



**CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY ENGLISH
TEACHERS IN RURAL STATE SCHOOLS OF
TÜRKİYE ON THE WAY OF BECOMING
PROFESSIONALS**

Doktora Tezi

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Eskişehir 2023

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DOKTORA TEZİ

**Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
İngilizce Eğitimi Programı**

Danışman: Prof.Dr. Özgr YILDIRIM

**Eskişehir
Anadolu Üniversitesi
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FINAL APPROVAL FOR THE THESIS



ÖZET

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ KIRSAL DEVLET OKULLARINDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN PROFESYONEL OLMA YOLUNDA YAŞADIKLARI ZORLUKLAR

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Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı

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Danışman: Prof.Dr. Özgür YILDIRIM

Öğretmen eğitimi alanında birçok araştırmacı öğretmenlik mesleğinin en zor mesleklerden biri olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bunun temel sebeplerinden biri ise öğretmenlik deneyimi sırasında ortaya çıkan zorluklardır. Bu nedenle araştırmacılar donanımlı öğretmen eksikliğinden ve öğretmenleri meslekte tutmanın oldukça güç olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Globalleşmenin ve toplumsal değişimlerin etkisiyle öğretmenin eğitimdeki rolü de önemli ölçüde değişime uğramıştır. Günümüzde İngilizce öğrenimine duyulan ihtiyacın artması dolayısıyla, donanımlı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin toplumun her kademesinde istihdam edilip edilmediği sorusu akıllara gelmektedir. Bu nedenle bu araştırma Türkiye'nin taşra okullarında görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin durumunu incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma kapsamında Kars iline bağlı taşrada yer alan okullarında çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin karşılaştıkları zorluklar ele alınmıştır. Araştırma durum çalışması deseniyle tasarlanmış ve nitel veri toplama araçlarından yararlanılmıştır. Araştırmaya Kars iline bağlı taşradaki MEB'e bağlı ortaokullarda tam zamanlı çalışan 11 İngilizce öğretmeni katılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları taşrada çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin birçok zorlukla karşılaştığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Öğretmenlerin yaşadığı temel zorluklar şunlardır: Öğretimle ilişkili, eğitim sistemiyle ilişkili, öğrenciyle ilişkili, öğretmenle ilişkili, okulla ilişkili, aileyle ilişkili, teknolojiyle ilişkili, kırsallıkla ilişkili ve pandemi süreciyle ilişkili zorluklar. Araştırma bulguları ayrıca taşradaki öğretmenlerin yaşadığı zorlukların öğretmen profesyonel gelişim süreçlerini olumsuz etkilediğini ve bu yüzden çoğunlukla taşrada gelişim süreçleri için herhangi bir çaba içerisinde olmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: İngilizce öğretmeni, Zorluklar, Taşra, Öğretmen eğitimi.

ABSTRACT

CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS IN RURAL STATE SCHOOLS OF TÜRKİYE ON THE WAY OF BECOMING PROFESSIONALS

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Many researchers in the field of teacher education state that the teaching profession is one of the most difficult professions. One of the main reasons for this is the difficulties that arise during the teaching experience. For this reason, the researchers state that there is a lack of qualified teachers and that it is very difficult to keep teachers in the profession. With the effect of globalization and social changes, the roles of teachers in education have changed significantly. Today, the need for English learning has increased, the question of whether well-qualified English teachers are employed at all levels of society should be considered. Therefore, this research aims to examine the situation of English teachers working in rural schools in Türkiye. The research investigated the difficulties faced by English teachers working in state schools located in rural districts of the Kars province. The research was designed with a case study design and qualitative data collection tools were used. 11 English teachers working full-time and appointed to MEB in rural secondary state schools in the Kars province participated in the study. The findings of the study revealed that rural English teachers experience many challenges. The main challenges faced by teachers are teaching-related, education system-related, student-related, teacher-related, school-related, parent-related, technology-related challenges, rurality challenges, and pandemic effects. The research findings also revealed that the difficulties experienced by the teachers in rural schools negatively affect the teacher professional development processes, and therefore they do not make any effort for their teacher professional development in rural schools.

Keywords: English teacher, Challenges, Rural, Teacher education.

02.03.2023

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES

I hereby truthfully declare that this thesis is an original work prepared by me; that I have behaved in accordance with the scientific ethical principles and rules throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis and presentation of my work; that I have cited the sources of all the data and information that could be obtained within the scope of this study, and included these sources in the references section; and that this study has been scanned for plagiarism with “scientific plagiarism detection program” used by Anadolu University, and that “it does not have any plagiarism” whatsoever. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

.....

Gökhan Yigit

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EBA: Education Technology Web

HEC: Higher Education Council

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

In the field of teacher education, a great number of researchers (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Morrison, et al., 2014; Pratt, 2014; Wanzare, 2007) are on the idea that becoming a teacher is one of the challenging professions in the world. As a result of challenges, recruiting qualified teachers and making them stay in the profession are regarded as an important issue because researchers like Hebert and Worthy (2001) express that a high number of teachers tend to drop the profession at the very early stages of their careers because of the challenges they face during their teaching experiences. That is, the challenges experienced in the early years of the profession can be deeply influential on teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors during the teaching process (Michael, et al., 2002). Smithers and Robinson (2003), for instance, inform that the main reasons for leaving from teaching profession are heavy workload, pupil behaviors, and government initiatives.

The question is why teachers tend to exit from the profession. Do they become ready for teaching in their classes after graduation from departments of teacher education? According to Wanzare (2007), teacher training including practicum is not sufficient for becoming a qualified teacher, and henceforth, beginning teachers face many difficult situations in their schools. This runs out of their hope to achieve their expectations about becoming a good teacher. In other words, when they enter the profession for the first time, they realize that teaching is not as simple as they thought and the facts of teaching shock them (Hebert & Worthy, 2001) especially when they realize the varying responsibilities they are in charge of. In this sense, Genç (2016) adds that the roles and responsibilities of teachers are more complex today when compared to the professional lives of teachers in the past since there is a great extension in their responsibilities both in the classroom and the school context. The reason that teachers today have to take on a high number of responsibilities is related to the changes in society from several perspectives such as the changes in politics, the economy, and socio-cultural dynamics. The changes in teachers' perspectives are, to a great extent, to take varying roles and responsibilities regarding the teaching environment. According to Eacute and Esteve (2000), the teaching context is

more complicated today simply because education in the past was a system for rich and elite people, and the classrooms, as a result, were more heterogeneous; therefore, designing suitable activities and managing the classroom was a bit easier in the past. Today, countries and their educational policies aim to educate all citizens of their own. That means every country has to recruit many teachers to achieve their educational goals; however, finding qualified teachers and making them stay in the profession are vital issues for sustaining educational standards.

That similar changes occur all over the world is evident since the world is turning into a global village with the rise of communication technologies and their integration into schools. These changes can have both positive and negative sides in that teachers must regularize their positions and roles considering the changes in educational contexts. Eacute and Esteve (2000) define these changes as some actors on stage who are suddenly asked for a change in the scene in the middle of their acting. That is, the changes in education go on when teachers are on stage and they are expected to adapt themselves to new roles and responsibilities. However, when there is a change in education, teachers do not respond in the same way and at the same time (Hargreaves, 2005).

One of the most important challenges for teachers can be adapting themselves to these changing paradigms in education. For example, constructivism as an important paradigm in education supports the idea that teaching should be centered on students instead of teacher-led instructions (Nandita, 2013). Therefore, constructing student-centered teaching for teachers may be challenging since they are most likely not educated in this way and the safest and easiest way for teachers becomes implementing the more familiar way of teaching. To adapt themselves to these changes, teachers need to get training based on the new demands of education but some teachers may also fail to adapt themselves to their new roles. In such a situation, the success of the students may decrease simply because teachers' effectiveness is highly influential on student success. Regarding failure in education, the easiest way for society is always to turn the lights on teachers and blame them in that they are not qualified enough to train learners. In other words, teachers have been devalued by society, and this increased teacher stress to a high degree (Day & Smethem, 2009).

The challenges that teachers experience are not only limited to teachers' changing roles and responsibilities in education, and also new challenges are added because of the

new changes in society and the effect of globalization. Eacute and Esteve (2000), for instance, define 12 changes that may create challenges for teachers in this era. These are:

- *The new responsibilities of teachers:* It is agreed that teachers' role is not limited to developing the cognitive skills of learners. Additionally, knowing the subject area well, facilitating learning, and organizing learners for group tasks are the other important responsibilities that teachers are regarded as responsible for. Teachers are also expected to answer the psychological needs of learners and provide social acceptance of their learners to the student groups. However, teacher-training programs lag in preparing pre-service teachers for the new demands of education, and hence, beginning teachers delve into the teaching context without sufficient knowledge and experience of the challenges that may occur.
- *Other stakeholders outside the school do not fulfill their responsibilities:* Although teachers have more responsibilities in education, other stakeholders such as families show limited interest in the education of their students since traditional family concepts turned to working-mothers and the increase of divorces led to the rise of single-parents. Therefore, the time allocated to the moral and emotional education of children is limited and the influence of parents on their children decreased. As a consequence of this, we can say that there can be an increase in the anti-social behaviors of students in schools and teachers have to undertake the social and emotional education of the students as well as teaching content knowledge.
- *Inclusion of mass-media in learning:* Students intensely use the internet to get knowledge about any subject and they are expecting now from their teachers to speak as influential as their favorite YouTuber. Considering the charm of these platforms, teachers are forced to teach subjects by supporting audio-visual materials.
- *The need to use different educational models:* Today's education gives priority to multiculturalism and societies that speak different languages. It is quite probable that students in a class speak different languages as in many cosmopolitan cities of the world. These students' cultural and educational values may change from

one student to another and therefore, teachers are expected to use different models to teach a subject because of the diversity of students' individual needs.

- *Breakdown on consensus and rise of contradictions in teaching:* Teachers use many educational models in the same context of teaching. From the perspective of English language teaching, for example, teachers at the beginning of the 1900s, the Grammar-Translation Method was the main teaching method. English teachers today have different options to teach, and differences in the understanding of teachers may cause conflict among them, and they can easily criticize each other in terms of their teaching methods. The problem here for teachers is to decide on which educational model they carry out by considering what educational values are important for them, and what values they are against.
- *The change in the worth of education:* In the past, getting an education was a situation for rich and elite people; however, the aim of education has changed to teach the whole population of a society. Educating the population and expecting similar achievements from all individuals coming from different backgrounds is a significant issue in that providing equal opportunities to all children needs a great amount of effort for governments.
- *Criticism against teachers and the system of education:* The new educational system disappointed society, especially parents in that it failed to provide social equality and progress as expected especially for disadvantaged groups. It is evident that societies decreased their expectations and withdrew their support from teachers. In other words, societies declared teachers as the scapegoat of the system of education.
- *Changes in the status of teachers:* It was not so many years ago that teachers were respected by societies. However, today societies give higher priorities to how much a person earns in his job. The terms such as being knowledgeable and self-dedication to the improvement of society have lost their value today. Also, teachers' feelings about their salaries have a significant influence on their decisions about leaving teaching to find well-paid jobs.
- *Pressing need for change in curriculum:* Because of the social and technological changes and integration of new concepts into education, curriculum changes in teacher education are vital. Teachers are also worried about losing their positions

or jobs because of the rapid changes in subjects. For example, French was a prominent language taught as a second language, but today it lost its strength against English within a few decades in Türkiye, and teachers of French are now having difficulty finding teaching positions in schools.

- *The mismatch between the needs of the school and available resources:* Many teachers are complaining about the decisions of authorities about methodological changes since they mostly observe the mismatch between the actual situation of the educational context and the renewals made by the authorities. These mismatches can be demotivating for teachers because they realize that additional funds and support are needed to achieve the objectives of new regulations and hence, teachers lose their reliance on the decisions of the authorities.
- *Authority and discipline in the classroom and school:* As a result of changes in society, relations between teachers and students have also changed. A few decades ago, teachers were the authority figures in the class and students were responsible for obeying the rules set by teachers and administrators of schools. Teachers no longer have the privilege to humiliate and punish students. Even worse, there is an increase in the attacks of students on their teachers as a consequence of losing their status in society, which is generally shown in the news.
- *Overload of teachers:* In addition to teaching, teachers have extra works to do such as attending administrative duties, planning to teach, attending in-service teaching programs, visiting parents, organizing extra tasks out of school, and attending meetings. Therefore, they have limited time to organize learning, and many researches (e.g. Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Roosenboom, and Volman, 2017; Maaranen, Kynäslähti, Byman, Jyrhämä, & Sintonen, 2019) state that the overload of teachers causes exhaustion in teaching.

It can be said that becoming a professional in teaching is a long-lasting issue; however, when students finish the undergraduate teacher education programs, it is supposed that everything related to teaching is already gained when teachers enter their classes. However, many things drastically change when teachers enter the real teaching contexts for the first time because the process of becoming a teacher can metaphorically be described as a bridge that beginning teachers need to cross from teacher education institutes to real teaching environments to become professionals. It is because the students in teacher education departments change their positions as teachers in real teaching

environments. For instance, the roles imputed to students in ELT departments as “learners of English teaching” change into “teachers of English learners”. In other words, the adaptation of beginning teachers into the teaching environment, which is called the transition process, can be harder and the environment of teaching can be full of challenges to be handled by them. Research on newly employed teachers reports (Aitken & Harford, 2011) that the transition from teacher education to teaching practices in real classroom settings is a problematic process for many teachers in that they need to confront the challenges of real teaching environments and this may influence their career stages. In other words, the transition phase is regarded as a vital cornerstone for a teacher’s professional development because it is believed that implications of this term may last longer and it can be interpretive on the effectiveness of teachers and their satisfaction with the job (Hebert & Worthy, 2001).

Although many researchers (e.g. Harford, 2010) state that there are significant reforms in teacher education programs, especially with the Bologna process in Europe, challenges are regarded as one of the main hindrances in continuous professional development. In this regard, challenges met in teaching environments are similar although there are some contextual differences. Aitken and Harford (2011) for example, inform that the basic challenges for beginning teachers are almost similar. These are: setting the classroom discipline, increasing student motivation to the learning, organizing the lesson based on the needs of individuals, assessment of the students’ work, organizing the classroom tasks, and dealing with the materials provided for learning.

Research on teacher education (e.g. Škugor & Sablić, 2018) indicates that the educational systems of countries are affected by the changes and developments in socio-cultural and educational issues. In this regard, countries like Türkiye, which try to follow the reforms in education, make changes in their educational programs to train future learners. However, it is difficult to catch these reforms very well for a country because numerous variables need to be considered for making an efficient renewal. For instance, although Türkiye has made significant changes in teacher education programs recently, transferring these changes into practice and implementing them in schools may not be as easy as expected. Öztürk and Aydın (2019) state that Türkiye as a developing country attempted to make renewals in English teacher education programs in recent years; however, these reformist movements fall behind in meeting the needs of English teachers. Although reforms are different in every country in terms of the content they provide, the

direction of reforms and the pace, and the ideas behind the reformist movements are similar. These reforms are applied by the authorities because they believe that students get the chance of development when they change the conditions of teaching (Day, 2002) and they do not consider the teachers' identities, commitments to their job, and motivations for the reforms.

We are sure that countries like Türkiye whose population is steadily growing must recruit new teachers for their education system. In Türkiye, a great number of teachers have been recruited in recent years. In addition to the growing population of the country, teaching English is also highly emphasized by the institutes of Türkiye in that teaching English to second-grade students is added to the national education program and there is a growing trend towards teaching English intensively in preparatory programs of universities (Öztürk & Aydın, 2019). These developments in the education system of Türkiye require educating qualified teachers in light of the changing paradigms of teacher education. It can be said that recruiting a high number of teachers within a short period may cause some problems in the adaptation of these teachers in that the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has to provide in-service training to them and make them adapt to education as much as possible. However, it will be pollyannaism when it is believed that the support needs of all teachers recruited in a short time are met. This can be one of the reasons why teachers may encounter many challenges starting from the very beginning of their careers.

In the Turkish education system, in-service training programs in the induction period include seminars related to different subjects (MoNE, 2020) such as Türkiye's Democracy history and the 15th of July events process, being a teacher from past to present, and effective communication strategies and classroom management. All these training sessions are equally given to all newly recruited teachers without considering the subject needs of teachers. That is, there is no such education specific to foreign language teachers in the induction period, henceforth, we can say that English teachers recruited to the Turkish education system do not take specific courses or seminars related to their subjects in the induction period although some seminars such as new approaches and methods in foreign language teaching are provided for English teachers in later years. We, therefore, say that this process can be difficult for English teachers who encounter challenges in their schools since there is not adequate support provided for English teachers peculiar to their subjects.

One dimension of becoming a teacher is related to where you work as a teacher. In other words, teachers are generally recruited in rural settings in their early teaching careers because many studies (e.g. Barley, 2009, Hayes, 2010) in the literature argue that recruiting and retaining qualified teachers in rural schools are highly difficult because of the challenging conditions of rural contexts. It is because rural settings have peculiar conditions in terms of providing education. One condition is the difficulty of finding qualified teachers in rural settings. For example, Eppley (2009) states that certain challenging situations are unique to rural schools such as recruiting and retaining teachers, funding, and appropriateness of the curriculum. Therefore, the author discusses the qualifications of teachers from a contextual perspective. If we consider teacher qualifications as standardization in teacher training, we need to be aware of the fact that rural contexts have peculiar needs and conditions, and henceforth, teacher quality should be reshaped based on contextual factors. That is, teachers working in rural settings may have different qualifications to meet the students' needs in rural schools.

The influence of socio-cultural conditions of contexts is significant for the processes of English language teaching in classrooms. Rural settings are generally depicted as the places, which include socio- economically disadvantaged students although students in urban settings are depicted as having more opportunities for getting a better education. As a result, having the chance of getting a better education in English is seen as a privilege for elite groups since the students in privileged urban schools are provided to get education by recruiting highly-qualified native speakers to teach English (Hu, 2005).

The expectations of both teachers and rural communities can be another source of challenging situations for teachers. According to Barley (2009), teachers must be prepared for teaching in rural settings in terms of the conditions of rural schools since there can be a lack of familiarity with the school context and communities, getting low salaries, being isolated from colleges, being assigned as a teacher to other subjects and multiple grades. Therefore, Eppley (2009) maintains that successful teaching in rural contexts can be affected by different factors when compared to successful teaching in other contexts.

Hayes (2010) also informs about the inconsistency between the sociocultural expectations of teachers and the new pedagogy of English language teaching, which focus on student roles. For example, Hu (2005) investigates 252 Chinese students who get their

secondary education in both economically prosperous and poor places before coming to university. The study group consists of people who lived in city centers or other places before. The researcher investigates whether the location of the schools and the participants' economical conditions affect the practices of English education provided to learners. The study results reveal that the location of teaching affects the practices of teaching English in EFL classes in that traditional methods such as GTM and ALM are strongly used in economically poor regions of the country; however, communicative-oriented methods such as CLT are more dominant in developed urban cities.

According to Cruz Arcila (2018), how English teachers deal with the curriculum in rural settings attracts little attention. However, research on the challenges faced in rural contexts indicates that there is an inconsistency between the conditions of the context and curriculum and language (Koza Çiftçi & Cin, 2017). It is because the policy makers' idealizations do not meet with teachers' and students' realities in rural settings (Cruz Arcila, 2018). It is therefore inevitable for teachers to take initiative when teaching English in rural schools, otherwise, they may not meet the needs of the students and rural communities.

Although some challenges are mutual for English teachers, some are context-specific such as the lack of social and educational opportunities (Şahin, 2021) since teachers in rural settings need to live in isolation to a certain point. As a result, they may not find any opportunity to develop themselves professionally. For example, a study made by Polidore, Edmonson, and Slate (2010) with three female African American teachers working in the rural south of America, maintains that the participants experience similar challenges such as being apart from other colleagues because they work in one- room schools, having limited resources, teaching multiple tasks and different age groups. Therefore, we can say that teaching is affected by the location of the schools and these external factors may hinder the professional development of teachers such as facilities provided, teaching resources, and being isolated, and so on. Likewise, an internet connection may help teachers reach a variety of resources and make the lesson more vivid, however, many teachers in rural schools still rely on books, chalks, and tape recorders as the main resources for language teaching (Liu, 2015).

1.2. Purpose of the Study and the Research Question

As one of the core members of the educational system, teachers, and the process of being a teacher should be enlightened via scientific research. Although numerous aspects can be examined in teacher education, how in-service teachers in rural schools develop themselves in the teaching profession and enhance their learning in how to become effective teachers is a neglected area. In this respect, what challenging situations English teachers encounter and how these challenges affect their insights into teaching should be investigated since teachers' professional development is strongly related to student achievements (e.g. Shaha & Ellsworth, 2013). Therefore, the aim of this research is mainly to reveal the challenges faced by EFL teachers working in rural areas of Türkiye throughout their careers. This research focuses on all the processes of becoming EFL teachers because of the scarcity of research on the challenges perceived by EFL teachers in Türkiye although a high number of studies has been conducted in the area of teacher education based on the challenges perceived by teachers in other subject areas (e.g. Gündoğan, 2002, Tonbul, 2010).

As previously mentioned, teaching English in rural settings has peculiar conditions and certain points can only be explained in terms of rurality. For example, Liu (2015) explains that some external factors influence the professional development processes of teachers such as the facilities provided to teachers and environment, content, education level, input, and teaching management resources. Similarly, Sethusha (2012) explains that teachers' social and educational contexts are effective in their classroom assessment understanding and practices. Therefore, understanding how English teachers experience language teaching in rural schools is valuable.

Some studies (e.g. Cruz Arcila, 2018) reveal that students' sense of cultural properties and intercultural awareness can be enhanced with teachers' pedagogical actions that are adjusted to local needs although the scarcity of research is evident in teaching practices of English teachers working in rural schools. Aiming to fill an important gap in the literature, the present research tries to identify what challenges English teachers experience in rural state schools in Türkiye. Therefore, the following question is asked to reveal the challenges experienced by English teachers in rural areas of Türkiye. Therefore, the following question is asked to reveal the challenges experienced by English teachers in rural areas of Turkey.

- What are the challenges of EFL teachers in rural areas of Türkiye?

1.3. Significance of the Study

As a resigned English teacher working two years after graduation from the English language teaching department, what made me drive studying the challenges of English teachers working in rural areas of Türkiye was my inner voice saying: “I am responsible for announcing the voices of teachers”. One reason that I decided to resign from the school where I was working as an English Teacher was related to the challenges that I encountered during the process of my first teaching years. One of the challenges to be mentioned was that MoNE changed the system of education based on the 4+4+4 program although there were not any observable preparations made for the new system. At the beginning of the 2012- 2013 academic year, a huge number of parents had to put their children down for our school although the physical conditions of the school were not good enough to educate such a big number of students. Besides the existing problems, new problems occurred as a result of this unexpected change in the education system of Türkiye. I, as an inexperienced English teacher, had to struggle with all the challenges and increase the success rates of students in English courses. When the students became unsuccessful in this new education program; I would also be an unsuccessful teacher. And most probably they would be unsuccessful in language learning because MoNE made a considerable change all over the country without considering how ready the schools were in terms of physical conditions, the number of teachers, and so on. A lot of things would inevitably be affected badly, especially teachers as a result of these abrupt changes in education because they had to make great efforts to arrange classrooms for this new program.

As stated by many researchers, teachers’ quitting the job is considerably high in the literature and the main reason for this is the challenges encountered in teaching contexts. To meet English teacher deficiency in Türkiye between 2010 and 2019 years, 40450 English teachers have been recruited by MoNE. Although this number of recruited English teachers is considerably high, the number of English teachers quitting the job is 1367 between 2010 and 2019 years. When compared to the literature on teachers’ quitting the job, the percentage of resignations is quite low only with 3, 38% in the Turkish context (MoNE Strategy Development Authority Archive, 2020). Looking only at the rate of teachers’ quitting their job, however, we cannot say that teachers in Türkiye are happy with their teaching conditions and easily solve the challenges they encounter during the

process of teaching. On the contrary, the only reason for difficulties experienced by teachers cannot be limited to resigning from the profession. Contextual factors also influence keeping them in the profession.

In the Turkish context, also, unemployment rates among younger adults are much higher than in countries in Europe and other developed countries. Normally, when all the factors are considered equal, having plenty of citizens at younger ages is accepted as advantageous for countries, however, it can only be positive when the potential of younger adults turns into an economic power (Ürüt- Kelleci & Türk, 2016). The writers also inform that young unemployment rates in Türkiye are much higher than the average rate of OECD countries. The students who graduate from education faculties also face harsh unemployment and therefore they cannot work as teachers. As a result, they try to find jobs that are not related to education. For example, Toker- Gökçe (2014) investigates 104 candidate teachers' reasons for being not recruited as teachers and reveals that candidate teachers believe that public placement exams (called KPSS) are unfair in teacher recruitment. When they are recruited as teachers after passing hard ways, it becomes hard for teachers to quit the job regardless of to what extent they are happy with their job. This can be the reason why teachers do not prefer to depart from the job although they experience numerous challenges during the process of teaching. On the other hand, similar situations are evident in other rural contexts because of concerns such as not being able to find a job for a living. Liu (2015), for instance, informs that most of the teachers in Chinese rural settings continue to teach because of survival needs and hence they do not depart from the occupation of teaching.

In case of excessive intervention from outside to teachers' working conditions, teachers may lose job satisfaction, commitment to their job, and self-esteem as well as early departure from the profession (Valli & Buese, 2007). In other words, challenging situations may cause more considerable results in terms of teachers' commitment to their job, job satisfaction, and burnout except dropping the profession. Now that pre-service teacher education, teaching experience in real classes, and support provided to teachers enable teachers to be more effective in teaching (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002), identifying the lacking sides of the teacher education process from an ample perspective by investigating the challenges English language teachers experience may increase our understanding on how to regularize teacher education processes to make them more effective. Otherwise, teachers' effectiveness, in the long run, becomes more vulnerable.

As a focus of our study, teaching English in rural settings has some peculiar conditions that may create some challenges for English teachers working in rural schools. According to Şahin (2021), teaching practices of English teachers in rural schools such as the methods used, materials, time, and space allocated for language teaching can give useful information on how English teachers design learning environments for meeting the needs of students. Henceforth, we can get an idea of to what extent English teachers in rural schools are able to adapt themselves to rural conditions and the challenges they face during the practice of teaching.

Preparing teachers for rural conditions is valuable. In this regard, courses related to rural settings should be offered by teaching institutes. Offering such courses is vital because courses focusing on education in rural conditions may increase the awareness of pre-service teachers about the conditions of rural settings. In Barley's (2009) research, for instance, she investigates 120 institutes in the mid-continent, and 17 of them offer teacher preparation programs, which emphasize the rural. And only nine out of 17 institutes have three or more components, which may prepare teachers for rural conditions. In her investigation, only one institute offers courses related to rural conditions and three of nine programs offer multiple certificates. She also states that some programs accept students from rural communities. It can be said that few opportunities are provided to teachers to get familiar with the conditions of rural teaching environments. As a result, it is inevitable to experience challenges for teachers in rural schools. The standardization of teacher education in this respect can be problematic in terms of meeting the needs of teachers in rural schools because a standardized teacher training curriculum as in Türkiye is an indication that the context and learners and their needs are not important or disregarded. Such approaches cannot reach success because teaching quality can only be increased by considering contextual factors and learner needs (Eppley, 2009). Similarly, Durdukoca (2018) explains that the participant teachers of her study inform that the universities and practicum schools are located in the city centers although teachers are appointed to villages. In other words, being accustomed to living in villages and the adaptation processes of the teachers to rural culture are difficult; therefore, some courses about rural life and teaching difficulties in rural schools should be added to teacher training programs.

When we consider the studies made on the challenges of English teachers in the practice of teaching, it is evident that there is a need to make comprehensive and detailed

research on the practices of English teachers in rural settings and identify what challenges they experience from a broader perspective, which include both English teaching practices and other factors that may affect English teachers' professional development processes. For example, teacher training institutes do not provide pre-service teachers any knowledge and skills on what is to be a teacher in rural schools of Türkiye (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003) and hence there is an irrelevancy between the curriculum, knowledge, and practice of English teaching and contextual realities of rural schools. There is also no specialized support and training focusing on the needs of teachers working in rural settings in Türkiye (Şahin, 2021). It is, therefore, inevitable for English teachers to experience challenges in their teaching experiences when they are recruited in rural settings.

As stated in the literature, teachers in rural settings have limited or no opportunity to get support from other colleges (e.g. Barley, 2009) because of isolation and lack of in-service training opportunities for teachers in rural schools. We can say that this study is significant for identifying the challenges of English teachers in rural schools of Türkiye from the perspective of professional development. In other words, studying the challenges of teachers in rural settings is necessary (Şahin, 2021) for teachers, teachers, educators, and policy makers to identify their professional development needs and to prepare pre-service teachers for rural contexts (Kızılaslan, 2012).

Numerous challenges that teachers experience are expressed in the literature. With this study, our aim is not to make a list of challenges English teachers experience, but to develop an understanding of how challenges encountered in practices of English teaching affect English teachers' professional development concerning their experiences in the process of teaching in rural settings. Teachers' professional development means that teachers increase their quality in teaching by increasing their knowledge of how to behave in a problematic situation. In other words, instead of desperately struggling with the challenges they encounter in teaching environments, they can spend their time and energies enriching the learning situations by enabling different types of tasks in English language teaching. In this respect, the challenges faced by English teachers are discussed in terms of the basic factors affecting the professional development processes of English teachers such as content knowledge, pedagogy, new socio-cultural developments affecting language teaching, global changes, and educational policies of countries, and

contextual factors which may cause specific challenging situations to English teachers in Türkiye.

- How does content knowledge affect teachers' professional development?

Content knowledge is a crucial issue in the literature because there is an increasing demand for learning English globally and therefore every government is forced to recruit new English teachers without considering how knowledgeable they are in English. For example, in Türkiye, university students from other subject areas are given the right to become English teachers by taking a certificate called "Pedagogical Formation". These students from other fields such as English language and literature, Translation, etc., become English teachers after passing the national exam for recruiting employees called "KPSS". This is not the first case that people from other fields were recruited as English teachers in the Turkish education system. Unfortunately, most of these attempts have deeply affected teaching English as a foreign language and created an idea in the minds of citizens that Turkish people are not talented to learn a foreign language despite the high amount of effort spent on learning English.

The previous policies in teacher recruitment in Türkiye do not seem to be rational for why people from different fields are recruited as English teachers. According to Hawanti (2014), an important reason behind recruiting English teachers who are not trained as English teachers is the pressure of families wanting their children to learn English because schools enabling English education are prestigious in the eyes of parents. On the other hand, Flammer (2013) states that teachers' lack of content knowledge and limited competence in English can limit teachers' ability to pedagogical skills fostering student participation. That is, teachers' lack of knowledge in English may lead them to focus on form not function since they are not able to manage to teach efficiently. Piasta, Connor, Fishman, & Morrison (2009) in this regard examines teachers' effectiveness on students' reading gains. The findings indicate that the students of more knowledgeable teachers providing explicit decoding instruction become more successful than the students of less knowledgeable teachers providing similar instruction in reading.

- The value of pedagogical knowledge in becoming effective teachers

As well as subject matter knowledge, the pedagogical skills of teachers critically determine how a teacher becomes successful in language teaching. It is because teachers are expected to have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. By having these skills,

teachers' professional development in the long-run is achieved (Harford, 2010) because these elements can be regarded as the main components of teacher training. For example, we cannot give efficient instruction without having pedagogical knowledge since it helps us to decide how to teach a subject. In this regard, researchers (e.g. Confait, 2015) state that pedagogical knowledge for teachers paves the way for adopting new paradigms into teaching. Teachers who have sufficient knowledge of classroom pedagogy are to give their students more freedom to express their ideas and arrange classroom activities based on the student-centered approach to language learning.

Since teaching paradigms have changed in recent decades, teachers' roles based on the paradigm shifts have also been deeply affected. According to Kumaradivelu (2003, p.8), teachers, now, are regarded as an artist, an architect that shape learners, a scientist and a psychologist who consider the emotional state of learners, a manager of the classroom, a counselor, and a mentor who light the way of learners in the learning process, and more. In the earlier years of the 19th century and before teachers were only teachers who transmitted the content knowledge to their students, however, within the historical development of teacher education, and because of the complexity of teaching contexts, today, teachers should be more critical in all the processes of teaching. In other words, schools should be centers where teachers continually develop themselves pedagogically and should not be only practitioners of pedagogical knowledge but the creators of pedagogical knowledge (Wood, 2007). Unfortunately, it does not seem that this approach is in practice. For example, Tezgiden-Cakcak's (2015) study with candidate English teachers in a state university of Türkiye reveals that candidate teachers are prepared as passive technicians rather than reflective practitioners although some reflective sides are observed in the foreign language teacher education program. It shows that foreign language teaching programs and their outcomes as English teachers are far beyond finding new ways of pedagogical thinking. Therefore, this study is significant for understanding the problematic sides of foreign language teacher education. The study is also important in how professionally they develop themselves to handle problematic situations, which needs wide pedagogical thinking.

- The influence of new developments such as technological improvements

When the system of teacher education does not allow teachers to be active in decision-making processes, they inevitably become passive, and hence they lose their intrinsic motivation to make efforts in teacher development. Their enjoyment and

eagerness to learn new skills and being open to new developments such as technology integration into teaching will have significant effects on their professional development. It is somehow inevitable for teachers to follow the new developments because of the rapid technological changes. For teachers, integrating technology into their classes needs certain knowledge. According to Reinders (2009, p.233), teachers should know first how to use that technology; second, they should have sufficient knowledge to be able to create teaching materials and activities through these technologies, and last, they should have sufficient knowledge to be able to teach course contents with technology. In this sense, teachers need to have both technical knowledge of how to use new technologies and pedagogical knowledge of how to implement them in their classes. When there is a lack of knowledge in any areas of them, that is, technical knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, teachers inevitably encounter some challenging situations, especially in language classes. For example, Hicks (2011) informs that technological developments have created challenges for teachers in classrooms, especially for their successful application of technology. We can say that teachers are facing challenges to meet the needs of today's students. Therefore, to successfully integrate educational technologies into English classes is related to what extent teachers are supported both in pedagogy and technical issues with special courses provided in in-service teacher training programs.

Although new teacher education programs like those in Türkiye entail courses aiming to increase the awareness of pre-service teachers on educational technologies (Öztürk & Aydın, 2019), it is questionable to what extent these courses meet the demands of future English teachers. The new course in the program for educational technologies is added to the curriculum as an elective course rather than an integrated course to the whole program; therefore, it is misleading for expecting English teachers to use educational technology in an efficient way for the education of future learners who are more competent in technology use. On the other hand, a desperate situation for the integration of these tools into teaching English lies in the question of the readiness of in-service teachers. That is, teachers in practice may not be ready to adapt these tools to language teaching effectively although MoNE (2017) defines one of the teacher competencies as gaining ability in the use of information and communication technologies in effective ways in terms of teaching and learning. Besides, in-service training is inadequate to provide a wealth of knowledge to teachers for the use of these

tools in classes (Ünal & Öztürk, 2012) and this makes it difficult for teachers to integrate these tools into teaching and hence teachers' use of technologies remain very primitive.

After the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools had to be closed to control the spread of the virus and most countries made considerable changes in their education system by giving distance education. Although distance education has some positive sides such as ensuring the continuity of education, flexibility, and reducing costs (Hebebcı, Bertiz, & Alan, 2020), there were also some drawbacks such as lack of equipment, infrastructure problems, and restriction interaction between teachers and students. When considering pre-service and in-service teacher education, the readiness of teachers for hard times is questioned. Teachers, for instance, prepared their teaching content based on a face-to-face format and had to digitalize them and deliver it through online virtual tools (Yastıbaş, 2021). Changing the format of teaching from face to face into virtual environments is not only related to the tools and equipment provided but teachers' readiness for distance education and teachers' compatibility with technology-based teaching. In this regard, teachers' use of information and communication technologies in an efficient way, which MoNE defines as an important competency of teachers, and education provided by both pre-service and in-service teachers gain a significant role.

Although teacher education programs include some courses on how to use technology for educational purposes, they can be still insufficient because teachers were not ready to teach online during the Covid-19 process. Lukas and Yunus (2021), for instance, investigated 20 ESL teachers' perceptions of e-learning during the process of Covid-19. They found that the participants experienced some challenges in the implementation of e-learning such as not being ready for adopting e-learning, internet connection problems and lack of technological devices, and classroom management problems like not attending the courses and assessments. This shows that not in Türkiye, but in other parts of the world, teachers were not ready to teach through technology and this is an indicator of ineffective ICT courses and the limited number of courses related to the usage of technologies for educational purposes.

- Global influences on curriculum policies of countries

Every nation has its national system for enabling education to its citizens; however, the recent developments in socio-cultural and technological developments compel nations to implement similar approaches for their educational systems. According to Harford (2010), teacher education policies of European countries have been turned to similar

structural paths because of the process of Bologna, and thus teacher education has moved from the educational paths of every nation to European standardization. In initial teacher education, for example, paradigms like student-centered learning and life-long learning as the signs of internalization, are becoming important topics in the educational policy of nations; however, such changes in curriculums of nations are primarily made as a political choice rather than professional choices (Škugor & Sablić, 2018).

On the other hand, the educational policies of nations from the historical perspective (Harford, 2010) have appreciated the applications which highlight national identities. This is why every country has a unique perspective on education and teacher training. Today, we can say that there is a strong battle between old and new approaches in the philosophy of education because countries try to catch the educational demands of the new world and protect their national identities at the same time.

There are also some concerns about the curriculum changes of teacher education programs in that they are not as rapid as for integrating all new demands into the educational programs because of the rapid changes in society (Maaranen, Kynäslähti, Byman, Jyrhämä, & Sintonen, 2019). The continuous renewal of educational policies, therefore, seems inevitable for providing opportunities for teachers in gaining sufficient knowledge and understanding of professional development. This is why teacher education programs are discussed in recent years to develop new models of teaching.

Considering the demands of learning English as a pressing force for the countries to make policy changes in the educational systems, Türkiye has made considerable changes in the national education policy by adding English lessons as a mandatory subject at all levels of education in recent years. The rise of English as a global foreign language in Türkiye as well as in other countries can be explained by the concerns of global competitiveness in the economy and technological innovations, getting a better education, and having qualified jobs (Kırkgöz, 2009). Although these innovations in the Turkish education policy increased the value of learning English to catch developed countries, some controversies emerged. According to Aksit (2007), much of the debate rises on how the new changes are implemented when there are policy changes in Turkish education because the researcher maintains that the new curricular reforms were not discussed enough by the stakeholders and changes were implemented in a rush without considering the effectiveness of these changes. Therefore, the emergence of problems in the educational system of Türkiye, from a wider perspective, seems inevitable. It is because

a great effort to make the renewals is needed by meeting the needs of English teachers since teaching English as a subject has been influenced by the curriculum changes in Turkish education policy.

As one of the recent changes in the education policy of Türkiye, English was added as a mandatory subject to the curriculum of second-grade students of primary schools in 2012. Although research on teaching English to young learners provides important advantages such as low affective filter, better pronunciation, and more time for learning (Gürsoy, Korkmaz, & Damar, 2017), there are some concerns about how this program is to be applied. In this regard, Gürsoy, Korkmaz, and Damar (2017) question the views of 870 pre-service teachers in comparison with 203 English teachers and 72 teacher trainers in terms of the appropriate starting period of learning English, the methodology applied for young learners. The questionnaire data indicate that when compared to in-service teachers, pre-service teachers have positive views towards the new changes related to age. They also think that young learners may gain positive attitudes toward learning English. The concerns of in-service teachers can be explained by the readiness of English teachers to teach young learners. In other words, teachers in practice may have limited pedagogical knowledge about teaching English to young learners. Considering all the renewals in the policy of Turkish education, English teachers should be supported through training on the new developments in foreign language teaching and their concerns about the process of language teaching should be paid attention to.

- The influence of contextual differences on teaching

The name “school” reminds us of learning but most of us think that it is the place for student learning. However, schools are places in which other stakeholders such as teachers can also learn. For a teacher, in this sense, schools can be regarded as places of learning how to teach. What should be considered here related to schools is whether schools foster or hinder teachers’ learning of professional development. According to Flores (2004), schools could not achieve to support teachers to develop themselves in teacher development although many reforms were made. This is because the schools could not pass the bureaucratic and managerial obstacles to create a learning atmosphere for the learning of both students and teachers.

Creating a collaborative school culture, therefore, is very effective for teachers’ professional development. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2012), however, state that collaborative school culture is a complex phenomenon because how collaboration is

shaped affects learning. For example, when collaboration is structured for increasing the workload, it will not foster progress in teacher development. In this respect, how school culture is constructed is very important. The ideal school culture for teachers is that trust is maintained for all teachers because the relationship between teachers is dependent on how other colleges behave (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012).

Since teachers' social relations are very crucial for creating a positive sharing atmosphere among stakeholders, getting familiar with the norms of the school is significant for long-term teacher development. In this respect, beginning teachers' support needs can be met in a school culture in which collaboration with more experienced others is inevitable. Formal teacher training may not be sufficient for all the things a teacher can acquire and some knowledge about teaching can only be learned through informal learning environments such as discussing a challenging situation in the free time of school teachers. Grosemans, Boon, Verclairen, Dochy, and Kyndt (2015) state that informal learning opportunities are supported and integrated into life-long policies in Europe since it increases the awareness of teachers towards professional development. One thing that should be considered here is whether the school culture is shaped by collaboration. In other words, whether all teachers in the school share some information to contribute to their teaching is strongly related to how school culture is constructed. Research regarding the influence of school culture on the learning opportunities provided to beginning teachers in the induction period (Flores, 2004) reveals that school culture and the attitudes of school leaders are highly important in providing necessary conditions for learning and professional development for beginning teachers. This is because they can have a deeper understanding of their needs and can acquire needed information regarding professional development.

For beginning teachers, being in contact with their experienced colleagues may provide many things on the road to becoming professionals. For example, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1986) explain that it is not true for a teacher to learn everything by himself or do everything with regard to his way of teaching; on the contrary, he should learn some things under the guidance of experienced teachers by observing or practicing the new ways of teaching to become a professional in teaching. However, some studies like Kutcy and Schulz (2006) state that beginning teachers become frustrated by the lack of tolerance from experienced teachers. Tamir (2010) adds that teachers expect a hospitable, supportive, collaborative, respectful, and challenging school environment

where they assumed responsibility for teaching. When they cannot find such a supportive environment, they can develop negative feelings toward the school and it may result in traumatic events for these teachers.

Examining the professional development processes of English teachers in light of the challenges that arise in their teaching experience will be an important step in understanding how English teachers in Türkiye should be trained. In this regard, this study will shed light on the shaping of the teaching given to English teachers at universities, how to provide support in the classroom and out-class problem situations they experience in teaching, to determine in-service training conditions for life-long learning and professional development, and how to adapt English teachers to possible teaching situations.

1.4. Definition of Terms

One of the important things to do is to avoid misunderstandings in research by defining key terms. Therefore, in this section, the basic terms of the research are explained. Thus, common linguistic knowledge about the research can be created. The following definitions are expected to contribute to a more accurate understanding of the research for the readers.

Beginning teacher: It refers to teachers whose teaching experience is less than five years.

Teacher professional development: This concept can be defined as a process-based education approach that enables teachers to follow new and contemporary approaches, refresh their knowledge both in subject knowledge and pedagogy, and eventually find ways to facilitate students' learning throughout their teaching careers.

Rurality: It is defined with regard to village law accepted by the constitution of the Republic of Türkiye in 1924. According to this law, a place whose population is lower than 20000 people is accepted as a rural area.

Kars district: The notion of the district throughout the thesis refers to living accommodations of the city of Kars including the city center, seven towns of the city, and the villages. The data were collected from the rural schools of Kars district, that is, the schools located in small towns and villages.

CHAPTER II

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Teacher Professionalism and Foreign Language Teacher Education

The issue of foreign language teacher education is one of the hottest debates in the literature since teacher training faces many pressures because of the changes in the approaches to teacher education. With the pressure of globalization and English becoming an international language in numerous fields such as communication and trade, the demand for English teachers worldwide is continuously increasing. Qi (2009) states that globalization influences language teaching policies of nations as a socio-political phenomenon. According to Hayes (2010), the emphasis on English language teaching in schools are mostly instrumental in that its importance is believed to boost the economic development of nations. As a result, teaching English at younger ages is taught to be better without considering the realities of the education systems such as funding, material development, and teacher recruitment. It is because teaching English is seen as a global development of nations (Hamid, 2010) although teaching performances of English teachers are not satisfactory because of their low levels of English. In other words, a high amount of effort is put to give instruction in English in many countries today; however, there appears an important problem: the availability of well-prepared and motivated teachers (Enever, 2014). Therefore, professional development in the field of teacher education is placed in a critical position.

In the second half of the 20th century, the discussions about professionalism and teacher training increased drastically. Countries try to define the standards of the teaching profession as other professions like becoming lawyer, medical doctor, etc. in these years. From the perspective of Hoyle, for instance, (1974, cited in Whitty, 2000), professionalism and professionality are different terms in that professionalism refers to one's employment in an occupation with status and salary, and the other term professionality refers to the knowledge, skills and the other procedures applied by teachers in the process of teaching. When we refer to the professionalism of Hoyle, that is, the standardization of teacher professionalism by getting certification provided by governments, the discussions against teachers' autonomy and their becoming technicians rather than reflective professionals increase to the end of the 20th century. Whitty (2000),

for example, informs in his research that teachers' being reflective practitioners decline to 46% compared to 57% for the previous survey in 1995-96 as a regulation of the teacher education on the professionalism of trainee teachers. Similarly, Day and Smethem (2009) argue that teachers are seen as the major agents of social reproduction, however, their autonomy and status are lowered in the educational system.

Many scientists (e.g. Avalos, 2011; Day, 2002) thinking about teacher professionalism try to understand the concept of professionalism and define it from different perspectives. From a general perspective, Mak (2010) describes teacher professionalism as teachers' capability to get the standards of subject matter knowledge and professional competence. Professionalism can be identified as teachers' increasing knowledge about learning and teaching and transforming this knowledge for the benefit of their students (Avalos, 2011). In a similar description, Chesnut (2016) identifies the teaching profession as an occupation with high knowledge and skills, and having autonomy in work practices as well as having a relationship with clients. In this regard, teachers' professional development is a complex process in which teachers need to use all their willingness and capacities to increase their professional learning on how to become effective teachers.

As understood from the descriptions of professionalism, there is not any consensus over the meaning of professionalism and there need to be plural conceptions such as a type of occupational control, socially constructed and dynamic construction, the application of knowledge in a specific area, a source that regulates between professionals and clients or society (Evans, 2011). As professionalism is a complex phenomenon, Evans (2011) tries to define the borders of professionalism with a model that includes three basic components: behavioral, attitudinal, and intellectual.

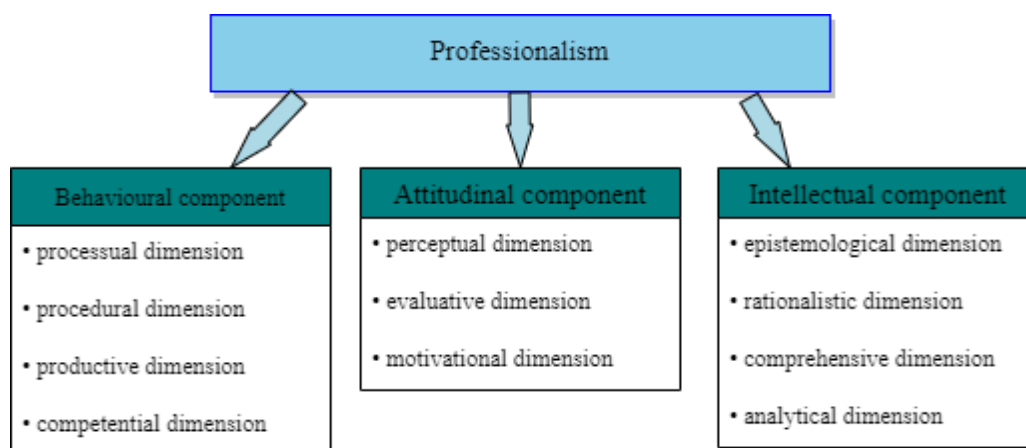


Figure 2.1. *Structure of professionalism*

Based on the three components of professionalism, Evans (2011) explains that what people physically do in their work is related to the behavioral component. When we consider teachers, what they teach in classes, and what they practice while teaching is in this category. The attitudinal component includes teachers' motivations, beliefs, job satisfaction, etc., which strongly shape the behaviors of teachers. The intellectual component is related to teachers' understanding, knowledge, degree of reasoning, etc. What is concerned is that policy changes in teacher professionalism focus mostly on the behavioral component and Evans (2011) warns that not only behavioral mechanisms but also attitudinal and intellectual components of professionalism should be taken into consideration when applying a new model of teacher professionalism; otherwise, these initiatives cannot be effective because attitudes of teachers and their way of thinking are strongly related to the behavioral component of teacher professionalism.

It is also explained that teacher professional development may trigger student success (Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, and Garet, 2008). The researchers explain that professional development can have a positive impact on student success when the professional development is applied in a conducive setting. In order to achieve this there should be certain features that make professional development useful such as the content of the professional development program. Kennedy (1998), for example, reveals that when the program of professional development focused on the subject knowledge of teachers, curriculum, and how students learn subjects rather than teacher behaviors, it has wider influences on student learning.

From another perspective, Leung (2009, p. 49) defines teachers' professionalism as "sponsored professionalism" and "independent professionalism. In sponsored professionalism, Leung (2009, p.50) informs that it includes pre-defined standards and many forms of sponsored professionalism appear. Some examples of these standards are end-of-course requirements that pre-service teachers need to meet, teachers' disciplinary knowledge and experience of teaching that teachers should have, teachers' inspection of teaching quality, and the decision-making ability in teaching processes.

It is believed that improving the teaching and learning processes is highly dependent on professional development experiences provided to teachers (Wassel, 2009). Considering language teaching and English as an international teaching subject, Zeichner (2006) regards that a standard-based teacher education and professional development are needed for teacher professionalism. Teacher education and professional development of teachers are expected to be standards-based although there are some differences in the policies and legislation regarding teacher effectiveness and school success (Josten, 2011). Considering the sponsored professionalism in ELT, individual states in the USA, for instance, defines different standards for teacher qualifications to recruit, however; in England, any mandatory qualification does not require for teaching English (Leung, 2009, p. 51).

In independent professionalism, reflective efforts of teachers on their practices are valuable because it is regarded as having a critical eye on the practices of sponsored professionalism by considering teachers' subject area knowledge and wider social values. In other words, teachers are more autonomous to adjust the program where needed. In a discussion on the usefulness of the teacher professional models, sponsored and individual teacher development, Leung (2009, p.55) explains that English teaching environments vary from one another, therefore; giving pre-service teachers to experience both models can be appropriate because the question here is not related to position themselves in one side but to increase their professional knowledge and consciousness in language teaching. Josten (2011) also argues that teachers' knowledge and skills may be at different levels; therefore, developing a standardized approach toward teacher education may not be successful as applying a standardized approach to the learning of children.

From the historical perspective, Hargreaves (2000) informs that professionalism has passed through four historical ages: "the pre-professional age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional, and post-

professional/postmodern”. According to these stages of professional development, the demands from teachers are highly related to the developments in socio-cultural and political values of societies; therefore, these stages and teachers’ professional development may not follow linearly in teacher development policies of every country. Considering the required level of competency in English as the policies of nations, for example, Enever (2014) compares the seven countries in Europe and reveals that Sweden and England do not demand any competency level of English; however, other countries like Italy and Poland ask their pre-service teacher to be at the level of B2. Similarly, Spain and Croatia apply for a national exam nearly at the B2 level. The classifications made by Hargreaves (2000) indicate what stages teacher development passes through in time and I believe that the globalization of English language teaching as a foreign/second language is strongly related to the professionalization of teaching from a historical perspective.

- **The pre-professional age**

The pre-professional age defines teaching as demanding but not technically difficult. Teachers in this age need to handle instruction alone with a limited number of resources and unwilling learners. The success of the classroom and the instruction of teachers, therefore, depends on how teachers are capable of managing the necessities of classroom control. In this age, teaching is mostly thought of as lecturing to a high number of students with limited resources. The basic classroom demands such as student attention and ensuring content are in question since teachers have to work with a large number of students and choose traditional ways of teaching methods (Hargreaves, 2000). With this kind of lesson structure, teachers do not consider the individuals’ needs and teach to the whole class. Considering these characteristics of teaching, teaching is regarded as a quasi-profession (Wilkins, 2011) in that it is not viewed as a profession but a concept, which is socially constructed.

From the point of teachers’ professional development in the pre-professional age, it is believed that once teachers learn what they teach, little knowledge remains to master them, therefore; teaching is seen as technically simple. For a novice teacher, some practices of teaching are adequate for professional development. The continuous professional development is disregarded and left to the choices of teachers. In other words, observing experienced teachers and experiencing teaching with limited time as in practicum schools are regarded as sufficient for one to master teaching. That is, the professional development of teachers can be identified as something to be taught, not

delivered (Day, 2002). Although some new ways of teaching in teacher education programs are instructed, teachers almost immediately turn to the traditional way of teaching in their classes. Also, teachers do not collaborate with their experienced colleagues and are isolated in their classes, hence, the practice of teaching turns to a trial-and-error type of development since they cannot receive any feedback.

- **The age of autonomous professional**

After the world wars, there was an increase in international space competition, and this led many countries to increase the demand for education. Therefore, countries started to change their educational policy and presented new curriculums. After the 1960s, the status of teachers sharply increased in many countries and they could find granted jobs. Teacher education was also embedded in a university degree. As a result of curriculum innovations, teachers' efforts became a lever of education, and professionalism and autonomy became an indispensable part of teacher education. This is why this age is called "the age of autonomous professional". The developments in education such as the expansion of the population of schools, full employment, and money allocated for training of new generations relieved teachers, and removed the external pressure on teachers. And henceforth, classroom pedagogy became an indispensable part of teacher development since teachers applied new methods of teaching under the ideology of student-centeredness rather than traditional methods.

Although new endeavors were practiced such as opening alternative schools in this age, progressive methods, which were idealized, were not as efficient as expected since child-centered approaches could not correspond to what was happening in the real classrooms. It is because traditional ways of teaching were not fully abandoned. Teachers easily lost the ideals presented in pre-service training and complained about the mismatches between ideals and reality. The professional development of teachers in this age was individualized and little collaboration among teachers occurred. Even when they interacted with each other, this was limited to sharing materials, student problems rather than classroom learning, and curriculum goals (Little, 1990). The limited interaction with more experienced teachers resulted in some drawbacks, in return, for teachers who adopted individual professional development. Some important drawbacks of this age were related to the effectiveness of teaching, lack of opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, lack of consistency between teachers about what they teach, lack of reshaping their teaching because of limited or no feedback, etc.

- **The age of collegial professional**

In the 1980s, it was observed that teaching was becoming more complex in schools and the ways of teaching in the age of autonomous professionals were not sufficient to meet the demands of the new school system. New methods of teaching became an important problem for teachers because teachers were not familiar with them, and therefore challenges faced by teachers were inevitable. Unfortunately, their teaching was individualized and they were not coordinated to meet the demands of schools. These methods, which were prepared by non-teaching experts, began to be questioned. Therefore, the age of collegial professionals emerged. In this age, unlike the age of autonomous professionals, the collaboration and cooperation of teachers were prioritized since the role of teachers evolved into collaborative works of colleagues in schools (Hargreaves, 2000). In this way, continuous professional development was expected to be granted.

Other reasons for forcing teachers to collaborate with their colleagues were that schools and classrooms were gradually turning to more complex teaching environments because there was a great expansion in both methodology and content knowledge. In other words, teachers' learning to teach was becoming a complex process requiring individual and collective involvement of teachers cognitively and emotionally and putting their willingness and enactment for finding alternatives to development in teaching (Avalos, 2011). For example, many teaching methods were presented in language teaching, which focuses on different aspects of language. Therefore, teachers could not decide on only one of the two methods, like traditional and student-centered, but they have other options to select. In other words, teachers are no longer to be the perfect practitioners of a defined method, but they can combine different methods to meet the needs of individual students. To do this, they can exchange their ideas and work collaboratively with each other.

Professional development can be more effective not with the methods provided by external experts who are not fully aware of the conditions of teaching environments, but with the methods that teachers create and put into practice through the involvement of colleagues. Teachers can improve their knowledge of how to be effective teachers in their teacher groups by discussing and sharing information about the new developments in language teaching. Besides, teachers' responsibilities and roles in schools are expanding gradually and teachers' endeavors to do all the relevant work need a great effort. In such a situation, teachers are forced to choose the policies of external experts and sacrifice

their ideals in teaching. In this respect, teacher professionalism should stand somewhere teachers should not lose their critical eye towards language teaching by building strong ties among teachers and other stakeholders of education.

On the other hand, teachers should not be forced to participate in collaborative work because they may resist collaboration when they are imposed to participate in group work. Suggestions for teachers to participate in collaboration should also not be made during their very busy times or limited periods in the school day. Otherwise, it will be a burden for teachers to participate in such group work and they view them as an empty endeavor, which is achieved formality.

- **The age of post-professional/postmodern professional**

The new millennium came with new challenges and demands for society as well as education. Nations are no longer fully autonomous in many aspects such as economy, technology, and education since international organizations and companies force governments to regularize policies based on the competitive market. It is because the commercial power of such companies drastically increased and their economic power globalized in this age with the help of the developments of technology and communication tools. This led to the globalization of education and turned the teaching environment into a commercial market. Therefore, the place of teachers and their professional development started to be questioned again from a new perspective, which is called the age of post-professional or postmodern professional.

The post-professional age is systematically more open, flexible, and democratic to include people outside of teaching, however, this flexibility and openness to the group-work in the post-professional age is done with a certain conscious social tendency of teachers, parents, and other stakeholders of education. Whitty (2000) argues that the profession of teacher education has now been occupied with problems as a result of new initiatives and investigations. It is therefore needed to work with others for developing new approaches related to not only getting a legitimate aspiration to the teaching profession and dealing with wider societies in the renewal of the approaches to teaching. Parents, for example, always become an important part of teaching, and traditionally teachers and parents had to work together through different organizations such as interviewing with parents in schools and arranging parent consultation on the problems of their children. In time, the relationship between teachers and parents extended and parents started to involve extensively since schools became more permeable in the age of

post-professional. In such a situation, when the relationship between teachers and other stakeholders like parents does not exist, misunderstandings of parents and students may occur especially for newer teachers in a school context (Hargreaves, 2005).

The involvement of parents in teaching is strongly related to the developments of communication technologies making teachers more reachable out of school. For example, the use of electronic communication media such as WhatsApp is gradually increasing among teachers and parents as a way of parental involvement. Parents can reach teachers with ease through these tools because they work with the principle of anywhere and anytime and hence parents send messages to teachers of their children. Such electronic media tools can be positively integrated for the involvement of parents since parents provide useful information about the personal lives of their children, which helps teachers know their students' needs; however, the use of these tools may be damaging to create a positive involvement of parents to teaching (Wasserman & Zwebner, 2017). A disadvantage may be the over-involvement of parents in teaching in that parents may not know in what situation they should support the teacher. It is more probable that parents and teachers lose the ideals of parental involvement depending on where parents stand in teaching and how communication between teachers and parents is shaped. Therefore, increasing the professional understanding of teachers about the new paradigms of education may depend on how teachers commit themselves to spend time for professional development. According to Hargreaves (2000), balancing parental involvement can only be achieved by teachers' professional development by applying the principles of the age of collegial professional within the age of post-professional. In other words, teachers should not be authoritative in their interaction with parents and teachers should learn from parents and vice versa.

On the other hand, the approach of this age to professionalism resulted in uncertainty because of the abundance of knowledge, and authorities in education have to decide which knowledge and skills are more essential for teaching. They also have to decide whether they should follow the cultural aspects of their society or choose a more global understanding since societies become more complicated because of people coming from very diverse cultural backgrounds.

Regarding the influence of international companies that globalized education by creating centralized curricula, institutions in education such as universities got into a restless competition against each other. Therefore, teacher education and professional

development of teachers were assaulted in this new era for the benefit of commercial marketing. Professional preparation was regarded as a burden to their economies and authorities provided fewer permanent contacts to teachers and lowered their status. Neo-liberal marketisers were also on the side of deregulation of the teaching profession and combine the outdated modes of professionalism and professionality in that they could easily employ non-graduate teachers in their schools (Whitty, 2000). The effects of these movements returned to education as de-professionalized employments, that is, from expert to novice in practice. As a result, the efficiency of teachers on the policies of education is lessened and countries started to question teachers, their salaries, and other things provided to teachers for their professional development. In Türkiye, for instance, the Minister of National Education of Türkiye stated that teachers' salaries comprise the highest portion of the budget and claimed that they, as the ministry, have a limited budget for research and development because of teachers' salaries.

To resist teachers' de-professionalism, teachers should do certain things at this age. Struggling for taking high salaries, standing strong against criticisms made in the media, increasing their voices against the employment of unlicensed persons in education, and defending their profession in that it deserves a high degree of importance in the eyes of both the authority and society should be the main concerns of teachers to underpin their profession. Otherwise, external experts and organizations tend to lower their effectiveness in the decision-making processes of education by making policies centralized. This led teachers to become only the practitioners of the pre-defined curriculum as in the age of pre-professional. According to Hargreaves (2000), a successful defense against de-professionalization requires teachers to prioritize modern professional projects as well as enrich the idea and implementation of collegial professionalism. They can only improve the quality of teacher professionalism by spending their energies collaboratively to improve their teaching, increasing time spent collaboratively with other teachers, parents, and other stakeholders, and spending their time and energies on positive aspects of teaching.

2.1.1. English language teacher education

Traditionally, learning to teach for teachers can be characterized as practicing teaching, in which others define what to teach and how to teach a subject. As English

teachers, their roles in English classes are to transmit their knowledge related to the language to learners. In the first half of the 19th century, the methods called Grammar Translation and Audio-lingual are widely used in language classes, and these methods are named traditional methods since they do not focus on communicative aspects of language teaching and they rely heavily on the memorization of rules and drills in the target language. Teaching a foreign/second language is thought of as grammar translation including detailed and explicit grammatical explanations, examples illustrating how grammar rules are used, vocabulary lists with their explanations in the mother language of the learners, and translation exercises (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011).

In the 1970s, the idea behind language teaching became more process-oriented and teachers were expected to integrate other things such as learners, new methodologies to be used in language classes, and to consider whether they teach in a foreign language and second language environment as well as content (Freeman, 2009, p.12). In other words, language teaching became more sophisticated for teachers and they were held responsible for considering all aspects of learning starting from the very beginning of the language teaching journey including content, process, and pedagogy. After the criticisms against the behavioristic approach to language teaching and the use of the audio-lingual method, several methods having a more humanitarian approach emerged such as Suggestopedia, Silent way, and Communicative language teaching. Because of the abundance of teaching methods, the main traditions in English classes became eclectic (Jin & Cortazzi, 2011), which is a combination of methods and techniques based on the needs of learners. In other words, teachers realized that language can be effectively taught through the real use of the language; therefore, English teachers tend to use more complex approaches integrating all skills in their classes. These ideas also affected teacher education programs and professional development. In these years, professional development research turned to the idea that effective teaching can be provided by recruiting effective teachers and effective school environments without considering the background of the students and their social status (Shon, 2011). Therefore, the notion of staff development became popular and research on professional development gained momentum in the mid of 1970s. Especially welfare states in the post-war period developed an understanding related to professionalism in that professional experts worked well on the behalf of everyone and were supported by the states with available resources (Whitty, 2000).

Teacher education, in the 1980s, was shaped with the attention of the teacher himself, and it was disputed that both providing knowledge and skills and centering on the teacher as an individual can be balanced in that the notion of teacher education can include both concepts. That is, it was thought that teachers should be trained in a way that they have content knowledge related to their study areas, and are active in decision-making regarding language teaching processes.

In the 1990s, designing teacher education entails thinking from various aspects including learning the content, program design, practices of pre-service teachers, etc. In other words, unlike the perspective of learning to teach, teacher education also included both what to learn about the content and how to learn it with practice. These developments made second/foreign language teacher education activity-based professional learning which covers environments of both learning and work (Freeman, 2009, p.13). However, this was not the agreed scope of teacher education. Some (e.g. Tarone & Allwright, 2005) argued that the focus of second/foreign language teacher education was lost in that the scope of second/foreign language teacher education has changed from what to learn as a professional learning process to how to implement what to learn.

With an expansion of the scope of second/foreign language teacher education at the beginning of the new millennium, teacher training focused on the training activities first and expanded its path to professional development as a career. It was also argued how to make functional the process of teacher development by widening the scope of second language teacher education through integrating disciplinary knowledge, classroom pedagogy, and socialization. In other words, professional development for teacher education was redefined in a broader sense and it included not only what happened in instructed teacher training environments, but also wider influences of social practices in individual development. These processes helped teachers develop themselves to understand how language learners acquire new knowledge and learn how to implement activities in classrooms. Therefore, it can be interpreted that courses for second/foreign language teacher education may not be the only criteria to prepare all teachers adequately for language teaching and all school contexts. However, it should be considered that all the things related to education cannot be provided to teachers at the pre-service level, and teachers in practice need guidance throughout their careers since teachers have to revise their knowledge about their subject area as well as pedagogy. It is because teachers' needs may change considering the changes in their subject matter and pedagogy during their

teaching career and the changes in the schools where they work (Richards and Farrell, 2005, p.2).

2.2. Teacher Education in Türkiye

2.2.1. A brief history of teacher education in Türkiye

From the historical perspective of teacher education, it can be said that teacher education in Türkiye dates back to the second half of the 18th century. The first teacher education institute called “Darulmuallimin” was opened in 1848 to train teachers in schools called “Rüşdiye” as a result of attempts at westernization in the Tanzimat reform era in the Ottoman Empire (Küçüköğlu, 2004). Then Darulmuallimin-i Sıbyan (School for Primary Teachers) was opened to train primary school teachers (MoNE, 2017). According to Gurbetoğlu (2015), renovation efforts were attempts towards the problems of education in these years. It can be said that the renovation efforts were valuable for finding solutions to the problems of education in these years; however, they could not become effective in solving them and in resulting in longitudinal development in education. Therefore, a combination of traditional ways of teaching and westernization type of teaching produced successful results within a short time; however, the renovation efforts were insufficient for maintaining success in education.

In 1869, Saffet Pashaa, a minister in the Empire, prepared a general education law called “Maârif-i Umumîye Nizamnâmesi” and it became an important step in teacher education up to the beginning of the 20th century. It can be said that being a teacher became an occupation with this law in Türkiye because teaching and being a teacher was introduced to society with official regulations. According to this law, Darulmuallimat (a teacher training institute for girls) was opened in 1870 in İstanbul. In 1872, a practicum school was opened called “Darulamelîyat”.

In these years, the teacher education system was highly influenced by the traditional teaching way of the country, which is called “Madrasah”, a kind of Muslim theological school”. As a new development in this education system, pedagogical courses were added to the programs of Darulmuallimat in 1870. Although these efforts were valuable for the development of education, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the century and the industrial phenomenon emerging in Europe led many intellectuals to favor the

westernization type of education. In other words, the expectations of intellectuals towards westernization type of education were so great that new schools were opened in the western ideology in different parts of the Empire.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Türkiye was founded in 1923. The education system of the Ottoman Empire was complicated in that there were different types of schools whose teaching procedures and outcomes varied a lot from each other. However, in the Republic of Türkiye, the education system was tried to be redesigned considering the drawbacks of education in the Empire. Türkiye's educational developments were also affected by social and political changes. Tezgiden-Cakcak (2015), in this respect, defines the changes in education considering the political and social changes in Türkiye. According to her, Türkiye's education system can be investigated as three basic eras: The foundation years (1923- 1945), the multi-party period (1945- 1980), and the period of neoliberal transformation (1980-today).

- **Foundation Years (1923- 1945)**

In 1924, a law on the unification of education called “Tevhid-i Tedrisat” was accepted and the traditional school system, madrasah, was closed and schools and their programs at all levels were modernized with this law. As a new state, Türkiye had to regulate many things, as well as education. Teacher requirement was very high and some attempts were done to train teachers in these years. In the early years of the republic, education institutes were taken over by the previous state. Therefore, there was not any institute that trains teachers for secondary schools. Teachers of these schools were trained in universities or higher teacher institutes. Considering the need for training teachers for secondary schools, Gazi Secondary School Teacher Education Institute which was called “Gazi Orta Muallim Mektebi” was founded in 1926 and it started to give training for two years (Gurbetoğlu, 2015). The institute trained teachers for the Turkish courses in the first years and then added other programs to train teachers in different subjects (Küçükoğlu, 2004). By the end of the 1940s, the demand for secondary schools increased, and henceforth, different institutes that train teachers for secondary schools were opened in different parts of Türkiye.

In 1926, village teacher schools were opened but they could not be successful and closed in 1932 (Gurbetoğlu, 2015). In 1926, two-year teaching schools for secondary grades called “Orta Muallim Mektebi” were opened, and turned into secondary school teacher education and training institute called Gazi Orta Öğretmen Okulu ve Eğitim

Enstitüsü” (Aldemir, 2010). Then, Teacher education courses for small villages in 1936 and Teacher education dormitories for bigger villages in 1937 were opened to train primary school teachers. These endeavors were for answering the quantity problems of teacher education. In 1940, Village Institutes were opened; however, they remained in the shadow of political conflicts. We can summarize this period as finding a new and westernized type of education and solving the teacher requirement in quantity. In these years, nearly 80 percent of the population lived in villages and henceforth teacher training schools were tried to be opened in villages. In this regard, the teacher education law for villages was legalized in 1937 (Gurbetoğlu, 2015).

- **The multi-party period (1945- 1980)**

After the Second World War which Türkiye did not attend, Türkiye’s political and economic ideals changed dramatically because of the depression in the economy. The Democrat Party, a sign of the multi-party era, became the major party of the country and henceforth, they made some changes in the ideology of the economy by making it more liberal and receiving aid like Marshall's aids (Tezgiden-Cakcak, 2015). Within the scope of these changes, Türkiye became a member of different international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a community against the Soviet Union. Because of these political changes, Türkiye was regarded as a shield against communism and some teaching institutes such as Village Institutes founded in the foundation era were accused of supporting communism. As a result of these charges, these institutes were closed until the end of the 1950s. Starting from the foundation years of Türkiye to the Democrat Party period, education was secular-based; however, the social and political changes in these years proposed religious-based education for the agenda of the government (Şimşek, 2013).

In this era, the rising population of Türkiye led to an increase in the demand for teachers; however, institutes were far from meeting these demands. In order to solve the quantity deficiencies of teacher recruitment, problematic attempts were done for a short period. For example, recruiting reserve officers in schools as teachers started in 1960 (Gökyer, 2014). In 1974, teacher training through letters as a kind of distance education and evening teacher education courses started, and expedited teacher training was used in 1977 to decrease the teacher deficiency in Türkiye’s education system (Küçüköğlu, 2004). In other words, these attempts can be seen as short-time problem-solving applications; however, they created much bigger problems in the education system by

diminishing the efficacy of teachers and quality instruction and development. These efforts were also inconsistent with the regulations made in the first meeting of education called “1. Heyet-i İlmiye”, which discussed teacher status and took many decisions on preserving the rights of teachers’ personal and economic rights (Gurbetoğlu, 2015).

- **The period of neoliberal transformation (1980- today)**

As formal teacher education institutes aiming at training different subject teachers, secondary school teacher education institutes increased their teaching years from three to four in 1978 and their names were changed to Higher Teacher Education Schools (Küçükoğlu, 2004). These schools were turned into faculties in universities in 1982 by increasing the specialization in subjects. These faculties train teachers for both primary and secondary schools. