Within the first phase, the background knowledge of English language teachers is examined through document analysis of the programmes implemented in ELT departments. This is particularly significant in terms of revealing the extent to which teachers engage in research during their pre-service training.

The second phase covers collecting and analysing data through a survey to explore English language teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards research. This process aims to determine how teachers stand towards a research-based paradigm.

Within the third phase, the training and action processes, the participant teachers are offered a teacher research training programme in order to support them in conducting action research in their teaching contexts. This phase aims to provide the teachers with theoretical knowledge that they will be able to translate into classroom practice.

The last phase comprises a thorough analysis of the experiences of the teachers

during and after the programme through semi-structured interviews. Thus, it is qualitatively explored how the participant teachers develop researcher identity as well as the challenges they face and their development areas.

The current study primarily seeks to find out systemic and pedagogical challenges which impede teachers from adopting a research-based approach in their individual and professional development and to propose a sustainable professional development model that can tackle these challenges. In this regard, it intends to help teachers become the producers of knowledge rather than the consumers of it.

In light of the objectives above, this study sought the answers to the following research questions:

1. Do English language teaching departments provide research courses in their curricula?
 - a- If they do, how are these courses structured in terms of content and research practice?
2. What are the perceptions of high school English language teachers working in central Adana regarding the concept of teacher research?
3. Do English language teachers integrate research into teaching practice? If so, in what ways?
4. Are there any barriers that prevent English language teachers from integrating research into teaching? If so, what do they stem from?
5. Is the teacher research training course given to English language teachers effective in gaining awareness towards the concept of teacher research?
6. Are English language teachers able to conduct research in classrooms by making use of action research methodology?
7. What are the perceptions of English language teachers of teacher research following the course and the action research experience?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Foreign language education in our country has been guided by scientific evidence in other countries, which aims to maintain high standards in teaching. In Türkiye, planning and teacher training phases are currently carried out scientifically; but, when it comes to putting theory into practice, the research so far reveals that there is a significant

gap between theory and practice in English teaching (Cabaroğlu, 2014; Çapan, 2021; Çelik & Zehir, 2024; Dikilitaş & Comoğlu, 2022; Kemaloğlu et al., 2020; Yaşar & Gürbüz, 2023). In various studies, it is highlighted that teachers consider research as a practice which belongs solely to the academic sphere and have not sufficiently developed the custom of analysing the problems they experience (Bıyık & Uslu, 2024). In this regard, the development of teacher-researcher identity contributes to both individual professional development and the establishment of professional learning communities (Şahin, 2020). Therefore, this study is believed to be beneficial in putting theory and practice together by means of providing English language teachers with a researcher identity. It is also expected to open new horizons to English language teachers in terms of the sustainability of reflective practice.

All over the world, a growing body of research has been carried out on the concept of teacher research. However, in the Turkish context, a majority of the studies conducted on the same concept are mostly small-scale and descriptive ones targeted to explore the perceptions of in-service or prospective teachers of research. In this way, the current research will make a different contribution to the literature since it allows not only measuring teacher perceptions but also engaging teachers in research.

The results of this study are planned to be shared with the relevant units of the MONE. Provided that the appropriate conditions are obtained, it might be possible to offer seminars on teacher research in each province under the auspices of the MONE. Such an approach, which combines practice and theory, will also reveal a new notion for the MONE to provide sustainability in teacher development in different contexts. In addition, such an acquisition will also enable similar studies to be carried out on a smaller scale, for example, on a school basis.

This study will also have implications for university departments training English language teachers. As is known, prospective English language teachers are equipped with the essential scientific knowledge and have the opportunity to practice in public schools before graduation. However, certain contextual limitations hinder the efficacy of their teaching practices to a great extent when they start their professional life. For this reason, student teachers can be provided with a teacher-researcher identity before graduation. Thus, it will be possible for them to discover the nature of their contexts and adapt their teaching accordingly, thanks to systematic inquiry and reflection. Moreover, teacher-researchers might be invited to senior classes at faculties in order to share their experience with student teachers; thus, a learning environment based on expert-novice interaction

can be created in faculty classrooms in the long run.

1.6. Limitations

The current study, which aims to bring together practice and theory, presents original and authentic data; yet, it has obvious limitations that should be addressed.

First, within the data collection process, the survey completed by 112 teachers revealed broad-scale trends, while the action research conducted by five volunteer teachers yielded more in-depth and context-specific data. Although insights at different levels were gathered through this multilayered form, the survey involved high school English language teachers in central districts of a province, which makes it not generalisable to the whole country. Furthermore, the survey participation was voluntary, and it might have been responded to by a lot more teachers if it had been compulsory. Additionally, the small sample size in the action research process ($n = 5$) cannot lead to a broader understanding of how other teachers from different contexts would grasp the research process.

Second, since the action research covered approximately a single semester, the long-term sustainability and impact of the implementation could not be observed. Other restraints such as permission procedures, participant teachers' strict schedules and workload limited the efficacy of the research.

Finally, the target of the qualitative findings of this study is not to make generalisations. Instead, they intend to provide context-specific perceptions of how participant teachers engaged in the research process and experienced identity transformation. In this regard, the findings are supposed to be viewed as reflections of an ongoing process rather than fixed conclusions. Still, the results can be transferred to another similar context as Lincoln and Guba (2000) suggest, "Although the notion of transferability accommodates the problem of complexity, it still assumes that findings from one setting are only generalisable to another setting if both settings are very similar" (p. 55).

1.7. Operational Definitions

This section introduces the definitions of the essential terms to guarantee clarity throughout the dissertation.

Teacher Identity: Teacher identity, in this study, refers to teachers' evolving sense of self as professionals, shaped by their pedagogical experiences, contextual conditions, and reflective engagement with their own practice (based on Pennington & Richards, 2016).

Teacher Research: This concept refers to a teaching approach through which teachers observe and evaluate their classroom practices systematically and conduct data-based examinations regarding the problems they face (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Teacher-Researcher Identity: Teacher-researcher identity, in this study, refers to teachers' self-positioning as systematic inquirers of their own classroom practices through reflection, data collection, and pedagogical decision-making. This identity is viewed as a dynamic and context-sensitive construct that develops through research engagement rather than being externally assigned (adapted from Borg, 2013).

Action Research: Action research is a participant-centred and practice-oriented research type which progresses through a planning, action, observation, and re-planning cycle so as to generate solutions to the problems faced by teachers (Carr & Kemmis, 2003).

Reflective Practice: Reflective practice is a process of teachers consciously thinking, evaluating, and formulating alternatives regarding their instructional practices. The reflective approach enables teachers to develop a critical awareness of their practice (Brookfield, 1995).

Theory-Practice Gap: Theory-practice gap refers to the challenges faced by teacher candidates in implementing theoretical knowledge that they have acquired in teacher training programmes into real classroom environments effectively. This situation causes teacher candidates not to be able to establish a meaningful connection between theoretical knowledge and classroom experience (Cabaroğlu, 2014).

Practitioner Inquiry: It is the process in which teachers continually think, ask questions, and seek answers to these questions in the field. Practitioner inquiry is the basis of pedagogical reflection (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Narrative Inquiry: It is a sort of qualitative research that enables researchers to generate meaning from experiences through narratives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Learning Communities: Learning communities are collective structures in which teachers with common pedagogical targets come together and share their experiences with the aim of learning together (Wenger, 1999).

Institutional Support: It is the resource, time, and guidance support given by

school administrations, universities, or ministries to provide the sustainability of research processes (Mockler, 2005).

Peer Collaboration: This concept refers to the learning processes where teachers develop through reciprocal support, collaborative analysis, and collective knowledge construction (Vangrieken et al., 2017).

The Zone of Proximal Development: This theoretical construct refers to the distance between what a learner can do without support and what they can achieve through guidance or collaboration. This concept highlights the significance of social interaction in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

1.8. Summary

This chapter initially presents the background to the study, clarifying the reason why this study was carried out and the context where it was conducted. Afterwards, the statement of the problem identifies the main problem that the current study focuses on. Subsequently, the purpose of the research clarifies the objectives of the study, presented with the research questions. The chapter also covers the significance of the study, its limitations, and operational definitions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a historical and theoretical overview of the literature in the field of teacher research and teacher-researcher identity. In the second part, the gap between theory and practice, which is often encountered in teachers' professional practice, is addressed by discussing how this gap is reflected in teachers' practices due to the irrelevance of theoretical knowledge. Afterwards, it is explained how teacher research can fill this gap, functioning as a bridge between theory and practice.

The third and fourth parts introduce the major components of the concept of teacher research by elaborating on its historical development and theoretical bases. The fifth part covers the methodologies which are commonly utilised in teacher research such as action research, practitioner inquiry, case studies and narrative inquiry alongside collaborative research and learning communities.

The sixth part provides a comprehensive perspective on the contributions of teacher research to professional development, student achievement and teaching practices. Nevertheless, the challenges faced in adopting a teacher-researcher identity and its limitations are elaborately discussed in the seventh part.

The eighth part of the review aims to explain the current status of teacher-researcher identity and development areas in the Turkish context as well as offering some recommendations. Finally, reviewing the recent studies in the field, a sound base is formed for the journey to the teacher-researcher identity.

In this sense, it can be said that the chapter aims to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and practical perspectives on teacher-researcher identity and practices.

2.2. Theoretical Framework: Social Constructivism

Teacher research, by its very nature, is both an individual and a social knowledge construction process (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Zeichner, 2010). The social constructivist approach argues that knowledge is constructed through processes of interaction, dialogue, and sharing between individuals (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

Teacher research aligns with this paradigm in that teachers generate new meanings and knowledge through peer interaction and reflection processes by means of drawing on their own experiences (Borg, 2013; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Hence, social constructivism provides a sound philosophical and pedagogical foundation for explaining how teachers develop their researcher identities, make sense of their experiences, and produce professional knowledge in this study.

Social constructivism conceptualises learning not as a passive accumulation of information within an individual's mind, but as an active process of meaning-making that occurs through social interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978). The theory is based on Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" and "more knowledgeable other". According to Vygotsky, individuals enhance their cognitive capacities through social interaction and collaboration, making learning a fundamentally communal activity. Bruner (1996), on the other hand, emphasises that learning takes place through cultural tools, language, and interaction, defining knowledge production as a cultural process. In this sense, social constructivism frames learning as a process involving individual understanding and shared social experiences, whereby individuals collaboratively construct, discuss, and transform meaning (Gergen, 2012). Lave and Wenger (1991) explain this process through the notion of "communities of practice", defining learning as a domain of belonging and sharing where participants acquire knowledge collectively through mutual involvement in common activities. Within the framework of social constructivism, Palincsar (2012) emphasised the significance of designing instructional environments that foster collaborative problem-solving and facilitate knowledge-sharing among learners.

In the educational context, social constructivism suggests that learning environments should be interactive, dialogue-based, and reflective (Phillips, 2000). According to this approach, knowledge is not passively transmitted by an external authority; rather, it is collaboratively constructed by individuals and continuously reshaped and reinterpreted within specific contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Consequently, social constructivism provides a contemporary paradigm for understanding the nature of knowledge production in teacher education and teacher research.

2.2.1. Social Constructivism and Teacher Research

The social constructivist perspective frames teacher inquiry not merely as an individual endeavour, but as a collaborative process shared within a community, where meaning is negotiated and knowledge is co-constructed (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In line with this view, teacher inquiry involves teachers reflecting on their experiences by systematically examining their own classroom practices and generating knowledge through interaction with colleagues (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Borg, 2013; Farrell, 2015); thus, it epistemologically aligns with the principles of social constructivism.

Recent research indicates that teacher research is strongly informed by the social constructivist paradigm. For instance, Vangrieken et al., (2017) suggest that teachers achieve more effective professional development within teacher communities where they collaboratively engage and share practices with their colleagues. Armstrong (2019), on the other hand, conceptualises teacher research as a collective knowledge-practice, highlighting the central role of social constructivist principles in teachers' reflective inquiry processes. Borg and Sanchez (2015) demonstrate that knowledge sharing in teacher research is a socially constructed practice and that teachers reconstruct their professional identities through peer interaction. From this perspective, teachers are positioned not merely as consumers of knowledge but also as active producers and transformers of knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Freeman, 2016).

From a social constructivist perspective, teacher research is transformed into knowledge through the sharing, discussion, and transformation of individual experiences within a community. This process strengthens researcher identities, enhances their professional agency, and fosters critical awareness of practice (McKinley & Rose, 2016). Consequently, social constructivism provides an epistemological foundation for teacher research by conceptualising knowledge as a phenomenon constructed through social interaction, collaboration, and shared reflection. Within this framework, teachers are enabled to produce meaningful, transformative, and shareable knowledge grounded in their own professional contexts and experiences. Based on the theoretical arguments outlined above, the concept of social constructivism was adopted as the theoretical framework guiding this study.

2.3. The Relationship Between Theory and Practice

The relationship between theory and practice has long been a central concern in teacher education. Rather than being two separate concepts, theory and practice should be seen as interconnected domains that inform and enrich one another throughout the process of teacher learning (Korthagen, 2010; Loughran, 2013). Ideally, theoretical approaches provide a conceptual foundation for understanding teaching and learning processes, while practice allows opportunities to apply, test, and refine these theoretical perspectives in real classroom settings (Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, the relationship between the two is complex, dynamic, and contextual, rather than linear or straightforward (Borg & Sanchez, 2015).

Borg (2003) contends that teachers' cognition -what they think, know and believe- plays a significant mediating role between theoretical inputs and classroom practices. For Borg, teachers do not directly apply theoretical principles; instead, they interpret and adapt them through the lens of their prior experiences, institutional expectations, and contextual constraints. This perspective suggests that there is a natural tension between theory and practice, and the process of teaching necessitates a constant negotiation between theoretical ideals and practical realities. Nonetheless, theory provides not only a set of abstract knowledge but also a guiding framework for decision-making processes (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Korthagen, 2010). Theoretical knowledge allows teachers to reflect on their practices, make sense of classroom observations, and make conscious pedagogical choices (Loughran, 2013; Zeichner, 2010). Therefore, in terms of the quality of teacher education, the key issue is not the exclusion of practice by theory, but rather the ability of teacher candidates to reconstruct and integrate theoretical knowledge with practice (Borg, 2009; Korthagen, 2010).

In related literature, several researchers advocate that institutional structures and sociocultural contexts largely influence how theory is translated into practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Borg, 2009). In teacher education programmes, theoretical courses are mostly provided in university settings, and the transfer of this knowledge to the school environment by prospective teachers is often supported by limited guidance or reflection opportunities. Such a fragmented structure weakens the link between conceptual understanding and pedagogical practice, negatively impacting both professional development and the quality of teaching (Firat & Dinçer, 2024; Loughran, 2013). Thus, this situation points to a significant gap between theory and practice.

2.4. The Gap Between Theory and Practice

Having been discussed for ages, one of the major problems in the field of teaching is the gap between theory and practice. Korthagen (2010) maintains that “The gap between theory and practice has made teacher education a difficult enterprise” (p. 407), highlighting the constant challenge in bridging theoretical knowledge and practice in teacher training. This gap has a negative effect on both the development processes of teachers and their pedagogical efficacy (Loughran, 2013). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) note that if the knowledge is viewed as a package to be given, the teacher becomes a mediator solely conveying the knowledge. For Darling-Hammond (2006),

one of the perennial dilemmas of teacher education is how to integrate theoretically based knowledge that has traditionally been taught in university classrooms with the experience-based knowledge that has traditionally been located in the practice of teachers and the realities of classrooms and schools (p. 307).

This implies that theoretical knowledge is frequently given in its idealised form by neglecting the multilayered and contextual problems that teachers encounter daily, thereby causing the persistent challenge in teacher education of merging theoretical knowledge with experiential knowledge gained in classrooms.

Related literature indicates that the gap between theory and practice directly affects the relationship which teachers establish with knowledge. Academic knowledge is often presented in a detached way, thereby making it hard for teachers to adapt the knowledge to their reality, thus creating a distance towards theory (Loughran, 2013). This situation affects both teacher education processes and classroom practices, besides reducing the quality of learning outcomes (Firat & Dinçer, 2024; Karampelas, 2024). Particularly within teacher training programmes, the distinct separation of theoretical and practical components hinders the ability of teacher candidates to understand knowledge comprehensively. Shulman (1987) explains this separation between theory and practice through the concept of “pedagogical content knowledge” (p. 8), highlighting that it is not sufficient for teachers to know the subject matter in theory; they should also be capable of teaching it effectively. The fact that knowledge production is concentrated on universities and research centres has led to the proliferation of research, which is done under controlled conditions, ignoring the complex nature of the classroom (Feldman et al., 2025). Especially the theoretical research on training programmes and teaching methodology can offer recommendations without considering local conditions (Mirici,

2024), which deepens the theory-practice gap.

2.4.1. Relevance or Irrelevance of Theoretical Knowledge

One of the most significant factors contributing to the challenges and deficiencies in English teaching is the disconnection between academic knowledge and practice (Wyatt, 2016). Medgyes (2017) highlights that academic research is often perceived as irrelevant by language teachers owing to its complex presentation and limited applicability to real classroom contexts, and adds the following remark:

This is in large measure due to the fact that in the unfolding dynamics of the classroom, the teacher has to take a host of instantaneous decisions and implement them on the spur of the moment. Teachers are primarily people of action: they do not need highfalutin theories and elaborate words to do a decent job, which is not to suggest, of course, that they lack the capability of reflective thinking (p. 492).

However, it would not be appropriate to completely dismiss the importance of theory in this context. Theory provides a framework which enables teachers to interpret their classroom decisions, justify their instructional preferences, and orient their professional development processes (Borg, 2003; Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Therefore, the relationship between theory and practice should be seen not as a dichotomy, but as an interaction that supports and fosters both.

Moreover, the knowledge that teachers acquire in their contexts as a result of their experiences is not considered valid when it is not based on a sound theory. Opposed to this perception, Schön (1983) puts forward the concept of “reflection-in-action”, arguing that teachers' problem-solving processes in the classroom are original production of knowledge. Loughran (2002) affirms that the reflective practice plays a critical role in teachers' professional development and is one of the cornerstones of teacher education. However, although the vast majority of teachers can produce solutions to the problems in classrooms, they unfortunately have not developed a habit of disseminating them in academic or collegial platforms (Borg, 2013), which might contribute to widening the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge.

At this point, not only the value of teachers' experiential knowledge but also its relation to a theoretical framework is of crucial importance. Because theory allows teachers to draw generalisations from their experiences and ground them on more informed and reflective foundations (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Moreover, Richards

(2008) states that teachers' making sense of theoretical concepts makes their in-class decision-making processes more reflective. This perspective requires viewing theory not as a factor that limits practice, but as a tool that enhances teacher awareness and pedagogical integrity.

In the Turkish context, similar problems regarding the theory-practice relationship are observed (Yıldırım, 2013). Several studies do reveal that teachers' research engagements are considerably low in Türkiye (Karakaya, 2015; Kılınç, 2022). These studies stress that teachers in Türkiye are generally distant from theory in their teaching practices since they cannot associate theoretical knowledge with daily classroom practices.

A large number of researchers investigated the potential reasons why theoretical knowledge cannot be effectively reflected in practice in teacher education and contended that this situation stems from a great many structural, pedagogical and sociopolitical factors (Borg, 2003). Brooks (2023) argues that the opportunities for student teachers to take more active roles in research processes are gradually decreasing and contends that it is related to how research is situated in teacher training programmes, thus restricting teacher candidates from developing a research-oriented professional mindset and shaping their classroom practices through this mindset. This perspective advocates that educational environments need to be restructured so that teachers will become not only consumers of knowledge but also producers of it. Similarly, McGarr et al. (2017) denote that the disconnection between theory and practice in teacher education is shaped by not solely pedagogical factors but also by power and authority relations. They emphasise that disregarding these dynamics impairs the integrity of theory and practice, thereby limiting the potential of teachers to be actors questioning and transforming knowledge. Hence, instead of restricting the function of theory to the production of knowledge only, it is necessary to develop an understanding that enables teachers to take an active role in the processes of questioning and transforming the theoretical knowledge in their contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Schön, 1983). Such an approach allows both theory and practice to develop through reciprocal interaction.

Hatasa (2013) expresses that the disconnection between theory and classroom practices continues, particularly in the field of language teaching and identifies the main reasons for this as the inadequacy of teacher education and the complexity of real teaching environments. This situation demonstrates that teachers experience difficulty in operationalising the theoretical knowledge in classrooms even if they have access to it.

Karim et al. (2021) defend that the relationship between second language acquisition research and teaching materials is rather weak and that the connection between them should be consolidated. Specifically, teachers' limited access to current research and the absence of support in interpreting this research make it hard to apply theoretical knowledge in classroom settings. Finally, Cabaroğlu (2014) revealed that teacher candidates experienced multi-faceted dilemmas which stemmed from the incongruity between theory and practice during teaching practicum. These dilemmas cause uncertainties in aspects such as the teaching process, professional identity development and future career plans, leading prospective teachers to struggle in producing solutions when they are confronted with systemic hindrances.

In conclusion, the difficulties that teachers encounter in translating theoretical knowledge into practice do not necessarily imply that such knowledge is irrelevant or inapplicable. Effective teacher education should approach theory and practice not as opposing forces, but as a two-way process that transforms one another. In this regard, theory guides the teacher to action, while practice reshapes theory (Korthagen, 2010; Schön, 1983; Zeichner, 2010).

2.4.2. Teacher Research: A Bridge Between Theory and Practice

The development of teachers does not solely occur within the framework of a teacher education programme; rather, it is a continuous process that starts and persists beyond that programme (Johnson, 2015). A distinctly emerging trend in teacher education literature is the redefinition of teachers as professionals who do not solely convey knowledge but also produce, question and transform it (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Zeichner, 2010). This transformation proposes the evolution of teacher identity from “practitioner” to “researcher practitioner”, and thus positioning teachers in a more autonomous, critical and productive role (Atay, 2008; Burns, 2010), which introduces a profound transformation of the teacher identity (Mockler, 2011). Loughran (2013) highlights that teacher training should be designed and carried out effectively to provide prospective teachers with these skills by exposing them to real teaching situations.

Related research identifies the gaps within teacher training, professional development and classroom practices as critical areas which should be addressed (Borg, 2015; Burns & Westmacott, 2018). Teacher research offers an effective way to bridge the previously mentioned gaps. The systematic research conducted by teachers in their

classrooms both enables the theoretical framework to become concrete and increases teachers' capacity to produce knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Doğan & Kırkgöz, 2022). In this manner, adopting a teaching approach based on research allows teachers to build their classroom practices on scientific principles (Boran, 2018). Teachers who embrace teacher research can evaluate the methods and techniques critically, adapt to contextual realities, and generate more fruitful learning environments (Borg, 2019; Burns, 2019).

Teacher research is becoming increasingly popular as a tool for continuing professional development in ELT contexts, and there is a good number of studies on the positive effects of classroom research on teachers (Edwards & Burns, 2016). In particular, English teachers' integration of theory and practice by means of adopting a researcher identity should be seen as a critical step in improving the quality of teaching (Burns, 2019). In this regard, teacher research is considered not merely a method or a tool for professional development but as a practice that contributes to the democratisation of pedagogical knowledge production as well (Kemmis & Smith, 2008; Mockler, 2011).

Researchers like Dikilitaş and Mumford (2019) report that when teachers transform their practices through research, their pedagogical efficiency increases, and their pedagogical self-efficacy improves positively. In defence of this claim, Zeichner (2010) asserts that the knowledge that teachers generate based on their classroom experiences sheds light on their teaching processes and provides local, contextual and practical depth to educational research and also constitutes a pivotal resource for teachers in forming their professional decisions and for the development of educational policies.

As can be understood, the related literature reveals that teacher research is a tenet which transforms teachers into active producers of knowledge from passive consumers.

Consequently, it is crucial that teachers are trained not solely as practitioners but also as teacher-researchers to bridge the gap between theory and practice in education. This should be acknowledged as a priority for the development of not only teachers but also the entire educational system. For this reason, the concept of teacher research, which will be detailed in the next section, has become the focus of this research.

2.5. Historical Development of Teacher Research

The concept of teacher research is based on the notion that involves transforming teachers from passive knowledge receivers to active producers of knowledge. The roots

of this perspective date back to the beginning of the 20th century, during which John Dewey's perception of education, grounded in reflective thinking, began to take shape. Dewey (1933) viewed the teacher's thinking and questioning processes as a form of learning and associated this mechanism with the concept "learning by doing". Dewey's perspective ensures that the teacher is evaluated as an individual who can question and transform educational practices (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). In this context, his perspective formed the basis for the "reflective practitioner" model afterwards (Schön, 1983).

However, teacher research acquired a more distinct identity as a form of application in Stenhouse's (1975) curriculum development studies from the 1970s onwards. Stenhouse's studies encouraged teachers to produce knowledge through investigating their classroom practices through scientific methods. This approach went further thanks to action research models developed by researchers like Carr and Kemmis (2003). Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) firmly identified the theoretical framework of teacher research and developed the "inquiry as stance" approach, which refers to a *critically inquiring, reflective and transformative* stance of teachers toward their practice in and out of the classroom. This insight started to be internationally utilised on a large scale and was integrated into political documents like AITSL (2011) and OECD (2013). Post-2010 literature advocates that teachers ought to be considered not merely as implementers of the education system but as transformative actors, too (Mockler, 2011; Hammersley, 2013).

In the Turkish context, the concept of teacher research is becoming increasingly important, and initiatives for the development of teacher-researcher identity are increasing, particularly in pre-service and in-service training programmes (Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022). These developments have gained significant momentum, especially with the positioning of teachers as lifelong learners and researchers in the 2018 Teacher Strategy Document and the 2023 Education Vision documents (MEB, 2018; MEB, 2019). Moreover, The Council of Higher Education (YÖK), with the amendment enacted in 2018, included compulsory Research Methods courses in the curricula of faculties training English language teachers for the systematic development of researcher identity (YÖK, 2018).

When the historical development of teacher research is analysed, it is seen that this concept has evolved into a more comprehensive, critical and transformative form in the course of time. This evolution might be considered not just as an individual development

process but also a social movement which can contribute to the transformation of the educational system (Sachs, 2016).

2.6. Theoretical Background of Teacher Research

Teacher research is a perspective that envisions the construction of a learning and questioning professional identity within which teachers actively engage in systematic observation, analysis and development processes of their classroom practices (Borg, 2013). In a broader sense, “Characteristics and elements of teacher research are messy and non-linear, collaborative, reflective, pedagogically driven, exploratory, self-initiated, self-directed, ongoing, practical, and flexible” (Borg & Sanchez, 2015, p. 220). This notion enables teachers to be positioned as agents who produce pedagogical knowledge while carrying out teaching practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). This multidimensional nature of teacher research can be comprehended more profoundly by relating it to various educational theories. In this section, the bases of teacher research methodology are examined in the context of basic theoretical approaches such as pragmatism, sociocultural theory, critical pedagogy, reflective practice, and experiential learning.

Chronologically viewed, the theoretical foundations of teacher research can be traced back to John Dewey’s (1933) pragmatism in the early 20th century. Pragmatism is a philosophical approach that associates the truth of knowledge with its practical consequences and interprets learning through experience (Biesta & Burbules, 2003). Dewey’s comprehension of inquiry-based learning, which is founded on pragmatism, focuses on teachers’ constant questioning and solution-producing processes towards pedagogical problems. For Dewey, teachers are positioned not as transmitters of abstract knowledge, but as active subjects who construct knowledge through experiencing, questioning, and applying it. This perspective transforms teachers from being passive recipients of information into investigative, interrogative, and innovative individuals in the education process. Dewey’s perspective forms a basic foundation for teacher-based approaches, particularly like action research (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Thus, teacher research becomes an active process through which theoretical knowledge is interpreted and transformed in the classroom environment rather than passively conveyed. Dewey’s approach later laid the groundwork for Lev Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural learning theory, which explains the role of social interaction and cultural

context in the process of learning.

Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory defines teachers' professional development through social interaction and cultural tools, and considers teachers' knowledge production as a process that takes place not only individually but also within the community. Vygotsky identifies learning as a social process; in this regard, the individual's zone of proximal development (ZPD) improves and transforms by means of interactions with more competent individuals. Therefore, teachers' active participation in research-based professional learning communities becomes an essential element which supports their pedagogical development (Johnson, 2015). Lantolf and Poehner (2011) assert that the professional transformation of language teachers is influenced by the structuring of their research processes through social interactions. Thus, teacher research gains a structure that supports professional development through joint learning, sharing, and social interaction.

Emerging in Latin America in the same period, Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy brought social justice and a transformative learning aspect to teacher research. Freire's critical pedagogy perspective emphasises that teachers should perform as actors who question and strive to transform the social injustices in education. Criticising the traditional teaching perspectives, in his work "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", Freire (1970) presented the "banking model of education" in which students are seen as "receptacles" that passively receive knowledge, and teachers act like "depositors" who fill the students as "depositories". In contrast to this, Freire puts forward the dialogic-based concept of "problem-posing education", in which the student learns together with the teacher. Freire's concept of "conscientisation" requires teachers to redesignate their roles as individuals sensitive to social inequalities. According to this theoretical basis, teachers are recognised as subjects who produce, share and transform the knowledge beyond receiving it. In this regard, Freire situates the teacher as the subject of social transformation and highlights the emancipating role of education rather than passivating. This perspective enables teacher research to become a critical practice that questions not solely classroom improvements but also educational inequalities.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the professional learning dimension of teacher research gained a new direction with Donald Schön's (1983) concept of reflective practice. Schön's approach proposes that teachers are required to fulfil active cognitive participation in professional knowledge production processes. Schön highlights that teachers can evaluate their pedagogical approaches through "reflection-in-action" and

“reflection-on-action” processes. Particularly in the sense of teacher research, these reflective practices make it possible for teachers to look critically at their practices and generate alternative solutions (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). Farrell (2015) maintains that teachers can undergo a transformation both pedagogically and personally via reflective thinking. In a nutshell, reflective practice encourages teachers to learn from their experiences and to consciously analyse them. This approach forms the theoretical basis for the processes of constant inquiry and self-evaluation, which are at the core of teacher research.

Subsequently, David Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory clarified the individual experience-based dimension of teacher research. Kolb’s theory advocates that learning is directly dependent upon the individual’s experiences. Kolb’s four-stage learning cycle -concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation- enables teachers to examine systematically and transform their classroom practices. As Burns (2019) puts it, participating in teacher research can enhance the acquisition and growth of experienced knowledge in teaching and professional development. This model encourages teachers to learn from their own experiences in teacher-centred research processes like action research and develop new strategies (Korthagen, 2010). Kolb’s model enables teachers to view the learning process as a cycle, integrating the stages of doing, reflecting, and restructuring. In this context, teacher research becomes a process in which teachers systematically develop and transform their experiential knowledge (Burns, 2019; Kolb, 1984).

All these theoretical approaches have been brought together in the teacher research literature since the 2000s and have formed the theoretical bases of the contemporary teacher-researcher identity (Borg, 2013; Borg & Sanchez, 2015). Consequently, the concept of teacher research is not merely a tool for the development of teaching skills but also a holistic process which enables teachers to establish a connection between theoretical knowledge and practice, thereby creating a pedagogical transformation and gaining professional autonomy. At this point, the teacher-researcher is an actor who conducts teaching practices with a critical mind and learns with her students. This synthesis has today turned teacher research into a paradigm that integrates both individual processes and theoretical production processes. Therefore, the contemporary teacher-researcher has emerged as an active agent in knowledge production through critical thinking, experiential learning, and social interaction.

2.7. Research Methodologies in Teacher Research

The methodologies commonly used in the teacher research approach are mostly based on qualitative research methodology and grounded in the production of knowledge related to teachers' own experiences. Among the most common of these methodologies are *action research*, *practitioner inquiry*, *case studies*, *narrative inquiry*, alongside collaborative research and learning communities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014; Feldman et al., 2025; Özgenel et al., 2025). This section covers detailed explanations of these methodologies.

2.7.1. Action Research

Action research is a participatory and systematic inquiry process in which individuals plan, act, observe and reflect to better understand, improve and transform their practices (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Originally conceptualised first by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s, action research was later theorised within the field of education by Carr and Kemmis in 1986. The main objective of this methodology is to ensure that teachers assess their practices critically and enhance these (Kemmis et al., 2014). The action research approach aims to position teachers not only as consumers of knowledge but as agents who produce knowledge as well (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Moreover, with its cyclical structure ensuring perpetual professional learning, it provides a significant opportunity for transformation (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Action research methodology has been widely used in teacher research since it is seen as a bridge to the gap between research and language teaching (Edge, 2001), and it encourages language teachers to adopt an explorative position towards their teaching practices (Nunan, 2001). Mills (2000) also points out the positive functions of action research, which are facilitating insight, developing reflective teaching, influencing the educational environment positively, and helping pupils become successful learners. Carr and Kemmis (2003) describe action research as “a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (p. 162). In particular, Carr and Kemmis's (2003) recognition of action research as an activity targeting social change indicates that this methodology has not only pedagogical but also ethical and political aspects.

Nowadays, Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) cyclical action research model is extensively used in educational research, and it involves the stages of developing a plan, implementing the plan, observing and documenting the effects, and reflecting on the effects of the plan for further actions. Within this study, this action research model was adopted, which facilitated collaboration among the participant teachers, creating a collaborative learning community.

2.7.1.1. Action Research to Integrate Theory and Practice

The main strength of action research is its potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Carr & Kemmis, 2003; Mills, 2000). Thanks to action research, teachers are able to have the chance to concretise abstract theories by observing the effects of their techniques on students. Schön's (1983) notion of "reflection-in-action" plays a key role here because teachers make insightful decisions during practice. In this sense, action research provides tools for teachers to analyse their own experiences and learn from them. Nunan (2001) supports this by uttering "I believe that the benefits of professional development are justification enough for the development of an action research agenda" (p. 199) and emphasises the significance of this methodology from the standpoint of professional development.

Recent studies revealed that action research fostered teachers' reflective thinking skills and enhanced their professional self-confidence (Yuan & Burns, 2017). In a like manner, the research in the Turkish context demonstrated that teachers who conducted action research developed stronger pedagogical awareness, classroom management skills and communication with students (Doğan & Kırkgöz, 2022). Researchers reported that thanks to action research, English language teachers were able to reduce the students' speaking anxiety (Doğan & Kırkgöz, 2022), enhance student motivation (Cabaroğlu, 2014), and increase teachers' sense of professional agency (Özgenel et al., 2025).

2.7.1.2. Criticism and Limitations

Despite its potential, action research is acknowledged to have certain limitations and has been criticised by some academic circles in terms of effectiveness. The limitations of action research are listed below:

- In action research, the researcher is often part of the process. This can increase subjectivity and undermine objectivity and lack of bias (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Denscombe, 2017).
- Since action research is usually conducted on individuals or groups with small numbers, the generalisability of the findings for other populations is markedly limited (McNiff, 2017; Mills, 2000).
- Owing to the local context-focused nature of action research, generalisation of the findings for other contexts is not possible, if not all, extremely limited (Burns, 2010; Cohen et al., 2018).
- When action research is considered in terms of traditional research criteria, its systematicity and repeatability might be found to be low (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007; Stringer, 2008).
- Action research is not acknowledged as scientific enough by some academic circles, and it might be troublesome to publish studies in high-impact journals (Zeichner, 2003).

In addition to the abovementioned limitations, action research was reported to have also some drawbacks such as teachers' time constraints, the inadequacy of data analysis and lack of institutional support (Firat & Dinçer, 2024).

Nonetheless, Carr and Kemmis (2003) specify such criticism as a perspective of science which is confined to the narrow framework of the definition of knowledge and advocate that the goal of action research is not generalisation but contextual understanding. Therefore, action research stands out as a highly valuable methodology for especially English language teachers to improve classroom practices in the light of scientific data.

2.7.2. Practitioner Inquiry

Practitioner inquiry is a systematic form of research through which teachers can perceive, question, and enhance their teaching processes. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) identify this methodology as a process of experience-based knowledge production in which teachers are central figures of the production. In this method, teachers are not solely individuals who gather information but also researchers blending theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge. Besides, the aim of practitioner inquiry is not to

generalise but to generate subjective and context-specific meanings (Brookfield, 1995).

Although similar to action research, practitioner inquiry is less structured, more subjective and reflective. The basic tools used in this methodology are listed and explained below:

- *Reflective journals*: Personal evaluation records in which the teacher or researcher regularly writes their experiences, feelings, and observations.
- *Narrative-based analysis*: Analysis of personal stories, narratives, and life events to make sense of individuals' experiences.
- *Observation notes and micro analyses*: Detailed field notes in which the researcher records classroom activities, student behaviour, or teacher interactions, and small-scale, detailed linguistic or behavioural analyses made from the observation notes.
- *Dialogues and peer interactions*: Colleague discussions, joint assessments and collaborative thinking processes.

2.7.3. Case Study and Narrative Inquiry

Utilised in teacher research, case study and narrative inquiry are the methodologies in which individual experiences, specific contexts and elaborate descriptions transform into knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991; Edge, 2001). Case studies enable teachers to perform in-depth analyses of the classroom situations in specific contexts. They also offer teachers the chance to critically analyse the dynamics of their practice. By doing this, case studies encourage more profound professional insights that can enhance both individual growth and overall pedagogical progress. Such studies aim to improve contextual awareness and pedagogical sense rather than to produce generalisable results from individual experiences (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). Post-2010 literature has revealed that case studies promote professional knowledge exchange and collaborative learning culture among teachers (Burns, 2014; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2016).

Narrative inquiry, on the other hand, deals with teachers' professional lives and experiences through a narrative-based approach. Clandinin and Connelly (1991) remark that narrative is a useful method and object of inquiry in teacher education. Such research acknowledges teachers' experience not just as a source of data but also as the production of meaning. (Clandinin et al., 2000; Barkhuizen, 2016). Especially in the field of English

teaching, narrative inquiry is beneficial as a powerful methodological tool for understanding teachers' identity transformation and pedagogical choices (Yazan & Lindahl, 2020; Yazan & Rudolph, 2018). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) put it:

It is equally as correct to say inquiry into narrative as it is to say narrative inquiry. By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study (p. 416).

Thus, they make it clear that narrative research is not just another method of data collection, but a fundamental way of understanding human experience through the lens of a story.

2.7.4. Collaborative Research and Learning Communities

In recent years, teacher research has increasingly gained a collective identity rather than focusing on individuality. "Deliberately designed professional collaboration is now widespread" (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017, p. 78). Collaborative teacher research and professional learning communities allow teachers to experience both individual and collective learning by conducting research with colleagues (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015).

Professional collaboration fosters student success, teacher retention, and reinforces application, innovation and change (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). In such research, teachers enhance their practices through reciprocal feedback by observing each other in action (Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022). During this process, knowledge is produced horizontally, not hierarchically. Kemmis (2001) calls this phenomenon the transformation of knowledge via collective learning. In Türkiye, this model is becoming prevalent in virtue of projects carried out through university-school collaboration. Particularly in projects supported by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TUBİTAK), teachers have opportunities to collect data, perform analyses, and assess the implementations with the assistance of academics (MEB, 2022).

"Professional Learning Communities" refer to large-scale structures. These are the contexts where teachers regularly come together to discuss pedagogical issues and share their experiences, thus contributing to their professional development. Wenger (1999) describes these as "communities of practice" (p. 73) and maintains that individuals improve their professional knowledge, identity and skills through social interaction and

commonly shared practices. Seashore et al. (2003) argue that what teachers do together outside the classroom is as important in professional development and school restructuring as what they do inside the classroom. For Stoll et al. (2006),

the community focus emphasises mutually supportive relationships and developing shared norms and values, whereas the focus on professionals and professionalism is towards the acquisition of knowledge and skills, orientation to clients and professional autonomy (p.225).

Such organisations are more common, especially within private schools and projects sponsored by universities. As for state schools, professional development meetings are often limited to the administrative agenda. However, in a limited number of pilot projects carried out with partnerships, teachers analyse their teaching processes through weekly reflection sessions (Firat & Dinçer, 2024). Chen (2022) studied teachers' learning experiences through collaborative action research conducted in a subject-based professional learning community. The findings based on observations, documents and interviews revealed that teachers gained new insights and practical skills. The results also suggest that teachers can balance the conflict between top-down demands and bottom-up needs by integrating action research into professional learning communities.

Several research methodologies used in teacher research have been presented in this section so far. All in all, these methodologies focus on teachers transforming their practices into meaningful knowledge and using it to enhance their teaching practice. In other words, these methods position teachers not merely as implementers of educational policies but also as active agents producing and transforming classroom knowledge.

2.8. Contributions of Teacher Research

The contributions of teacher research can be examined in the context of professional development, student achievement and teaching practices. The value that teacher research studies add to teaching environments can be observed not solely in the level of teachers' knowledge and skill but also in students' learning processes and overall quality of education (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). As a matter of fact, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) emphasise that teacher research has the power to transform learning environments by fostering teachers' professional autonomy. The research in the field indicates that teachers' systematic thinking over their practices improves their pedagogical skills and has a positive influence on student achievement (Zeichner, 2010; Borg, 2013; Yuan &

Burns, 2017). Zeichner (2010) remarks that the knowledge teachers generate through their classroom experiences lends a local and contextual depth to pedagogical practices. Similarly, Borg (2013) maintains that teacher research directly contributes to learning processes by enhancing teachers' pedagogical awareness.

The areas to which teacher research contributes will be discussed in the following sections in detail.

2.8.1. Professional Development

Teacher research offers a development process in which teachers are positioned as learning individuals. It also provides a dynamic learning process through which teachers constantly question and improve their practices (Zeichner, 2010). This process not only fosters teachers' professional skills but also strengthens their commitment to their profession and their sense of self-efficacy (Mockler, 2011). In teacher research methodology, where reflective thinking is central, the teacher is not an actor who merely transmits content knowledge, but rather becomes a professional who thinks, questions, and grounds her decisions (Farrell, 2012; Mockler, 2011).

Cochran-Smith ve Lytle (2009) describe teacher research as a practice related to the production of knowledge rather than access to it and explain that it is also based on producing pedagogical knowledge, rather than consuming it, which allows teachers to evaluate their classroom practices critically and develop new pedagogical perspectives. This active role fosters a sense of professional agency, empowering teachers to move beyond prescriptive curricula and standardised methods (Burns, 2010).

Studies conducted in the context of Türkiye reveal that teacher research studies contribute to teachers feeling more effective and qualified (Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2019). These studies indicate that teacher research increases teachers' sense of professional efficacy and therefore has positive effects on student achievement (Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015). Furthermore, teachers' awareness of their own professional development grows, and their practical learning experiences are enriched (Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2019).

Furthermore, it is highlighted that teachers' sense of professional loneliness decreases when they conduct research within a learning community focused on sharing (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015; Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015). Teachers' feelings of professional isolation are significantly reduced through their engagement in research

practices within collaborative learning communities (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015). Such collaborative environments allow teachers to gain diverse experiences and generate multidimensional solutions to professional challenges (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015). In this manner, individual learning processes are integrated with collective knowledge production.

Çelik and Dikilitaş (2015) involved 25 English language teachers in a guided action research project with regard to observing problems in a classroom and finding effective solutions to these problems. The researchers observed that the participants developed their practical skills and reinforced their content knowledge through the action research project. Admiraal et.al. (2016) observed the research conducted by experienced teachers with the assistance of a supervisor. The findings demonstrated that the research process deepened teachers' perspectives on learning processes and allowed them to develop alternative viewpoints. The participants were able to publish their studies despite difficulties in academic publishing processes. The study underscores the potential of teacher research as a concept linking theory and practice. Cain (2015) investigated how teachers, working at state schools in the UK, used research and found that they occasionally used research conceptually in instrumental and strategic ways. The findings indicated that research altered teachers' way of thinking and focus. The process was conceptualised as an intellectual interaction in which the research contributes to the discussions as a "third voice."

Collaborative research environments give teachers an opportunity to pluralise their professional experiences by sharing them with other colleagues, thereby creating a collective knowledge domain. These shared research environments enable teachers to acquire diverse perspectives, design innovative pedagogical practices, and construct shared bodies of knowledge with their colleagues (Zeichner, 2010; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Such collectively produced knowledge plays a critical role in enhancing school culture and improving the quality of education (Burns, 2010).

2.8.2. Student Achievement and Learning Experience

Teachers conducting research is not just beneficial for themselves but for students as well, since research-based decisions that teachers implement in their classrooms are usually more conscious and need-driven, which makes students' learning processes more efficient, meaningful and inclusive (Burns, 2014; Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014).

Research-oriented practices allow teachers to develop pedagogical approaches addressing students' individual needs and learning styles, thereby making the learning environment more inclusive and meaningful for students (Zeichner, 2010). Recent research demonstrates that teacher research improves student motivation, level of research engagement and depth of learning (Doğan & Kırkgöz, 2022; Firat & Dinçer, 2024). Increased student motivation, enhanced participation in in-depth learning processes, and the development of inquiry-based learning habits are seen as direct positive outcomes of teacher research (Yuan & Burns, 2017). Yuan and Burns (2017) note that teacher research positively influences learners' academic success and their attitudes towards learning, attributing this impact to teachers' systematic questioning and improving their classroom practices.

Research in the Turkish context illustrates that teachers become more responsive to different learning styles and develop strategies appropriate for learners' individual differences through research (Doğan & Kırkgöz, 2022; Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022). This enables teachers to design flexible and diverse teaching methods to meet various needs of students, thus strengthening personalised approaches to learning processes (Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015). This process also enhances teachers' ability to design flexible instructional strategies that can address the needs of their classrooms (Doğan & Kırkgöz, 2022). Furthermore, research also enables teachers to critically evaluate their pedagogical practices and make adjustments according to students' ever-changing expectations (Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022). This critical evaluation process allows teachers to quickly adapt to changes in classroom dynamics and update their teaching strategies, thereby making them more responsive to students' different learning paces and styles (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015). In this sense, teacher research can be appreciated as a tool which enhances pedagogical flexibility and sensitivity.

2.8.3. Instructional Practices and Classroom Climate

Research in the field demonstrates the transformative power of teacher research. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) emphasise that when teachers participate in systematic inquiry, they gain greater pedagogical awareness and make more deliberate instructional judgements. This process provides opportunities for teachers to evaluate their practices with a critical perspective and make pedagogical decisions more consciously (Burns, 2010). Such a reflective engagement encourages adaptability and creativity in lesson

planning, helping teachers to better serve the diverse needs of their students. Similarly, Zeichner (2003) contends that teacher research urges teachers to question assumptions and adopt more student-centred practices, resulting in a more inclusive and responsive classroom environment. Teacher research facilitates the development of innovative and student-centred approaches to teaching by encouraging the practice of questioning stereotypical assumptions (Zeichner, 2010). When teachers become the producers of knowledge, their classrooms transform into dialogic and collaborative settings, which enhance both teaching quality and student engagement (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). This transformation enables the classroom setting to evolve from a one-way transmission of knowledge to a more interactive and collaborative learning environment. This, in turn, enhances both the quality of teaching and student participation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Clandinin et al. (2000) advocate that teachers' stories concerning their classroom experiences are reliable sources in the process of pedagogical decision making. Teachers' sharing their lived experiences contributes to understanding the emotional and ethical dimensions of instructional decisions, as well as their technical dimensions. (Clandinin et al., 2000). Teacher-researchers who can grasp this multilayered structure can create a student-centred, supportive, and positive learning environment by organising the classroom climate more mindfully (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2015).

Beyond classroom context, teacher research might also have positive effects on school culture. Collaborative research culture is more likely to increase feelings of trust, openness and professional sharing among teachers (Sachs, 2016; Shand & Goddard, 2025). A collaborative research culture fosters trust and openness among teachers, enhances professional collaboration, and encourages the dissemination of innovative practices (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015). Such an environment allows teachers to try new teaching strategies and remain open to continuous professional development (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2017).

2.9. Challenges and Criticisms: Limitations of Being a Teacher-Researcher

Becoming a teacher-researcher bears a prominent potential for contribution to transformation; nevertheless, adoption of this identity brings about various challenges and limitations. These challenges might be related to teachers' lack of knowledge and skills at the individual level, but they might also be linked to institutional barriers, lack of time,

lack of support and cultural factors (Borg, 2013; Mockler, 2011; Yuan & Burns, 2017). According to related literature, the fact that teachers simultaneously take on the roles of both practitioner and researcher brings along severe problems such as a sense of academic inadequacy, time management, lack of organisational support and professional isolation (Mitton-Kükner, 2016; Santos et al., 2021). While Blakemore (2012) states this situation causes a lack of self-confidence in teachers, Atkinson (1994) explains that the conflicting nature of research and teaching tasks deepens this negative situation.

Below will be presented the challenges and limitations of teacher research elaborately.

2.9.1. Time and Workload

Highlighted in the literature quite often, one of the challenges of teacher research is that teachers do not have time to do research because of their workload. Particularly, the issue of lack of time prevents teachers from allocating time to conduct research (Banegas, 2018; Borg, 2007; Borg, 2009; Chow et al., 2015). The teaching profession, especially at state schools in Türkiye, encompasses a wide range of responsibilities such as instructional workload, assessment preparation, administrative duties and parental communication. This situation hinders teachers from sparing time for research processes of gathering systematic data, performing analysis and evaluating the results (Kayaoğlu, 2015; Zeichner, 2010).

Banegas (2018) sought the perceptions of 622 English language teachers on research in Argentina. The study revealed that teachers' views of research mostly reflect the quantitative aspect of the research, which are called traditional conceptions of research (Borg & Sanchez, 2015), and that teachers considered research as a phenomenon apart from their profession, from which they are disengaged primarily due to lack of time. The researcher also emphasises the importance of teachers engaging in research types such as action research, which can be relevant to them, and that such practices can support teachers' professional development, empowerment and autonomy.

Zhou et al. (2024) studied Chinese teachers' motivation for research and the challenges they faced. The study demonstrates that teachers embraced the significance of research in terms of professional development and students' learning outcomes. However, a number of challenges such as time limitation, lack of resources and lack of sufficient support are emphasised as obstacles hindering teachers from doing research. Besides, it

is stated that infrastructure deficiencies and insufficient institutional support negatively affect the sustainability of research practices. Conclusively, the study recommends the development of support systems to meet local needs in order to increase the efficacy of teacher research.

In the Turkish context, researchers obtained results emphasising that teachers suffer from a lack of time to do research (Alabaş & Kamer, 2012; Elçiçek, 2016). Similarly, Çelik and Dikilitaş (2015) remark that even though teachers have a desire to do research, they cannot carry out research processes on account of a lack of time.

2.9.2. Research Skills and Methodological Knowledge

Another significant limitation is the fact that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and experience regarding research methods. In teacher education, while content knowledge and practical skills are emphasised, research methodology is either entirely not addressed or only taught superficially at a theoretical level (Borg, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2006). This situation causes teachers to experience difficulty in designing data collection tools or analysing data.

Such a lack of expertise might hinder the effective design, implementation and analysis processes of teacher-led studies, thereby affecting the reliability and validity of findings. Without proper practical training, teachers are likely to have difficulty in choosing an appropriate methodology, obtaining data correctly and deriving meaningful results (Mermer & Soyer, 2021). Dikilitaş and Mumford (2016) maintain that teachers initiate the research procedure with a high spirit, but teachers' lack of technical research skills disrupts the process. At this point, it is often emphasised that the strong collaboration between universities and schools should be provided and maintained (Nguyen & Bui, 2016). Thus, it will be possible for teachers to gain research knowledge and practical skills through seminars, training courses and collaborative research (Bilican et al., 2021; Chow et al., 2015).

Borg and Sanchez (2015) also identified and explored significant concerns in the literature on teacher research in language teaching and pointed out some challenges regarding teacher research. They attributed teachers' reluctance towards research to their biased conceptions of research, their lack of confidence, and constraints between the roles as a teacher and a researcher. Boran (2018) explored how research engagement affected seven EFL teachers' research skills and motivation in a postgraduate education context.

It was observed that there was a significant increase in teachers' research efficacy, whereas no significant change was found in motivation levels statistically. The study contends that research-oriented education programmes can foster competence development but might have a limited effect on motivation, thereby suggesting that programme contents should be enhanced with motivational elements.

Dikilitaş and Wyatt (2018) assessed the development of teacher research mentors through teacher research projects. The results indicated that teacher-researchers should be encouraged and motivated constantly during the whole process of mentoring. Besides, it was concluded that teacher research of good quality might take more time than expected even with the guidance of a mentor. Dehghan and Sahragard (2015) studied EFL teachers' perspectives towards action research. They found that teachers regarded this method as the duty of researchers rather than of teachers, which led to their reluctance to engage in action research. The study suggests teachers should be offered more practical and supportive guidance, as well as systematic and research-oriented teacher education.

2.9.3. Lack of Institutional Support

It is frequently reported that institutional support and arrangements to facilitate teachers' research practice are inadequate (Zhou et al., 2024). In school contexts without a culture supporting research practices, teachers' research initiatives might be ignored or undervalued (Mockler, 2011; Sachs, 2016). Besides, research practices might not be welcomed at times due to a lack of administrative support, which complicates the sustainability of teacher research (Poulton, 2023). Hargreaves and Fullan (2015) stress that it is pivotal to establish a collaborative learning culture in the school environment so that teachers' efforts will have a collective effect. However, especially in centralised educational systems, the exclusion of teachers from decision-making processes might prevent them from developing research practice (Nehez et al., 2024).

Borg & Liu (2013) examined 725 Chinese college teachers' research engagements and found that the participants' level of reading and doing research was moderate. Among the factors causing this result were teachers' linear and instrumental perspectives of the relationship between research and teaching practices, lack of institutional support and the tensions between the purpose of research and institutional expectations from teachers. The study also highlights the complicated nature of teacher research due to personal, interpersonal and institutional factors.

In the Turkish context, teachers are provided funding by TÜBİTAK and the MONE in some research projects, but the teachers who carry out these projects have been reported to experience a lack of practical research skills and methodological support in research processes like analysing or reporting (Pişgin & Pişgin, 2024). Lack of institutional and organisational support leads to a situation that degrades teacher research to individual effort and sacrifice (Atay, 2008; Sato & Loewen, 2019), which restrains its sustainability and proliferation.

2.9.4. Teacher Identity and Nature of Academic Knowledge

Teacher identity is a dynamic structure taking shape through interaction with academic knowledge and professional practice (Clandinin et al., 2000). In the context of teacher research, teachers develop identity through critically reflecting on their experiences and integrating theoretical insights with classroom realities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Theoretical knowledge is increasingly recognised as situated and socially constructed, which challenges the traditional perspectives that knowledge is fixed and universal (Pennington & Richards, 2016). In this paradigm, teachers become active producers of knowledge who integrate theory with practice to inform their pedagogical decisions and professional development. This interaction encourages a new professional identity based on questioning and contextual understanding.

The concept of teacher-researcher has been subject to debate among some scholars because it imposes an extra burden on teachers' roles. In particular, equating the researcher identity with academic knowledge might cause teachers to feel inadequate (Borg, 2015). Such an imposition of identity might create pressure and stress for some teachers. From another point of view, scholarly literature also suggests that teacher-researcher discourse can be utilised as a tool to enhance the individual accountability of teachers in compliance with neoliberal educational policies, which increases individual responsibilities of teachers (Mockler, 2011; Smyth, 2014). For example, from this standpoint, there are also concerns that teacher research risks transforming teachers into individual actors bearing the responsibility that the system itself is meant to carry, rather than empowering them.

2.9.5. Issue of Prevalence and Sustainability

Another significant challenge in the development of teacher-research identity is the issue of prevalence and sustainability. In related literature, teacher research is acknowledged to have quite a few positive effects, whereas there are a series of gruelling obstacles to the widespread adoption of these practices (Mockler, 2011; Zeichner, 2010). Particularly in contexts like Türkiye, where structural and cultural boundaries are relatively high, the prevalence of teacher research practices is restricted, and their sustainability is at risk (Yıldırım, 2013). Feldman (2025) maintains that teacher research “with an emancipatory perspective seeks to uncover underlying political, social, and economic causes of the problems, dilemmas, or dissonances of practice” (p. 225). However, this potential can be enhanced through long-term, structured and supported programmes.

The problem of prevalence stems largely from factors such as limited time that teachers can spare for research and the lack of sufficient academic and administrative support (Altun & Sarpkaya, 2021). In addition, teachers’ lack of self-confidence in conducting research and difficulty in prioritising research among other professional responsibilities confines the adoption of researcher identity (Borg, 2013). This situation causes teacher research to be frequently limited to individual or small-scale projects.

The issue of sustainability, on the other hand, pertains to the inability to maintain teacher research in a systematic and long-term manner. For teachers to continue research practices, there should be mechanisms of perpetual motivation, professional support and reward (Kemmis & Smith, 2008). Yet, existing structural deficiencies weaken this motivation and negatively affect the sustainability of research (Mockler, 2011). In particular, the lack of institutional frameworks deprives teachers of clear guidance on continuing their research practices, and also insufficient recognition of their research achievements decreases their motivation to engage in long-term inquiry to a great extent (Kemmis & Smith, 2008; Mockler, 2011).

2.10. Teacher-Researcher Identity in the Turkish Context

In Türkiye, the development of teacher-researcher identity has started to come to the agenda more often with recent educational reforms under the 2023 Education Vision Programme (MEB, 2019), which proposes a data-driven management with analytic tools for learning. In this context, university-school collaboration and scientific publication

activities have begun to be given more space. Despite all these attempts, teachers' adoption of researcher identity still remains within a limited framework (Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022).

In the following subsections, the situation in the Turkish context, in terms of current status and areas for development, will be covered with a set of recommendations.

2.10.1. Current Status of Teacher Research in the Turkish Context

Efforts to develop teacher-researcher identity in Türkiye have gained momentum thanks to research-based teacher education approaches in recent years. Along with the curriculum change made by YÖK in 2018, the Research Methods course was added to teacher education programmes of universities. However, the recent research reveals that in-service teachers are not capable of putting the theoretical knowledge they acquired at faculties into practice (Kara, 2024; Kılınç, 2022). Although in limited numbers, teachers continue their postgraduate education and conduct school-based research despite the lack of support of any kind in their contexts (Aktan, 2020).

In the Turkish context, teacher research is conducted mostly in the form of action research and classroom-based applied projects. Especially in the field of foreign language teaching, it is observed that there is an increasing research interest (Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2016). Research indicates that teachers have a positive attitude towards research, whereas they experience difficulty in both technical and structural requirements of the research process (Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022). In a study conducted by Kefi (2014), it was found that the participant teachers exhibited significant improvement in research skills; nevertheless, the sustainability of research could not be maintained in cases where these skills were not given institutional support. In a similar way, Dinçer and Özkan (2024) reported that teachers' tendency to conduct research increased significantly even without systematic support mechanisms. Demirezen and Akhan (2017) examined teachers' perspectives on the "Teacher Researcher Model" in-service training activity organised by the MONE. The data from semi-structured interviews with 22 teachers who completed the training indicated that teachers were willing to do research, the training met their expectations, and this model should be disseminated in schools. The findings demonstrate that this model is of potential to enhance professional development. The researchers also suggest that such courses should become more practical and longer-term.

Consequently, the lack of time, resources and institutional support stand out as the biggest obstacles for teachers, especially working at state schools in Türkiye regarding research.

2.10.2. Research Skills in the Process of Teacher Education

The professional formation process plays a critical role in the adoption of teacher-researcher identity. The Research Methods courses, given in education faculties in Türkiye mostly as two class hours, aim to provide prospective teachers with basic research skills. Though this structural amendment targets to enable teacher candidates to gain research competencies at an early stage, the fact that the course is given at a theoretical level for a short period of time restricts the student teachers' ability to internalise the research culture deeply (Çetin et. al., 2021). Studies reveal that prospective teachers mostly acquire knowledge at a descriptive level, and the reflection of this knowledge into practice is rather limited (Elgün & Uysal, 2020). Moreover, student teachers' limited experience with research processes in practice hinders them from making research-based decisions in teaching practices and developing a research-oriented perspective (Goldshaft et al., 2024). Nonetheless, for the development of researcher identity, prospective teachers need to gain both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the field.

The fact that teacher competencies are perceived only within the scope of the teaching role orients teachers to focus on this role in the classroom (Ekinci & Ekinci, 2022). In a plethora of studies, it is seen that the focal point is teachers' teaching role (Selvi, 2010). By virtue of this perspective, most teachers think it is not their duty to conduct research, nor do they need to do research or show interest in others' research (Dehghan & Sahragard, 2015). This case might cause teachers to take a negative stance towards doing research and its professional impacts (Borg, 2013).

Atal (2019) reported that the professional identities of teacher candidates were shaped in the educational processes carried out on the axis of information technologies, and they became more equipped in terms of research skills. The findings highlight that student teachers do need to be provided with both technical skills and methodological background knowledge. Aktan (2020), on the other hand, affirms that teachers with postgraduate education have stronger research skills and critical thinking tendencies, which indicates that postgraduate education in the professional development process is

one of the distinctive factors shaping teachers' researcher identity.

However, the research skills that teachers develop during postgraduate education are usually shaped in conformity with the scholarly world, and they might not be appropriate for classroom implementations. At this point, teacher education programmes should be enhanced to allow teacher candidates to experience research practice in real-world contexts, as Borg (2009) emphasises the importance of bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in teacher education. This integration is most likely to help bridge the gap between theoretical perspectives and practical implementation. Moreover, it has the potential to cultivate a sense of ownership and relevance in research conducted by teachers, thereby enhancing its sustainability and impact within educational environments.

2.10.3. The Need for Institutional and Policy Support

Individual motivation alone is not enough for teachers to develop teacher-researcher identity and sustain this identity in their professional lives. Systematic support mechanisms ought to be established at political and institutional levels (Fırat & Dinçer, 2024). Particularly, European-funded projects such as e-Twinning and Erasmus offer research-based learning environments for Turkish teachers and facilitate them to gain experience in international contexts. Besides, in projects supported by TÜBİTAK, teachers have opportunities to collect data, perform analyses, and assess the implementations with the assistance of academics (MEB, 2022). Nevertheless, the prevalence of these efforts is yet to be ensured at the desired level. The lack of an institutionalised reward system for teachers to do research constitutes a crucial impediment to development in this profession (Sakarkaya & Bumen, 2022).

Although Hammersley (2013) asserts that research-based policies and practices are mostly a myth because of the complexity and multilayered nature of research, Mockler (2011) advocates that four basic elements, which are professional autonomy, time, resources and administrative support, should be provided together for teacher research to thrive.

2.10.4. Recommendations

Particularly for the Turkish context, some specific recommendations for the enhancement of teacher-researcher identity, which have been made by scholars so far, are

presented below.

First of all, it is pivotal for teacher education programmes to promote research skills integrated into the field rather than to cover mere theoretical knowledge. These programmes should not be restricted to the instruction of traditional research skills but should also provide teacher candidates with opportunities to conduct classroom-based research. Thus, teachers can adopt research as an integral part of their professional practices and produce substantive knowledge in their contexts (Lunenberg et al., 2007).

Secondly, the concept of teacher research comprises many difficulties and limitations as well. In order to overcome the challenges of teacher research, comprehensive strategies to support teacher-researcher identity should be developed in collaboration with the policy makers, educational institutions and academicians. For the development of sustainable and efficacious teacher-researcher identity, structural support mechanisms should be corroborated (Groothuisen & Bronkhorst, 2020). For instance, university-school partnerships can empower teachers' professional autonomy through allowing them to contribute to the processes of knowledge production (Elçiçek, 2016). However, strategies that are designated in such a collaboration should aim to integrate research into professional development and decision-making processes, besides providing the necessary time, resources and support environment to enable teachers to do research. In this manner, teacher research can become widespread and a sustainable tool for professional transformation.

Additionally, it will be a critical step for the MONE to establish an organisation that promotes, supports and rewards teacher research practices. Through formal policies, various attempts can be made prevalent and integrated into teachers' professional development process (Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022). As Mockler (2011) contends, teacher research can be sustained provided that it is supported by larger professional and political organisations, since teacher identity is not limited to merely classroom practices but is also shaped by institutional and policy-level contexts.

On the other hand, it is quite important for school administrators to create school environments that can enhance teacher research practices. This support should encapsulate providing teachers with the necessary time, resources and moral environment (Yıldırım, 2013). Institutional and administrative support might influence teacher motivation and contribute to the development of a research-oriented culture in schools (Borg, 2013).

Finally, professional learning communities ought to be enhanced as platforms where teachers can share their experiences and learn from colleagues. Collective learning environments enable teachers to learn from each other and develop innovative practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2011). Such communities support teachers not solely in respect to individual development but also the improvement of researcher identity in a professional context.

All the recommendations presented above are required for teacher research identity to progress systematically and sustainably and should be implemented, considering the existing structural constraints in Türkiye. In this regard, the joint efforts of policymakers, academicians and practitioners will be determinant in supporting teachers' professional transformation. Only through such collaboration can a research-oriented teaching culture be cultivated and maintained.

2.11. Summary of Outcomes and Professional Implications

In light of the studies examined in the above sections, the following results have emerged, indicating the challenges causing teachers' low research engagement:

- Teachers perceive research as an activity that belongs to the academic world and is not relevant to their professional practices.
- Teachers cannot spare time for research due to their current professional duties and responsibilities.
- Teachers suffer from a lack of resources.
- Teachers do not get institutional support.
- Teachers have difficulty in integrating research into practice.
- Teachers have biased perceptions of research processes.

Despite the negative results of the studies, it was also observed that teacher research has a considerable number of positive aspects on the professional development of teachers. These can be summarised as follows:

- Teachers' research skills and reading habits improved.
- Research engagement changed teachers' thinking patterns and professional foci.
- Teachers' practical skills and content knowledge were enhanced through action

research.

- Teachers' perceptions towards research deepened, and they gained alternative perspectives.
- Teachers' professional development and interpersonal skills increased.
- Research designs promoted teachers' professional autonomy and empowerment.
- Teachers' motivation, reflective thinking and strategic learning skills developed.
- Engagement in research decreased teachers' anxiety levels and enhanced their self-confidence.
- Collaborative research environments fostered teachers' practical knowledge and understanding.
- Research-based education expanded teachers' research efficacy and assured permanent development.

As a final remark, notwithstanding its present limitations, the concept of teacher research has the potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice, thus making significant contributions to the professional development of teachers. Although to a limited extent, teachers' engagement in research can promote their reflective thinking and allow them to integrate theoretical knowledge into classroom practices efficaciously. Even considering the challenges encountered, teacher research can be a robust tenet for perpetual professional development by combining academic inquiry with practical teaching contexts. Its gradual integration into teacher education and school culture might ensure long-term enhancements in teaching quality and learner outcomes.

2.12. Conclusion: A Journey Towards Teacher-Researcher Identity

This review of literature reveals the transformative power of the concept of teacher research in terms of both individual teacher development and systemic education reform. Teachers' development of a teacher-researcher identity is critical not only for professional competence but also for pedagogical ethics, professional agency, and a democratic school culture (Priestly et al., 2015; Carr & Kemmis, 2003). The structural gap between theory and practice causes teachers to become passive in knowledge production (Karampelas, 2024). However, teachers do possess the potential to generate authentic knowledge based on their observations and interactions with students (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2011). In recent years, there has been a rising trend that identifies teachers as actors who not solely

convey knowledge to students but also produce, question and transform the knowledge (Borg, 2013). This transformation envisions a shift in teacher identity from passive implementer to active practitioner-researcher, positioning teachers in a more autonomous, critical, and productive role.

In this sense, teacher research is regarded not only as a method or a tool for professional development but also as a practice which contributes to the democratisation of pedagogical knowledge production (Kemmis & Smith, 2008; Mockler, 2011). The knowledge that teachers generate based on their classroom experiences offers solutions to teaching processes as well as providing local, context-specific and practical depth (Zeichner, 2012).

Research conducted specifically in the Turkish context demonstrates that teachers are positively inclined towards research; yet, they cannot sustain this process due to structural limitations and lack of support (Yıldırım, 2013; Altun & Sarpkaya, 2021). The lack of components such as time, resources, administrative support and professional autonomy poses a major hindrance to teachers' development of teacher-researcher identity. Nonetheless, collaborations with universities, peer support and projects based on action research provide a promising ground (Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015). Research-oriented practices allow teachers to make decisions more consciously and affect student achievement directly alongside the classroom environment (Firat & Dinçer, 2024; Özgenel et al., 2025). Still, many factors such as time constraints and limited publication opportunities impede teachers from conducting research (Alabaş & Kamer, 2012; Elçiçek, 2016).

Literature demonstrates that the gap between theory and practice directly influences the relationship which teachers establish with knowledge. The fact that academic knowledge is mostly presented in a decontextualised and idealised manner poses challenges for teachers to adapt this knowledge to their settings, bringing about a sense of distance from theory (Loughran, 2013). It is recommended that further research focused on teacher identity should be done for the development and enhancement of teacher education systems (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Buchanan, 2015; Walkington, 2005). In this respect, teacher research places teachers as agents of knowledge production and paves the way for professional transformation by building a two-way bridge between the academic realm and the field of professional practice.

At this point, individual awareness alone is not sufficient for the development of teacher-researcher identity. It is essential to establish systematic and multilayered support

mechanisms, reconfigure teacher education programmes with a research-based focus, promote more equitable university-school collaborations, and integrate teacher research into decision-making processes. Furthermore, legitimisation of the knowledge produced by teachers through their own experiences within academic discourse requires redefining the perception of knowledge regarding the teaching profession (Fenstermacher, 1994; Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). This transformation process can promote teachers' professional motivation and enhance their commitment to their profession (Borg, 2013). Thus, the quality of teaching and student achievement will improve in parallel with this (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2011). Research also suggests that teachers' questioning and improving their practices systematically increases professional autonomy and lowers the risk of professional burnout (Mockler, 2011).

Additionally, the prevalence of technology-supported professional development platforms can allow teachers to develop skills of data collection and analysis (Altun & Sarpkaya, 2021). Moreover, fostering a collective culture of teacher research through collaborative learning communities encourages teachers to share their knowledge and experiences, accelerating the dissemination of innovative practices (Borg, 2013; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

To sum up, teacher research implies not merely teacher development but also reconstruction of ethical, pedagogical and epistemological bases of the educational system. Such a transformation involves not only a change in methods but also in mindset. As a conclusion, teacher research promotes a more conscious, critical, and sustainable transformation in all components of the educational system.

2.13. Summary

This chapter has covered the literature concerning the basic concepts and theoretical framework of teacher-researcher identity and teacher research. The gap between theory and practice, the irrelevance of theoretical knowledge, and the role of teacher research to bridge this gap have been described. Besides, the historical background of teacher research, as well as its theoretical grounds and different methodologies used in teacher research, have been explained. Furthermore, the positive impacts of teacher research on professional development, student achievement and teaching practices have been elaborated. Additionally, the challenges and limitations encountered in the adoption of teacher-researcher identity have been discussed. The current situation regarding teacher-

researcher identity in the Turkish context and development areas has been evaluated, and recent studies in the field have been examined. As a conclusion, the review aims to provide an academic foundation for the teacher-researcher identity and to provide guidance for future studies with all the implications it offers.



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework, methodological choices, and rationales associated with the various stages and processes of this multiphase study. Beyond its descriptive nature, this study also includes a teacher research training course for a group of teachers and an action research component to be conducted within this course. The rationale for adopting this methodological approach, which includes the use of document analysis, a survey, observations, focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, will be thoroughly explained. Furthermore, the chapter will provide insights into the research context and the criteria used for participant selection. A detailed account of the data collection and analysis methods will also be presented. In addition, the decisions and actions implemented to provide the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings and interpretations, while also ensuring the fulfilment of ethical obligations, will be emphasised.

3.2. Research Questions

The main purpose of this research is three-fold: (1) to investigate English language teachers' background knowledge of research, (2) to explore the perspectives of teachers of English working in the central districts of Adana on scientific research, and (3) to provide a teacher research training course that enables a selected group of teachers to conduct action research in their classrooms.

In light of the objectives above, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

- 1- Do English language teaching departments provide research courses in their curricula?
- 2- If they do, how are these courses structured in terms of content and research practice?
- 3- What are the perceptions of high school English language teachers working in central Adana regarding the concept of teacher research?

- 4- Do English language teachers integrate research into teaching practice? If so, in what ways?
- 5- Are there any barriers that prevent English language teachers from integrating research into teaching? If so, what do they stem from?
- 6- Is the teacher research training course given to English language teachers effective in gaining awareness towards the concept of teacher research?
- 7- Are English language teachers able to conduct research in classrooms by making use of action research methodology?
- 8- What are the perceptions of English language teachers of teacher research following the course and the action research experience?

3.3. Research Design

This study is based on the criteria of Multiphase Mixed Method, which is characterised as an iterative process prioritising quantitative and qualitative methods in a cyclical way (Creswell, 2009). This is evident in various studies where qualitative and quantitative methods complement each other to address evolving research inquiries within extensive research projects. Consequently, a multiphase design may effectively characterise the long-term research objectives of researchers; however, this term should seldom be applied to a single study (Creswell, 2009).

Creswell and Creswell (2017) identified some key characteristics of Multiphase Mixed Methods Design:

1. Multiple Phases:
 - The research comprises several phases, each designed to build on the findings of the previous one.
 - Each phase may use a different research approach (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed).
2. Integration of Methods:
 - Combines qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) and quantitative (e.g., surveys, experiments) methods in a coordinated way.
 - The methods are integrated to complement each other, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3. Complex Research Problems:

- Used for addressing multi-faceted research questions that require diverse perspectives and extensive data collection.
- Often employed in large-scale studies, evaluations, or programme implementations.

4. Sequential or Concurrent:

- Phases can occur sequentially or concurrently, depending on the study design and objectives.
- The sequence is planned meticulously to ensure continuity and coherence in addressing the research objectives.

5. Practical Applications:

- Common in programme evaluation, policy development, or longitudinal studies where the context and needs may evolve.

Under the principles of the Multiphase Mixed Study, Table 1 provides a summary of the research design utilised in this study.

Table 1

Outline of the Study

Phase 1 (Qualitative)	• Document analysis of foreign language department curricula to see teachers' research-oriented background knowledge
Phase 2 (Mixed Data)	• Implementation of a survey to measure the perceptions of high school English language teachers of research
Phase 3 (Action Phase)	• Implementation of an integrated teacher research training course followed by action research • Conducting focus group discussions and observations
Phase 4 (Qualitative)	• Conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants to explore their experiences with the programme

This four-phase research design provides a multidimensional perspective on teacher research by holistically addressing both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the data. Each phase was planned based on the findings of the previous phase and supported the

continuity of the research. This structure provides a systematic progression that strengthens both the methodological consistency and validity of the study.

3.3.1. Phase 1: Examining the Curricula

The first phase of the research was essentially a pre-research phase and was conducted to seek answers to the first research question. The question to be answered was whether English teachers take Research Methods courses at the faculties, and if so, what the content of these courses is, and whether teacher candidates conduct research within these courses. For this reason, the official websites of 44 state universities that train English language teachers in Türkiye were examined, and the curricula of their ELT departments were analysed meticulously. The number of these universities represents the vast majority of active programmes verified by YÖK. The periods, credits, contents and objectives of the Research Methods courses in these curricula were found out. A common list of goals was determined by comparing the objectives of each of the courses that are offered.

Since the participants' perceptions of and attitudes towards research were influenced, at least partly, by their initial teacher education experiences, this step is considered significant. The results will be detailed in the *Findings* section.

3.3.2. Phase 2: Online Teacher Research Survey

In the second phase of the study, a survey was utilised to form the partial quantitative part of the study in order to obtain answers to the second, third and fourth research questions. As a result of the literature review, the "English Language Teachers' Views of Research" survey, which was prepared and used by Borg (2009) in international studies as well as by a large number of researchers who conducted research in the field of teacher research, was chosen. The population to which the survey would be applied was specified as high school English teachers ($N = 112$) working in the central districts of Adana province. After obtaining permissions from local authorities (Appendix 10), and the scholar who owned the survey, Simon Borg (Appendix 9), the online survey was presented to the teachers via an official letter sent to schools by the Directorate of National Education. In addition, the researcher contacted these teachers at regular intervals to encourage them to complete the survey.

3.3.3. Phase 3: Teacher Research Training Course and Action Research

This phase is comprised of a seven-week-long teacher research training course and action research conducted by the participant teachers. The implementation was carried out between 26 April 2024 and 7 June 2024. The course and action research processes will be detailed separately.

3.3.3.1. Phase 3: Teacher Research Training Course

The third phase of the study covered a teacher research training course given to five in-service high school English language teachers from three high schools. The course comprised 10 sessions in total, and the sessions were held face-to-face and as Zoom meetings. While determining the content and objectives of the course, the studies of several scholars who did research in the field of *teacher research* (Atay, 2008; Borg, 2010, 2013, 2015; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Edwards & Burns, 2016), *reflective practice* (Brookfield, 1995; Farrell, 2015; Schön, 1983) and *action research* (Burns, 2010, 2019; Feldman, 2025; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Mills, 2000) were exploited. The course objectives were specified, and the syllabus was prepared accordingly.

The participants, involved in the course and action research processes, were five English language teachers working in central Adana. Table 2, demonstrating the educational and professional experiences of the participant teachers, is given below.

Table 2

Members of the Teacher Research Training Course and Action Research Team

Code	Gender	Experience Year	Degree
PT1	Female	17	Bachelor's
PT2	Male	13	Bachelor's
PT3	Male	22	Master's
PT4	Female	35	Bachelor's
PT5	Female	20	Bachelor's

The course consisted of a focus group discussion, presentation and implementation parts. The focus group discussion phase involved exploring participant teachers' points of view of research in general terms, besides their teaching paradigms in terms of methodology and practice. The presentation and application stages of the course were designed to provide the participants with:

- a- Knowledge of research in general terms,
- b- In-depth knowledge of the teacher research concept,
- c- Broad information on reflective teaching, implementing systematic and thoughtful inquiry into practice,
- d- Knowledge of the action research methodology,
- e- The ways of collecting and analysing data,
- f- The ways of finding and examining academic publications as well as making use of the findings,
- g- The ways of implementing action research in the classroom context.

Another important issue was how and to what extent the course would contribute to the knowledge base of the participant teachers. At the end of the course, teachers were expected to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- distinguishing between traditional research methodology and teacher research,
- identifying reflective teaching and critical pedagogy,
- implementing systematic inquiry into classroom practice,
- collecting and analysing data,
- searching through scientific studies,
- conducting action research to solve the problems they encounter in the classroom,
- considering ethical and moral issues related to teacher research,
- disseminating the outcomes of the research conducted in their contexts.

In order to prepare a suitable schedule for all participant teachers, the days and hours of the course were decided together with the teachers. After the entire programme was prepared, three professors from the department of English Language Teaching were consulted for their opinions on the course content. Consequently, the course schedule, as shown in Table 3 below, was prepared (see also Appendix 1 for the complete course plan). All the online sessions were videotaped, and face-to-face meetings were recorded as meeting minutes for data analysis. The duration of the sessions varied according to the content and availability. Nonetheless, the entire course content was delivered to the participant teachers who could not attend some sessions, either by letting them watch the

recordings or through make-up sessions.

Table 3

Teacher Research Training Course Schedule

Session 1 – Discussion & Introduction to Teacher Research(er) 1- Focus group discussion 2- Introduction to Teacher Research – Presentation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Borg, 2010) <i>Additional Reading:</i> Atay, 2008; Borg, 2010, 2013.
Session 2 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology 1- Teacher research (Borg, 2015; Edwards & Burns, 2016) 2- Action Research Methodology (Burns, 2010; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Mills, 2000) <i>Additional Reading:</i> Burns, 2019; Feldman, 2025.
Session 3 – Reflection in teaching 1- Identifying a problem and data collection tools 2- Reflective Practice (Brookfield, 1995; Farrell, 2015; Schön, 1983) <i>Additional Reading:</i> Farrell, 2015.
Session 4 – Strategies for Action Research 1 (McTaggart, 1994) 1- Organising, analysing and interpreting qualitative data (Merriam, 2009) 2- Searching the essential resources for materials
Session 5 – Strategies for Action Research 2 1- Organising, analysing and interpreting qualitative data (Merriam, 2009)
Session 6 – Strategies for Action Research 3 1- Developing a plan to address the problem
Session 7 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology 1- Implementation Phase 1
Session 8 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology 1- Implementation Phase 2
Session 9 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology 1- Evaluation and reflection
Session 10 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology 1- Reporting the results

This schedule gives an outline of a ten-session programme that was followed within the teacher research training course process. The sessions were structured to allow the participants to understand the concept of research, experience the stages of the action research process, and enhance their reflective thinking skills. Throughout the programme, it was aimed to enable the teachers to gain and empower their research competence through the combination of theoretical input and practical engagement.

The content of the sessions will be briefly presented in the following sections.

3.3.3.1.1. Session 1

The action research team, comprising five voluntary high school English language teachers from the survey group, was initially taken to the first session of the teacher research course in the meeting room of the English Language Teaching Department at Çukurova University. This first meeting covered a focus group discussion to explore the teachers' background knowledge and perceptions of the research, as well as a general introduction to the concept of teacher research. After a brief introduction, the following questions were directed to the teachers:

- What does research mean to you?
- Did you take courses related to research at the faculty? Do you still remember the content?
- Do you conduct research? Why or why not?
- How do you overcome the problems you encounter in the classroom?
- Have you ever heard of teacher research? What does it mean to you?

For the rest of the session, a presentation was made to the teachers about the concept of teacher research. In addition, the ontological and epistemological differences between the traditional concept of research and teacher research were discussed. The teachers were given articles (Atay, 2008; Borg, 2013) to read at the end of the session. Following this session, the teachers were asked to examine the given articles and prepare individual reflection notes on the concept of teacher research up to that time.

3.3.3.1.2. Session 2

At the beginning of the session, the teachers discussed concepts highlighted in the articles presented in the previous session and related them to their own teaching contexts. In particular, examples from Atay (2008) were analysed in comparison with the participant teachers' own professional experiences in their contexts. In addition, Borg's (2013) perspectives on the relationship between research and teaching were explored through discussion questions to uncover differences in the teachers' current perceptions of research.

Subsequently, the participant teachers were given more information on the concept of teacher research, which was explained in general terms in the previous session. In the second half of the session, the participants were informed about the action research methodology. In addition, some examples of action research were presented to them in broad outline. The teachers were given articles (Burns, 2019; Feldman, 2025) as an additional reading task.

3.3.3.1.3. Session 3

In this session, the teachers were asked about the challenges they constantly encountered in teaching practices. The answers constituted a problem to focus on prior to the planning stage. Namely, the answers shaped the problem-identification phase of the action research they would implement later on. At this point, Burns's action research cycle scheme was examined using the teachers' current problems, and detailed information was given in terms of identifying a problem and subsequent actions. In line with Feldman's (2025) emphasis on collaborative action research, the teachers were asked to share their experiences with each other during the action research process. Additionally, the teachers' background knowledge of reflection practice was explored. In this context, they were presented with the concepts of reflective practice and teacher inquiry as essential methods in teacher research with examples. They were given a book for additional reading (Farrell, 2015).

3.3.3.1.4. Session 4

This session started with a scenario that depicted a problem in a classroom which teachers might experience while teaching. Then they were asked whether they were experiencing similar problems. This part formed the first phase of the action research

process, which would be conducted by the teachers simultaneously with the course. The teachers identified a common problem, and the focus of the action research was determined as “learners’ deficiencies in spoken English during English classes”. For the planning phase of the action research, the researcher asked the teachers to conduct an open-ended single-question survey and a focus-group discussion in their classrooms to explore the perspectives of students regarding the reasons why they cannot speak English in classes. During this period, the researcher conducted pre-action classroom observations to justify the situation in the classrooms.

3.3.3.1.5. Session 5

In this online session, the teachers were given detailed information about how to arrange, analyse and interpret the qualitative data obtained from the students thematically. According to Merriam’s (2009) thematic analysis framework, data organisation, coding, and interpretation stages were elaborately given. The data collected by a team member were analysed live, step by step, by the researcher. At the end of the session, the teachers were asked to analyse the data they obtained from their classrooms (Appendix 7), as they were shown until the next session. In this process, teachers were given the necessary support by the researcher so that the collected data could be analysed correctly.

3.3.3.1.6. Session 6

This session of the course covered the preparation of an action plan to be implemented. First, the thematic analysis results were examined, and the themes were discussed as a group. The similar results that emerged in five different classrooms were evaluated, and obstacles to students speaking English were outlined. Prior to preparing the action plan to overcome these problems, the researcher asked the teachers to review the studies focused on the same problem. In this way, they would be able to have an idea about what teachers in other contexts did to overcome the same problem. Meanwhile, teachers were offered some tips on how to benefit from academic articles. In addition, they were asked to find interactive activities and materials to enhance English classes. It was determined to share the collected materials on the social media platform of the action research team.

3.3.3.1.7. Sessions 7 and 8

In these sessions, in line with the decisions taken previously, an action plan to integrate into the curriculum was designed collaboratively using the materials and activities the teachers had already compiled. A team member provided technological support and wrote the lesson plans (Appendix 2) for four lesson hours in a digital environment. These plans were designed in accordance with the course contents and textbooks. So as to make the lesson more fun, some activities such as icebreakers, videos, interactive games, songs and puzzles were added to the course plans. According to the action plan schedule, the teachers carried out their classes completely according to these plans. Following the teachers' implementation stage, the researcher conducted post-action classroom observation to assess the situation after action research implementation. In session 8, the participant teachers reflected on their initial implementation in classrooms. Based on their first impressions, the points that needed to be taken into consideration in the following lessons were determined.

3.3.3.1.8. Sessions 9 and 10

During these sessions, the focus was on the effects of the action research implementation on the students and the teachers. Teachers shared their experiences collaboratively regarding the action research process within the group. They discussed whether they needed to repeat the cycles or change the focal point. Thus, the teacher research training course and action research process came to an end. These sessions were particularly important because they marked the stage where the participant teachers' final reflections emerged following the teacher research training course and action research process. Moreover, these sessions provided valuable data which directly addressed some of the specific research questions of this study.

3.3.3.2. Phase 3: Action Research

In this study, the participant teachers conducted action research within the training course. Each step of the action research was evaluated during the meetings held, ensuring that the teachers' motivation remained high. In addition, the teachers were taught thematic analysis in practice and were allowed to analyse the data they collected from their classrooms according to this method.

During the implementation, the participant teachers worked with the constant guidance of the researcher. They were able to get support from the researcher via online communication tools and through systematic observations when needed. Additionally, the teachers had a chance to share their experiences in group meetings. In the action research phase of the study, the research design included typical action research cycles based on the model created by Kemmis and McTaggart (1998), which consists of the *Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection* stages, presented below:

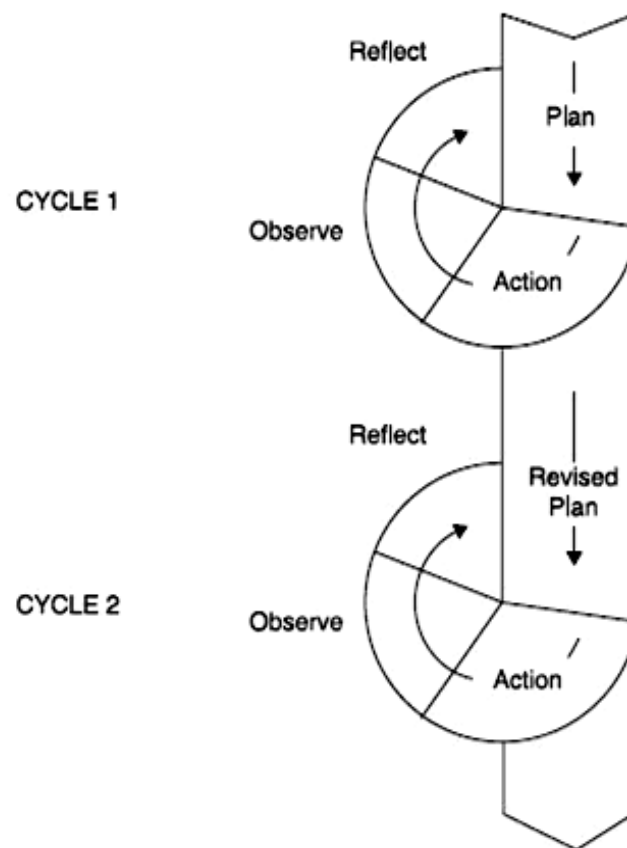


Figure 1. Cyclical AR model based on Kemmis and McTaggart (1998)

3.3.3.2.1. Planning

Planning constitutes an essential initial phase in the action research cycle, encompassing the identification of a problem, the formulation of a strategy to tackle it, and the preparation for systematic investigation and transformation (Mills, 2000). Within the context of action research, planning is characterised by collaboration, reflection, and a focus on objectives, thereby ensuring that the research is aligned with practical requirements and results in implementable solutions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

The first step of the planning stage was to identify a problem encountered by the teachers during English classes. Through Zoom & face-to-face meetings and constant assistance, the action research team agreed to address deficits in students' English-speaking skills in their classrooms. For this purpose, it was decided to collect the essential data in cooperation with the students. The main objective was to conduct action research to improve student engagement in speaking. Thus, they collected data from their students via an open-ended questionnaire and a focus-group discussion questioning potential reasons behind their inability to speak English. Additionally, the researcher visited English classes to observe typical lessons in order to explore the situation in the classrooms. Such an etic approach was necessary to bring a different perspective to the teachers' insider positions. Afterwards, the researcher and the teachers compared the observation results with the data collected by the teachers and evaluated the results. A large body of data was obtained by the teachers and the researcher, which represents some themes such as "lack of background knowledge, curricular & instructional factors, contextual factors, anxiety, reluctance, lack of self-confidence and classroom environment". The data were utilised to review the literature to create enhanced lesson plans to foster speaking in English classes. The action research group reviewed studies on similar topics in the literature. In the subsequent meeting, it was decided to compile the contents that would enhance speaking in classes by sharing suggestions found as a result of the review. As a result, the planning phase was carried out by incorporating activities like icebreakers, videos, songs, puzzles and games into the weekly lesson plans prepared according to the curriculum (Appendix 2).

3.3.3.2.2. Action

As for implementing the action plan, it was decided that teachers would carry out all kinds of activities included in the plans during the natural course of the lessons. In this regard, teachers would use the content prepared in accordance with the curriculum at the appropriate time and manner in classrooms. Most importantly, the teachers would teach classes in L2. During this process, if the teachers had difficulty implementing the plan or felt unsuccessful, they would not deviate from the plan. The researcher motivated the teachers at every stage of this process when necessary, and the teachers shared their experiences in routine meetings. This type of collaboration kept the teachers' motivation high and enabled the effective implementation of the action plan.

3.3.3.2.3. Observation

The observation phase involved data collection and analysis before and after the implementation. The researcher conducted systematic classroom observations and collected data in English lessons to monitor the effectiveness of the action research process. Subsequently, participant teachers reflected on their practices during the action process in terms of student motivation, participation, classroom climate and challenges they encountered. This phase was significant for assessing the influence of the action and exploring the areas which required improvement. It served as a bridge between the action and reflection phases, providing critical evidence to guide future cycles of the action research. In this context, the teachers' collaborative stance significantly increased the efficacy of the procedure.

3.3.3.2.4. Reflection

The reflection phase in action research is quite critical since researchers and participants evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation in this stage through analysis of the data obtained during the observation phase (Burns, 2010). Reflection provides a deeper understanding, learning from the outcomes and a facility for planning the next cycle of action research. Completing the observation phase, the action research team reflected on their actions in group meetings regularly held. The data were analysed by the team members under the guidance of the researcher to evaluate the impact of the intervention.

3.3.4. Phase 4: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a widely used qualitative research method, offering flexibility while maintaining some structure to guide the conversation (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For this reason, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the post-implementation perceptions of teachers who took a teacher research training course and conducted action research in their classrooms. These interviews, which constituted the most important qualitative phase of the research, yielded very comprehensive and informative results. Detailed information about the content of these interviews is provided in the Data Collection Tools section.

3.4. Context of the Study

The second phase of the study included English teachers working in various types of high schools, which are Anatolian High School, Science High School, Social Sciences High School, Vocational and Technical High School, and Religious Vocational High School, in four central districts of Adana. Teachers responded to the online survey that was presented to them after obtaining official permission. The third phase of the study, the teacher research training course, was carried out through face-to-face and online conference meetings. In the same phase, action research was carried out in the participants' schools. The meeting sessions, including the semi-structured interviews, were held in the researcher's school.

3.5. Participants and Sampling Procedure

In the first phase of the study, which was the examination of ELT programmes of 44 state universities, the selection was based on a purposive sampling approach, which aims to identify cases that can provide the most relevant and in-depth data in relation to the research questions (Patton, 2002). Within this framework, the curricula of 44 universities constituted a representative sample reflecting the structure of teacher education in Türkiye in terms of both geographical distribution and institutional diversity.

For the second phase of the study, which was the online teacher research survey, English language teachers working at high schools in the central districts of Adana were selected. The third and fourth phases of the study, covering a teacher research training course, action research and semi-structured interviews, were carried out with five in-service teachers of English working in three distinct high schools.

Several sampling models were utilised to determine the population of this study. While selecting the teachers who would respond to the online survey, purposive sampling was used. It was considered that it would be better to limit the sample of the study to high schools to ensure sample homogeneity. The teachers to be given a teacher research training course and to participate in the action research were selected from the teachers who answered the survey, based on volunteerism principle. In addition, these teachers were selected from nearby schools to be easily accessible, which can represent convenience sampling. Therefore, a multistage sampling model, comprised of purposive sampling and convenience sampling, can be mentioned within this study.

3.6. Data Collection Tools

In this research, a wide range of data was obtained using different data collection methods in each phase of the research. Table 4 presents which data collection method was used in which phase.

Table 4

Data Collection Tools Utilised

Phase 1	• Compilation of the curricula from the websites of universities
Phase 2	• Online Teacher Research Survey
Phase 3	• Focus group discussions • Observations • Meeting minutes and recordings
Phase 4	• Semi-structured interviews

The data collection procedure was carried out in four distinct phases to ensure triangulation and reliability of the findings. Each phase involved different methods adapted according to the specific objectives of the study. The combination of qualitative and quantitative tools assured a comprehensive understanding of teachers' engagement in research practices. The integration of multiple data sources enhanced the validity of the analysis procedure.

The following sections provide information on how these data collection tools were utilised in different contexts.

3.6.1. Document Compilation

As a part of the data collection procedure, a document analysis was conducted to examine the participants' foundational knowledge and background regarding research. To gain an idea about the type and scope of research education given to prospective teachers in universities, English teacher education programmes of 44 state universities in Türkiye were systematically analysed.

With this objective in mind, the official websites of faculties that offer English teaching education were accessed, and the latest versions of the undergraduate curricula were downloaded. Only the state universities were involved in this process to provide

comparability in terms of national standards and requirements. The documents were then subjected to a qualitative content analysis, and the existence of research-based modules like research methods and educational research were focused on, as well as the contents of the courses, credit loads and descriptions.

3.6.2. Online Survey

Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009) note that questionnaires facilitate the efficient, cost-effective, and standardised collection of substantial amounts of data. The use of online surveys has become increasingly common in recent years, especially in order to collect data from target audiences that are difficult to reach. For this reason, the online survey (Appendix 3) “English Language Teachers’ Views of Research” prepared by Simon Borg (2009), which has demonstrated validity and reliability in previous studies, was conducted in this study. The necessary approval was obtained from the scholar himself for the use of the survey. In addition, permission was taken from the authorities for the application of the survey to English teachers working in the central high schools of Adana province.

3.6.3. Observations

In the research process, systematic observations were carried out by the researcher in the action research phase of the study. In line with the claims of the participants as a result of self-reflection before the planning stage of the action research, the courses were observed to evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons in the context of oral use of English and to look objectively at the extent to which students demonstrated speaking skills. Pre- and post-observations were made in terms of the content of the lessons, the attitudes of the students and teachers’ practices before and after the implementation so as to see whether the action research yielded the desired results. The observations were carried out via prepared observation forms (Appendices 5 and 6). Various sources were examined while preparing the content of these forms, and the forms were written according to the elements presented by Merriam and Tisdell (2016).

3.6.4. Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were included in the first and third phases of this study. The first focus group discussion was held with the participant teachers in the first session

of the teacher research training course, aimed at discovering the teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards research, besides their background knowledge of research. The other focus group discussions were held by the teachers in their classrooms during the action research process. The focus of these discussions was on the difficulties students had in speaking English. All these discussion sessions were audio-recorded by the five participant teachers in order to obtain data that would be useful in the subsequent action research process.

3.6.5. Meeting Minutes and Recordings

The last sections of the teacher research training course, given to five teachers during the research process, covered the action research experience that the teachers would conduct in their classrooms. At each stage of the action research, group meetings were held with teachers, both face-to-face and online. In these meetings, teachers' reflections and opinions were included, and suggestions were made to them when necessary. Online meetings were video-recorded, and face-to-face meetings were recorded as minutes. The contents of these records and minutes were then subjected to thematic analysis.

3.6.6. Semi-Structured Interviews

As the final phase of the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers who participated in the teacher research training course and action research. The interviews were conducted in English, and while excerpts were used where appropriate, the originality of the statements was preserved. The semi-structured interview is distinguished by a list of topics to be discussed, as well as recommended questions. At the same time, there is a willingness to vary the order and format of the questions in order to follow up on the subjects' responses and tales (Kvale, 1994). According to existing literature, there are specific principles that should be considered during the preparation of the interview form (Bogdan & Biklen, 1997). Considering these principles, care was taken to develop questions that were simple, clear, focused, and open-ended. The intention was to limit the use of leading and complex questions, while also preparing alternative inquiries and follow-up questions. A variety of question types were created and structured logically. The draft interview form was reviewed by a lecturer, and adjustments were made in response to the feedback received. The interview had nine items prepared by the

researcher to reflect the teachers' experiences at the end of the research and was checked by two other scholars in the field for validity and reliability (Appendix 4). Beforehand, an outline of the interview was presented to the participants so that they would come to the interview prepared and give in-depth answers.

3.7. Data Analysis

Data analysis involves interpreting and deriving meaningful insights from the data (Merriam, 2009). However, unlike quantitative research, where data analysis is mostly based on the reliability and validity of measurement tools, the role and effectiveness of the researcher are much more important in qualitative research. Strauss (1987) affirms that a standardised data analysis method cannot be created in qualitative research; if it is created, it will limit qualitative researchers and prevent them from obtaining rich and in-depth results appropriate to the data obtained. Nevertheless, the task of analysing the qualitative data is considerably more challenging, particularly when confronted with a substantial amount of information that has not undergone any initial examination during its collection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Within this study, the data that were obtained from documents, the survey, which had quantitative and qualitative contents, observations, meeting minutes and recordings, and semi-structured interviews, which were analysed in accordance with the scope of this study and the research questions. In data analysis, document analysis (Bowen, 2009), content analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013), narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1988) and Merriam's (2009) thematic analysis methods were utilised. Details of the analysis processes will be presented below.

The curricula of undergraduate ELT programmes of 44 state universities in Türkiye were examined using the document analysis method. Public, reliable and representative documents were searched on universities' official websites. The documents obtained underwent skimming and intensive reading stages, and the presence of courses such as "Research Methods, Scientific Research or Graduation Programme" was sought. Finally, the semester in which these courses are offered and whether they ensure research practice to pupils were systematically coded and listed. The analysis revealed the structural opportunities for prospective teachers' development of researcher identity and generated a holistic perspective with the other qualitative data of the study.

In this study, an online survey (Borg, 2009) was administered to 112 English language teachers. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequency and standard deviation, while the qualitative data were analysed through recurring patterns and meaningful themes in participant statements (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Merriam, 2009). The analysis demonstrated teachers' perceptions toward research in a systematic and representative manner.

The data from meeting records and minutes, as well as interviews, were analysed within the framework of analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. First, themes were derived from the meeting minutes and interview transcripts through analysis of narratives. Subsequently, these themes were reorganised, and individual narratives were constructed for each participant in order to present the data in a holistic manner through narrative analysis. Teachers' experiences were structured chronologically, thus creating meaningful narratives by establishing relationships among subsequent events. The narratives were shaped by the participant teachers' classroom observations and interventions. Particularly, the effects of student-centred implementations on both students and teachers were highlighted. The analysis process provided a holistic overview that supports the development of teacher-researcher identity by revealing the teachers' pedagogical awareness and problem-solving skills.

The thematic analysis process of the qualitative data consisted of open coding and analytical coding phases. In the open coding phase, the documents and interview transcripts were thoroughly reviewed and analysed. The researcher systematically coded the data by compiling similar excerpts from both sources into open coding categories. Examples of these open coding categories include successes, challenges, problems, cherished memories, and difficulties, which were subsequently organised into two primary themes as "successes" and "challenges".

During the thematic analysis procedure, a method adapted from the *Six-phase Thematic Analysis Process* by Clarke and Braun (2013) was used.

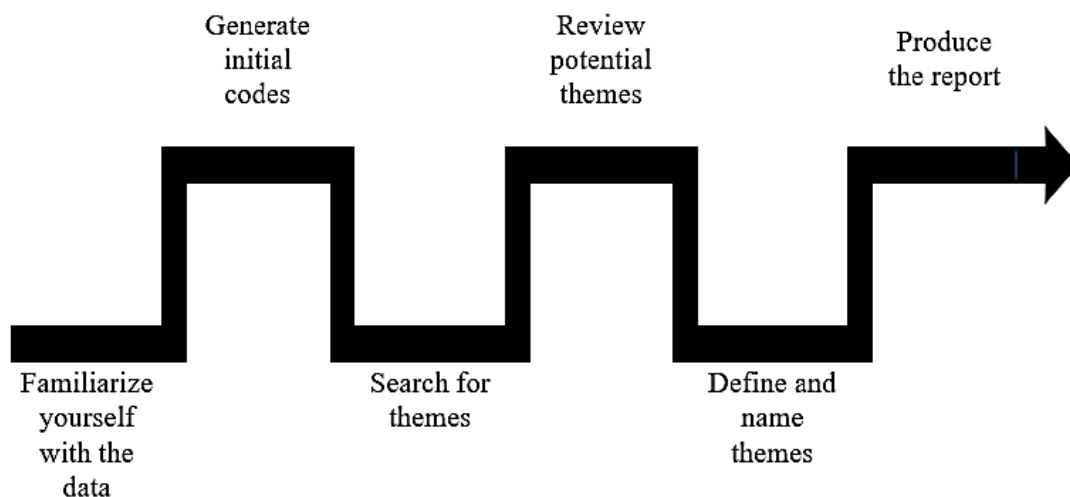


Figure 2. Six-phase Thematic Analysis Process (adapted from Clarke & Braun, 2013)

In the analytical coding phase, all excerpts within the two open coding categories were examined in detail to further classify them into themes based on both concrete and abstract concepts. In the final stage of the analysis of qualitative data, the researcher tried to make sense of the collected data. Therefore, he tried to contribute to the explanation and interpretation of the findings by stating his own thoughts about the data that emerged during the interpretation stage. For this purpose, he tried to explain the relationships between the findings, establish cause-and-effect relationships, and derive some conclusions from the findings, besides making explanations about the importance of the results he obtained. In order to present the views of the participants and to exemplify the themes more clearly, he frequently included excerpts from discussions and interviews when reporting data analyses.

3.8. The Researcher's Positioning

There have been many calls in academic discourse for qualitative researchers to articulate their positions and engage in reflexivity within their research. Patton (2002) contends that qualitative researchers should provide personal information, as they function as the main instrument in their studies. Similarly, Creswell (2009) points out that researchers need to be aware that their interpretations are influenced by their backgrounds, and thus, they should disclose their positions to acknowledge “how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural and historical experiences” (p. 8).

As an experienced teacher-researcher who has been working as an English teacher for over 27 years, the researcher of this study was able to provide an insightful perspective

within the research. It was a great advantage for the researcher to be both a practitioner and to have an academic knowledge base in the process of determining research problems, the research methodology and sampling, as well as collecting and analysing data. It can also be stated that the researcher's emic perspective on classroom dynamics and school context was effective in evaluating the cases and mitigating bias, especially during the actions conducted with in-service teachers.

Overall, in this multiphase study, the researcher assumed various roles such as trainer, observer, and facilitator, who was able to hear the voices of teachers and who had personally experienced the difficulties they faced in professional life.

3.9. Trustworthiness of the Study

In qualitative research, trustworthiness of the study is of critical importance with respect to enhancing internal consistency and ensuring the credibility of the researcher's interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Within this study, multiple strategies were used during the data collection and analysis processes to support reliability in many ways.

In order to explore teachers' perceptions toward research, a survey instrument, the validity and reliability of which were tested previously in both national and international contexts, was utilised. In this way, the mixed data were based on a sound theoretical basis and were ensured to be comparable with other studies (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The qualitative data, derived from the training course and action research processes, were analysed through thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Merriam, 2009). During the analysis procedure, with the intention to reduce the researcher's subjectivity, collaboration was established with two doctoral-level faculty members from different universities for peer debriefing, and constructive feedback was received from the dissertation monitoring committee members to provide external audit (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The context and processes of the study were described in detail, thereby supporting the transferability of the findings to other contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Active participation of the teachers in the research process contributed to the in-depth understanding of the data, and it was examined whether the findings were consistent with participant teachers' opinions via member checking during meetings and interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

To ensure dependability, regular meetings, observations and constant connection with the participants were fulfilled (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Besides, confirmability was addressed through triangulation strategies and audit trails. In conclusion, these methodological strategies increased the study's internal coherence and academic rigour, enabling the interpretative findings to be based on reliable and transparent grounds (Lincoln, 1985; Clarke & Braun, 2013).

3.10. Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in compliance with ethical standards by respecting the rights and privacy of the participants. Initially, all permissions needed for the survey were obtained via the relevant unit of the university to which the researcher is affiliated. Afterwards, the official approval process was finalised by the authorities of the Provincial Directorate of National Education before the survey reached out to teachers working at state schools. The purpose and scope of the study were clearly explained to the participants who volunteered to take part in the survey. No personal data were collected, nor was anything shared that might directly or indirectly reveal the participants' identities.

The teachers who participated in the training course and action research processes signed consent forms (Appendix 8) beforehand. Video and audio recordings, observation forms, meeting minutes and survey data obtained throughout the research were only accessible to the researcher, and these materials were never shared with third parties. The participants' confidentiality and privacy were protected meticulously at every stage of the study.

To conclude, the study conducted within this framework was structured and implemented with careful consideration of both academic ethical principles and human rights.

3.11. Summary

In this chapter, the overall methodological approach of the current study was elaborated, and the research process was structured in four main phases. First, the curricula of English language teacher education programmes of universities in Türkiye were examined through document analysis. Next, teachers' perceptions toward research were revealed via a large-scale online survey. In the third phase, a teacher research training course and subsequent action research with a specific group of in-service teachers

were described in detail by providing details of each session and action cycle. In the last phase, semi-structured interviews, conducted to deepen the qualitative data, were presented. Additionally, the context of the study, the process of sampling, data collection tools, data analysis methods, the researcher's positioning, reliability of the study and ethical principles were described to ensure methodological integrity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, data obtained from document analysis, focus-group discussions, observations, meeting minutes, and semi-structured interviews are presented sequentially, in alignment with the phases of the study. Each participant of the teacher research training course and action research process will be presented separately under specific headings. Therefore, the findings of the pre- and post-observations, meeting minutes and recordings, and interviews will be covered within these sections holistically.

4.2. Analysis of the Curricula

Document analysis is frequently employed alongside various qualitative research methods to facilitate triangulation, which is "the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (Denzin, 1988, p. 511). Although document analysis has predominantly been regarded as a complementary research method, it has also been applied independently (Bowen, 2009). In the first stage of this study, which aims to discover teachers' perspectives on research and to introduce them to the concept of teacher research, the background knowledge of the teachers regarding research was investigated. For this purpose, a thorough documentative analysis of the curricula of 44 English teaching departments in Türkiye was performed, and it was seen that all English teaching departments give Research Methods courses to their students. The overall picture is presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5

Status of Research Courses at Universities

University	Research Course	Term	Credit
9 Eylül University	Yes	4th	2
Afyon Kocatepe University	Yes	4th	2
Akdeniz University	Yes	4th	2
Amasya University	Yes	4th	2
Anadolu University	Yes	4th & 6th	2 + 3
Atatürk University	Yes	4th	2
Aydın Adnan Menderes University	Yes	4th	2
Boğaziçi University	Yes	4th	3
Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University	Yes	4th	2
Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi	Yes	4th	2
Bursa Uludağ University	Yes	4th	2
Çanakkale 18 Mart University	Yes	4th	2
Çukurova University	Yes	4th	2
Dicle University	Yes	4th	2
Düzce University	Yes	4th	2
Erciyes University	Yes	4th	2
Eskişehir Osmangazi University	Yes	4th	2
Fırat University	Yes	4th	2
Gazi University	Yes	4th	2
Gaziantep University	Yes	4th	2
Hacettepe University	Yes	4th	2
Hakkari University	Yes	4th	2
Hatay Mustafa Kemal University	Yes	4th	2
İnönü University	Yes	4th	2
Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University	Yes	4th	2
Kocaeli University	Yes	4th	2
Marmara University	Yes	4th	2
Mersin University	Yes	4th	2
Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University	Yes	4th	2
Muş Alparslan University	Yes	4th	2
Necmettin Erbakan University	Yes	4th	2
Middle East Technical University	Yes	5th & 6th	3 + 3
Pamukkale University	Yes	4th	2
Sakarya University	Yes	4th	2
Selçuk University	Yes	4th	3
Siirt University	Yes	4th	2
Sinop University	Yes	4th	2
Sivas Cumhuriyet University	Yes	4th	2
Süleyman Demirel University	Yes	4th	2
Trabzon University	Yes	4th	2
Trakya University	Yes	4th	2
Van Yüzüncü Yıl University	Yes	4th	2
Yeditepe University	Yes	4th	2
Yıldız Teknik University	Yes	4th	2

The analysis revealed that 44 universities offer at least one course concerning research methodology in English education in the curricula of English teaching departments, and that these courses are generally given in the fourth semester. While the majority of departments offer two-credit courses, Anadolu University and Middle East Technical University present the course over two semesters with higher credits, demonstrating that there is relatively more meticulous interaction with research content.

The Research Methods courses were included in ELT undergraduate programmes in Türkiye as a compulsory course with the revision of the undergraduate teacher education programmes carried out by YÖK in 2018. Within the scope of this revision, three main domains have been identified as “Subject-Specific Education”, “General Culture” and “Professional Knowledge”, and the Research Methods course has been categorised under the domain of Professional Knowledge with the aim of promoting research-based skills of teacher candidates.

Following a thorough analysis of the contents of the courses, it was seen that the departments focused on certain achievements. After the common objectives of the courses were determined, the following objectives were identified as being included in each curriculum:

- To discuss the transformation of the concepts of knowledge and science throughout history.
- To explain the role and importance of scientific thinking in understanding and questioning life.
- To explain the limitations of the scientific method in social sciences.
- To conduct and present reviews of research processes and techniques used in social sciences.
- To identify a research problem and to conduct research following the steps of the scientific method.
- To write a report of the research in accordance with the rules.

As can be understood from the data that were analytically derived by the researcher through a document analysis, students graduating from the ELT departments are provided with both theoretical and practical knowledge of research

4.3. Analysis of Teacher Research Survey

In the second stage of the research, it was aimed to explore English teachers' perspectives on research. Thus, the "English Language Teachers' Views of Research" survey (see Appendix 3) prepared by Borg (2009) was given online to English teachers working at high schools in the central districts of Adana. A total of 112 English language teachers, working at various types of high schools, responded to the survey consisting of five segments, concentrating on participants' interpretations of what constitutes research, opinions regarding the traits of high-quality research, insights into their institutional culture concerning research, involvement in reading research and participation in conducting research.

Table 6 illustrates the range of ELT experience among the teacher respondents:

Table 6

Respondents by Year of English Teaching Experience

Years	N	%
0 – 4	2	1,8
5 – 9	6	5,4
10 – 14	29	25,9
15 – 19	35	31,2
20 – 24	21	18,7
25+	19	17
Total	112	100

Table 6 demonstrates that most of the teacher respondents have significant experience in English language teaching, with more than half (56.8%) having between 10 and 19 years of teaching experience. A mere 7.2% of participants indicated having less than 10 years of experience, suggesting that the sample is primarily made up of experienced ELT professionals.

4.3.1. Conceptions of Research

Conceptualisations of research held by respondents were gathered through two methods. Initially, they were requested to evaluate a range of scenarios, followed by providing their thoughts on the traits of good quality research.

4.3.1.1. Evaluating Scenarios

In Section 1, there were ten scenarios, each depicting a different type of inquiry. There were no correct or incorrect responses, as the aim of this item was to gather insights into the participants' perspectives on what constitutes research. The teachers were requested to assess the degree to which they believed the activities outlined in ten scenarios constituted research. The scenarios are presented below, and the results of this inquiry are encapsulated in Table 7, which presents the number of teachers who chose each of the four available ratings for every scenario.

1. A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful.
2. A teacher read about a new approach to teaching writing and decided to try it out in his class over a period of two weeks. He video recorded some of his lessons and collected samples of learners' written work. He analysed this information, then presented the results to his colleagues at a staff meeting.
3. A teacher was doing an MA course. She read several books and articles about grammar teaching, then wrote an essay of 6000 words in which she discussed the main points in those readings.
4. A university lecturer gave a questionnaire about the use of computers in language teaching to 500 teachers. Statistics were used to analyse the questionnaires. The lecturer wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.
5. Two teachers were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for 3 months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and wrote a short article about what they learned for the newsletter of the national language teachers' association.
6. To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a teacher first tested two classes. Then for four weeks she taught vocabulary to each class using a different method. After that

- she tested both groups again and compared the results to the first test. She decided to use the method which worked best in her own teaching.
2. A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a report which he submitted to the Ministry of Education.
 3. Mid-way through a course, a teacher gave a class of 30 students a feedback form. The next day, five students handed in their completed forms. The teacher read these and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.
 4. A teacher trainer asked his trainees to write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments the trainer decided to write an article on the trainees' ideas about motivation. He submitted his article to a professional journal.
 5. The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She gave all teachers a questionnaire to complete, studied their responses, then presented the results at a staff meeting.

Table 7

Evaluation of 10 Scenarios by the Teachers

Scenario	<i>N</i>	Definitely not research <i>n</i>	Probably not research <i>n</i>	Probably research <i>n</i>	Definitely research <i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	112	56	25	16	15	1,91	1,08
2	112	1	25	54	32	3,04	0,74
3	112	2	17	65	28	3,06	0,69
4	112	1	4	22	85	3,71	0,58
5	112	3	12	43	54	3,32	0,77
6	112	2	20	28	62	3,34	0,83
7	111	36	50	8	17	2,05	1,00
8	110	52	35	12	11	1,84	0,98
9	111	1	16	22	72	3,49	0,77
10	109	22	51	21	15	2,27	0,93

The responses of the participants to the scenarios were quantitatively analysed in terms of the tendency to perceive scenarios as “research”. Among the scenarios rated as the highest level of research are the *academic publishing based on statistical data* (Scenario 4, $M = 3.70$; $SD = 0.58$), *a teacher’s writing an article based on the preservice teachers’ ideas* (Scenario 9, $M = 3.49$; $SD = 0.77$), *an experimental comparison of methods* (Scenario 6, $M = 3.34$; $SD = 0.83$) and *collaborative classroom observation and joint reporting by two teachers* (Scenario 5, $M = 3.32$; $SD = 0.77$). High mean scores for these scenarios indicate that teachers perceived such practices as “academic publication, writing article, experimental design, and statistical reporting” as the indicators of research. Moreover, the low and moderate standard deviations observed in these scenarios reveal that the conventional understanding of research is relatively consistent among the participants.

On the other hand, the scenarios rated as the lowest level of research are *modifying teaching practices through student feedback* (Scenario 8, $M = 1.84$; $SD = 0.98$), *practice transformation via reflective diary writing* (Scenario 1, $M = 1.91$; $SD = 1.08$), *the principal’s report grounded in teacher feedback* (Scenario 7, $M = 2.05$; $SD = 1.00$) and *the department head’s assessment of the textbook via a questionnaire* (Scenario 10, $M = 2.27$; $SD = 0.94$). The low mean scores illustrate that the participants generally did not recognise practices such as “classroom reflection, student feedback and administrative data collection” as research. Besides, high standard deviations related to these scenarios indicate that there are serious levels of perceptual differences and conflicts of opinion among teachers.

The aforementioned data demonstrate that the participants mostly define the concept of research as processes that are *planned, systematic, data-driven*, preferably with *shared or published results*. Nevertheless, the participants’ tendency to consider personal reflection or practices conducted with feedback from a small number of students is lower. Furthermore, high standard deviations in some scenarios (e.g. Scenarios 1 and 7) underscore that there is a certain conceptual inconsistency or uncertainty among the participants. This situation highlights the significance of promoting teachers’ research literacy development and the need for developing content within in-service training programmes to raise awareness.

According to Borg’s (2009) perspective, one common challenge associated with the notion of the teacher as researcher is that research is often interpreted in a traditional scientific sense; broader understandings of the term are needed in the context of teachers

investigating their work. For Borg, teacher research does not consist of statistical analysis or publication-driven practices only. On the contrary, the teacher's systematic observation, reflection, experimentation and documentation of these practices within their classroom is included in research. In this context, the reflective and decision-making practices carried out by the teacher to directly inform classroom practice, as in scenarios 1 and 8, form the basis of the research for Borg, whereas the participant teachers do not consider these processes as legitimate forms of research. The standard deviation data confirm this lack of awareness, and the highest deviations demonstrate that the participants are yet to attain a certain level of conceptual clarity.

4.3.2. Traits of Good Quality Research

The second section of the questionnaire delved deeper into teachers' perceptions of research by requesting them to evaluate the significance of various characteristics deemed essential for high-quality research. In this table, the category "more important" includes the ratings of "important" and "very important.", while "less important" encompasses both "unimportant" and "moderately important". The responses are organised in descending order based on the number of respondents who identified a characteristic as 'more important.'

Table 8

Teachers' Opinions on the Significance of 11 Research Characteristics

Characteristics of Research	More Important <i>n</i>	Less Important <i>n</i>	Unsure <i>n</i>
Information is analysed statistically	100	11	1
The researcher is objective	99	9	3
The results give teachers ideas they can use	96	9	6
The results apply to many ELT contexts	93	15	4
A large volume of information is collected	86	23	3
A large number of people are studied	84	28	0
Questionnaires are used	83	23	6
The results are made public	75	23	14
Experiments are used	70	27	15
Hypotheses are tested	63	27	22
Variables are controlled	36	23	53

Within this survey, it was also explored which characteristics the participants prioritise while defining research. The findings indicate that the majority of participants described *inclusion of statistical analysis* ($n = 100$), *the objectivity of the researcher* ($n = 99$) and *the production of applicable ideas for teachers* ($n = 96$) as important traits of research. This tendency reveals that the teachers mostly perceive research as academic and observable practice, commonly framed by scientific methods and principles of objectivity. As a matter of fact, these findings correspond to the evaluations based on the scenarios. The strong recognition of statistical analysis, method comparison, and publication-based activities as research in scenarios 4, 6 and 9, demonstrated by high mean and low standard deviation values, is consistent with this perspective.

On the other hand, among the characteristics to which the teachers attach less importance are *the use of experiments* ($n = 70$), *testing hypotheses* ($n = 63$), and *controlling the variables* ($n = 36$), which are also traditional research methods. This situation might imply that the teachers find highly technical or experimental designs as inaccessible or abstract, even though they recognise research as an academic concept. In particular, a fairly high rate of uncertainty for the *controlling the variables* feature ($n = 53$) demonstrates that the teachers experience uncertainty regarding such methodological details.

4.3.3. Institutional Culture Concerning Research

The third section of the survey aimed to gather teachers' perspectives on the extent to which they were teaching in an environment that fostered both learning and research activities. With this part of the survey, Borg (2009) aimed to reveal whether institutional culture has a decisive effect on teachers' motivation to conduct research and their implementation processes. Table 9 provides a summary of these perspectives, where the original five-point scale – ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' – has been condensed into three categories, with the responses represented as numbers. When evaluating the data in this section, the answers "disagree strongly" and "disagree" were combined under "disagree", while "agree strongly" and "agree" were combined under "agree".

Table 9

Research Attitudes in School Context

Research Attitudes in School Context	Agree <i>n</i>	Do not know <i>n</i>	Disagree <i>n</i>
Time for doing research is built into teachers' workloads	37	14	61
The management encourages teachers to do research	32	6	74
Teachers have access to research books and journals	27	51	34
Teachers have opportunities to learn about current research	24	48	40
Teachers do research themselves	22	7	83
Teachers are given support to attend ELT conferences	20	26	66
Teachers feel that to do research is an important part of their job	19	8	85
Teachers talk about research	17	4	91
Teachers read published research	13	9	90

When teachers' attitudes towards research in the school context were examined, the results pointed to a considerably weak culture of research. Out of 112 participants, only 37 participants stated that time for doing research is built into their workload while 32 of them explained that the management encourages them to do research. 22 participant teachers affirmed that teachers do research themselves, and 19 of them argued that teachers adopt research as an integral part of their profession. A particularly remarkable finding is that merely 13 respondents asserted that teachers read published research. This finding points to a substantial gap between professional and academic knowledge. The highly rated uncertain and negative responses accompanying these findings demonstrate that there are severe shortcomings concerning access to research, awareness and application.

Borg's (2009) definition of research encompasses a continuum of activities such as teacher observation, reflection and decision-making. But, the present data reveal that existing school cultures do not promote teachers' engagement in this process, either structurally (time, resource, support) or mentally (awareness, value of research). Therefore, it is clearly seen that teacher research also refers to a cultural transformation that should be fostered at the institutional level, rather than individual efforts. This

transformation necessitates a restructuring of the school environment for teachers to foster their research engagement capacity.

4.3.4. Reading Research

Another section of the survey asked to what extent teachers read research publications, and if not, for the reasons behind their not doing so. A total of 111 teachers responded to this inquiry. Table 10 demonstrates the results.

Table 10

Frequency of Teachers' Reading Published Research

Question	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
How frequently do you read published language teaching research?	7	16	29	59	111

A total of 111 teachers responded to the question about how often they read research on language teaching. As shown in Table 10, a great majority of the teachers ($n = 59$) said they never read research articles, while 29 said they read them rarely. Merely 16 teachers said they sometimes read research, and just 7 said they often did so. This finding reveals that teachers read published research to a very limited extent. This low reading level might imply that they do not have access to research, do not have enough time, or feel that research does not relate to their teaching.

Subsequently, the participants were asked for the reason why they do not read research-related publications. Table 11 below indicates the reasons why they do not read research. To ensure data integrity, the answers “never” and “rarely” were combined as both indicate minimal exposure to research.

Table 11

Stated Reasons for Not Reading Research (Rarely or Never)

Reasons	<i>n</i>
I am not interested in research	42
I find published research hard to understand	23
I do not have time	19
Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom	8
I do not have access to books or journals	2
I do not like reading published ELT research but sociological journals	1

The results present significant findings regarding teachers' attitudes towards reading research and the obstacles they encounter. When examining the table, teachers' lack of interest ($n = 42$) is seen as the most common reason hindering them from reading research-based publications. This situation underscores that teachers' motivation for engagement in professional research can be low. Secondly, the difficulty in understanding published research ($n = 23$) reveals that teachers have not developed sufficient awareness of the benefits of reading academic publications, and that they need support in accessing and making use of scholarly resources. Teachers' lack of time ($n = 19$) to read publications indicates that they cannot devote time to deal with research owing to professional workload. Teachers' opinion that published research does not provide practical recommendations for classroom practices ($n = 8$) justifies that the gap between professional practice and theory continues. In addition, the lack of access to academic resources ($n = 2$) and variation in preferred types of research ($n = 1$) were identified as less frequent yet noteworthy obstacles.

These findings highlight that research content should be more understandable and practice-oriented primarily to enhance teachers' engagement in research, and that support mechanisms that are suitable for teachers' professional time management should be developed. Furthermore, it is important to facilitate access to research types aligned with teachers' interests as well.

4.3.5. Doing Research

The following section of the survey was targeted to explore the involvement of teachers in research activities. It aimed to explore how often teachers engage in research and what factors affect their participation. Participants were inquired about the frequency of their research endeavours, the motivations behind their engagement, and, for those who did not participate in research, the reasons for their lack of involvement. Table 12 shows the frequency of their doing research. This part also helped to identify teachers who were more experienced in research practices.

Table 12

Frequency of Teachers' Doing Research

Question	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
How frequently do you do research yourself?	3	15	15	79	112

Out of 112 teachers, 79 stated they never did research, while 15 of them said they rarely did. Another 15 respondents remarked they sometimes did research, and the rest of the participants ($n = 3$) said they often did research. The explanations by the teachers who responded to this inquiry are detailed in Table 13. Some teachers answered more than one option, which might cause inconsistency in the total number of respondents.

Table 13

Stated Reasons for Not Doing Research

Reasons	<i>n</i>
My job is to teach not to do research	43
I am not interested in doing research	28
I do not have time to do research	24
Other teachers would not co-operate if I asked for their help	7
The learners would not co-operate if I did research in class	4
I do not know enough about research methods	4
Most of my colleagues do not do research	3
My employer discourages it	1
I need someone to advise me, but no one is available	1
I do not have access to the books and journals I need	1

The findings point to the existence of multiple factors affecting teachers' participation in professional research. To begin with, the participant teachers do not consider research as a part of their profession, attributing merely the task of teaching to themselves ($n = 43$). Teachers' indifference to research ($n = 28$) is another hindrance that limits the efficacy of research processes. Besides, time constraints stemming from institutional schedules or workload within the profession ($n = 24$) reduce the time available for teachers to engage in research. Moreover, the teachers stated that they would lack collaboration from both colleagues ($n = 7$) and students ($n = 4$) when they needed their participation or assistance. Other reasons that the participants provided such as teachers' insufficient knowledge of research methods ($n = 4$), limited research

engagement among colleagues ($n = 3$), administrative discouragement ($n = 1$), lack of guidance and support ($n = 1$), and limited access to academic resources ($n = 1$) are doubtlessly significant factors that should be considered.

On the other hand, a certain portion of the participants reported their engagement in research (frequently: $n = 3$; occasionally: $n = 15$; rarely: $n = 15$). The justifications for their participation in research are presented below.

Table 14

Stated Reasons for Doing Research

Reasons	<i>n</i>
Because it is good for my professional development	14
To find better ways of teaching	11
Because I enjoy it	8
To solve problems in my teaching	5
As a part of a course I am studying on	5
To contribute to the improvement of the school generally	4
Because it will help me to get a promotion	1
Because my employer expects me to	1
Because other teachers can learn from the findings of my work	0

The findings reveal that the teacher respondents' research engagement is driven by several personal and professional motivations. The most frequent reason is the contribution of research to professional development ($n = 14$). It is followed by the desire to explore more effective teaching strategies ($n = 11$) and enjoyment of the research process ($n = 8$). Among other reasons for conducting research are searching for solutions to problems encountered in teaching ($n = 5$) and the requirement of an educational programme ($n = 5$). Some of the participants stated they do research to contribute to the improvement of the school ($n = 4$). Besides these, the expectation of promotion ($n = 1$) and the employer's expectations ($n = 1$) were reported to a lesser degree. None of the teachers associated their motivation for doing research with the advantage gained by their colleagues from the research findings. These results highlight that factors such as personal

development, pedagogical needs and individual interest are key factors in teachers' involvement in research. This suggests that teacher research is primarily driven by intrinsic rather than extrinsic factors.

4.4. Teacher Research Training Course and Action Research Group

Following the survey conducted among English teachers working at high schools in the central districts of Adana, a group of teachers was invited to participate in an action research process supported by a teacher research training course. In this process, the schools close to the institution where the researcher was working were preferred. As a result, five teachers from three different schools volunteered for the research. In the first phase of the teacher research training course, a meeting was held with these teachers in the faculty meeting room on 26 April 2024. This meeting included an initial focus group discussion and a general introduction to the concept of teacher research. The focus group discussion was conducted to explore these teachers' perceptions and background knowledge towards research.

In the following stages, the participant teachers were given a teacher research training course focused on concepts like teacher research(er), reflective practice and action research in both online and face-to-face meetings. In the meantime, observations were made by the researcher in the teachers' classrooms prior to the action research implementation. Starting from the sixth session of the training course, the teachers simultaneously conducted action research in their classrooms. In this phase, one more classroom observation was made following the action research. In the routine sessions held during this process, the teachers collaboratively shared their experiences. The last two sessions of the training course were held for the reflection and reporting phase, which was fulfilled by the teachers. As the last phase of the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. During these interviews, the teachers' perceptions of teacher research training course and action research, their experiences during the research process, and their overall perspectives on the concept of teacher research were aimed to be explored.

In this context, data obtained through various data collection tools will not be presented collectively under specific headings. Rather, in order to see the experiences, development and perspective changes -if any- of the participant teachers during the research process more clearly, the data obtained from the focus group discussion records,

observation reports, meeting minutes and interview records will be presented for each participant specifically and individually. Each participant teacher's case will be presented subsequently.

4.4.1. Participant Teacher 1

Participant Teacher 1 (PT1 henceforth) was a female teacher who had been teaching English for approximately 17 years. The teacher included 11th-grade students ($N = 15$) in the action research process. This teacher had not been involved in research since her faculty years, but thanks to this research study, she was involved in a teacher research training course and action research. For this teacher and the other participant teachers, their participation in the current research will be discussed in a detailed and holistic manner, covering the pre-research, during research and post-research periods.

4.4.1.1. Prior Perspectives on Research

PT1's initial perception of research was limited to her experiences at university. During the focus group discussion held at the beginning of the training course, she affirmed she had taken research courses at university but could not remember the content of those courses currently. Additionally, she defined research as a *complicated issue* and stated that she had never conducted research herself before. She also repeated this comment by uttering "I always found it complicated and not suitable for real-life situations. So, I am never interested in research; will be right if I say I was" in the post-action interview. The teacher stated that she found solutions to classroom problems through her professional experience. Furthermore, she added that she had never heard of the concept of teacher research until this study.

4.4.1.2. Pre-Action Research Process

In order to initiate the action research, it was necessary to specify a problem that would be the focus of the action research. In an online meeting, the teachers focused on their students' speaking skill deficiency. The focus of the planning process of action research was determined in this way. So as to investigate the situation in the classroom, a classroom observation was conducted in PT1's classroom on 30 April 2024. Based on the first observation of the classroom of 11th graders of 15, the situation of the class was as follows:

... none of the students seemed willing to speak. Only one student answered the questions The students intended to speak neither in English nor in Turkish. They did not seem to understand the English teacher used L1 almost the whole class. ... students ... never attempted to join the activities. ... the teacher utilised a smart board ..., which did not seem to appeal to students.... ... activities of listening, speaking and reading were all done by the teacher.

..., no student spoke English during the class. The students seemed rather indifferent There was ... teacher-centeredness the students lacked motivation, willingness and autonomy the teacher seemed to have accepted the situation even if she still tried to teach something students' learner autonomy should be promoted.

In the observation, it was clearly seen that none of the students spoke English during the class, except one student answering some questions directed by the teacher. The majority of the class did not engage in the textbook activities, nor did they understand the English the teacher rarely used, which caused excessive use of L1. Much as the teacher utilised technology for listening, speaking and reading activities, she had to carry them all out by herself, thereby creating a teacher-centred learning atmosphere. The students exhibited indifference, lack of motivation and lack of autonomy throughout the entire class. Even though the teacher tried hard to teach the class, she seemed to comply with the situation at last. As one of the ways to overcome this contextual challenge, it was suggested to promote learner autonomy.

Following the observation, PT1 conducted a short open-ended questionnaire and a focus group discussion to investigate students' inability to speak English in her classroom as a part of the planning process. In parallel with this stage, data collection methods and thematic analysis techniques were taught to the participant teachers with examples. In light of the information given, PT1 collected data from her classroom. With the assistance of the researcher, the written and recorded data were analysed thematically and revealed some factors which might cause students' deficiency in speaking English during courses. This systematic consideration helped ensure that the action research addressed the most relevant challenges faced by the teachers. These factors were "Curricular-Instructional Factors" ($n = 11$), "Lack of Background Knowledge" ($n = 7$), "Reluctance" ($n = 6$), "Having Difficulty" ($n = 4$), "Contextual Factors" ($n = 3$) and "Lack of Motivation" ($n = 3$). All these were taken into account in the planning phase of the action research. The

same procedure was also followed by the other participant teachers.

4.4.1.3. Action Research Implementation

PT1 reviewed studies and other sources on the internet, which could offer possible solutions to students' English-speaking deficiency during the planning phase of the action research. She contributed to the planning process by sharing her findings in collaboration with the other participant teachers. She also explained her efforts during the planning stage by commenting, "I tried to use several motivational techniques before implementing the action plan. I read articles on motivation in English classes in different contexts and applied some of the approaches others had tried in their classrooms". Employing the lesson plan, which was prepared collaboratively by the action research team, she implemented the action plan in her classroom using what she had learned in the teacher research training course given in parallel with the action research. PT1 made significant comments regarding the implementation process during the meetings in which the action research team reflected on the implementation process. As a result of the thematic analysis of the meeting minutes, several specific themes were derived. PT1's experiences regarding implementation will be presented in the form of themes with relevant excerpts from the meeting minutes.

4.4.1.3.1. Theme 1: Challenges in Motivating Students

For PT1, it was a big hardship to change students' views on learning English owing to their strong beliefs and resistance. This situation might have stemmed from different backgrounds of students, who possibly need different approaches. The teacher's disappointment reflects both practical and emotional situations, as well as ineffective efforts, leading to little progress. She affirmed that changing the students' points of view requires more than using proper techniques or methods. This emotional insight is illustrated in PT1's reflective remarks:

I accept that it is too difficult for me to change the students' points of view of English (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

No matter how much I try to motivate the students, I cannot break their prejudices (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

She said, despite trying to motivate them, deep-seated negative perceptions

persisted, thereby causing her frustration. It can be inferred from this situation that understanding the socio-cultural and psychological factors that affect the students' attitudes is highly crucial in the success of teaching.

4.4.1.3.2. Theme 2: Efforts to Enhance Motivation

PT1 was determined to create a positive learning environment despite the challenges. She used motivational strategies, which she borrowed from others' practices, like icebreakers and games. Such an attitude does indicate decisiveness and willingness of the teacher to learn and innovate. But the lack of student motivation shows that new strategies are hard to apply in a specific and challenging classroom context. The teacher's effort highlights the importance of persistence in overcoming challenges and the need for continuous professional growth, which is relevant to the classroom context. This situation is evident in PT1's words below:

I try to use several motivational techniques before implementing the action plan (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

I researched articles on motivation in English classes in different contexts and applied some of the approaches others had tried in their classrooms (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

The teacher exhibited an anticipatory approach by utilising motivational strategies from other contexts in order to support action research implementation.

4.4.1.3.3. Theme 3: Importance of Small Success

PT1 valued even the smallest achievements like activities done by the students even with too many mistakes. Such an improvement-centred approach involves appreciating small successes and celebrating the actions which others might consider insignificant. Exhibiting appreciation, PT1 advocates the benefits of motivating both herself and the students with the aim of improvement to a greater extent. Acknowledging the small successes, like partly increased participation, seems to have encouraged her to cope with the obstacles. This realisation is captured in PT1's own words:

I used icebreaker activities and a game in the last lessons, and at least some students joined the activities even if they made mistakes and errors a lot. This is even a good development (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

Despite the obstacles she faced during the implementation, PT1's determination to keep trying seems fairly promising in terms of the sustainability of research practices.

4.4.1.3.4. Theme 4: Emotional Impact on the Teacher

PT1 shared her feelings about the classroom challenges she faced during the implementation, including frustration and feeling discouraged. These feelings demonstrate the mental challenges PT1 had when her hard work did not lead to quick results. However, being open about these feelings also indicates a willingness to improve through self-reflection. Providing emotional support to teachers is just as important as giving them teaching tools. Building a network of support can help reduce feelings of loneliness and prevent burnout. PT1's comments highlight her emotional state:

This is very demoralising for me (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

Yet, I admit that I didn't manage to keep them motivated (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

PT1 talks openly about the feelings of stress and doubt that come when plans do not work as expected. Such cases reveal the significance of the mental states of teachers in carrying out effective teaching activities.

4.4.1.3.5. Theme 5: Reflection and Adaptability

PT1 exhibited an insightful and flexible approach by making use of several strategies and making inferences from them. This is a fairly significant development, seeing that it reflects the ability to evaluate both the successes and the failures, which is key to professional development. Recognising and prioritising the need for exploring new solutions, PT1 embraced the very essence of action research, which is constant learning and adaptation. Such a positive change in her perspective was a result of reflection, which plays a pivotal role in effective teaching. This finding emphasises the fact that teaching should be open to learning and adaptation so as to be able to handle the complicated

problems through reflective practice. The participant's words confirm this shift in perception:

I think I need to focus on other issues related to my students and find solutions accordingly (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

It was not possible to break the students' resistance. Therefore, I will focus the action research on such problems in the academic next year (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

The teacher seems to embrace reflective practice by recognising the value of attempting different approaches and evaluating the situations for new solutions. This reflective approach allows the teacher to continuously adapt strategies to better meet students' needs.

To sum up, PT1's statements she made during the meetings reveal the reflections of her professional development as well as gaining a new researcher identity through her research journey. Even though she was not able to attain the expected results from the first interventions, she managed to evaluate her pedagogical approaches by means of experiential learning and look for alternative solutions. She also experienced a nourishing atmosphere full of collaboration and cooperation with other colleagues towards a common target. Hence, she plans to carry out the action research practice as a tool enabling her to analyse the problems and foster learning environments in her classroom context for the next academic year. As a conclusion, the meeting minutes set a notable example in terms of PT1's professional reflection and her developing researcher identity.

4.4.1.4. Post-Implementation Classroom Observation

At the end of the implementation process, which lasted a total of 8 lesson hours, the researcher made a classroom observation to examine the overall classroom dynamics and instructional outcomes following the action research implementation. Based on the second observation, the situation of the classroom was as follows:

This observation was made in the 7th lesson hour of the implementation process, which lasted a total of 8 lesson hours. The class size was quite ideal the seating in a "U" shape. ... a smart board with the internet, and the necessary

materials had been prepared....

This class had demonstrated a very inadequate level of English speaking before the implementation.... The current situation did not seem to change with ... various materials and activities. The students did not even participate in the icebreaker activity (except two students), ... were able to give answers in L1 only through scaffolding.

... icebreaker activity ... could not attain the student participation. ... prepared activities, but the students did not attempt to join, nor did they speak. ... a visible demoralisation in the teacher

The teacher, ..., stated that there could be many reasons for the students' reluctance. ... the main reasons could be the type of school, lack of background knowledge, prejudice against English, and demographic factors

The situation demonstrated in the observation report is closely in accord with the theme *Student Motivation* derived from the interview item, *Challenges in Implementation*. The report exposes the difficulty PT1 had in involving the students with low English proficiency in the lesson. Notwithstanding the materials and activities prepared to support the classroom practices, the students' lack of participation reflects PT1's experience of students' nonparticipation during the action research process. The situation also might refer to such themes as *motivational barriers* and *contextual factors*. In this respect, it might be beneficial for PT1 to carry out action research focused on initially student motivation rather than other instructional elements.

4.4.1.5. Perspectives After Research – Interview Phase

Following the 10-session teacher research training course and the action research, a semi-structured interview was conducted with PT1 in English. Thematic analysis of the interview records revealed a large number of themes presented in Table 15. In order to ensure data integrity, the themes will be presented as narratives with original verbatim sentences rather than covering them under different subheadings.

Table 15

Refined Themes from PT1's Interview Transcript

Interview Items	Themes
Perception of Research	Changed Perception
Course Evaluation	Effective Instruction
Action Research Process	Collaboration
Challenges in Implementation	Student Motivation
Benefits of Action Research	Practical Improvement
Confidence Development	Enhanced Confidence
Sharing and Dissemination	Willingness to Share
Teacher Researcher Identity	Dual Role
Future Intentions	Continued Practice

The themes above present a holistic look at PT1's experiences and perspectives, with reflections on both challenges and opportunities presented by the teacher research training course and action research.

Previously, PT1 used to consider research highly academic, abstract and irrelevant to real-life instruction. Her research course experience at the faculty seemed to leave a negative impression on her as she described research rather “complicated” and “time-consuming” to integrate into her classroom. However, her perceptions of research prominently changed thanks to the teacher research training course and action research experience. She realised that research did not have to be complicated and gruelling, but could be simplified and adapted into classroom environments, which would allow teachers to investigate and handle their specific challenges efficiently. PT1's words confirm this shift in perception:

I saw that research isn't supposed to be so complicated and difficult, also time-consuming (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 15-16).

Now, I feel that a teacher can do research in her classroom very well (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 16-17).

As for the teacher research training course, PT1 remarked that the course led to noteworthy changes in her paradigm of research. She also emphasised the stance of the researcher as both an experienced teacher and a researcher. Therefore, she maintained that a teacher with practical classroom experience and theoretical knowledge as a researcher could provide more relevant instruction. As a matter of fact, such teachers could serve as mediators between theory and practice since they can empathise with the

challenges encountered by teachers. This appreciation is supported by the excerpts below:

However, the teacher research course that you gave us showed something different to me. ... This way, research doesn't seem as complicated as I learnt at the faculty (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 14-17).

I must admit that the course has changed my perspective towards research (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 22-23).

By the way, I must accept that such courses will be more beneficial if a competent teacher gives them. Because they know both practice and theory. They know our challenges and difficulties in our classrooms. So, I guess they can reach us better and can teach what we need and should do (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 24-27).

In regard to the action research experience, PT1 advocated that the collaborative nature of action research is particularly important. In this sense, the periodic meetings with colleagues dealing with similar problems seem to have created an atmosphere which enabled her to share personal experiences with a sense of belonging. Such an interaction clearly not only cherished a sense of friendship but also enriched her research experience thanks to various perspectives and practical solutions from her colleagues. Thus, it can be concluded that action research has the potential to support collaboration among teachers. PT1's statement clearly illustrates the collaborative nature of the action research:

Seeing they share almost the same problems was satisfying. I didn't feel lonely. We exchanged ideas, and I used their suggestions sometimes (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 36-37).

Concerning the challenges in action research implementation, PT1 affirmed that one of the most challenging obstacles during the implementation stage was the lack of student participation, especially in a classroom in which the students are reluctant to learn English. This situation highlights the difficulties in embarking on research-based activities without overcoming motivational barriers. PT1's reflection stresses the need for contextual amendments which reckon with students' specific environment and their emotional readiness level. This situation is evident in PT1's words below:

Unfortunately, they didn't want to join the activities (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 47-48).

Maybe, if they are motivated enough, the action research will be successful in future (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 49-50).

PT1 appreciated the action research methodology since it did not seem as complicated and time-consuming as it was to her. She appraised its nature of being integrated into classroom practices with small adjustments easily. She also admired action research, seeing that it facilitates real-time problem solving without necessitating dealing with the regular activities thoroughly. This perspective points out the applicability of action research in diverse teaching contexts and its potential to enhance teaching without imposing excessive workload. PT1 expressed this idea as follows:

It is applicable because you don't have to put so much to your daily practices. Only some modifications are needed. I am sure every teacher can do it properly according to their context (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 53-54).

PT1 stood for the initial failures; yet, she accepted them as an essential part of the learning process. Such reflection must possibly have stemmed from the self-confidence she began to develop. Her newfound confidence seems to have arisen from understanding the dynamics of action research and its practicality in the classroom. This reflects a growth mindset in which the difficulties are considered as improvement opportunities rather than impassable obstacles. As a result, despite the initial challenges, this research experience stimulated tenacity and confidence in PT1. The following quotation from PT1 exemplifies this finding:

I feel more confident even if I failed this time (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 60).

It is very important for teacher-researchers to disseminate their findings with others both in and outside of their teaching areas (Borg, 2010). Corroborating this view, PT1 exhibited a willingness to share her research experience with others, which indicates that she embraced the benefits of professional collaboration and knowledge dissemination. This viewpoint does highlight the ripple effect of individual development, which can

contribute to collective development. This finding also corresponds to the principles of Sociocultural Theory, which is one of the theories constituting the basis of the teacher research phenomenon. PT1's enthusiasm to disseminate her research experience is apparent in the verbatim sentence below:

I have already done it [shared my experiences] with a few colleagues, and I will with more in future (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 69).

PT1's statements do reveal her adoption of being both a teacher and a researcher, which reflects an apparent change in her identity as a teacher. This dual role enables her to comprehend classroom dynamics more systematically and analytically by applying research in the long run. Such an approach can also contribute to her teaching practices through systematic reflection and problem-solving. PT1's personal transformation is evident in the extracts below:

Now I know that I am a teacher and a researcher at the same time (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 59-60).

I think all teachers should be researchers as well (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 64).

Finally, PT1 concluded that the teacher research concept is highly beneficial for teaching practices, particularly since it is contextual. Despite her failure and disappointment this time, she exhibited strong consistency in sustaining research practices in her classrooms. This endurance points out her conviction for the significance of action research as a long-term facility to foster teaching practices. Her devotion implies that the teacher research training course and the subsequent action research experience helped her develop a permanent interest in learning and improving her skills.

Because every classroom is different from one another. Only the teacher can know and solve the problems of her classrooms (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 65-66).

Yes, because I like this way (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 73).

4.4.1.6. Summary

In a nutshell, PT1's teacher research training course experience and her overall opinions regarding the action research process were explored by focusing on how her perspectives towards research evolved. At the beginning, she used to think research was too complicated and irrelevant to real-life teaching. Yet, the course obviously changed her thinking. It showed her how research can be made simpler and contextual to be utilised in the classroom. The researcher's combined experience in theory and practice was especially appreciated by PT1 in terms of the course's effectiveness. She asserted that such expertise is quite pivotal in addressing the problems encountered by teachers.

In the course of action research, PT1 valued peer collaboration since the routine meetings allowed for exchanging views and emotional support with a sense of community. Yet, she had difficulties during the implementation phase due to the students with low English skills. PT1 acknowledged that she failed to involve her students in the activities. Still, she was determined to amend the strategies and adjust the research to her context. Highlighting the stance of a teacher-researcher as empowering, she remarked that her confidence in conducting classroom-based research increased.

She also appreciated the action research methodology as it seemed practical and relevant for finding solutions to certain classroom problems through making only small adjustments in daily routines. PT1 exhibited a willingness to share her experiences with colleagues and affirmed that professional collaboration and knowledge sharing are essential. Eventually, PT1 would like to carry on her profession as a teacher-researcher and knows that it is significant for the enhancement of professional development.

4.4.2. Participant Teacher 2

The second member of the action research group, Participant Teacher 2 (PT2 henceforth), had been teaching English for nearly 13 years and worked at an Anatolian High School. He included 10th-grade students ($N = 31$) in the action research process. This teacher had not been involved in research since his faculty years, but thanks to the current research, he was involved in a teacher research training course and action research.

4.4.2.1. Prior Perspectives on Research

PT2's prior perception of research was limited to the knowledge he had obtained in research courses at university. However, during the focus group discussion, he stated that he did not remember the content of the Research Methods courses. PT2 considered the concept of research as a *complicated* and *tough* job. He said, "I've always thought about scientific research as a tough job to handle..." expressing his negative point of view of research. He also accepted that he had never involved research in his teaching practices and never used it for the problems he encountered in his profession. He uttered, "I am a traditional teacher. I have difficulty in doing research," and maintained he relied on his experience and intuitions to solve the problems he faced. Moreover, PT2 had never heard of the concept of teacher research until then.

4.4.2.2. Pre-Action Research Process

To start the action research, it was necessary to determine a problem that would be the focus of the action research. In an online meeting, teachers reflected on the difficulties that their students were experiencing in spoken language development. This determined the main topic of the action research planning process. In order to examine the situation in the classroom, a systematic classroom observation was conducted in PT2's classroom on 2 May 2024. Based on the first observation of 10th graders of 31, the situation in the classroom was as follows:

... very few students seemed willing to speak. They only read ... answered the vocabulary and fill-in-the-blank questions A small number managed to say what they wanted with ... errors through scaffolding. They failed to keep the talk going ... their pronunciation was not well Students could not use suitable words and phrases. The students ... developed typical interlanguage errors. The teaching techniques ... were appropriate The teacher utilised ... stimulated response and question & answer techniques. Grammar teaching was appropriate to focus-on-form and communicative approach norms.

The learning media -reading texts, pictures & videos, open-ended questions- ... feasible for the topics. ... the majority of the students seemed uninterested the students exhibited almost no individual speaking. ... they preferred to communicate in L1, distraction and indifference seemed the most

challenging problems

The observation report reveals the students' reluctance to speak English and their tendency to read from the board or the textbook. Their responses were limited, and those speaking were struggling with pauses, pronunciation errors and grammatical mistakes. Typical interlanguage features in students' speaking (e.g., "I am go", "I am want") were also observed. While PT2 was using visual materials and communicative approach techniques, the vast majority of the students displayed a rather explicit lack of interest and opted to use L1, which the teacher initially objected to but tolerated at last. The class exhibited certain issues such as distraction, overreliance on the teacher, and lack of participation, which revealed the requirement of new strategies to provide student-centredness and an appealing learning environment.

Based on the observation results, PT2 also conducted a questionnaire and focus group discussion with his students to explore the potential reasons for the students' lack of English-speaking skills. He achieved results represented in the themes such as "Curricular-Instructional Factors" ($n = 15$), "Lack of Background Knowledge" ($n = 9$), "Contextual Factors" ($n = 8$), "Having Difficulty" ($n = 5$), "Anxiety" ($n = 4$) and "Lack of Self-Confidence" ($n = 3$) and "Reluctance" ($n = 3$). These themes played an essential role in the action plan process in terms of clarifying the content of the action plan.

4.4.2.3. Action Research Implementation

PT2, as his teammates did, reviewed several online sources and research studies focused on students' deficits in English speaking skills to get an idea about potential solutions to the problem. He shared the knowledge he gained with the others. But more significantly, PT2 had previously worked as a project manager on a similar subject, hence he had sufficient experience in this regard. Therefore, he made great contributions to the team regarding the techniques, activities and materials to be used in the classroom. PT2 openly shared his experiences during the action research implementation process in the routine meetings and made a significant contribution to the collaboration. Below will be presented his perceptions of action research implementation through relevant themes supported with verbatim sentences taken from the meeting minutes.

4.4.2.3.1. Theme 1: Importance of Motivation and Engagement

In PT2's context, motivational strategies such as icebreakers, games, and activities were critical and important factors in keeping students engaged in the learning process. These activities helped them not only perform well in classroom dynamics but also move towards other goals, such as improving speaking skills. According to PT2, students engaged with the strategies and created a positive atmosphere in the classroom learning, which shows the importance of using interaction for the acquisition of speaking skills. PT2's words confirm this positive impact in his classroom:

The students seemed to be willing to join the activities and to have fun a lot. In conclusion, particularly icebreaker activities and games were quite beneficial to foster motivation (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

This is in line with what teacher research refers to because it emphasises the creation of a productive learning space to make the most of modern and effective practice when it comes to teaching techniques.

4.4.2.3.2. Theme 2: Teacher Adaptation and Learning

Despite his previous professional experience in student talk, PT2 felt that adapting to such a scientific approach might be difficult at first. Although he discussed the initial difficulties of implementing new teaching methods, he remained optimistic that better results would be achieved as students adjusted. This reflects the adaptability required in teacher research. PT2's reflection deepens the understanding of this theme:

Regarding the implementation of the action plan, it might have seemed tiring at first; however, I expect that the situation will change positively once the students have adopted the new techniques (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

PT2 expressed initial difficulties in adapting to the action plan but expected positive results as the students became familiar with the new strategies. This reflects the iterative and adaptable nature of teacher research, where practitioners develop their approaches through reflection and experience. The phrase *tiring at first* emphasises the emotional and physical demands of adopting new practices, which is an important consideration in teacher research.

4.4.2.3.3. Theme 3: Perceived Effectiveness of Action Research

PT2 perceived the action research as beneficial in the short term despite acknowledging its long-term nature. This indicates a balanced perspective on the challenges and opportunities presented by action research. The teacher also described the action plan as feasible, which indicates that its potential to address classroom challenges was realised. PT2's words vividly demonstrate this finding:

I think the action plan implementation has been useful so far. But it is a very long way to go (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

As teachers, we were able to integrate research into our classrooms. It was undoubtedly tiring and difficult most of the time. However, I cannot ignore the fact that this approach made us more productive (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

The recognition that sustained improvement requires time suggests that action research should be understood as an ongoing process rather than a one-time solution. This is consistent with the cyclical nature of action research, which involves continuous improvement and iteration.

4.4.2.3.4. Theme 4: Reflective Growth and Collaboration

Through his experience, PT2 started to think about his career growth and realised there are endless possibilities for improvement. He values collaboration, seeing how it enhances teaching through collective learning. The reflective aspect of action research changed his perspective on professional development and teaching methods. This understanding is reflected in PT2's words:

I realised that there is no limit to working and producing. ... Collaborating with other colleagues seems quite promising for future implications (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

The reflective aspect of action research has led to a shift in PT2's mindset regarding professional development and teaching practices. He seems to have recognised the importance of collaboration by emphasising its role in generating new ideas and enhancing implementation. This supports the teacher-researcher paradigm that promotes

shared professional growth through collaborative inquiry.

4.4.2.3.5. Theme 5: Sustainability and Future Implementation

According to PT2, action research is a method that can be applied to all types of classroom problems. He sees action research as a sustainable method for addressing classroom problems. His commitment to continuing the cycle demonstrates its potential for long-term impact, which can be seen in the following excerpt:

I plan to use action research for the situations I encounter in my classes from now on. ... I will repeat this cycle next academic year (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

The teacher regarded action research as a lasting practice that offers long-term advantages. The desire to maintain and grow this approach shows this method's potential to foster a culture of inquiry among teachers. This viewpoint emphasises how action research can effectively address the challenges constantly encountered in the classroom.

In summary, PT2 highlighted several important points during the meetings regarding teacher research: the significance of motivating students, the ongoing process of practice, the necessity of reflective professional growth, and the benefits of working collaboratively. Even with the obstacles faced, PT2 acknowledged the powerful impact of integrating research into teaching practices and demonstrated a shift towards a more reflective teaching style. His eagerness to adopt this approach also reflects the flexibility of the teacher-researcher concept. These insights underline the importance of action research for addressing current classroom challenges, as well as for achieving wider professional development objectives.

4.4.2.4. Post-Implementation Classroom Observation

This classroom observation report was conducted to examine the changes that occurred in the classroom after the teacher completed the action research process. The observation notes are as follows:

This classroom observation, which was made after the action process, took place in the 7th lesson hour of the 8-hour implementation phase. The class ... appeared ready ... and accustomed to the new enhanced teaching style. ... seating arrangement ...

students could move comfortably. An interactive whiteboard connected

Compared to the first ... the students are more active Participation in the icebreaker and game activities is high. The students did not display independent speaking skills, a desire to speak English ... was observed.

... preparations in accordance with the action plan ... he taught in line with this plan and managed to teach ... in English. ... methods that supported peer interaction scaffolding when necessary, rarely in L1. ... speaking activities and materials appropriately and effectively.

The teacher started ... with an icebreaker. ... used an interactive presentation

The reading and listening ... with appropriate methods and techniques, ... code switching when necessary. ... ended the lesson ... with an interactive game

... it was observed the action plan implementation has made a significant contribution Although ... tired at the end ..., he emphasised he was satisfied it was stated that ... long term... they need.

According to the observation results, student participation in the lesson increased, and they were more willing to participate in games and warm-up activities. However, independent speaking skills were not fully developed, and some students experienced idle moments during the lesson. The teacher managed the process in accordance with the lesson plan and taught the majority of the lesson in English using interactive materials and techniques which could support peer interaction. The lesson was supported by interactive presentations, listening and reading activities, video-supported question-answer studies and games. Although it is seen that the action plan made a positive contribution to the classroom environment, it is emphasised that the long-term application of the method is critical for the development of independent speaking skills. Much as it takes time for students to get used to the new method, the expected outcomes can be achieved with continuity.

4.4.2.5. Perspectives After Research – Interview Phase

Following the teacher research training course and the action research, a semi-structured interview was conducted with PT2. The results of the thematic analysis of the interview are presented below.

Table 16

Refined Themes from PT2's Interview Transcript

Interview Items	Themes
Perception of Research	Changed Perception
Course Evaluation	Practical Relevance
Action Research Process	Problem Solving
Challenges in Implementation	Resistance and Time
Benefits of Action Research	Collaboration
Confidence Development	Research Empowerment
Sharing and Dissemination	Willingness to Share
Teacher Researcher Identity	Practice – Inquiry Bridge
Future Intentions	Continued Practice

The themes above reveal the perspectives of PT2 before, during and after the training course and action research experience. Supported with the excerpts, the analysis of the themes corresponding to each interview item will be presented as narratives in paragraphs below.

Previously, PT2 used to consider the research as a *complicated* and *tough job* to handle and thought that it was beyond his capabilities to conduct research individually. As a matter of fact, this is a very common perception among teachers who might feel disconnected from academic research, particularly when their work is excessively restricted to classroom teaching and other tasks that their occupation requires. Yet, after he had taken part in the teacher research training course and conducted action research, his perception noticeably changed. He now sees research as a useful and applicable tool which he can utilise in his daily teaching practices. This change is of critical importance for teacher development since it can encourage teachers to do their research and contribute to the community of teachers. This insight is particularly evident in PT2's remarks:

I believe that scientific research is much easier this way (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 14).

It looks much clearer because I mostly thought that it was more complicated in the past, or maybe it sounded more complicated for me (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 15-16).

PT2's evaluation of the teacher research training course was largely positive. He appreciated the relevance of the course content with real-life problems in teaching and recognised the significance of exploring the issues directly concerning the students. This practical relevance is fairly crucial as it indicates that the teacher research training courses can be most effective when their contents are based on the realities that teachers have to face in their teaching contexts. PT1's acknowledgement of *sharing the same thoughts and maybe feelings* with his colleagues implies the collaborative aspect of the training course, which might be a powerful motivational factor for teachers. Furthermore, PT2's satisfaction with the researcher's stance, who is also an experienced teacher, puts forward the benefits of peer interaction and collaboration. PT2's following quotation portrays his insights:

After the course I realised that we found out... what we found out was actually about our real school life problems that we have been dealing with (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 20-22).

And it feels nice to see one of my colleagues' [referring to the researcher] points of view since we share the same thoughts and maybe feelings mutually, you know (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 22-23).

PT2 evaluated the action research process as methodical but adaptable as well. He highlighted the significance of making a clear plan as a starting point, implementing the plan in the classroom, analysing the results and making the necessary modifications to foster student learning. This iterative structure of action research – plan, take action, observe, reflect – provides teachers with opportunities for constant enhancement and improvement in their teaching practices, which makes it feasible and beneficial for teachers dealing with numerous problems in classrooms. PT2 seems to have internalised this process and accepted that it can be useful. He summarises the process in his own words:

We piled the report, you know, we searched for different methods, and we made additions and modifications that were necessary for students' better learning (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 33-34).

While PT2 acknowledged the value of action research, he also pointed to some challenges in implementing research in traditional teaching environments. One of the biggest challenges was students' familiarity with customary techniques such as reading a text and answering questions, which made it more complicated to adopt new approaches based on research. This is quite a common obstacle that many teachers encounter while trying to integrate innovative teaching methods and techniques into classrooms. Such a situation refers to students' resistance to changing the way they are accustomed to while learning new things. Another challenge PT2 signified was *time constraints* in educational settings that might reduce the efficacy of research-based applications. Despite all these challenges, PT2 still believes action research is a valuable tool, which is seen in the excerpts below:

The most difficult thing was the students are used to some kind of traditional method, like reading a text and answering questions (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 45-47).

So, we definitely need much more time to implement this kind of research. It is not very easy to do it in a short time, but overall, it might be considered as a useful tool for a teacher to have (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 47-49).

For PT2, the main benefit of action research exists in its collaborative and reflective nature. He emphasised how the research process enabled him to gain a deeper understanding of the students' thoughts and feelings by means of enhancing the responsibility for better teaching and learning. This highlights one basic advantage of action research: collaboration between teachers and students. This way, teachers' efforts can lead to a teaching-learning environment in which teachers and students collaborate to discover the problems and their solutions, rather than a one-way information transfer. Thus, a more empathetic and efficacious classroom environment can be created thanks to the contributions of both sides. PT2's explanation exemplifies this outcome:

It was a surprise for me to find out they also had the same things in their minds like I do (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 47-49).

All I know is that me and my students share the same thoughts and feelings. (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 67-68).

PT2 was already a self-confident teacher at heart, in his own words. However, his confidence was promoted as he learnt to use practical tools to help him feel more prepared to cope with the problems. PT2 might have felt confident in his classrooms before the teacher research training course; yet, the course provided him with a new structured approach to handle contextual issues. Such an improvement in confidence is pivotal, in particular since it enables teachers to approach the problems with a sense of proficiency. This finding might support the conclusion that if teachers are equipped with research tools and strategies, it fosters greater professional self-efficacy, which subsequently contributes to better teaching results. PT2 candidly states this situation by uttering:

I've always felt confident in class but when you think you have the right tools for the right job like we did in the, you know, these action research thing, you feel better (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 60-62).

PT2's tendency to share his experiences with his colleagues points out the fact that teacher research can enhance the culture of knowledge sharing and professional collaboration among teachers. By stating it is *great* to share the same feelings and problems with others, PT2 claims that such an interaction among teachers might be rewarding and enriching for their profession. This comment suggests that although teachers may often work in isolation, professional development courses, like the one PT2 attended, can provide a valuable opportunity to engage in open dialogue about teaching practices. This idea resonates with PT2's statement below:

Sharing the same feelings and issues with each other was great. Not every day we have an opportunity to do this, it's important to share (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 74-76).

Developing a teacher-researcher identity is vital to empowering teachers to take responsibility for their teaching and learning. PT2 expressed his intention to continue as a teacher-researcher, reflecting his understanding of the role as both teacher and researcher. He appreciated that teacher research is more manageable than traditional research and offers practical applications in his classroom. This highlights a key advantage of teacher research: it is accessible and directly relevant to teachers' daily work. By embracing the teacher-researcher identity, teachers can engage in ongoing

reflective practice and contribute to the development of their profession. PT2's transformation is reflected in his statements:

I know that it is much easier than the traditional scientific research (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 81-82).

It is important, it's a new thing for me because I haven't heard something like that before (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 82-83).

PT2 expressed a clear intention to continue his journey as a teacher-researcher. Although he did not have a fully formed plan, he was confident about the steps and processes involved. This openness to future research opportunities shows that the course provides a strong foundation for continued professional development. He is likely to engage with future teacher research projects with greater confidence and enthusiasm due to his positive experience during the course. He clarifies his intention clearly in the following excerpt:

I know what the steps are, what we can do about it, and I know that it is much easier than the traditional scientific research (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 80-81).

So yeah, I'm going to continue this research (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 85).

4.4.2.6. Summary

The interview summarises the transformational experience of PT2 as an experienced teacher while he advanced through a teacher research training course and action research programme. Before the programme, PT2 thought of research as an abstract and complex endeavour, but he soon realised that it could be useful and directly related to his teaching context. The course helped him understand that by demystifying the research process, he could address real-life school challenges with clarity and simplicity. Working with colleagues who faced similar challenges was beneficial to him, and he valued the course's emphasis on collaboration and practicality.

Characterised by planning, action, observation, and reflection, the action research process involved students with classroom problems like improving their speaking

abilities. Despite encountering challenges such as student resistance to new methods and time constraints, he realised the long-term benefits of this approach in encouraging adaptable and effective teaching strategies. The programme significantly increased PT2's self-confidence and provided him with the tools to address classroom issues more effectively.

He also developed a stronger bond with his students since he realised that his students shared many of his concerns and desires, making teaching a more collaborative endeavour. He expressed a commitment to sharing his experiences with his colleagues, highlighting the importance of a professional culture built on shared learning and peer support. By adopting the dual identity of a teacher and researcher, PT2 redefined his professional role and found strength in the balance between practice and inquiry. Finally, he expressed a clear intention to continue his career as a teacher-researcher.

4.4.3. Participant Teacher 3

The third member of the action research team had been teaching English for almost 22 years and worked at an Anatolian High School. He included 9th-grade students ($N = 33$) in the action research process. This teacher had a master's degree in ELT and is familiar with research; yet, he had not incorporated research into his teaching practice until the current study.

4.4.3.1. Prior Perspectives on Research

PT3 had a certain knowledge of classical research due to his previous postgraduate education. In the focus group discussion held at the first meeting, he defined research as "a scientific approach" and "gathering information". PT3 stated that he took Research Methods courses at university, but he did not remember the content of the courses like the other participants. He also said that he did not do research and that his relationship with research did not go beyond reading articles at times. He clarified this situation in the focus group meeting by saying, "Sometimes I read articles, but I don't know how to conduct research". This teacher stated that he coped with the difficulties he encountered in his class by relying on his professional experience. Finally, the participant stated that he had not heard of the concept of teacher-researcher before, but noted that it might refer to something about collaboration.

4.4.3.2. Pre-Action Research Process

In an online meeting held with all the participants, in the first phase of the action research, namely the problem finding part, PT3 also touched upon the issue of students' inadequacy in speaking English, like all participants. In this context, a preliminary observation was carried out to determine the situation in PT3's classroom of 9th-grade students of 31 on 2 May 2024. The observation report is presented below:

... certain students seemed eager to speak English. ... they did not exhibit independent speaking performance. Few students managed ... with scaffolding ... with a lot of syntactic errors. The students ... understand the English ... through stimulation, correction and L1 use The students ... could not manage to keep the talk going smoothly, nor could they pronounce well enough.

Some students used suitable words ... when the lexis and structure were given beforehand the students' interlanguage was quite obvious practically the whole class did not tend to speak. The teacher utilised appropriate teaching techniques; ..., visual and audio materials were used A game ... was played, ... inactive students seemed ... willing Students mostly used L1

The great majority ... did not join the speaking activities despite scaffolding. ..., interruptions, distractions, indifference and some other negative attitudes of the students were highly observed.

This observation was made to evaluate the English-speaking skills of the students. Although some students seemed willing to speak English in the lesson, their independent speaking skills were weak. Most students were only able to utter short and incorrect sentences under the teacher's guidance. Pronunciation and fluency problems were common. Especially in structural errors such as irregular verbs and the -ing suffix, students' deficiencies were obvious. Students mostly used L1 during the activities. When the structure and words were given in advance, some students were able to use appropriate expressions, but free speech did not occur. There was a reluctance to speak English in the class. Although the teacher used effective materials and games, the lesson generally focused on teaching vocabulary. Due to the age characteristics of the students, distraction and disinterest were frequently observed.

Based on the observation results, PT3 conducted a questionnaire and focus group discussion with his students to explore the potential reasons for their lack of English-speaking skills. He obtained results which yielded some themes such as “Anxiety” ($n = 12$), “Having Difficulty” ($n = 8$), “Reluctance” ($n = 8$), “Lack of Background Knowledge” ($n = 7$), “Curricular-Instructional Factors” ($n = 2$), “Lack of Self-Confidence” ($n = 2$) and “Classroom Environment” ($n = 2$). These themes were used in the planning phase of the action research.

4.4.3.3. Action Research Implementation

PT3, like his teammates, examined various online resources and research studies that addressed the deficiencies in students’ English-speaking abilities to identify possible solutions to the issue. He shared the insights he acquired with his colleagues. He implemented the action plan in his classroom collaboratively with the researcher and the others. PT3 candidly discussed his experiences throughout the action research implementation process in the regular meetings, significantly enhancing the collaborative effort. He once said, “The action plan became beneficial to a great extent to make students speak English compared to previous lessons”. The following sections will outline his insights regarding the action research implementation, organised by appropriate themes and accompanied by direct quotes extracted from the meeting minutes.

4.4.3.3.1. Theme 1: Student Engagement and Motivation

PT3 made use of some activities focused on student motivation in his context. He affirmed that these activities made positive contributions to students’ classroom interactions and their learning processes. Such activities fostered the students’ perception of learning through entertainment by promoting the development of basic skills, especially speaking. For PT3, the students’ enthusiasm for the activities bolstered the classroom interaction. His comments below support this observation:

I observed that some students enjoyed a lot and seemed willing to join the activities (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

I observe that the activities motivate students because they are fun (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

This situation highlights the supportive role of teacher research in active learning through motivational strategies in classroom practices. PT3's reflective approach to increasing student participation facilitated the creation of an effective learning environment.

4.4.3.3.2. Theme 2: Process-Oriented Approach

According to PT3's point of view, action research is a cyclical process which aims at gaining long-term benefits rather than offering instant solutions. He advocated that patient and steady progress would bring about more permanent results. Hence, he tends to produce innovative solutions by constantly observing his classroom. At this point that PT3 reached, it can be asserted that he developed an insightful perspective on the significance of sustainability in teacher research. The excerpts from PT3 demonstrate this situation:

It is a very long journey, but at least we are on the right path (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

I don't expect all students to make a big change in a short time. However, if we constantly repeat the action research cycles you had mentioned in the long term, we can get somewhere (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

This perspective matches up with the “plan-do-observe-replan” cycle, which is one of the basic principles of action research. Besides, it supports the idea that meaningful and lasting learning outcomes can be acquired only through continuity and repetition.

4.4.3.3.3. Theme 3: Teacher Autonomy and Contextuality

PT3 defends the idea that each classroom has its unique structure, and generally accepted solutions might not suffice for other contexts. Therefore, PT3 accepts that it will be much more effective for English language teachers to develop strategies for the contexts of their own. This view aligns with the idea that teacher research locates teachers not only as practitioners but as determining agents as well. PT3's explanation exemplifies this theme:

Because each of our classrooms has different features, and others' research might not be able to offer solutions for our classrooms (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

The fact that PT3 put forward such a viewpoint is particularly significant due to emphasising another pivotal aspect of teacher research, which is to meet contextual needs. Furthermore, he advocated taking more control in decision-making processes for classrooms, thereby contributing to fostering teacher autonomy.

4.4.3.3.4. Theme 4: Professional Development and Innovation

From PT3's perspective, the action research process made significant contributions not just to the students but also to him. Having practised his job for quite a long time, he remarked that the research process provided him with motivation and mental refreshment. This situation highlights the supportive nature of teacher research concerning professional development. The following quotation captures PT3's view on this issue:

I can say that this new application has very positive effects on students (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

This process has refreshed my mind and given me motivation after many years (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

PT3's statement manifests that teacher research provides teachers with pedagogical gains and also contributes to their professional satisfaction. Adopting such a perspective empowers the teacher as a lifelong learner.

4.4.3.3.5. Theme 5: Collaboration with Colleagues

According to PT3's statement, collaboration and exchange of views with his teammates during the action research process made the experience much more meaningful. It seems that taking action towards a common goal increases teachers' motivation and contributes to the creation of learning communities through collaborative spirit. PT3's words vividly demonstrate this finding:

I agree with my friends of action research team concerning the material development by the ministry (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

It felt good to share feelings and opinions with my colleagues (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

The remarks indicate that teacher research is not just an individual but a collective learning process, too. PT3 thinks that the process, which was carried out with colleagues, offered a powerful source of awareness and an abundance of diverse ideas.

As the summary of the meeting minutes, the statements of PT3 indicate that the training course and the action research processes took him beyond his role as a practitioner and transformed him into a teacher who questions and produces. He explained that the research process enabled him to develop a critical insight into classroom practices and to foster professional awareness for solutions to contextual problems. Observing the positive effects of the action plan on the students, PT3 reformed his pedagogical decisions and believed the research experience refreshed his professional motivation. The cyclical and reflective nature of the process significantly supported his decision-making skills, thus contributing to the development of teacher-researcher identity.

4.4.3.4. Post-Implementation Classroom Observation

This classroom observation was carried out to investigate the potential changes after PT3 had completed the action research process. Observation notes are as follows:

This post-action classroom observation was conducted in the 8th lesson hour of the implementation phase. The general condition ... positive. The students seem to have adopted ... activities ... quite motivated.

Compared ..., it was observed ... students were more willing, excited and in good spirits icebreaker, game and puzzle activities significantly supported the students' desire to speak. ..., it was seen that the negative situation ... continued in terms of independent speaking skills and forming regular sentences.

The teacher tried ... using relevant vocabulary, digital materials and interactive presentation. ... he tried to create a discussion environment by ..., it was not very effective ... the students' attention ... distracted. ..., the teacher used switch-code ... scaffolding. Three students exhibited predetermined and prepared talks the teacher tried to do the lesson following the action plan.

..., it was observed ... the action plan has improved the students' attitudes towards

speaking to a certain extent. ... it can be claimed that positive results can be obtained as a result of the teacher's effort.

The classroom environment and seating arrangement were appropriate for the English class. The students were observed to be motivated and to have adopted the lessons enriched with speaking activities. Compared to the previous observation, the students' enthusiasm, eagerness and energy seemed to have increased. Particularly, the icebreakers, games and puzzle activities supported the desire to speak. However, the students did not exhibit independent speaking skills and proper use of language. The teacher utilised digital materials, proper lexis and interactive presentation to avoid boredom. He divided the students into groups to encourage them to discuss, but this attempt did not create the expected impact. The teacher occasionally applied code switching to promote participation. Besides, three students made speeches that they had already prepared as part of an assignment. Throughout the class, the contents relevant to the curriculum and the course book were used. Although the group discussion did not provide the desired effect, the activities were done successfully to a great extent.

In a nutshell, the action plan positively affected the students' attitude towards speaking. Given that the permanent changes require time and sustainability, it is considered that favourable results can be attained through the teacher's continuous effort.

4.4.3.5. Perspectives After Research – Interview Phase

Finally, a semi-structured interview was held with PT3 to explore his overall approach to the course and action research process. The interview yielded the results presented below as themes:

Table 17

Refined Themes from PT3's Interview Transcripts

Interview Items	Themes
Perception of Research	Changed Perception
Course Evaluation	Systematic Awareness
Action Research Process	Problem Solving
Challenges in Implementation	Student Resistance
Benefits of Action Research	Practical Improvement
Confidence Development	Increased Self-efficacy
Sharing and Dissemination	Willingness to Share
Teacher Researcher Identity	Adopting a New Identity
Future Intentions	Continued Practice

The detailed analysis will be presented below as narrative presentations in distinct paragraphs, each representing a theme. Interpretations will be supported by verbatim sentences from the interview transcript.

PT3's perspective towards research changed positively as he realised the power of teacher research methodology. His optimism for the effect of research on teaching was seen at the beginning of the interview. He started to consider research as a tool providing classroom improvements rather than an academic endeavour. Particularly, his statement "Science always provides facilities to education if appropriate ways and methods are used" provides a basis for his change. This awareness indicates that PT3 was able to integrate research into teaching practices and associate it with classroom-based practices. Thus, the teaching process, which he had perceived as *ordinary and challenging*, became more systematic and meaningful by means of research-based interventions. In this context, PT3's perception of research turned into a practical improvement tool from a theoretical activity as a result of adopting a reflective mindset, which is seen in the verbatim sentence below:

Beforehand, things were a little ordinary and challenging in that curriculum... After the implementation of action research, I became more reflective (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 8-10).

PT3 evaluated the teacher research training course as a consciousness-expanding, constructive and attainable process. He emphasised that the training brought about a holistic and systematic perspective towards the teaching process. The easily applicable nature of the process made a good impression on him. His remark "We cannot ignore the steps of the process. I mean collecting and analysing the data and interpretation" demonstrates that he adopted the structural integrity of research. Moreover, PT3 appreciated that the course trainer-researcher works at a state school, pointing to the empathy the researcher can develop. This situation reveals that the course was given realistically and contextually, which enabled PT3 to internalise the course content in this regard. This idea resonates with PT3's statements:

It helped us refresh our minds and made us aware and consider the teaching as a whole and more systematic (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 14-15).

Using the coding was not as complicated as taught (Interview Transcript, June

2024, lines 16).

The researcher teaches in a state school like us, and that will help him perceive the things from the same aspect (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 18-19).

PT3 described the action research experience as a constructive and goal-oriented process. At the beginning of action research, he gathered with his teammates and specified a problem. In this way, he contributed to the stage of determining a problem and developing a solution collaboratively, which indicates that he carried out the research in a contextual and specific manner. His statement, “I wanted to enhance their interest and attention and make them feel more confident”, reveals that he conducted a planning process responsive to his students’ needs. Thus, he carried out the process by means of the activities targeted to foster self-confidence and willingness. PT3’s exposition demonstrates that not only did he specify a problem in his context but also implemented an efficacious and measurable intervention strategy. The quotation below from PT3 exemplifies this perspective:

I determined a significant problem... and sought practical solutions (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 21-22).

I planned and implemented a warm-up activity about the unit... especially for the less confident or shy ones (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 25-27).

PT3 evaluated the difficulties he had with low student participation during the action research process. For him, the fact that the great majority of his students see English lessons like Maths or History had a great deal of negative impact on student motivation and eagerness. This perception of the students led to reluctance and a lack of participation in classroom activities. Throughout the implementation stage, although PT3 substantially adhered to the action plan and fostered student engagement to some extent, some students were unable to break down their walls or participate in the activities. This statement indicates that PT3 reflected on the process from an insightful perspective and realised that it would be rather difficult to create the same level of effect for each student. This perception change brought him closer to a teacher-researcher identity, more critical and flexible. PT3’s reflection deepens the understanding of this situation:

Most students see English lessons like Maths or History and are not eager to make it better (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 30).

A few ones could not break it or did not join the activity (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 33-34).

PT3 remarked that he observed the benefits of action research on teaching practices both at the individual and classroom levels. He affirmed that the process enabled him to be more focused and confident. His statement that the action plan implementation in his current situation was *both applicable and beneficial* reflects his perception that action research is practicable in both theoretical and pedagogical aspects. The significant increase in student confidence and interest concretises his idea. In this respect, teacher research helped PT3 transform his teaching style and encouraged him to take practical decisions for the situations in his context. This insight is particularly evident in PT3's account:

Yes, they were useful. [referring to whole action research practices]. I totally agree that the solution I used in my current action research was both applicable and beneficial (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 38-39).

There was a remarkable increase in PT3's self-confidence. In spite of the diversity of his students and classroom challenges, the action research process bolstered his sense of self-efficacy. Explaining he worked with a considerable number of students who are shy, reluctant or problematic, PT3 noted that the action research developed his skill of managing this complicated context. He turned the process into an opportunity for professional development. The fact that he feels more controlled, planned and prepared supports this improvement. In this regard, the action research process not solely provided PT3 with research knowledge and skills but strengthened his self-confidence, too. His remarks serve as indicators of his self-confidence and motivation:

After the implementation of this action research, I feel more focused and self-confident (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 33).

I should be ready for every situation in every context (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 55).

PT3 pointed out the collective aspect of teacher research as well as its value for individuals. He seemed quite willing to share his research experience with his colleagues. This perspective indicates that he considers teacher research not just as a tool for professional development but as a practice that gains value when shared within the community. PT3 believes that this experience can be more useful provided that it is shared with others. This viewpoint does reflect his commitment to the community of teaching and his stance open to collaboration. This realization is captured in PT3's own words:

Scientific research brings success and willingness to have in classroom contexts. So why not [sharing] (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 51-52)?

Along with the research process, PT3 stepped beyond his teacher identity and made significant progress towards adopting a teacher-researcher identity. Following the process, he developed a more reflective, planned and analytic teaching approach. His statement, "Beforehand, things were a little ordinary and challenging", forms the basis of this transformation. PT3 seemed to adopt a way of supporting teaching processes with more data to analyse his students' needs more deeply and find solutions to these. This identity shift can enable him to approach teaching processes more holistically. PT3's comment highlights his internal transformation:

If I want to be more beneficial to my students... I should be ready for every situation (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 54-55).

PT3 clearly reported his intention to carry on his profession as a teacher-researcher in future. By stating, "If I want to be more beneficial to my students and contribute to education as well, I should be ready for every situation in every context", he concluded that he wanted to sustain his new identity during the rest of his career. This attitude indicates that teacher research was adopted not as a temporary experience but as a permanent approach for professional development by PT3. He also apprehended the long-term effects of teacher research and fostered a desire to integrate it into his professional career. This finding is substantiated by PT3's following remark:

Yes, I would like to be [a teacher-researcher] (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 55).

4.4.3.6. Summary

To summarise the interview analysis, PT3, notwithstanding his 22-year-long teaching experience, benefited from the processes of the teacher research training course and action research as an opportunity for mental refreshment and professional transformation. The common theme that emerged throughout the interview is the fact that PT3 started to consider teacher research not just as an academic enterprise but also as a functional and attainable facility to produce solutions to classroom challenges. In particular, he expressed that the research process enhanced his systematic thinking, observation and data-based decision-making skills. His description of the teacher research training course as a refreshing and awareness-raising activity suggests that the proper training programmes can create dramatic changes in teachers' pedagogical paradigms.

PT3's efforts to determine and produce solutions to classroom problems highlight the contextual power of teacher research. The warm-up activities that he prepared to eliminate the classroom challenges like low participation and reluctance are an effective example of research-based intervention. Enhanced student interest and increased self-confidence in the teacher's self at the end of the process concretise the personal and pedagogical contributions of teacher research.

PT3's intention to share his research experience with other colleagues and his determination to carry on the teacher-researcher identity into the future demonstrate that he has adopted teacher research as a sustainable tool for professional development. His statement, "I should be ready for every situation", indicates that he approaches his profession from a more reflective and solution-oriented perspective. All these findings reveal that PT3 has undergone a significant and perpetual transformation in his professional identity through teacher research.

4.4.4. Participant Teacher 4

PT4 had been teaching English for almost 35 years and worked at an Anatolian High School. She included 9th-grade students ($N = 30$) in the action research process. The teacher had neither conducted nor participated in research beforehand; hence, this study was her first research experience.

4.4.4.1. Prior Perspectives on Research

PT4's view of research was previously restricted to what she had learned in university. In the focus group discussion, she said she couldn't recollect the knowledge regarding research from her university years. She explained research as a "scientific approach" in her own words. She had never conducted research until this study, and she did not state any reason for not conducting research. However, the teacher said she tried to find solutions to the problems in classrooms through her intuition and experience. Moreover, PT4 had not heard of the concept of teacher research until the meeting. When she was asked what teacher research meant for her, she answered, "finding solutions to the problems".

4.4.4.2. Pre-Action Research Process

In the first phase of the action research, the problem-finding phase, PT3 discussed the issue of students' inadequate English-speaking skills in an online meeting with the other participant teachers. In this sense, an initial observation was conducted to ascertain the circumstances in PT3's classroom of 30 ninth graders on 3 May 2024. The report on the observation is shown below.

The students seemed reluctant to speak, ... only a few ... responded to the questions ...in L1. ... small number ... managed to say ... with scaffolding. The students did not ... understand the English the others used ...; ... teacher ... converted the speech to L1. The interlanguage ... was ... noticeable. Their pronunciation was full of errors, ... the teacher made them repeat The students ... used ... limited lexis students did not manage ... grammar utterances were made ... without grammar When ... asked to share ... ideas, only a few students were willing

The teacher was ... using repetitions, question-and-answer technique and translations, she ... strived to provide a communicative and sociocultural atmosphere. ... the students did not live up to her expectations. ... the textbook on the smart board were used. The teacher attended ... drama play ..., ... students looked uncomfortable and anxious. ... pair work activity ... seemed to entertain There were obvious learning needs ... like learner autonomy and motivation. The class ... in a teacher-centred atmosphere, ... students should be motivated ...

be taken to the centre

Within this classroom observation, it was observed that students' speaking skills were rather limited, and they were generally reluctant to speak. Very few students who were able to answer the questions frequently used short and superficial expressions, while some others preferred L1. As the students could not understand English expressions that the teacher and very few others used, the teacher often had to use code-switching. Active students exhibited poor pronunciation skills, limited vocabulary and grammatical errors. The teacher focused on a particular subject through question-answer and translation techniques and applied interaction-based activities such as drama play and pair work, but these efforts were met with reluctance and hesitation in students. Teacher-centred atmosphere of the class appeared to negatively influence students' engagement levels. Furthermore, it was observed that students were largely accustomed to a traditional teaching style. It was suggested that students should be motivated through activities which are appropriate to their age and interests to enhance their autonomy and participation.

Following the observation, PT4 carried out a single-question survey and a focus group discussion to learn the students' opinions regarding their low level of English speaking. When the data were thematically analysed, she attained the results specified by the themes such as "Lack of Background Knowledge" ($n = 6$), "Anxiety" ($n = 5$), "Lack of Self-Confidence" ($n = 5$), "Reluctance" ($n = 5$), "Curricular-Instructional Factors" ($n = 5$), "Having Difficulty" ($n = 3$), Contextual Factors ($n = 2$) and "Classroom Environment" ($n = 2$).

The planning process was carried out in light of these themes as a part of collaborative work.

4.4.4.3. Action Research Implementation

PT4 followed the same procedure as her teammates did by reviewing online resources and studies focused on students' English-speaking deficiencies to see what was done in other contexts to overcome this problem. She contributed to the collaborative planning process, sharing her opinions and knowledge with her colleagues. She implemented the action plan in her classroom in collaboration with the researcher and the other participant teachers. PT4 frankly talked about her experiences in the implementation process during regular meetings. She reflected on the short-term impact of action research

by uttering, “As time goes by, I see that difficulties I have encountered in implementing the plan are decreasing a little bit (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024)”.

Her perceptions on the implementation of action research will be outlined in the sections that follow, which are arranged according to relevant themes and include direct quotes taken from the meeting minutes.

4.4.4.3.1. Theme 1: Student-Centred Interaction

Stating that the speaking activities in textbooks do not appeal to students, PT4 observed higher student participation through alternative materials and strategies. Tools such as fun videos, games and icebreakers contributed to the students’ becoming more willing and motivated to speak English. PT4’s words encapsulate the essence of this theme:

The coursebook has already contained activities for speaking and other skills to develop. But I was never able to involve the students in those activities earlier (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

I observed that my students mostly seemed to enjoy the activities (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

This situation reveals the significance of the student-centred learning approaches going beyond traditional content, especially in terms of developing speaking skills. In the context of teacher research, teachers’ producing solutions by recognising their students’ needs contributes to the development of teacher-researcher identity. Additionally, this example highlights the importance of interactive learning environments, revealing that motivation is a factor that directly affects student success. Here, PT4 seems to have internalised the processes of observation, evaluation and pedagogical decision-making.

4.4.4.3.2. Theme 2: Need for Material Development

While acknowledging the positive effects of interactive classroom materials on student participation, PT4 feels a serious burden in choosing and using these materials for each lesson separately. This case indicates that individual efforts are not adequate in the teaching process and that the necessity of institutional support is required. PT4’s narratives offer supporting evidence for this finding:

It may be too tiring to find such activities and put them into the lessons all the time (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

It would be very useful if textbook writers and material developers prepared such activities (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

These remarks might suggest that teachers do not find it sustainable to take on the role of material developers beyond being practitioners. The teacher-researcher model implies that it is necessary to encourage teachers to produce authentic solutions, as well as to support this production process. In this regard, teacher research practices require not only a collaboration among teachers but also a coordination with curriculum developers, book authors and policymakers. PT4 calls for effective solutions at the level of both individual awareness and systemic needs.

4.4.4.3.3. Theme 3: Coping with Challenges

With a very long teaching experience, PT4 noted that the implementation of the action plan seemed tiring at first, but this problem decreased over time. As the process progressed, fun environments in the classroom obviously fostered her motivation. Furthermore, despite the ongoing problems like disruptive noise from student chatter, PT4 developed a more flexible attitude toward this issue by saying:

As someone who has been teaching for 35 years, this implementation seemed tiring at first. However, as the lessons are becoming more fun, I observe that the students' motivation increases (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

There is a lot of noise in the classroom. However, such situations are problems which I always face. In short, the implementation of the action plan is going well (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

The statements above indicate that action research can provide teachers with not merely pedagogical but also psychological flexibility. The research process developed PT4's reflective thinking skills and allowed her to see the problems encountered as phenomena that can be studied and transformed, rather than cases to be endured. In this context, teacher research plays a critical role in the development of professional resilience against problems and flexibility capacity.

4.4.4.3.4. Theme 4: Professional Identity and Sense of Belonging

PT4 identifies the research process as a mental and professional refreshment for her after many years in the profession. Engagement in the research process has made her not solely a contributor to the teaching process but also a part of scientific production. This contribution enhanced PT4's sense of belonging and attitude towards the teaching profession. PT4 articulated this change in the following statement:

I am very proud of being a part of this study. I have learnt new things and did something for science (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

This comment illustrates that teacher research fosters not only classroom practices but the transformation of teacher identity as well. Especially for senior teachers like PT4, such collaborative research can prevent professional burnout and renew motivation for teacher learning. This allows teachers to be professionals who produce knowledge, beyond just conveying knowledge. In related literature, this transformation is interpreted as empowering teachers' professional autonomy and self-perception.

4.4.4.3.5. Theme 5: Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

PT4 affirms that one of the most valuable outcomes of the research process was the collaboration with other colleagues. Emphasising the need to promote a sharing culture, she maintains that professional development can be enhanced through not only individual efforts but also collective rapport. Likewise, Borg (2010) contends that teacher research tends to yield the best results when it is conducted as a collaborative effort that encourages mutual reflection and professional dialogue. Teachers' coming together to share their experiences encourages the formation of a shared learning culture. This perspective is mirrored in PT4's own description of her experience:

I think collaboration is very important and effective (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

I think it would be good if we English teachers came together more often and share our experiences (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

This point of view suggests a potential for enhancing not only individual but also

institutional learning. Collaboration among teachers contributes to several areas, such as the prevalence of reflective practice, sharing of good practices and collective problem-solving. Moreover, this condition plays a pivotal role in the sustainable development of teachers, considered in the context of professional learning communities. Teacher research can generate a web of learning in which teachers never experience a feeling of loneliness.

To sum up the analysis of the minutes, the pedagogical transformation of a senior teacher in the action research process and the effects of the process on her teaching practices have been revealed. PT4 realised that traditional coursebook activities are insufficient in promoting student interaction and observed the motivational impacts of alternative materials and activities such as games, videos and icebreakers on students. However, she drew attention to the requirement of systemic support because these materials are hard to find or prepare continually. Stating that the research process became easier over time despite the difficulties, PT4 stressed the significance of collaboration and sharing of experiences in terms of professional development. Besides, she described the process as both an individual and scientific contribution, indicating the role of teacher research in fostering personal awareness and professional motivation.

4.4.4.4. Post-Implementation Classroom Observation

After PT4 finished the action research process, this classroom observation was conducted to look into any possible changes. The results of the observation are presented below:

This classroom observation ... was made in the 8th lesson hour of the eight-hour implementation phase. ... students were ready ... the teacher had ... preparations on the interactive board. No change ... in sitting order. The students were impatient, waiting for the icebreaker ...

The students ... active, excited and eager icebreaker activity produced the desired result. ... students did not exhibit individual speech, they participated in the question-and-answer, fill-in-the-blanks and reading activities students had ... fun in the drama game

The teacher used ... interactive book presentation. ... participation could not be achieved ..., ... student's attention was attracted with a video The teacher

explained two grammar topics ... using the role-playing technique. The teacher used L2 used code-switching where ... necessary. The teacher taught ... according to the plan.

An icebreaker was used Contextual images and videos were used Dialogues and question-and-answer techniques were used in accordance with the communicative approach. Puzzles and role-playing ... included.

... action plan ... has been effective, long-term and meticulous efforts are required

According to the observation conducted to examine the class in terms of oral use of English, the students seemed ready and motivated for the lesson, indicating they had got used to the new style of teaching enhanced with various materials and activities. The students actively joined the icebreaker activity. Compared to the pre-action observation, the students exhibited a more willing and energetic attitude towards the lesson. Even though the students did not develop effective speaking skills in such a short time, it was observed that they willingly participated in activities such as question-and-answer, gap filling and reading, and had fun in the drama play at the end of the lesson. The teacher used an interactive book presentation and compensated for the low participation in reading activities with a video related to the reading task. Two grammatical structures encountered in the course of the lesson were taught through drama technique rather than direct presentation of the structures. Mainly, L2 was used throughout the lesson except for a few moments of code-switching when scaffolding was needed. In conclusion, the action plan, which aimed to enhance students' speaking skills, yielded positive results in a short time. Nevertheless, sustainable and systematic practices were deemed necessary for the students to develop independent and fluent English-speaking skills.

4.4.4.5. Perspectives After Research – Interview Phase

In order to understand PT4's general perspectives on the course and action research process, a semi-structured interview was conducted with her. The following themes are the results of the interview.

Table 18

Refined Themes from PT4's Interview Transcripts

Interview Items	Themes
Perception of Research	Changed Perception
Course Evaluation	Contribution to Development
Action Research Process	Structured Inquiry
Challenges in Implementation	Minor Difficulties
Benefits of Action Research	Practical Improvement
Confidence Development	Enhanced Confidence
Sharing and Dissemination	Willingness to Share
Teacher Researcher Identity	Adopting New Identity
Future Intentions	Continued Practice

Below will be presented an in-depth analysis of the interview in paragraphs, each of which covers a narrative presentation of a theme. The interpretations will be justified with verbatim sentences from the interview transcript.

Before the training and action research processes, the research concept seemed rather complicated to PT4. She described research as a scientific activity which was hard to attain. Yet, following the teacher research training course, she realised that research is a meaningful practice which is attainable for teachers. The idea of systematically investigating one's own classroom experiences was exciting and transformative for PT4. She now sees research as a process that can be integrated into her practices, rather than as a theoretical practice. This awareness indicates that teacher education is critical to breaking down in-service teachers' prejudices and resistance to research. PT4's following quotation portrays her evolving understanding:

I used to see research as a very complicated issue. This course created positive awareness for me. Now I believe every one of us can be researcher thanks to reflective practice (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 10-12).

PT4 evaluated the teacher research training course as effective in terms of content and the researcher, who was also the trainer of the course. She affirmed that the course contributed directly to her professional development and enhanced her knowledge level. For PT4, the fact that the researcher has both a teaching background and a scientific perspective is one of the most crucial factors that built trust and made the course relevant.

She also appreciated the researcher's observation, inference and analysis skills, and emphasised that thanks to these skills, she had a better understanding of how to relate the research processes to the classroom. Her consideration reveals the significance of interpersonal connection, sense of identification and pedagogical empathy in fostering the efficacy of the course. This manifests that it is quite pivotal for the trainer to be attuned to teachers' realities and challenges so that the training can be utterly effective. This perspective is mirrored in PT4's own description of her experience:

This course has contributed to professional development. It has improved my knowledge (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 14-15).

You are a teacher like us, you know. You have been teaching for many years in the same field of education with us. So you know our problems well. You can understand us easily in teaching language. Besides, you are one of us as a teacher and you see through science. (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 15-18).

PT4 grasped the structural features of action research clearly and was able to integrate it into her classroom practices. The planning, implementation, data collection and analysis steps were carried out accompanied by the researcher, thus facilitating the processes and fostering the motivation of participant teachers. Besides, the consolidation of content knowledge through group discussions indicates that PT4 was also supported with peer interaction collaboratively. This structured process allowed her to examine the classroom problems and produce solutions accordingly. Consequently, theoretical knowledge was combined with practical knowledge. This insight is illustrated in PT4's reflective remark:

We followed the basic structure which you had mentioned to us to carry out action research in the classroom (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 24-25).

You showed us that we would put our data into a format that we can easily read and understand using charts, graphs (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 30-31).

PT4 remarked that the implementation process was generally unproblematic, even enjoyable. The action research process was a motivating experience for her in terms of attracting student attention and applying different techniques in the classroom. This

outcome demonstrates that action research methodology can be applicable in classroom contexts and provides an observable benefit for teachers. Although minor difficulties were not overtly mentioned by PT4, her observation and interpretation of some humorous or unusual situations in the classroom reflect the natural complexity of the process. Rather than a challenge, the research process has become a tool that enables PT4 to observe the atmosphere in the classroom more consciously, enhancing her observation and intervention skills. Research practices that turn into an enjoyable process for teachers can promote the sustainability of research. The following extracts from PT4 provide evidence of this point:

Applying research method is enjoyable, taking students' attention and interesting experience for me (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 39-40).

You were sleeping on the desk in the classroom, and you are in the classroom with me, and we could see [She mentions the first class observed, which was boring and monotonous] (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 40-41).

PT4 maintained that action research is extremely beneficial in terms of improving teaching methods, better understanding students' problems and making research-based classroom decisions. She also stated that she gained a deeper understanding of not solely teaching but also learning processes thanks to the current research. PT4 now feels that she has a more critical and solution-oriented perspective towards teaching practices. The clearer identification of students' learning difficulties enabled her to reconstruct classroom management accordingly. Research experience brought a new dimension to her teaching practices. Eventually, PT4 has become a teacher who not only transfers knowledge but also structures learning. This offers a sustainable development promoting the quality of teaching. PT4's personal awareness of this issue is evident in the quotations below:

This study has made me deep in understanding about students' difficulties in learning language (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 45-46).

It is beneficial to improve teaching and learning management (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 55-56).

PT4 affirmed that she gained self-confidence to carry out her research thanks to the action research practice. This confidence establishes a ground for promoting teaching practices and the willingness to conduct research. The contribution of the training course and action research carried her from the consumer role to the producer of knowledge. PT4 developed a motivation to produce innovative techniques, offer solutions and advance her existing knowledge. Such a transformation is an indicator of the development of her research identity. She has now become a subject who can analyse, assess and transform any kind of problems regarding classroom context. This progress plays a critical role in fostering teachers' professional autonomy and motivation. PT4's statement clearly illustrates this point:

Yes, certainly. Yes, I do [referring to her gained confidence] (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 49).

... we are able to use our knowledge to create connections and extend and present alternatives (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 50-51).

PT4 seemed fairly willing to share the experiences she had during the programme. This desire to disseminate indicates that she internalised the whole process and developed a sense of belonging. This condition fosters not just individual development but also strengthens the professional community. The dissemination of research experiences promotes learning among colleagues and research culture, contributing to the prevalence of learning communities through research-oriented practices. Teachers' desire to share knowledge might increase self-confidence and have a positive effect on other teachers. Teachers' dissemination practices can reduce the feeling of loneliness among teachers and consolidate a collaborative professional development. Her desire for sharing is evident in PT4's words below:

Yes, of course. Yes, I would [share her experiences]. *I'll share my experiences with them. It's worth mentioning* (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 59-60).

PT4 adopted a new identity and started to see herself as a teacher-researcher. The concepts of systematic inquiry and reflective thinking, gained within the training course, added a new dimension to her professional identity. Particularly, her emphasis on terms like *contextual* and *ethical* demonstrates that research provides teaching with not only

technical but also ethical and pedagogical insights. PT4's possession of teacher-researcher identity has the potential for transformation at both individual and institutional levels. This identity is the level of consciousness that will enable her to question and transform each practice she engages in. Teachers' adoption of teacher-researcher identity allows a lifelong learning culture to be integrated into the teaching profession. PT4's statement reflects her adopting a teacher-researcher identity:

We tend to be flexible, open to new ideas to expand the theory and the practice to offer solutions to various problems (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 54-55). We have investigated systematically about teaching influences on students... contextual... and ethical (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 63-65).

PT4 remarked that she would carry on conducting teacher research, and this process is an integral part of her profession. She emphasised her desire to implement scientific methods in the classroom and engage with students more effectively. She realised that teacher research is a more contemporary and efficacious methodology and declared that she would act in this way. PT4's commitment to research indicates that action research was internalised as a professional attitude, not as a mere activity. This outcome reflects that she has become more open to change and development processes and would like to keep up with constantly evolving educational environments. PT4 expressed her future intention as follows:

I'm going to continue my career as a teacher-researcher (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 63).

It shows us students' strengths and challenges, so I'll do it again and again (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 65-66).

We must update our knowledge and keep up the speed on the latest developments... It's important to use scientific methods (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 66-68).

4.4.4.6. Summary

This interview reflects the perspectives of a senior teacher over the teacher research training course and subsequent action research experience within this study. Although

PT4 previously considered research as an enterprise that was complex, abstract and irrelevant to the field of teaching, she contends that her perceptions altered, especially thanks to the course. Particularly, the idea of making teaching practices an object of research presented an opportunity to reform her teaching. Discovering that research can be integrated into everyday classroom experiences has transformed PT4 into a professional who produces knowledge from her context.

The action research process within the study is acknowledged as a highly structured, comprehensible and applicable experience by PT4. The effective guidance during the stages of planning, data collection and analysis enhanced her trust and participation in the process. Such outcomes as in-depth understanding of student difficulties, questioning teaching methodologies and producing new approaches reinforced PT4's pedagogical competence. She affirmed that her professional confidence increased, and she started to feel competent to conduct research following the completion of the process. This finding highlights that teacher research is a tool that fosters not merely professional development but the awareness of classroom dynamics.

Moreover, PT4 is not willing to keep these experiences to herself but rather to share them with her colleagues, thereby aiming to transform the research culture into a sustainable professional attitude. Her adoption of teacher research as a part of teacher identity is a significant indicator with regard to the development of learning communities. Core values like constant development, scientific reasoning and openness to pedagogical change reinforced her teacher-researcher identity. The findings of this interview demonstrate that teachers can develop a researcher identity through effective mentoring and support, and that this transformation can provide lasting effects on professional satisfaction, effective instruction and student achievement.

4.4.5. Participant Teacher 5

PT5 had approximately 21 years of teaching experience and worked at an Anatolian High School in central Adana. She participated in the research process by involving 10th graders ($N = 29$). This study was her first research experience since her pre-service education.

4.4.5.1. Prior Perspectives on Research

PT5's knowledge of research consisted of what she had learnt in Research Methods courses during her faculty years. During the focus group discussion in the first session of the training course, when asked to describe research, she identified it as a "scientific approach". However, she stated that she could not remember theoretical details regarding research. PT5 put forward a perspective that viewed research as a *complex issue* and explained, "Research is done when we want to learn something". She also stated she had never done research until then, but she seldom read articles. She affirmed that she tried to find solutions to classroom problems through experience. PT5 had never heard of teacher research until that meeting. Still, she noted that the concept evoked "finding solutions to problems" in her own words.

4.4.5.2. Pre-Action Research Process

PT5 addressed the problem of students' poor English-speaking abilities in an online meeting with the other participant teachers during the action research's first phase. As a result of her collaborative manner with the others, the main topic of the action research planning process was identified. In order to determine the conditions in PT5's classroom of 29 students in 10th grade, an initial observation was carried out on 3 May 2024. The observation report is displayed below.

During the class, ..., ... a few students seemed willing to speak ... the other students were busy ... rather than the lesson. Certain students answered the questions ... using L1 students partly managed to say ..., and the teacher corrected the mistakes ..., sometimes using L1. The students needed scaffolding and translation Only a few students ... pronounce well, ... teacher had to do repetitions Those ... exhibited distinct interlanguage features The teacher gave ... opportunities ... through open-ended questions.

The teacher ... used appropriate teaching methodology She provided an atmosphere ... communicative approach. Very few students spent relevant utterances Visual and audio materials ... became effective to a small extent. The topic seemed to intrigue the students, ... the majority seemed indifferent and bored Learner autonomy should be promoted

During the classroom observation, the low level of student participation stood out. Very few students volunteered to speak English, whereas the others were busy with other activities, disconnected from the lesson. The students who responded to the questions frequently spoke in L1 and took support from the teacher for translation. The number of students who were good at English pronunciation was rather low, and therefore, the teacher had to repeat most of the words again and again. Obvious interlanguage errors in verb tenses and structure selection were observed in English-speaking students. The teacher utilised a teaching technique based on the communicative approach and offered the students opportunities to express their ideas via open-ended questions. While the subject intrigued only a few, the great majority of the students seemed uninterested and bored with the lesson. This situation reveals that the students lack integrative motivation and should be supported. The students' rather limited interest and participation in the class, notwithstanding the teacher's overall efforts, indicates that the learning environment should be enhanced in terms of not only pedagogical but also affective cognitive factors.

Subsequent to the observation, PT5 conducted a single-question survey and focus group discussion to learn the students' opinions concerning their low level of English speaking. The data were thematically analysed, and the results below were obtained, specified by the themes such as "Curricular-Instructional Factors" ($n = 22$), "Lack of Background Knowledge" ($n = 9$), "Contextual Factors" ($n = 9$), "Reluctance" ($n = 7$), "Having Difficulty" ($n = 5$), "Classroom Environment" ($n = 3$), "Lack of Self-Confidence" ($n = 2$) and "Anxiety" ($n = 1$).

The findings were presented by PT5 in a regular meeting and shed light on the collaborative planning process.

4.4.5.3. Action Research Implementation

In the same way as her teammates did, PT5 reviewed the related literature concerning students' deficiencies in speaking English to learn about the implementations done in other contexts on the same issue. She provided an insightful perspective during the planning process, sharing her experiences and knowledge with the others. She implemented the action plan very successfully in collaboration with the researcher and the others. PT5 reflected on her experiences in the implementation process in regular meetings. She honestly admitted the challenges of implementation by uttering, "It would

be very hard to speak English all the time because it is tiring, and the students don't let me teach in peace". However, she put forward a determination to continue action research in her classroom, saying, "But I am determined this time".

Below are presented PT5's perceptions on the implementation of action research, arranged according to relevant themes and containing direct quotes taken from the meeting minutes.

4.4.5.3.1. Theme 1: Persistent Effort and Gradual Progress

From PT5's perspective, conducting action research in an English class requires determination and continuous effort rather than the expectation of instant outcomes. In particular, considering the classroom dynamics that are vibrant and ever-changing, she admits the difficulties of consistently pursuing English-only instruction. Still, she acknowledges these difficulties not as severe obstacles but as a natural part of the learning process. For her, even partial improvements represent meaningful progress in such a short time. This situation is evident in PT5's remarks below:

It would be very hard to speak English all the time because it is tiring, and the students don't let me teach in peace (Meeting Minutes, 29 May 2024).

Although I could not attain one hundred per cent success and development in my class, I know that it was a start (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

These verbatim quotes demonstrate that PT5 appreciates the cyclical and reflective nature of action research and emphasises the significance of sustainable change rather than quick solutions, owing to the challenges. Her view reflects a mature understanding that educational transformation is gradual and requires patience.

4.4.5.3.2. Theme 2: Alignment with Curriculum Goals

PT5 believes that the action plan closely corresponds to the curriculum targets, and the approach is theoretically sound and compatible with expected educational standards. Moreover, she argues that students' early and constant exposure to such teaching methods from primary school onwards can alleviate the present classroom challenges. PT5's views indicate an awareness that systemic factors influence classroom outcomes and that teacher research should consider broader educational contexts. The following excerpts exemplify

this finding:

If students had been educated in this way since their primary school years, I think we would not have such problems now (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

I think we have come a long way even in such a short time (Meeting Minutes, 3 June 2024).

The statements reveal the growing awareness of the significance of fundamental learning experiences and the need for early intervention. Such a perspective is quite pivotal since it highlights that teacher research can develop a critical viewpoint on curriculum implementation and its long-term effects.

4.4.5.3.3. Theme 3: Student Participation and Engagement

PT5 noted that English classes became visibly more interactive and entertaining even though full participation could not be provided. She stressed that engaging the students in an active learning process contributed to the formation of a lively and motivating classroom environment. This improvement reflects her enhanced understanding regarding participatory approaches within action research in which student participation is both a means and outcome of effective teaching practices. PT5's comments below support this observation:

At least, I made lessons with students' participation which was funny and entertaining (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

The students loved joining the data collection procedure (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

The narrative excerpts demonstrate PT5's appreciation for student-centred methods and the role of participation in promoting learning. This outcome underscores that action research has the potential to encourage teachers to make arrangements based on student reactions and adapt themselves to unexpected situations.

4.4.5.3.4. Theme 4: Reflective Practice and Problem-Solving

For PT5, action research will prompt her to anticipate and tackle future classroom problems by means of fostering her reflective thinking skills. She acknowledges this experience as a valuable starting point that will allow her to continually evaluate and improve her teaching practices. This perspective reflects a fundamental aspect of teacher research, which is the development of professional autonomy through critical self-assessment and proactive problem-solving.

I know what I can do to solve the problems I will encounter in the coming years
(Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

This alone is a great gain for me (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

PT5's utterance demonstrates that her confidence in the ability to use research insights for permanent professional development has increased. It is also highlighted how action research fosters a mindset towards lifelong learning and adaptive expertise.

4.4.5.3.5. Theme 5: Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

PT5 remarked that involving her students in the data collection process and carrying out a thematic analysis of the collected data was a rewarding experience. She found that her students' willingness to discuss their educational problems enhanced the depth of action research. This collaborative dynamic reiterates the participatory nature of action research, in which teachers and students co-construct the knowledge and share the responsibility of research. This understanding is reflected in PT5's words:

I didn't expect them to talk about themselves and their educational problems. This alone is a great gain for me (Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

I find the thematic analysis you taught us very valuable. It is like a fun game
(Meeting Minutes, 7 June 2024).

These final excerpts from the meeting minutes emphasise that collaboration enriches teacher research by promoting greater student participation and allowing the teacher to better understand classroom realities. This indicates that data engagement is not merely an analysis-oriented task but also a pedagogical opportunity for empowerment

and participation.

In summary of the statements in the minutes, PT5 acknowledges action research as a long-term process that necessitates patience and consistent effort. In spite of the difficulty in constantly using English during classes, she accepts that this process is necessary to provide a lasting change in education. She also appreciates the compatibility of the action plan with the curriculum and believes that introducing this methodology to students at an early age will reduce existing problems. In PT5's context, an increase in student participation enhanced classroom interactivity and student motivation. Additionally, thanks to reflective practice, she improved her ability to foresee and solve the problems she will encounter in future. The students' active engagement in the data collection procedure before the planning stage indicates the importance of collaborative teacher research. Consequently, this research process supported PT5's professional development, as well as encouraging sustained pedagogical shifts in classroom instruction.

4.4.5.4. Post-Implementation Classroom Observation

This classroom observation was carried out to investigate any potential changes following PT5's completion of the action research process. The observation findings are shown below.

... observation was conducted in the 7th lesson hour The class ... suitable for English class. The teacher ... made preparations on the smart board. The students, ... got accustomed to the new teaching style, ... waiting ... to start. The majority ... seemed to have fun with the icebreaker, theme song and the game. They took part in the activities ... to intrigue them. Compared to ... two weeks ago, they looked willing, active and enthusiastic. ... still had problems with independent talk ...

The teacher utilised digital visual and auditory materials She spoke English ... small number of exceptions she lost students' concentration, ... recovered soon. ... she enabled the students to join the activities The teacher seemed to stick to the action plan

An icebreaker, a drama game, a puzzle and an interactive game were utilised

The ... class gave ... a different image from the first observation. ..., the teacher

was more determined, clearer and more active The students were more willing the action plan implementation contributed to ... the students

The observed English class was carried out with suitable physical conditions for language teaching. The students were seen to have been used to the new teaching method and to be waiting for the teacher to start. This indicates that the classroom atmosphere evolved into a positive and learning-focused environment. Regarding student performance, it was observed that the majority of the students joined and had fun with the icebreaker, a theme song and an interactive game. Compared to the same classroom observed four weeks ago, the students seemed more willing, active and participating. Nevertheless, the students had much difficulty speaking English independently. The teacher spoke mostly English in class and adhered to the target language except for a few exceptions. In general, the teacher did the activities successfully and did not deviate from the action plan. She exhibited a more determined, clear and energetic performance compared to the first observation, and the students behaved more talkatively and participatively. As a consequence, it can be asserted that the implemented action plan positively affected the students' attitudes towards speaking English to a certain extent.

4.4.5.5. Perspectives After Research – Interview Phase

A semi-structured interview was conducted with PT5 to learn about her overall thoughts on the course and the action research process. The interview's findings are grouped into the following themes.

Table 19

Refined Themes from PT5's Interview Transcripts

Interview Items	Themes
Perception of Research	Changed Perception
Course Evaluation	Empathetic Approach
Action Research Process	Collaboration
Challenges in Implementation	Breaking Habits
Benefits of Action Research	Needs-Oriented Solutions
Confidence Development	Enhanced Confidence
Sharing and Dissemination	Willingness to Share
Teacher Researcher Identity	Renewed Identity
Future Intentions	Lifelong Inquiry

An extensive analysis of the interview is provided below in paragraphs, each of which focuses on a different theme presented as narratives. The verbatim sentences, taken directly from the interview transcription, will be used to support the interpretations.

PT5 used to consider the concept of research as complex and challenging to carry out. However, she later stated that her perception of research changed, and that she realised research was feasible and accessible for teachers in fact. This transformation indicates that her assumption “research is preserved for academics only” was replaced with a more informed paradigm. The breakdown of PT5’s prejudices can pave the way for teachers to consider research as a part of their profession. Such awareness refers to a significant shift in mindset, enabling teachers to approach their classroom experiences with a more systematic and scholarly perspective. This situation highlights that research is required not solely in universities but also in classroom environments. PT5’s statements demonstrate that teacher research offers a practical and applicable model for teachers. The excerpt from PT5 demonstrates this situation:

Before this training I thought that scientific research was more complicated and difficult to conduct. After this study, I realized that scientific research is easier and feasible (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 11-12).

PT5 expressed that the teacher research training course was effective and created significant awareness among her colleagues. In particular, it is notable that the training course revived the problems that the participant teachers had neglected for a long time and allowed these problems to be discussed among themselves. The researcher-trainer’s background as an experienced teacher, like the participant teachers, made the training process more meaningful in terms of understanding teachers’ perspectives and experiences. The course’s design, grounded in professional collaboration, provided an emic perspective towards the participant teachers’ realities, thereby fostering an environment of trust. This situation enhanced the efficacy of the training and allowed PT5 to engage in the process with a sense of belonging. Thus, the training course turned into an environment that promoted professional empathy and collective questioning, rather than merely knowledge transmission. This finding is substantiated by PT5’s following remarks:

This course made us realise once again many problems in English teaching that we had forgotten or ignored (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 14-15).

It was important that the person giving the course was a colleague and evaluated the problems from our perspective (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 19-20).

PT5 described the action research process as a systematic experience carried out step by step and collaboratively. The process comprised the stages of problem identification, literature review, classroom implementation, observations and reflection. She emphasised the effectiveness of teamwork and group discussions. The systematic framework of action research and its implementation through teacher collaboration fostered PT5's motivation and engagement in the process. She experienced action research not only as an individual progress but also as a collective learning environment. Participatory design across all stages of the action research process developed a sense of responsibility and possession in participant teachers. This structure illustrates that research culture is not an individual pursuit but a shared process of development. This insight is particularly evident in PT5's account:

We first came together and identified a problem... Then a literature review was conducted... we revised annual plans and implemented activities in classrooms (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 28-30).

At the end, we shared our ideas and tried to find solutions... it was an effective teamwork (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 31-32).

PT5 noted that the implementation process was generally positive except for some structural and behavioural routine-related difficulties. She affirmed that it was rather challenging and exhaustive to detach the students from the traditional teaching methods they are used to. She also suggested it would be more fruitful to extend the whole process over time. From a widely accepted perspective among teachers, it is highly challenging to break students' established habits and to implement new pedagogical strategies. In this regard, it is evident that it is necessary for teachers to be supported, for research processes to be extended over longer periods, and for more systematic structures to be established within schools. Such difficulties as student resistance and teacher burnout can be considered as fundamental obstacles to maintaining research sustainability. For this reason, PT5 advocates prolonged implementations for research to be ingrained as a

culture. The following quotation captures PT5's view on this issue:

Students have been accustomed to a certain style... and it was difficult to break these old ones (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 37-38).

It can be also exhausting, tiring for us... Therefore, it needs to be spread over a longer period (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 39-40).

Concerning the benefits of action research, PT5 reported that action research provided a better understanding of student needs and increased the efficacy of classroom practices, highlighting that producing research-based solutions makes teaching more meaningful. The action research experience allowed her to evaluate and enhance her instruction through a student-centred approach. In this sense, this outcome demonstrates that research is not an abstract academic endeavour but a functional tool that directly influences classroom practice. PT5 realised in this way that the decisions supported with scientific data produced more effective results, thus guiding her instructional practices in a more conscious and needs-oriented manner. PT5's reflection below clarifies her perspective on action research:

I think by doing that we can better understand and identify our students' needs (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 46-47).

We can better analyse the result of our teaching activity with the help of action research (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 59-60).

PT5 asserted that her negative bias towards research was entirely eliminated thanks to this research experience. Realising that research was not as complex as she previously assumed enhanced her self-confidence. Such a confidence development should be seen as a critical threshold for the accomplishment of the research process. The fact that PT5's anxiety towards research was gradually replaced by curiosity and productivity is quite hopeful for professional enhancement. She experienced an empirical perspective and creativity through research experience. She now acknowledges research as an inherent part of her pedagogical development. The participant's words confirm this shift in perception:

This first experience broke all my prejudice about an action research (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 52-53).

As I said before, it seemed very complicated and difficult issue for us. But after that, I broke it broke all my prejudice. Now I feel more confident in carrying out my own research (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 53-54).

PT5 affirmed that she was willing to share her research-based knowledge with her colleagues and argued that traditional teaching patterns can be restructured with the help of this methodology. She also believes that the dissemination of teacher research can lead to a transformation in instructional practices. Such a desire for sharing indicates that teacher research holds strong potential to grow within a learning community, which points to an inference that a research-oriented culture can be cultivated in educational settings. Dissemination of research practices among teachers can also foster collaboration and knowledge transfer, thereby allowing teachers' personal experiences to transform into an institutional benefit. Her intention to disseminate is captured in PT4's own words:

Yes, yes of course. And we can share our ideas (Interview Transcript, June 2024, line 64).

I'd like to share my experiences with my colleagues because this method can break all traditional teaching methods (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 67-68).

PT5 explained that she internalised a teacher-researcher identity and wanted to carry out her profession in a more conscious and up-to-date way by adapting this role. She also emphasised that blind adherence to traditional teaching practices restrains the effectiveness of instruction. This perspective highlights that PT5 does not define herself as a knowledge transmitter but as a professional who constantly questions and improves learning and teaching. It also refers to a sustainable professional growth vision compatible with the dynamic nature of teaching practice. Teacher-researcher identity can empower the teacher to make her educational decisions in a more informed, evidence-based and ethically grounded way. PT5's utterance reflects her embracing a new identity:

... as I mentioned before teacher research is very beneficial for my teaching practices (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 57-58).

A teacher should always renew and improve herself/himself. They shouldn't adhere

to old traditional practices (Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 72-73).

PT5 is determined to continue her profession as a teacher-researcher. She regards the need for ongoing growth and development as both personal and pedagogical responsibility. She intends to integrate a teaching perspective based on scientific inquiry and implementation into her profession as an integral part of it. Such decisiveness illustrates that teachers can transform not only today's but also tomorrow's educational environments. PT5's future-oriented mindset demonstrates that teacher research was adopted as an established professional practice. This outcome offers an opportunity to integrate research into the education system. PT5's personal determination on this issue is evident in the following excerpt:

I'd like to intend to continue my career as a teacher-researcher, of course
(Interview Transcript, June 2024, lines 73-74).

4.4.5.6. Summary

This interview reveals how a teacher research training course facilitated a noteworthy change in an experienced English language teacher's cognitive framework. PT5 used to perceive research as a complex and distant activity, whereas she then realised that, thanks to the training course experience, this perception altered, and teachers, too, can conduct research successfully. The practicality of research and its contribution to classroom practice became a strong motivational source for PT5. It is a significant factor for teachers to associate research methods with their classroom realities concerning the sustainability of professional development. In this sense, teacher research is not solely a methodological tool but also serves as a means of transformation that corroborates teachers' pedagogical autonomy.

The action research process provided PT5 an opportunity to restructure her pedagogical practice through the steps of planning, implementation and collaboration with her colleagues. Gaining a deeper insight into students' needs enabled her to base classroom decisions on scientific bases, thus consolidating her self-confidence. Beyond individual benefits of research, the encouragement from teamwork and peer collaboration strengthened her belief in professional solidarity. Such experiences can reduce teachers' sense of isolation and reshape their professional reflexes in a collective learning

environment. Furthermore, they can support their intuitive decisions with systematic thinking thanks to data-driven classroom practices.

PT5's acknowledgement of this experience as an integral part of her profession, rather than a transitory process, points to the sustainability of teacher research. Her adoption of an innovative and student-centred teaching perspective by transcending traditional patterns indicates how powerful research-oriented professional transformation can be. In the evolving educational paradigm, teachers are expected to position themselves as not only practitioners but as individuals who generate knowledge, too. This interview illustrates that teachers can transform into effective researchers with proper techniques and guidance, thereby bringing about deep-rooted shifts in the quality of education.

4.5. Thematic Findings on Participants' Overall Perceptions

In this section, the overall qualitative findings related to the training and action research processes, obtained from the focus group discussion, meetings and interviews, are organised around a thematic diagram (Figure 3). The themes reflect the participant teachers' perspectives before and after the research process, as well as their perceptions of the teacher research training course and action research practice. The findings reveal that the research process had a significant effect on teachers' mindsets.

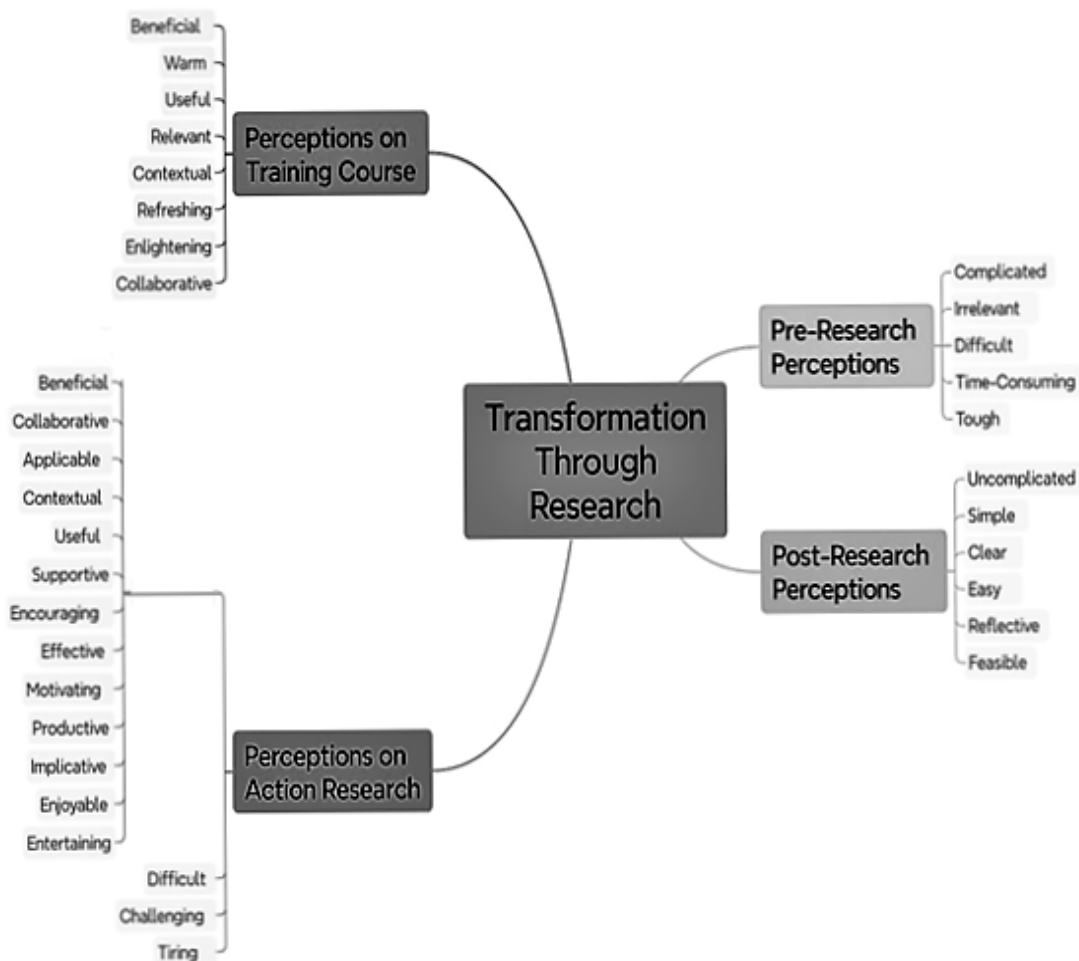


Figure 3. Thematic Diagram of Emerging Themes

The participant teachers' perceptions of research before their current experience reflected the belief that research was complicated, irrelevant, difficult, time-consuming, and tough. This situation indicates that research was previously perceived as a burden or an overwhelming challenge to overcome. These negative preconceptions are particularly pivotal in emphasising the significance of the change observed in the course of the research process.

Through the teacher research training course, the teachers' perspectives on research evolved in a positive direction. The course was described with a good number of affirmative adjectives such as *beneficial*, *warm*, *useful*, *relevant*, *contextual*, *refreshing*, *enlightening* and *collaborative*. This outcome demonstrates that not only did the training course offer a cognitive learning experience, but it also contributed to the participants' developing a positive attitude towards research by enhancing their motivation.

The participant teachers' perceptions of the action research process were generally positive. They stated that action research was *beneficial, collaborative, applicable, contextual, useful, supportive, encouraging, effective, motivating, productive, implicative, enjoyable* and *entertaining*. This finding reveals that the teachers experienced action research as a collaborative and feasible process that provided them with practical benefits rather than sole theoretical knowledge. However, the teachers reported some difficulties they had during the implementation of action research. They expressed that it was sometimes *difficult, tiring* and *challenging*, especially in terms of breaking the students' habits and overcoming the student resistance. Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that every new practice might bring about such drawbacks in the classroom context.

In conclusion, it can be asserted that the entire research process contributed to the transformation of teachers in terms of adopting a teacher-researcher identity, developing self-confidence, and informed practice. The change in participant teachers' preconceptions of research at the end of the study supports this judgement. They now describe research as *uncomplicated, simple, clear, easy, reflective* and *feasible*, which is drastically different from their prior perspectives. Overall, the training and action research experience helped participant teachers overcome their initial hesitations and embrace research as a valuable and transformative tool.

To better visualise the frequency of all themes and affective expressions obtained during the entire research process, a word cloud is presented below.

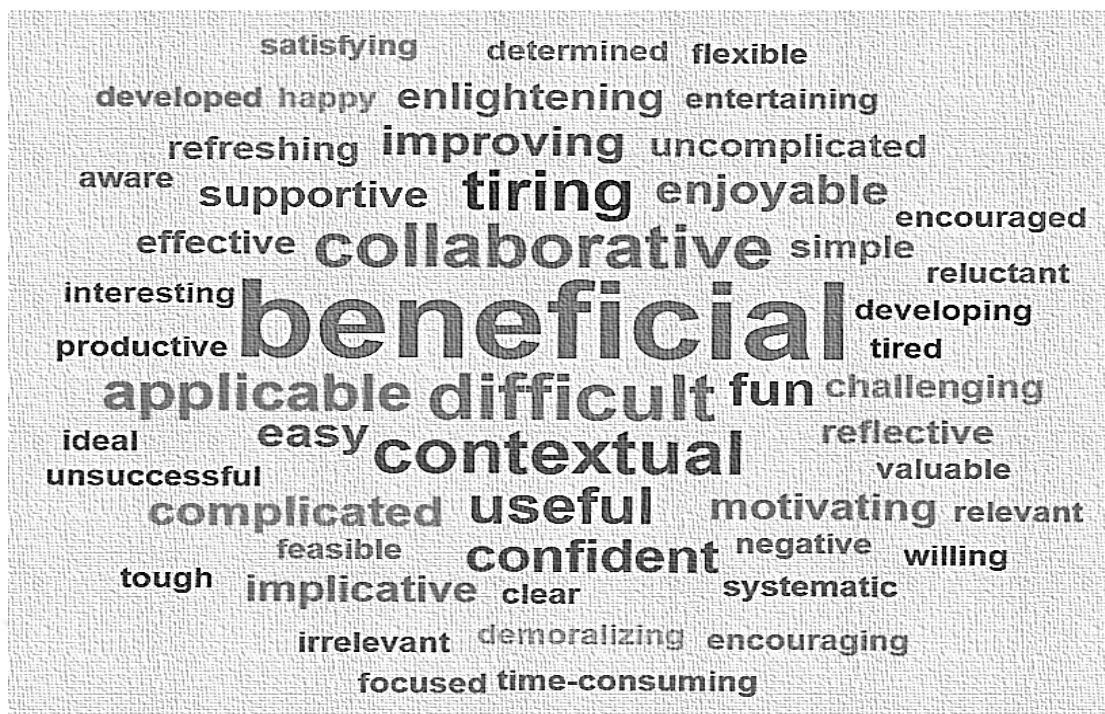


Figure 4. Word Cloud Representation of Themes

The word cloud demonstrates that all five participant teachers' perceptions of teacher research are positive to a great extent. The appearance of adjectives such as *beneficial*, *useful* and *collaborative* reveals that research is valued in terms of continuous professional development and collaboration. However, the prominence of words such as “*difficult*” and “*tiring*” points to the fact that the process involves certain cognitive and affective challenges.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This study has thoroughly and holistically investigated English language teachers' background knowledge and perceptions of research, as well as how they integrated research processes into their classroom practices, and their developmental transformation through a training course and action research. The chapter presents a discussion of the findings based on the seven research questions that guided the research process. The findings will be evaluated and discussed within the framework of the research questions, referring to previous research.

5.2. Curriculum Analysis: Examining Research Courses in ELT Departments

RQ1. Do English language teaching departments provide research courses in their curricula?

- a- If they do, what are the contents of the courses?*
- b- Do the courses include research practice?*

The first finding of the study revealed that Research Methods courses are offered in all ELT programmes in Türkiye. These courses are generally introduced in the fourth semester of undergraduate education and limited to two credits. Additionally, student teachers consolidate the theoretical knowledge they have acquired in practice and write a scientific report in accordance with scholarly standards at the end of the courses. However, the fact that some universities, such as Anadolu University and Middle East Technical University, offer Research Methods courses over two semesters indicates that research education in these institutions is addressed in a more structured and comprehensive manner. This situation highlights the differences in research approaches across universities, suggesting that student teachers' research competency might be diversified in this regard. The findings, however, reflect the impact of central policies on research education in Türkiye. Indeed, within the scope of the curriculum reform enacted by YÖK in 2018, it has been aimed to enhance prospective teachers' research literacy through the compulsory Research Methods courses in the field of professional knowledge

(YÖK, 2018). Within this framework, it is intended to equip teacher candidates with the skills necessary for making research-based decisions, problem-solving, and scientific reporting.

In related literature, it is suggested that research methodology education is linked to specific areas, such as critical thinking (Yuan & Burns, 2017), professional autonomy (Borg, 2010), and openness to lifelong learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Nevertheless, studies conducted in the Turkish context indicate that teacher candidates primarily perceive research at a theoretical level and are provided with limited opportunities to conduct research (Şahin, 2023; Yıldırım, 2013). The findings reveal that, although the research method courses are widely offered, there are notable limitations in the content of these courses in terms of student learning outcomes (Sönmez & Akyel, 2017; Zeichner, 2010). Furthermore, the data obtained in this study indicate that the great majority of the teachers do not engage in research, despite having taken Research Methods courses. Furthermore, they recall very little of the course content and hold negative prejudices against research, often associating it with research concepts typically linked to positivist paradigms, such as statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. Thus, it appears that these courses primarily provide essential theoretical knowledge about research methodologies in the social sciences, but do not sufficiently incorporate real, classroom-based experiences related to teacher research. This situation might hinder the development of a teacher-researcher identity for prospective teachers.

Consequently, though a significant structural step has been taken in offering research education in ELT programmes in Türkiye, it is evident that further measures need to be taken to integrate practices related to real-life situations into research education in order to eliminate the factors that teacher candidates might encounter in their careers. Frequently emphasised in literature, the teacher-researcher identity can be meaningful only through combining theoretical knowledge with real-life experiences (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Burns, 2010). Hence, it bears considerable importance for curricula to be restructured so as to allow teacher candidates not only to acquire theoretical knowledge but also to conduct small-scale research within real-life contexts. As Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) argue, it has critical importance for teacher candidates to gain experience through inquiry in real-life contexts for their professional development, in addition to acquiring theoretical knowledge.

Nonetheless, based solely on the data from the programme documents and this study, no definitive conclusion can be drawn regarding the efficacy of research education

in universities. It would be the subject of another study whether the research education practices in universities are sufficient for teacher candidates to develop a researcher identity.

5.3. Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Research: Insights from High Schools

RQ2: What are the perceptions of high school English language teachers working in central Adana regarding the concept of teacher research?

The survey findings gathered from 112 high school English teachers working in central Adana demonstrate that the concept of “teacher research” is commonly associated with academic and statistical methods. The data obtained via the “English Language Teachers' Views of Research” survey (Borg, 2009) indicate that the teachers’ perceptions reflect conventional definitions of research. Notably, the top-rated scenarios involving academic publications, statistical analysis, and experimental design confirm that teachers primarily identify research with objective, formal, and external processes. Yet, more routine and pedagogically oriented practices, such as gathering student feedback, keeping a reflective journal, or conducting classroom observations, are regarded as non-research with low ratings, which indicates that teachers perceive research as an effort separate from classroom practices. This situation demonstrates that the vast majority of teacher respondents have restricted awareness towards “teacher research” and tend to adopt a narrow and technical perspective on the concept. Borg (2010) argues that teachers are prone to perceive research as a detached and abstract task when their engagement with it is limited. In a similar vein, the broader literature reveals that a great many teachers consider research as a practice which involves complicated methodological processes carried out merely at the university level, and as a result, they find it difficult to position themselves as researchers within the classroom (Atay, 2008; Borg, 2009; Burns, 2010).

In another section of the survey addressing the definitions of “high-quality research, it was observed that most of the teacher respondents attribute certain traits to research, such as “statistical analysis” ($n = 100$), “objectivity” ($n = 99$) and “generating practical solutions” ($n = 96$). This result suggests that teachers tend to view research through the lens of scientific validity and objectivity, while demonstrating limited awareness of action research, reflective practice and qualitative classroom inquiry. As a matter of fact, less valued traits such as “controlling variables” ($n = 36$) that also received the highest rating of *unsure* ($n = 53$), “testing hypotheses” ($n = 63$) and “experimental designs” ($n = 70$)

underscore that the teachers do not have in-depth knowledge of research methods. These findings are consistent with those reported in Ali (2020), Freitas et al. (2024), and Mertler (2021), which suggest that most teachers are acquainted with the theoretical framework of the research process, yet their practical knowledge is weak. This is also significant in that it reveals the teachers' unfavourable perceptions of research.

The findings on the impact of institutional culture on research explain the reason why teachers externalise this concept. Out of 112, only 13 teachers stated they read published articles, and 19 said teachers feel that research is a part of their job, which indicates the lack of an established research culture among teachers within the institutions. This situation points not only to an individual but also to an institutional problem area. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) emphasise the importance of not only individual motivation but also institutional support mechanisms for enhancing the teacher-researcher identity. Within this study, solely 37 teachers stated they had time to conduct research, which reveals a significant lack of institutional support. Similarly, the findings relating to teachers' habits of reading research demonstrate low levels of teacher motivation towards research, and that they face challenges in accessing academic publications and understanding written materials.

As a consequence, the survey findings highlight that the teacher respondents' perceptions of research are confined to a narrow, academic, and external framework, and they are not adequately familiar with research types based on reflective practice (Banegas, 2018; Beycioğlu et al., 2010). Moreover, it is evident that teacher research depends not only on mere knowledge but also on culture and structural conditions. Eventually, teachers can develop a researcher identity not solely through individual awareness, but also through systematic, accessible and relevant educational programmes, and supportive institutional policies. These findings were also reported in a good number of previous studies (Banegas, 2018; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Borg & Liu, 2013; Borg, 2009; Mermer & Soyer, 2021; Tabatabaei & Nazem, 2013; Wulyani et al., 2021).

5.3. Engagement in Research: English Teachers' Attitudes Towards Research

RQ3: Do English language teachers integrate research into teaching practice? If so, in what ways?

The survey findings demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of English language teachers who responded to the survey do not see research as a core part of their profession, instead viewing research activities as separate activities from teaching. Out of 112 participants, only three teachers reported frequently conducting research, 15 sometimes, another 15 rarely, and 79 stated they never engage in research. The data suggest that most teacher respondents struggle to make a clear connection with research, and their habit of incorporating research data into teaching is limited. Among the reasons teachers cited for not conducting research, “reducing the teaching profession to instructional practices only” reflects a reluctance to redefine their professional roles and a tendency to stay within their usual workload. Furthermore, teachers’ tendency to see research as part of a university-centred academic career, rather than as a tool for improving classroom practice, creates a certain distance from research activities (Borg, 2007; Burns, 2010).

The findings concerning the teachers’ “reading research” habits further corroborate this lack of integration, too. The fact that 59 teachers reported they never read research, while 29 mentioned doing so rarely, indicates that the teachers lack up-to-date academic knowledge. This implies that they fail to inform their teaching practices with research-based knowledge and instead rely on experience or intuition (Farrell, 2015). In addition, “the lack of research interest”, “difficulty in understanding published research, and “time constraints” hinder the teachers from taking advantage of research-oriented learning opportunities.

On the other hand, the reasons provided by 33 teachers who reported conducting research offer significant evidence for a better understanding of how to integrate research into practice. A substantial number of these teachers consider research as a tool for professional development. The statements, “It is good for my professional development” and “To find better ways of teaching” demonstrate that these teachers are willing to conduct research grounded in pedagogical reflection. This mindset is consistent with the reflective teaching approach. Zeichner (2012) advocates that teachers’ research-oriented reflections, aimed at questioning and enhancing classroom practices, play a pivotal role

in professional development. In addition, some teacher respondents' expressions of individual motivations, such as "Because I enjoy it" and "As a part of a course I'm studying on", reveal that the integration of research encompasses both institutional and subjective dimensions. When considered within the framework of "Situated Learning Theory" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which suggests that learning takes place through participation in social practices within a community, this situation indicates that teachers' research engagement is related not only to knowledge but also to identity and a sense of belonging.

Additionally, some teachers stated that they conduct research directly "To solve problems in teaching". This expression corresponds to the literature on "Action Research". Carr and Kemmis (2003) argue that teachers' engagement in research in order to generate solutions to classroom problems is the most effective form of teacher education. Furthermore, expressions like "To contribute to the improvement of the school generally" indicate that research can be perceived as a process that produces not solely individual but also institutional benefits. Other reasons stated by the participants, "Because it will help me to get a promotion" and "Because my employer expects me to", might be considered minor factors; nonetheless, they are significant in pointing out the pragmatic and contextual aspects of research.

The findings demonstrate that the teachers generally integrate research into teaching practices in three ways:

1. For reflective professional development,
2. To generate solutions to pedagogical problems in the classroom,
3. As a requirement of academic and institutional contexts.

However, these integrations primarily occurred at the individual level and were implemented by a limited number of teachers. This situation emphasises the significance of several factors such as structural support, institutional motivation, time management and research literacy for the prevalence of research practices. Day (1999) maintains that teaching is not a static profession, whereas it requires constant restructuring and a learning process in light of ever-evolving learning environments and societal expectations. He also contends that teachers' professional development processes are facilitated not only through personal efforts but also through institutional support and the contribution of professional communities. Yuan and Burns (2017) put it:

Specifically, while teachers' limited research knowledge as well as the rigid school culture and scant institutional support could pose challenges to their AR, the opportunities to engage in interactions and negotiation with different community members (i.e. university researchers and other schoolteachers) help teachers develop their research confidence and competence to enact and enrich their professional identities (p. 747).

As a result, although a limited number of teachers in this study integrate research into their classroom practices in various ways, this tendency is rather limited, individual, and inconsistent. Teachers' intentions to conduct research are grounded in positive rationales, such as professional development and pedagogical transformation; however, these intentions do not translate into systematic practice. In this sense, the sustainability of teacher research can be fostered through supportive school cultures, institutional support mechanisms, and enhanced research literacy.

To summarise, the level of research integration among the respondent teachers in this study is relatively low. Behind this, there are multilayered obstacles, including a lack of conceptual awareness, inadequate institutional support, and limited interaction with academic resources. This situation demonstrates that the research culture should be enhanced through structural reforms, sustainable education programmes and professional learning communities rather than relying solely on individual efforts. Related literature encompasses studies whose findings are consistent with those of this study (Alabaş & Kamer, 2012; Borg, 2007, 2009; Chow et al., 2015; Elçiçek, 2016; Kayaoğlu, 2015; Zeichner, 2010).

5.4. Barriers to Research Engagement: Challenges Faced by English Language Teachers

RQ4: Are there any barriers that prevent English language teachers from integrating research into teaching? If so, what do they stem from?

The fact that merely three teachers out of 112 reported conducting research frequently, and another 15 sometimes doing so, demonstrates that a considerable number of teachers do not carry out research practice. Particularly, the teachers who acknowledge research as an “academic enterprise only” remain disengaged from teacher-driven research forms such as classroom-based reflection and observation. This contradicts Borg's (2010) broad framework that identifies teacher research as the process of generating pedagogical solutions to classroom-based problems. Borg (2009) emphasises

that teacher research is essentially a process whereby teachers systematically question contextual problems, conduct observation and work to enhance their teaching practice.

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the participant teachers fail to integrate research into the teaching processes owing to both individual and structural barriers. Among these barriers, the most significant ones are *teachers' misconceptions about research, lack of motivation or interest, time constraints and workload, lack of methodological knowledge and lack of institutional support*. These findings point to a multilayered system of barriers hindering teachers' involvement in research at both cognitive and institutional levels.

To begin with, teachers not perceiving research as a part of their profession stands out as the leading factor. This misconception is evident in their expression, "My job is to teach, not to do research" ($n = 43$). Such a viewpoint leads to a perspective that the teaching profession is limited only to instructional practices, and research is solely an academic endeavour. Borg (2010) underscores the limitation in the perception of professional roles as one of the primary obstacles hindering teachers' engagement in research processes. This perception complicates the development of a reflective and research-oriented teacher identity. In this sense, there is a need to reconceptualise teachers' perceptions of research so that it encompasses core aspects of classroom-based reflective processes directly connected to practice. Making research more accessible to teachers is possible through not only methodological knowledge but also conceptual flexibility and pedagogical awareness (Borg & Liu, 2013; Borg, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2016).

The second most common reason is the lack of motivation or interest ($n = 42$). The lack of motivation to conduct research and read academic publications suggests that most of the participant teachers perceive research as irrelevant or unfeasible. This situation might stem from teachers' limited exposure to positive research experiences during their previous education. Yuan and Buns (2017) similarly note that teachers' low motivation is often linked to their last insufficient research experiences and failure to link research to teaching. Addressing these issues necessitates offering teachers research opportunities integrated into teaching practices, particularly starting from their educational years. Enhancement of such experiences can foster a more positive attitude towards research and encourage teachers' active engagement in research. A plethora of studies have reported that teachers lack motivation or interest in conducting research (Banegas, 2018; Boran, 2018; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2012; Borg & Liu, 2013; Mermer & Soyer, 2021;

Velioğlu & Özdemir, 2023; Zhou et al., 2024).

The third reason for the teacher respondents' low participation in research is time constraints, including the inability to dedicate time to reading research ($n = 19$) and to conducting research ($n = 21$). Teachers' weekly schedules, lesson preparation workload, administrative duties, and other bureaucratic responsibilities significantly limit the time they can allocate to research-oriented activities. This situation negatively impacts teachers' motivation and engagement in research. It is a critical step to provide support in time management and to encourage engagement in research activities. Moreover, school and institutional policies should be structured to allow teachers to dedicate more time to research. Farrell (2015) advocates the creation of planned intervals within teachers' professional development programmes to ensure the sustainability of teacher research. This finding aligns with previous research revealing that teachers' workload hinders their ability to do research in Türkiye's education system (Borg, 2009; Çelik & Dikilitaş, 2015; Elçiçek, 2016; Mermer & Soyer, 2021; Sakarkaya & Bumen, 2022; Türkoğlu & Cansoy, 2020).

The absence of research integration into classroom practice might also be attributed to teachers' lack of methodological knowledge. Yıldırım (2013) describes the lack of methodological knowledge among teachers as one of the primary barriers to teacher research. The fact that four participants in this study explicitly stated they do not know enough about research methods highlights that not solely cognitive support but also structural and cultural facilitation are needed for this integration. This condition causes teachers to be detached from engaging in research as they are often unsure about which tools, methods and processes to utilise. Specifically, some technical aspects, such as controlling variables, testing hypotheses, and collecting and analysing data, are considered highly complicated and academic, which discourages teachers from conducting research in classroom settings. Studies by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) emphasise that teachers need both practical methodological knowledge and a safe environment that fosters collaboration with other colleagues to conduct research in their contexts. Similar to this finding, several studies report teachers' lack of theoretical knowledge in literature (Borg, 2009, 2013, 2015; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2016; Mitton-Kükner, 2016; Pişgin & Pişgin, 2024; Santos et al., 2021; Yuan & Burns, 2017).

There are also significant institutional barriers. Out of 112 participants, solely 37 teachers stated that "Time for doing research is built into teachers' workloads", and another 32 reported that "The management encourages teachers to do research".

Moreover, only 22 teachers expressed “Teachers do research themselves”, while just 13 reported that “Teachers read published research”. This finding suggests that the culture of research-based professional development in schools remains underdeveloped. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) maintain that teacher research can be made sustainable not through individual efforts, but through collaborative and structured learning communities. In this study, the respondent teachers complained that they do not receive sufficient collaboration from either their colleagues ($n = 7$) or their students ($n = 4$). Such a lack of social support increases teachers’ sense of loneliness and reduces their motivation. Recent research has revealed similar results (Altun & Sarpkaya, 2021; Bonar et al., 2025; Borg, 2013; Kantaridou & Kaltsiou, 2018; Mockler, 2011; Poulton, 2023; Wulyani et al., 2021; Yuan & Burns, 2017; Zhou et al., 2024).

Finally, some respondents complained about limited access to academic resources ($n = 2$) and the deficiency of academic advising or mentoring ($n = 1$). This situation indicates that teachers are also deprived of external support to supervise their research processes. In particular, insufficient integration of research methodologies into in-service training programmes hinders the development of teachers’ research skills, thereby deepening the gap between professional development and academic knowledge. Teachers’ limited access to published work has been identified as an obstacle in research studies, such as those by Banegas (2018), Borg and Liu (2013), Borg (2009), and Kutlay (2013).

To sum up, the findings demonstrate that the factors hindering teachers from engaging in research cannot be attributed solely to individual indifference or a lack of knowledge; they also stem from more structural problems, such as a lack of time, limited support, insufficient cultural infrastructure, and inadequate institutional support mechanisms. In this regard, not only teacher-level initiatives but also transformation at the institutional and systemic levels are required for teachers to internalise research as an integral part of professional practice. Otherwise, research engagement is likely to remain limited to individual effort and motivation.

5.5. Evaluation of the Teacher-Researcher Course: Teachers' Reflections

RQ5: Is the teacher research training course effective in gaining awareness towards the concept of teacher research?

The qualitative findings of this study reveal that the teacher research training course has significantly increased the awareness of research practices among the participant teachers ($n = 5$). Semi-structured interviews conducted with participant teachers (PTs) have indicated that PTs initially perceived research as a highly complex, difficult, and academic activity that was irrelevant to classroom practice. Nevertheless, it was observed that these perceptions altered during the training process, and PTs developed a new awareness that research could indeed be integrated with teaching practice. PTs' perspectives demonstrate the contributions of the teacher research training course to professional development and application processes from various angles. As PT1 highlights, the course provided a warm and supportive learning environment through both face-to-face and online sessions, while also offering valuable information about data collection and analysis techniques. Particularly, the practical and constant applicability of the thematic analysis method positively influenced PTs' perceptions of research processes. Similarly, the statements of PT2 and PT5 indicate that the training course enhanced collaboration and the collective sharing of experiences among PTs. PT2 remarked that the course shed light on the problems experienced in school settings and that it was meaningful to share the colleagues' experiences who faced similar issues. PT5, on the other hand, affirmed that the course provided an opportunity for teachers to discuss problems and seek solutions collaboratively.

Another significant aspect that emerged from the PTs' course experiences is the impact of the researcher's dual role as both an experienced teacher and a trainer on the course's effectiveness. The statements of all PTs during the interviews emphasised the value of sharing professional experience grounded in empathy. This common emphasis points out that the training delivered by a teacher-researcher with similar professional experience and contextual background fostered PTs' learning motivation and engagement in action research. This finding confirms, as Zeichner (2003) advocates, that teacher education involves not only the transmission of knowledge but also the provision of credible models of teaching. Furthermore, this viewpoint corresponds with the literature suggesting that teacher research fosters the culture of collective learning and practice

within professional communities (Chen, 2022; Lynch et al., 2025; Voelkel Jr. & Chrispeels, 2017).

PTs affirmed that the training course shifted their previous views on research by making the concept more concrete. PT3, for example, highlighted that the course allowed PTs to approach research from a holistic and systematic standpoint. It was also mentioned that technical aspects of research—such as data collection and analysis, including thematic analysis—are not complicated but rather manageable in practice. These views align with existing research that emphasises the importance of practice-based and theoretically grounded instructional approaches for developing teachers' researcher identities (Mockler, 2011; Yuan & Burns, 2017).

Another remarkable finding is that PTs developed the ability to integrate the research process not solely into theoretical understanding but also into direct classroom practices through the course experience. For PTs, the course provided an opportunity to reshape their instructional approaches by turning teaching practices into an object of inquiry. This perspective aligns with the concept of practice-based transformation (Kemmis et al., 2014), a central concept in the action research literature.

Upon completion of the training course, a notable increase was observed in PTs' conceptual awareness and their attitudes towards teacher research. This outcome indicates the noteworthiness of structured and context-specific training courses for the development of a teacher research culture. Particularly in the Turkish context, given the difficulties that teachers experience in relating research to classroom practices, it can be argued that such training programmes bear the potential to create a cultural transformation. Moreover, for professional learning to be sustainable, it is pivotal to establish collaborative settings in which teachers can interact with their colleagues and address shared problems (Day, 1999; Farrell, 2015; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001).

Taken together, the findings have revealed that the teacher research training course, implemented within this study, enabled PTs not only to acquire knowledge of research but also to internalise it, relate it to their practice, and begin to see it as an integral part of their professional identity. This situation demonstrates that such contextual, teacher-centred and model-based training courses play a critical role in the prevalence of teacher research practices. A considerable number of studies focused on professional training programmes have reported their positive impact on professional development (Bilican et al., 2021; Cabaroğlu, 2014; Chen, 2020; Chow et al., 2015; Demirezen & Akhan, 2017; Günay et al., 2016; Johannesson & Olin, 2024; Köprülü, 2013; Sönmez & Akyel, 2017).

5.6. Implementing Action Research: Teachers' Ability to Conduct Classroom Research

RQ6: Are English language teachers able to conduct research in classrooms using action research methodology?

Following the teacher research training course, PTs ($n = 5$) engaged in a collaborative action research process in their classrooms, guided by the researcher. At this stage, the action research processes undertaken by the PTs were examined in depth. The findings indicate that PTs have gained the ability to conduct action research; still, this process involved both individual and structural challenges. Teachers' positive perspectives on action research methodology, despite the difficulties in implementation, are often reported in the literature (Bialen, 2025; Mermer & Soyer, 2021; Mitton-Kükner, 2016).

All the PTs found the action research process both feasible and instructive within the teaching context, stating that it is possible to identify classroom-related problems and generate solutions to them. While PT1 and PT2 noted that this methodology can easily be implemented with only minor modifications in classrooms, PT3 and PT5 emphasised its feasibility and benefits. On the other hand, during the interview, PT4 briefly outlined the action research process and summarised the process as an enjoyable and interesting activity. However, some noteworthy obstacles were encountered during implementation. For instance, PT1 pointed out her students' lack of motivation and affirmed that they showed quite a little interest in learning English, which prevented the successful implementation of the action plan. PT2 and PT5 similarly complained about difficulties arising from the students' reliance on traditional teaching methods, and contended that innovative practices require more time to be adopted. These findings suggest that, particularly in English classes, students might exhibit resistance owing to their habitual learning behaviours, especially during practice-based activities like speaking. In particular, some statements of PTs indicate that conducting and completing action research in the short term is rather challenging, given the classroom environments where established routines need to be broken.

Throughout the entire process, PTs' systematic approach to conducting action research is particularly remarkable, as the stages of problem definition, literature review, planning, implementation, data collection and analysis, and reflection were carried out properly. PT4 explained that the data collection tools and data analysis methods have brought a sense of systematisation and meaning to the teaching process. Supporting this

view, PT1 commented that her students had enjoyed the data collection process, and she was surprised by their participation in the focus group discussion. Highlighting the efficacy of teamwork, PTs expressed that sharing experiences among colleagues was quite satisfying in terms of alleviating the sense of isolation and that the exchange of ideas and suggestions contributed to their professional development. This finding highlights that teachers can enhance their knowledge base and performance in a collaborative learning community. The successful completion of action research implementations by PTs indicates that the training programme offered an effective research model, and that PTs were able to put the learnt concepts into practice. Especially, PT3's remark, "teacher research course helped us refresh our minds and made us aware and consider the teaching as a whole and more systematic", demonstrates that action research has directly contributed to teacher cognition. This outcome validates and strengthens Farrell's (2015) "holistic reflective practice" approach, which encompasses not only teachers' reflections on their classroom practices but also their beliefs, values, emotions and pedagogical decisions through a comprehensive lens.

As a conclusion, PTs were able to conduct action research in classrooms and largely generate authentic, data-based and systematic solutions to classroom-oriented problems. Nonetheless, the findings highlight the requirement to support methodological guidance, effective time management, and a collaborative institutional culture to ensure the sustainability of the research among teachers. The results show similarities with those of recent research in the field (Bilican et al., 2021; Burns & Westmacott, 2018; Chen, 2020, 2022; Doğan & Kırkgöz, 2022; Fırat & Dinçer, 2024; Johannesson & Olin, 2024; Mertler, 2021; Poulton, 2023; Yuan & Burns, 2017).

5.7. Post-Research Perceptions: Teachers' Reflections on the Programme

RQ7: What are the perceptions of English language teachers on teacher research following the course and the action research experience?

The latest findings of the current research suggest that, after completing the training course and subsequent action research, PTs underwent a significant change in how they perceived research. They had previously described research as *complicated, irrelevant, difficult, time-consuming*, and *tough*; however, this situation changed thanks to the research process, and PTs' perspectives on research evolved, seeing research as

uncomplicated, simple, clear, easy, reflective, and feasible. The data collected throughout the study revealed that all the PTs developed a more positive, open and functional perspective towards both the concept of teacher research and its contribution to classroom practices. This transformation was not limited to an increase in conceptual awareness; it also brought about a noticeable change in perceptions of professional identity, pedagogical approach, and classroom decision-making processes.

It is clearly seen that before their research experience, PTs had acknowledged research as mostly an “academic and theoretical activity” that was difficult to attain; however, following the course and implementation processes, this perception shifted towards the viewpoint that research is contextual, feasible and integrable into teaching. In the context of teachers’ beliefs, Borg (2015) argues that teachers’ pedagogical learning, when reinforced by experience, has the potential to transform their cognitive schemata and professional beliefs, thereby shaping their professional practices in depth. In a similar vein, PTs stated that they had previously considered research as “abstract and complicated” but then realised that it could be directly related to instructional practices. Such a shift in their view demonstrates that research shifted from being “academic knowledge irrelevant to practice” to becoming “a tool for addressing practical problems” in PTs’ minds. As Kemmis and McTaggart (2007) emphasise, this outcome directly points to the notion that research should be consistent with reality. The majority of PTs described teacher research with some positive adjectives such as *refreshing, enlightening, encouraging* and *supportive*. Such conceptualisations imply that the overall research process not solely provided the teachers with knowledge but also had an impact on their attitudes, self-perceptions, and motivations. Notably, despite his 22 years of professional experience, PT3’s appreciation of the training course as an opportunity for professional transformation reveals that teacher research offers a supportive learning environment for both novice and experienced teachers. Thus, it is a critical step for teachers to be lifelong reflective practitioners who

subject their own beliefs of teaching and learning to critical examination, by articulating these beliefs and comparing these beliefs to their actual classroom practices to see if there are any contradictions between practice and underlying beliefs (Farrell, 2015, p. 9).

PTs’ emphasis on the researcher-trainer’s background as a teacher, perceived as reassuring and contributing to integrating research into the real classroom context, points

to the significance of modelling in effective professional development programmes. Zeichner (2003) advocates that, for teacher education to be effective, the educators should possess not only theoretical knowledge but also field expertise and practical experience. This condition facilitates a shift in teachers' mindsets from "research is not for me" to a transformation of identity of "I can conduct research as well".

In short, in the aftermath of the training and implementation, PTs' perceptions of research have shifted in three aspects:

1. Conceptual Transformation: It is observed that the teachers who participated in the action research programme experienced a shift in their perception of research, from an abstract concept to a practical and meaningful framework. Dikilitaş and Yaylı (2018) assert that action research enhances teachers' professional identity by developing traits such as sensitivity, knowledge-seeking practitioner, inward reflection, and collaborative empathy. Banegas et al. (2023) emphasise that involving language teacher educators in action research processes makes their conceptual perspectives more systematic, contextual, and structured.

2. Pedagogical Transformation: The adoption of research as an integral part of the teaching process enabled PTs to integrate research into daily teaching practices. Such an integration allowed them to develop a solution-oriented perspective on students' needs and contextual problems. A community study based on online action research, conducted by Dikilitaş and Yaylı (2018), revealed that the research process had a direct impact on teachers' development of their own instructional strategies, and that the participants reported they restructured both their teaching and the students' learning processes.

3. Identity Shift: Through the current research, PTs seemed to internalise a researcher identity. All five PTs' intention to continue their career as teacher-researchers indicates that they have already embraced this new professional identity. Nevertheless, though they seemed to have adopted a researcher identity in such a short time, the sustainability of this new identity requires perseverance and coping with the challenges ahead. There are, however, findings in the literature reporting the adoption of a researcher identity by in-service teachers. Barkhuizen (2021), for example, investigated language teacher educators' identity dilemmas between their academic and field-level roles, and found that action research fostered their identity towards a more agentic level, referring to the ability to direct personal development and to be autonomous in decision-making. In the Turkish context, recent studies indicate that the teacher-researcher identity

enhances teachers' professional beliefs (Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022) and that action research leads to the reconstruction of professional identity through critical reflection, collaboration, and reconceptualisation of research (Ceylan & Çomoğlu, 2022).

To summarise, the identity transformation of PTs enabled them not only to acquire theoretical knowledge but also to develop professional autonomy and reflective capacity. In this regard, it can be argued that structured, action-oriented programmes, such as the one implemented in this study, can be considered as powerful tools for reforming teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards research.

5.8. Summary

This section provides a detailed discussion of the findings of the study in line with the research questions. Furthermore, the similarities with existing research are highlighted to underscore the contributions of the present study.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study alongside its overall findings. First, the results obtained will be explained by providing a summary of the study. Then, specific areas will be identified in accordance with the scope and findings of this study, such as the reconceptualisation of teacher research towards ownership of a new identity, structural and cultural barriers to research engagement, the role of conceptualised professional learning, and contributions to research and practice. The chapter also includes final reflections and implications for institutions, teachers, and researchers for further investigation in the field.

6.2. Summary of the Study

The current research aimed to explore English language teachers' perceptions of research, the challenges they encountered, and how they would develop a teacher-researcher identity, as well as the relationship between professional practice and research. This study adopted Creswell's (2009) multiphase mixed-methods design and consisted of four main stages, which were document analysis of curricula, a wide-scale survey administration, a teacher research training course and action research, and semi-structured interviews.

The first phase covered the document analysis of ELT programs of 44 state universities in Türkiye. It was observed that all the universities offer Research Methods courses generally in the fourth semester, as a two-credit theoretical course, which indicates that English language teachers graduate with a certain level of research knowledge. The results of the survey administered in the second phase demonstrated that the respondent teachers considered research as a phenomenon based mainly on academic and statistical grounds. Furthermore, the great majority of the teachers stated that they did not read or conduct research, nor did they acknowledge research as a natural part of their profession. Among the main factors hindering research engagement were the lack of time and interest, professional solitude and weak institutional support.

Within the third phase, a teacher research training course was organised, and extensive qualitative investigations were conducted with the participation of five high school English language teachers. During the later stages of the course, the teachers carried out collaborative action research in their classrooms. At the end of the process, it was observed that the teachers experienced a transformation in their perspectives towards research and were able to integrate research into the classroom practice by gaining professional awareness. Moreover, it was noted that they acquired the skill to conduct action research and were able to generate systematic solutions to classroom problems. Within the fourth phase, the data of semi-structured interviews indicated that the teacher research training course and action research altered the teachers' attitudes towards research positively. The participant teachers highlighted the importance of collaboration in maintaining professional solidarity and emotional support during the process. They also exhibited the determination to adapt new strategies and continue research despite student resistance and other challenges. This research experience seemed to foster their reflective thinking and problem-solving skills. Finally, the teachers remarked that they were willing to sustain the teacher-researcher identity, and it was pivotal for professional development.

This study reveals that it is necessary to enhance not only teachers' knowledge but also their attitudes, motivations, and support systems required to increase teachers' engagement in research. The development of the teacher-researcher identity can be possible through structured training programs, reflective environments and collaborative school culture.

6.3. Conclusion of the Study

This study has explored English teachers' conceptualisations of research, their integration of research practices into classroom pedagogy, and their developmental processes through a specifically designed teacher research training course in a holistic and layered manner. Based on Creswell's (2009) multiphase mixed-methods design, the study has established meaningful links between a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data obtained from curriculum analysis, a large-scale survey, teacher training and action research processes, and semi-structured interviews. The findings have yielded valuable insights regarding the gaps between research and pedagogy, the perceptual obstacles hindering research engagement, and the transformative potential of sustainable

and contextualised professional learning.

6.3.1. Reconceptualising Teacher Research: From Distance to Engagement

One of the most significant results of the study is the change in PTs' perceptions of research due to the interaction with the training course and subsequent action research methodology. Before the intervention, PTs used to consider research as an enterprise which was abstract, academic, inaccessible, and irrelevant to classroom realities. Nonetheless, the narratives collected after the intervention demonstrated a remarkable conceptual shift. PTs started to acknowledge research not as an external imposition, but as a practice-oriented process. For instance, PT3's perception that the research process enhanced the systematic thinking and decision-making skills exemplifies the development of reflective capacity, which constitutes a cornerstone of action research and practitioner inquiry (Farrell, 2015).

Such a shift from distance to ownership represents not only a change in viewpoint but the reconstruction of professional identity, too. Having previously identified themselves as mere implementers of the curriculum, the PTs started to reconsider their roles as reflective and data-informed agents of change.

6.3.2. Structural and Cultural Constraints to Research Engagement

Notwithstanding the abovementioned positive changes, the findings do reveal several entrenched structural and cultural barriers that restrict the integration of research into daily teaching practices. The large-scale survey uncovered that most teachers lack the institutional support and confidence to engage in research practices. Out of 112, only three respondent teachers stated they conducted research, while more than two-thirds of them never did so. This result corresponds with other studies that highlight fundamental systemic deterrents to teacher research, such as heavy workload, limited access to research resources, and insufficient methodological training (Beycioğlu et al., 2010; Borg, 2010; Kırkgöz, 2008; Yuan & Burns, 2017).

Moreover, the survey results indicate that, even when teachers are interested in research, they struggle to interpret academic literature, perceive very little connection between published studies and classroom realities, or feel demotivated because of the irrelevance they perceive. These findings highlight a situated theory-practice gap, which many teacher education programmes have yet to bridge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009;

Zeichner, 2003). Although the teacher research training course, implemented in this study, has demonstrated some significant progress, long-term institutional strategies are required to sustain research engagement beyond isolated interventions.

6.3.3. The Role of Contextualised Professional Learning

One of the key contributions of the present study is its demonstration of how teachers' engagement in research can be enhanced considerably through a contextualised training programme. The teachers in this study constantly emphasised the significance of the training course's practicality, accessibility and collaborative spirit. They also appreciated the researcher's stance as an experienced teacher with academic knowledge and teaching experience based on classroom realities, which was a notable factor fostering the teachers' confidence and motivation. These findings corroborate the importance of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), mentoring and teacher agency in professional development (Farrell, 2015).

Additionally, the action research conducted by PTs has revealed that even novice researchers can identify meaningful classroom-related problems, collect relevant data, and generate pertinent insights contextually. The sense of empowerment reported by PTs indicates that research is a practical and powerful approach to teacher-centred research, rather than a domain exclusive to academic circles. Therefore, teacher education and school leadership should promote the structure and discourses that legitimise practitioner knowledge and appreciate research-based professionalism.

6.3.4. Contributions to Research and Practice

The findings of this study contribute significantly to both the theoretical discourse on teacher research and the practical domain of English language teacher education. At the theoretical level, reflecting the theoretical frameworks proposed by Borg (2009) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), the study confirms the dynamic and socially constructed nature of English language teachers' research beliefs and practices. Furthermore, it provides empirical support for the idea that teacher identity can be reconstructed through active participation in research, and thus corroborates the transformative potential of action research proposed by Kemmis et al. (2014).

In practice, the current study offers a reproducible model for the low-cost and high-impact professional development programmes which emphasise contextual relevance,

reflective practice and collaborative learning. The training course and the subsequent action research processes have demonstrated that even teachers with no prior research experience can become competent in designing and conducting research when provided sufficient support. This perspective is particularly critical for in-service teacher education in contexts like Türkiye, where structural boundaries often restrict professional learning opportunities. Moreover, the study highlights the significance of the latest curriculum reform at the pre-service level. While the national curriculum mandates a Research Methods course, the findings have not substantially revealed its positive impacts on English language teachers. In this sense, teacher education programmes should go beyond merely fulfilling formal obligations, and a research-oriented mindset among teacher candidates should be actively fostered.

6.3.5. Final Reflections

Taken together, this study further substantiates that English language teachers can- and indeed were able to- adapt teacher research as a meaningful part of their professional lives with appropriate pedagogical structures, reflective support, and institutional encouragement. Provided that teachers are positioned not only as mere practitioners but also as knowledge producers, both teaching and learning are significantly enhanced. It appears that bridging the gap between theory and practice necessitates more than solely reforming the curriculum; it also requires the reconstruction of teacher professionalism.

Illuminating both the opportunities and challenges of teacher research, the current study contributes to a growing body of academic knowledge base which recognises teachers not only as practitioners but also intellectuals, representative of change and collaborative producers of pedagogical knowledge.

6.4. Implications of the Study

The current study provides significant findings regarding how teacher research can be promoted at the institutional and pedagogical levels for both teacher education programs and in-service teachers. In light of the collected data, four key levels of practice-oriented implications have been outlined.

6.4.1. Implications for Universities

Some structural adjustments are proposed for the university departments that prepare prospective teachers. The limited content and duration of the Research Methods course in the current curriculum might affect teacher candidates' ability to build sufficient expertise. Therefore, it is crucial to introduce the concept of teacher research to prospective teachers beyond providing them with theoretical research knowledge (Farrell, 2015). In this regard, it is recommended that senior students be brought together with in-service teacher-researchers as a part of the practicum period. The establishment of "expert-novice interaction" during this process will allow teacher candidates to observe classroom research practices, receive mentoring support and gain more practical awareness regarding the development of a researcher identity (Loughran, 2013; Zeichner, 2010).

6.4.2. Implications for the MONE

It is also recommended that "Teacher Research Units" be established under the auspices of the MONE, specifically within the scope of provincial and district directorates. In these units, postgraduate-level teachers who conduct teacher research can actively work. Employing these teachers, continuous professional development programs, teacher training courses, seminars, and research-oriented workshops can be organised for other in-service teachers. In this way, teachers will be supported to become individuals who not only consume but also produce and share knowledge (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Furthermore, the dissemination of research practices, carried out by teacher-researchers, via the MONE's official journals and websites, is most likely to promote the prevalence of the teacher research notion (Farrell, 2015). Furthermore, a reward mechanism for teachers who engage in research can also be considered. Such a system might encourage teachers to participate in research practices since they will be provided the necessary motivation for research engagement (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

6.4.3. Implications for Policy Makers and Material Developers

The teacher research approach involves teachers' active participation in systematic classroom observation and problem-solving processes. These processes also require teachers to produce authentic teaching materials, adapt course content to their contexts, and generate solutions to students' needs (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Yet, such an

expectation might impose a considerable time and workload on teachers, as well as pose a significant challenge for teachers, particularly when combined with factors such as classroom demands and lack of institutional support (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Therefore, it is of utmost importance for policymakers and material developers to design adaptive, practice-oriented and interactive content to enhance the teacher research approach. Especially, the EBA (Education Informatics Network) platform of MONE offers a valuable opportunity for such materials to be shared, diversified and made easily accessible for teachers. Remodelled lesson plans based on the principles of teacher research, classroom implementation examples, structured observation forms, data collection templates, and reflective journal samples can be shared via the EBA platform, thereby reducing teachers' workload and enabling them to engage more effectively in research processes. Eventually, it is critical for policymakers and material developers to focus on digital and pedagogical tools that will facilitate and support teachers' research engagements (Darling-Hammond, 2006)..

6.4.4. Implications for Teachers

At the fourth level, there are implications for individual development processes of teachers. The findings of this study reveal teachers' low interest, knowledge and motivation towards research. When combined with professional solitude, time stress and inadequate support, this situation constitutes a barrier that hinders teachers from engaging in research (Farrell, 2015; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Hence, teachers ought to adopt the role of autonomous learners responsible for their own learning, acquire the competence to identify classroom-related problems and develop appropriate solutions, and enhance their reflective practices as a part of professional growth (Day, 1999; Loughran, 2013). Such a transformation, however, can be achieved through the presence of professional learning communities and a culture of collaboration in schools (Stoll et al., 2006).

6.5. Motivation for Further Research

This study examines English language teachers' perceptions of research and the development of researcher identity in a comprehensive and multidimensional manner, while also revealing several limitations and potential areas which can shed light on future research. Initially, because of the small number of participant teachers within the qualitative phase of the study, the findings should be considered exploratory, pointing to

areas that require further research with larger samples. Therefore, long-term studies that will be conducted with a much larger number of teachers from diverse regions should be conducted, providing sufficient data indicating how teacher research is shaped by contextual variables.

In addition, the impacts of the training program conducted within the research process and the action research implementation conducted by five participant teachers largely stem from relatively short-term observations. Hence, the persistence of the teacher-researcher identity should be evaluated through extended longitudinal studies in which it can be more thoroughly investigated how teachers sustain this identity, what kind of difficulties they encounter and how they situate research within their decision-making processes. Furthermore, long-term studies on how teacher candidates develop research competencies during their undergraduate education can provide valuable insights into how teacher-researcher identity emerges in its early stages.

Finally, studies involving multiple stakeholders that give support to teacher research at the institutional level -such as school administrators, curriculum designers and policy makers- are needed. The institutional recognition and sustainability of teacher research are directly related to not only teachers' individual efforts but also to the way in which systemic structures support this process.

In light of these reasons, longitudinal studies on teacher research that are holistic and involve multiple actors have the potential to enrich both the theoretical and practical knowledge, directly enhancing the quality of the education system.

6.6. Summary

In this chapter, an overall summary of the study has been presented. Subsequently, the key findings concerning the participant teachers' interest, knowledge and motivation levels have been reported. The implications regarding teacher education, professional development and educational policies have been specified, and this specification emphasises the necessity of concrete measures to strengthen teacher-researcher identity at both structural and pedagogical levels. Finally, motivations and recommendations for further studies aimed at supporting teacher research have been offered.

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- Zeichner, K. M., & Noffke, S. E. (2001). Practitioner research. *Handbook of research on teaching*, 4, 298-330.
- Zhou, N., Liu, X., Jin, X., Li, T., Wang, C., & Admiraal, W. (2024). Motivation for and challenges in teacher research in underdeveloped areas of northwest China: An exploratory study. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(11), 1064.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Teacher Research Training Course Syllabus

TEACHER RESEARCH TRAINING COURSE *Spring 2024*

COURSE DATES/TIMES/LOCATIONS:

- 1- 26th April 2024 – 15:45 (Department Meeting Room – Video Tape Session)
- 2- 29th April 2024 – 16:10 (Face-to-face Meeting)
- 3- 4th May 2024 – 18:00 (Via Zoom Meeting)
- 4- 7th May 2024 – 16:00 (Via Zoom Meeting)
- 5- 11th May 2024 – 18:00 (Via Zoom Meeting)
- 6- 15th May 2024 – 16:00 (Face-to-face Meeting)
- 7- 22nd May 2024 – 18:00 (Face-to-face Meeting)
- 8- 29th May 2024 – 16:00 (Face-to-face Meeting)
- 9- 3rd June 2024 – 18:00 (Face-to-face Meeting)
- 10- 7th June 2024 – 16:00 (Face-to-face Meeting)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course is comprised of focus group discussion, presentation and application parts with a sampling of five in-service high school English language teachers. The focus group discussion phase involves eliciting the in-service teachers' point of view of research in general terms besides their teaching paradigms in terms of methodology and practice. The presentation and application stages of the course are intended to provide the participants with:

- a- Knowledge about research methodology in general terms,
- b- Detailed knowledge about teacher research concept,
- c- Broad information on reflective teaching; implementing systematic and thoughtful inquiry into practice,
- d- The action research methodology,
- e- The ways of collecting and analysing data,
- f- The ways of finding and examining academic publications as well as making use of the findings,
- g- The ways of implementing action research in their classrooms.

The application stage involves action research which the participant teachers conduct in their classrooms with the guidance of the researcher at regular intervals. During this stage, the participants will be able to take support from the researcher via online communication tools and through systematic observation. Additionally, the teachers will have a chance to share their experiences at weekly scheduled group meetings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of the course, the participants will be able to:

- distinguish between traditional research methodology and teacher research,
- identify reflective teaching and critical pedagogy,
- implement systematic inquiry into classroom practice,
- collect and analyse data,
- search through scientific works,
- conduct action research to solve the problems they encounter in the classroom,
- consider ethical and moral issues related to teacher research,
- disseminate the outcomes of the research conducted in their contexts

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Atay, D. (2008). Teacher research for professional development. *ELT journal*, 62(2), 139-147.
- Borg, S. (2010). Language teacher research engagement. *Language teaching*, 43(4), 391-429.
- Borg, S. (2013). *Teacher research in language teaching: A critical analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Borg, S. (2015). *Teacher Cognition and Language Education: Research and Practice*. London, England: Bloomsbury.
- Brookfield, S. D. (1995). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher*. San-Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Routledge.
- Burns, A. (2019). Action research: Developments, characteristics, and future directions. *The Cambridge handbook of language learning*, 166-185.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (2009). Teacher research as stance. In B. Somekh & S. Noffke (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of educational action research* (pp. 39–49). Sage, London.
- Edwards, E., & Burns, A. (2016). Language teacher-researcher identity negotiation: An ecological perspective. *Tesol Quarterly*, 50(3), 735-745.
- Farrell, T. S. (2015). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Feldman, A. (2025). Action research for awareness, advocacy, and activism. *Educational Action Research*, 33(2), 225-232.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner*, (3rd ed.). Geelong: Deakin University Press.
- Merriam S., (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation: Revised and expanded from qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mills, G. E. (2000). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458.

ADDITIONAL RELATED TEXTS (Recommended)

- Altricher, H., Feldman, A., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (2005). *Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to action research across the professions*. Routledge.
- Borg, S. (2006). Conditions for Teacher Research. In *English Teaching Forum* (Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 22-27). US Department of State. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs, SA-5, 2200 C Street NW 4th Floor, Washington, DC 20037.
- Elliott, J. (1990). Teachers as researchers: Implications for supervision and for teacher education. *Teaching and teacher education*, 6(1), 1-26.

Merriam, S. B. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation: Revised and expanded from qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.

Richards, J. C. (1995). Towards reflective teaching. *ENGLISH TEACHERS JOURNAL-ISRAEL*, 59-63.

Course Schedule:

Session 1 – Discussion & Introduction to Teacher Research(er)

1- Focus group discussion

2- Introduction to Teacher Research – Presentation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Borg, 2010)

Additional Reading: Atay, 2008; Borg, 2010, 2013.

Session 2 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology

1- Teacher research (Borg, 2015; Edwards & Burns, 2016)

2- Action Research Methodology (Burns, 2010; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Mills, 2000)

Additional Reading: Burns, 2019; Feldman, 2025.

Session 3 – Reflection in teaching

1- Identifying a problem and Data Collection Tools

2- Reflective Practice (Brookfield, 1995; Farrell, 2015; Schön, 1983)

Additional Reading: Farrell, 2015.

Session 4 – Strategies for Action Research 1 (McTaggart, 1994)

1- Organising, analysing and interpreting qualitative data (Merriam, 2009)

2- Searching for essential resources for materials

Session 5 – Strategies for Action Research 2

1- Organising, analysing and interpreting qualitative data (Merriam, 2009)

Session 6 – Strategies for Action Research 3

1- Developing a plan to address the problem

Session 7 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology

1- Implementation Phase 1

Session 8 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology

1- Implementation Phase 2

Session 9 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology

1- Evaluation and reflection

Session 10 – Teacher Research(er) & Action Research Methodology

1- Reporting the results

Appendix 2. Weekly Lesson Plan Sample

LESSON PLAN Ref:	ING - 10	Course Ref:	II. SEMESTER
Subject / Course:	ENGLISH		
Topic:	HEROES OF A CULTURE		
Lesson Title:	MODERN HEROES & HEROINES		
Level:	Intermediate	Lesson Duration:	4 CLASS HOURS
Lesson Objectives:			
1-) Talking about imaginary situations 2-) Expressing wishes 3-) Guessing meaning from the context			
Summary of Tasks / Actions:			
1-) ICE BREAKER ACTIVITY: The Hot Seat - Put a chair at the front of the room with its back facing the board; this is the hot seat, and a student volunteer must sit here. Then, write a word on the board (for beginners, tell them the category or theme of words, such as jobs or food – ideally vocabulary they are already studying). Then, the other students try to prompt the hot-seater into guessing what the word is by describing it without saying the actual word (fun with famous people too!). For example, if you've told your beginner class the category is fruit and the word on the board is pineapple, the students can say things like: • It's a big fruit. • It grows in tropical places. • It's yellow inside. • It has spines. With guessing games like this one, students are really enthusiastic about trying to get their peers to guess correctly and win the game. The desire to guess takes over, and formerly reserved students forget that they were ever afraid to speak up in English. 2-) The video on the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2OZxdWpd-o&ab_channel=ArmaganCatak is watched and the teacher ask questions related to it. a- When was Atatürk born? b- What was his father's name? c- Which school did he go to first? 3-) Pre-reading activities for the passage (pg 108) are done: a- What makes a hero or heroine? (Eliciting information through adjectives) b- Who is your favourite heroine in Turkish history? Why? 4-) The reading passage is skimmed by the Ss. a- In this activity, students are expected to read the text and do the exercises. Monitor your students and ask them to answer the questions when they finish reading. You should tell them not to worry about unknown words and to focus on the key words that will help them do the activity. Give your students a suitable amount of time for reading the text and make an oral check for the answers. b- The aim of the activity is to make students guess the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary using contextual clues from a text about modern heroes and heroines. Ask your students to study the words in bold in the text and match them to their meanings given. Let them work individually and give them some time for the activity. Make an oral check for the answers. 5-) FOCUS ON FORM: The conditionals - Type II is taught to the class with a few examples.			

- If I had enough money, I would help the poor. - I would travel to space if I had a chance.

--> SECOND CONDITIONAL IN MOVIES: The video on the link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GebAK6fnjtg&ab_channel=ENGLISHWITHDASHA is watched and repetitions are done when necessary.

6-) PRACTISE THE FORM: Students are given a chance to make true sentences by using their own words. This will also help them to practise 'if clause type 2' as in Let's Explore Part. Ask your students to complete the sentences for themselves. Let your students fill in the blanks individually and finally, read their sentences aloud when the activity is completed.

7-) The aim of this activity is to make students talk about their personal hero (who he or she is and why he or she is their hero or heroine). Tell students that below is a list of some modern heroes or heroines and why people see them as their heroes or heroines. Ask them to look at the list and choose who their hero or heroine is by stating reasons. Remind them that they can choose other people even if they are not in the list. Give them a few minutes to think about these questions and practise what they would like to say. Then, choose some volunteers and let them speak. Make sure that all the students are involved in the discussion as this is a good opportunity for them to develop their speaking skills. (pg 110)

8-) LISTENING & SPEAKING: Students are supposed to talk about their favorite cartoon superheroes or heroines and their abilities. Before starting the activity, ask them a few questions such as:

E.g. - Do you watch cartoons?

- Which cartoon character/characters do you like most? Why?

- Is he/she a superhero/superheroine?

- What can he/she do?

Set a time limit of 5 minutes and let them think and choose one of their favorite cartoon superhero or superheroine, write his or her name in the blank and tick his or her abilities. Make sure that each student has completed the activity and choose some volunteer students to share their answers with the class.

9-) LEXIS: Give them some time to think about the situation and study what they would like to say related to it. Also, remind them that an example is given as a guide so that they can benefit from it during production. When the activity is completed by all of the students, choose some volunteers and let them share their answers with their friends. Try to correct the grammar and pronunciation mistakes, only if necessary.

10-) READING SECTION:

a- Pre-Reading Activities: Ask them to look at the picture and think about what it reminds them of. You can also ask them a few questions such as:

Eg. -What do you see in the picture?

- Who do you think the lamp belongs to?

- Do you think it is magic?

- What did you associate the lamp with?

It is not important for them to give the correct answers as they will find them in the reading text soon.

b- In this reading activity, students should use the skimming technique to find out the gist of the text. They should only focus on the keywords and try not to worry about the unknown words or phrases. Give your students some time to complete the activity and check the answers.

c- Ask your students to read the text again. But this time, they should use the scanning technique to look for specific details. They are expected to guess the meanings of some words from the context and focus on the keywords that will be of help to do the activity. Let them find out the difficulties and wishes in the text and fill in the grid by using them. Remind them to look at the example given so that they can write the sentences more easily. Enough time should be given for the activity and the answers should be checked orally.

11-) LET'S EXPLORE: In this part, students are expected to study the 'wish clauses' from the text. Draw their attention on how these sentences are formed and help them elicit the use and usage of the new grammatical pattern. Students should circle the correct options to complete the given sentences about the rules for 'wish clauses'. Set a time limit of 2-3 minutes and then, check the answers.

12-) Students are supposed to work in pairs. Ask them to read the statements in both columns and match them by understanding relationships through cohesive devices, discourse markers or meaning associations. When they are ready for oral check, let them share their answers. (pg 114)

13-) LISTENING: The aim here is to prepare the students for the listening task and help them to do some brainstorming using the image given.

a- Ask your students to look at the image and think about the questions in a suitable amount of time. Motivate them to share their opinions freely since there is no right or wrong answer. Suggested answers:

1. The man is standing, his arms tied on his chest. His shadow is also standing but it is holding a cup in his hands, over his head.

2. The cup in the image symbolizes your dreams' coming true.

3. If you imagine, you will win.

4. In the picture the man imagines himself as a winner and this is the illustration of his imagination.

b- Students are expected to listen to the dialogue again and find out what Mary's problem is. Play the tapescript once and let your students take notes in a few minutes. When it's done, ask the volunteer students to share their answers with their friends.

14-) TREE of WISHES ACTIVITY: Explain your students that the wish tree image and the points of wishes are given to help them narrow down the issues that they are expected to write about. Set a time limit of 7-8 minutes and let your students work individually. Monitor and guide them instead of helping while doing the activity on their own as this activity will help students make a revision of the new grammatical pattern. Ask volunteer students to share their wishes with their friends when the activity is completed. Don't interfere in their speech unless it's necessary.

15-) GAME TIME: The "Wishes" game on the link <https://www.baamboozle.com/game/432884> is played together.

Materials / Equipment:

- 1- Interactive course book
- 2- Smart Board
- 3- Youtube video 1
- 4- Youtube video 2
- 5- Game

References:

- 1- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2OZxdWpd-o&ab_channel=ArmaganCitak
- 2- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GebAK6fnjtg&ab_channel=ENGLISHWITHDASHA
- 3- <https://www.baamboozle.com/game/432884>

Appendix 3. Survey of English Language Teachers' Views of Research

1

English Language Teachers' Views of Research

Değerli meslektaşım,

Çukurova İsmail Kulak Anadolu Lisesi'nde İngilizce öğretmenisi olarak görev yapmaktayım. Doktora çalışmamın bir parçası olarak, Adana'nın merkez ilçelerindeki liselerde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin bilimsel araştırmaya yönelik algılarını ölçmek için hazırlanmış bu anketi doldurmanız çalışmaya büyük katkı sağlayacaktır. Anketin süresi ortalama 15 dakikadır ve cevaplarınız kesinlikle doğru veya yanlış olarak değerlendirilmeyecektir. Yabancı dil öğretimi alanına sunacağınız katkıdan dolayı şimdiden teşekkürlerimi sunarım.

Saygılarımla

Emrah AKDAĞ
İngilizce Öğretmeni

SECTION 1: ABOUT YOURSELF

1. The district where you work:

☐ Çukurova ☐ Seyhan ☐ Yüreğir ☐ Sarıçam

2. Years of experience as an English language teacher:

☐ 0 – 4 ☐ 5 – 9 ☐ 10 – 14 ☐ 15 – 19 ☐ 20 – 24 ☐ 25+

3. Highest degree earned:

☐ Lisans ☐ Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐ Diğer

4. Type of high school where you teach English:

☐ Anatolian High School ☐ Science High School
☐ Social Sciences High School ☐ Vocational and Technical High School
☐ Religious Vocational High School ☐ Other

SECTION 2: SCENARIOS

The purpose of this section is to elicit your views on the kinds of activities which can be called research. There are no right or wrong answers. Read each description below and choose one answer to say to what extent you feel the activity described is an example of research.

1. A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

2. A teacher read about a new approach to teaching writing and decided to try it out in his class over a period of two weeks. He video recorded some of his lessons and collected samples of learners' written work. He analyzed this information then presented the results to his colleagues at a staff meeting.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

3. A teacher was doing an MA course. She read several books and articles about grammar teaching then wrote an essay of 6000 words in which she discussed the main points in those readings.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

4. A university lecturer gave a questionnaire about the use of computers in language teaching to 500 teachers. Statistics were used to analyze the questionnaires. The lecturer wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

5. Two teachers were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and wrote a short article about what they learned for the newsletter of the national language teachers' association.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

6. To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a teacher first tested two classes. Then for four weeks she taught vocabulary to each class using a different method. After that she tested both groups again and compared the results to the first test. She decided to use the method which worked best in her own teaching.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

7. A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a report which he submitted to the Ministry of Education.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

8. Mid-way through a course, a teacher gave a class of 30 students a feedback form. The next day, five students handed in their completed forms. The teacher read these and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

9. A teacher trainer asked his trainees to write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments, the trainer decided to write an article on the trainees' ideas about motivation. He submitted his article to a professional journal.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

10. The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She gave all teachers a questionnaire to complete, studied their responses, then presented the results at a staff meeting.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐
---	---	---	---

SECTION 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD QUALITY RESEARCH

1. Here is a list of characteristics that research may have. Tick ONE box for each to give your opinion about how important it is in making a piece of research 'good'.

	Unimportant	Moderately important	Unsure	Important	Very important
a. A large number of people are studied					
b. A large volume of information is collected					
c. Experiments are used					
d. Hypothesis are tested					
e. Information is analyzed statistically					
f. Questionnaires are used					
g. The researcher is objective					
h. The results apply to many ELT contexts					
i. The results are made public					
j. The results give teachers ideas they can use					
k. Variables are controlled					

SECTION 4: RESEARCH CULTURE

Tick ONE box for each statement below to give your opinion about the general attitude to research in your school.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Agree strongly
Teachers do research themselves					
The management encourages teachers to do research					
Teachers feel that doing research is an important part of their job					
Teachers have access to research books and journals					
Teachers have opportunities to learn about current research					
Teachers talk about research					
Teachers are given support to attend ELT conferences					
Time for doing research is built into teachers' workloads					
Teachers read published research					

SECTION 5: READING RESEARCH

1. How frequently do you read published language teaching research? (Tick ONE)

Never ☐	Rarely ☐	Sometimes ☐	Often ☐
--------------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------

If you choose Rarely or Never go straight to Question 4 in this section.

2. You said that you read published language teaching research often or sometimes. Which of the following do you read? (Tick all that apply)

Books	
Academic Journals (e.g. TESOL Quarterly)	
Professional Journals (e.g. ELT Journal)	
Professional Magazines (e.g. ET Professional)	
Newsletters (e.g. IATEFL SIG Newsletter)	
Web-based sources of research	
Other (please specify)	

3. To what extent does the research you read influence your teaching? Choose ONE.

It has no influence on what I do in the classroom	
It has a slight influence on what I do in the classroom	
It has a moderate influence on what I do in the classroom	
It has a fairly strong influence on what I do in the classroom	
It has a strong influence on what I do in the classroom	

4. In Question 1 of this section, you said that you read published research rarely or never. Here are some possible reasons for this. Tick those that are true for you.

I am not interested in research	
I do not have time	
I do not have access to books and journals	
I find published research hard to understand	
Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom	
Other reasons (please specify)	

SECTION 6: DOING RESEARCH

1. How frequently do you do research yourself? (Tick ONE)

Never ☐	Rarely ☐	Sometimes ☐	Often ☐
--------------------------------	---------------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------

If you choose Rarely or Never go straight to Question 3 in this section.

2. You said you do research often or sometimes. Below are a number of possible reasons for doing research. Tick those which are true for you.

I do research ...

a. As part of a course I am studying	
b. Because I enjoy it	
c. Because it is good for my professional development	
d. Because it will help me get promotion	
e. Because administration expects me to	
f. Because other teachers can learn from the findings of my work	
g. To contribute to the improvement of the school generally	
h. To find better ways of teaching	
i. To solve problems in my teaching	
j. Others (Please specify)	

3. You said that you do research rarely or never. Below are a number of possible reasons for not doing research. Tick those which are true for you.

I don't do research because...

a. I do not know enough about research methods	
b. My job is to teach not to do research	
c. I do not have time for research	
d. Administration discourages it	
e. I am not interested in doing research	
f. I need someone to advise me but no one is available	
g. Most of my colleagues do not do research	
h. I do not have access to the books and journals I need	
i. The learners would not co-operate if I asked their help	
j. Other teachers would not co-operate if I asked their help	
k. Other reasons (Please specify)	

The questionnaire ends here. Thank you for your contribution.



Appendix 4. Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. You have experienced a teacher-researcher course and action research. Has it led to any negative or positive change in your perception of what research is?
2. What do you think about the teacher research course?
3. Could you tell me about your experiences during the action research process?
4. What do you think worked well and did not work that well during the action research programme?
5. Did you find the action research method applicable and beneficial for your classroom context?
6. Do you feel more confident in carrying out your own research in your classroom context after the programme completion?
7. Would you like to share your experiences you had in this programme with your colleagues?
8. In general, do you find the notion of teacher research beneficial for your teaching practices?
9. Do you intend to continue your career as a teacher-researcher?

Appendix 5. English Classroom Observation Sheet 1

English Classroom Observation Sheet

Researcher: Emrah AKDAĞ

Date:/...../2024

Duration : 40 mins

Grade : Class size :

Focus In line with the claims of the participants as a result of self-reflection, the course will be observed in terms of speaking skills.

1. In relation to the speaking activities during the learning process.

Did the students

seem willing to speak?

☐ mostly ☐ to some extent ☐ no

answer the questions their teacher asked?

☐ mostly ☐ to some extent ☐ no

manage to say what they wanted?

☐ easily ☐ with scaffolding ☐ no

seem to understand the English that the others used?

☐ easily ☐ with scaffolding ☐ no

manage to keep the talk going smoothly?

☐ yes ☐ it was rather broken up ☐ it was very broken up

pronounce well enough to be understood?

☐ yes, always ☐ not really ☐ no

use suitable words and phrases?

☐ yes ☐ not really ☐ no

manage the necessary grammar?

☐ yes ☐ not really ☐ no

have opportunities to share their ideas with all group members?

☐ yes ☐ not really ☐ no

consider a number of ideas before coming to a decision?

☐ yes ☐ not really ☐ no

2. Was the teaching learning techniques used either by the teacher and students appropriate to the topic being discussed?

☐ yes ☐ no

Comments:

.....

3. Was the learning media used feasible to the topic being discussed?

☐ yes ☐ no

Comments:

.....

4. How much of the lesson did it take for students to speak?

.....seconds

Comments:

.....

5. Were there any obvious learning needs (or problems)?

--



Appendix 6. English Classroom Observation Sheet 2

English Class Observation Sheet

Researcher: *Emrah AKDAĞ*

Date:/...../2024

Duration : 40 mins

Grade : Class size :

Classroom Atmosphere

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Students' Performance

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Teacher's Performance

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Activities

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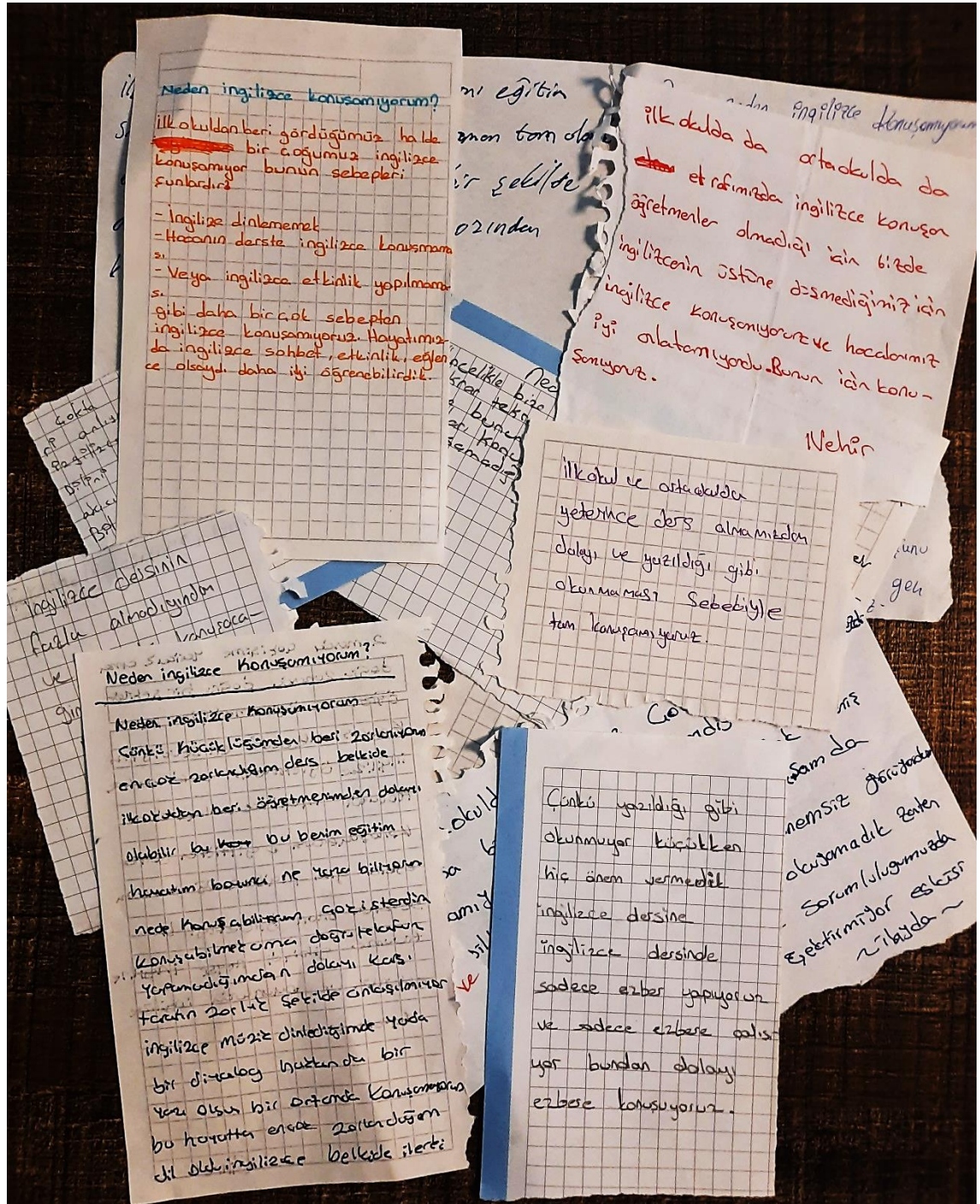
Others

.....

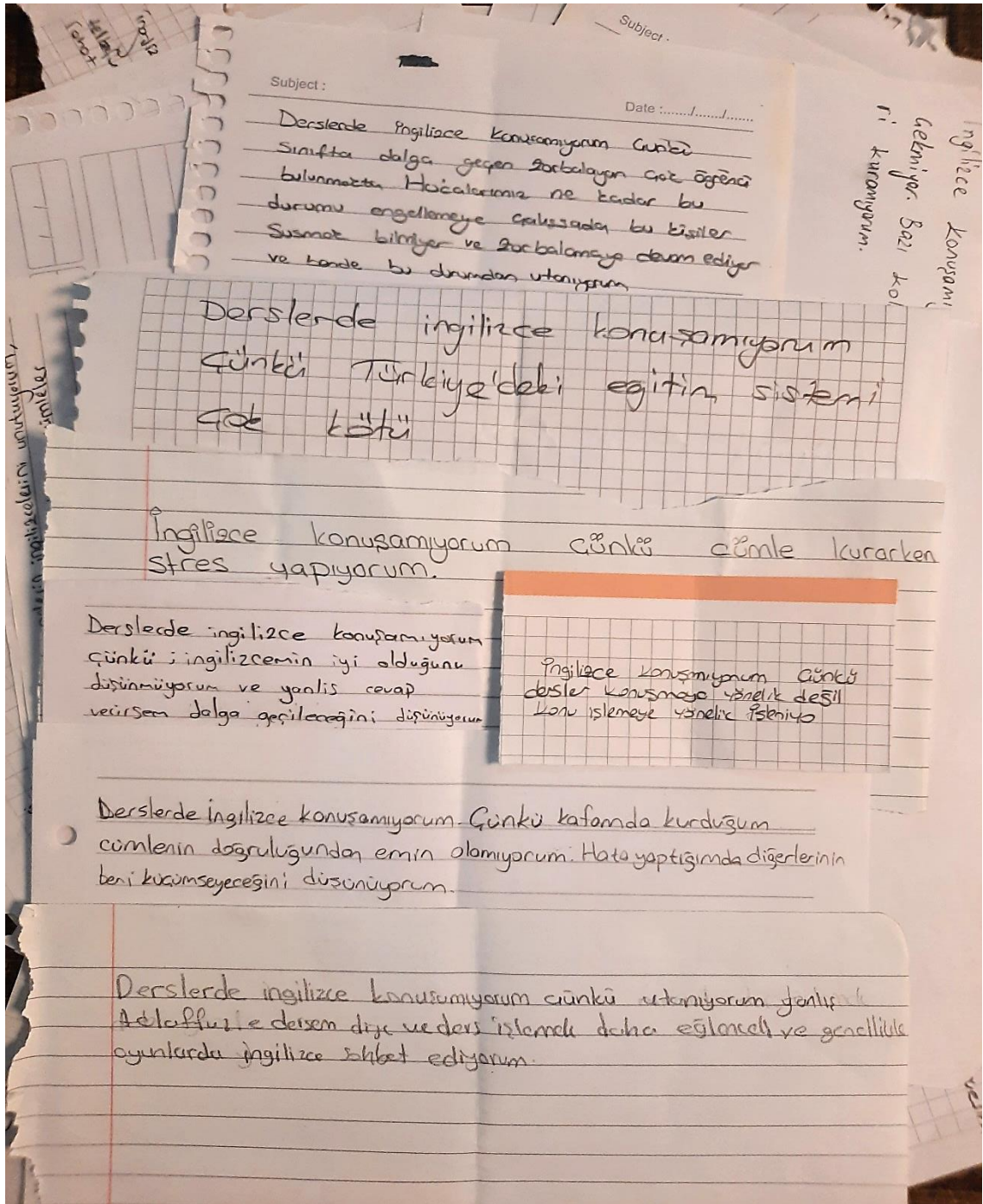
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Appendix 7. Samples from Classroom Data Collection Process

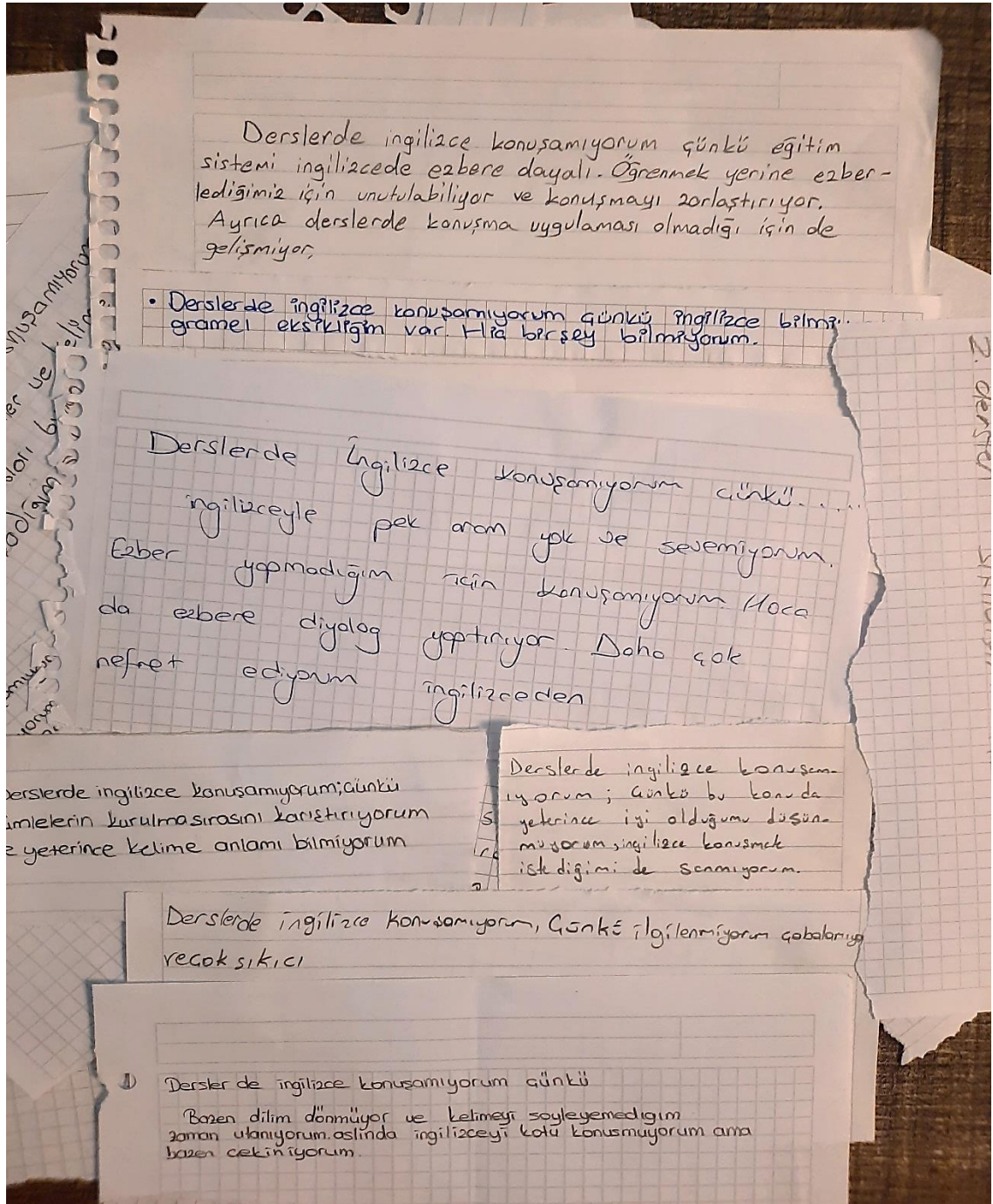
Voices from PT1's Classroom



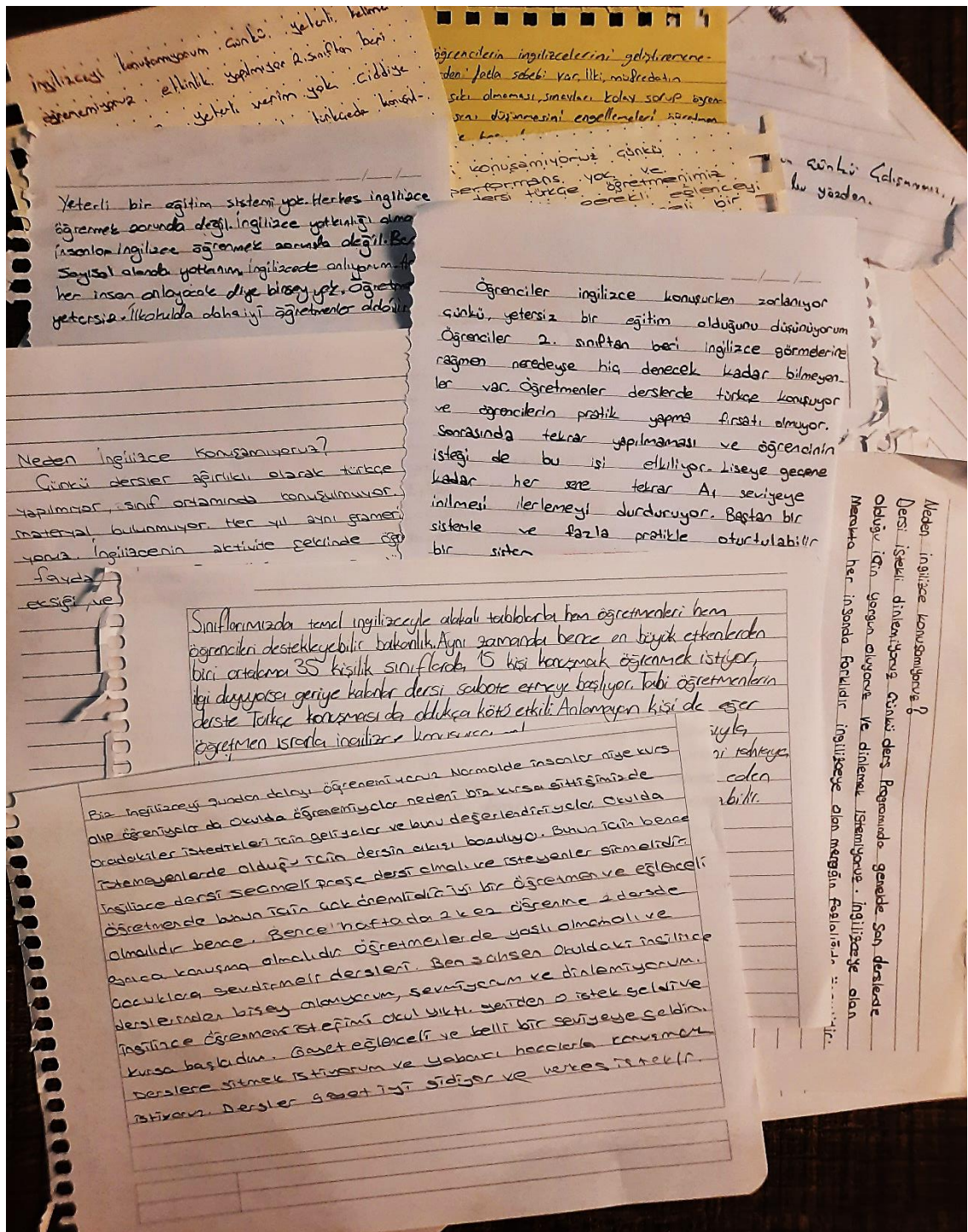
Voices from PT2's Classroom



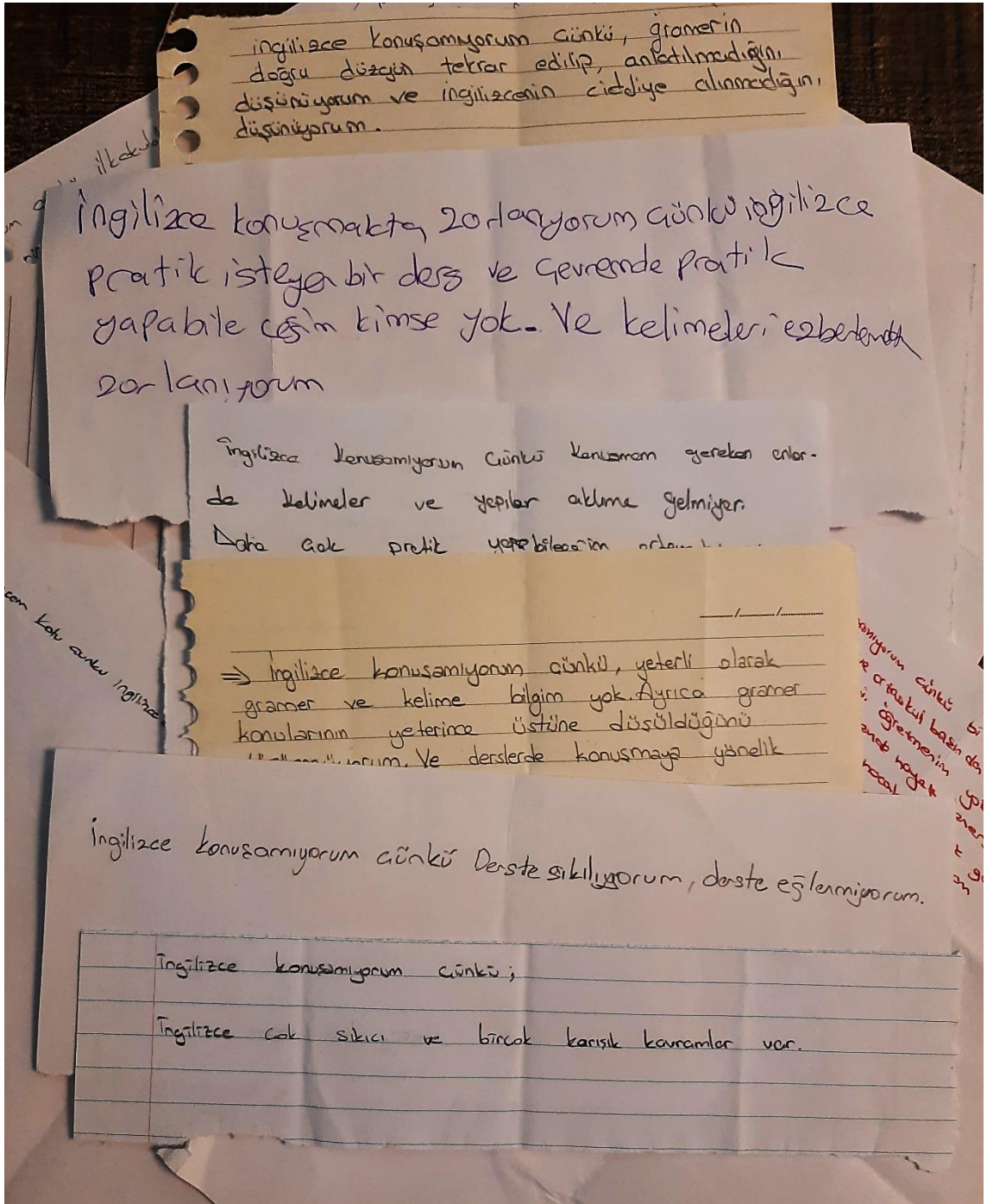
Voices from PT3's Classroom



Voices from PT4's Classroom



Voices from PT5's Classroom



Appendix 8. Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the research: *English language teacher as researcher: Constructing a bridge between practice and theory*

- ☐ I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- ☐ I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- ☐ I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- ☐ I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- ☐ I understand that participation involves face-to-face and web meetings, classroom observations, classroom research and interview.
- ☐ I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- ☐ I agree to my interview being audio and video recorded.
- ☐ I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- ☐ I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- ☐ I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in dissertation and published work.
- ☐ I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- ☐ I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's archive until the dissertation has been confirmed by the thesis monitoring board.
- ☐ I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years.
- ☐ I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- ☐ I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature

...../...../2024

Participant

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature

...../...../2024

Researcher

Contact e-mail :

Contact number: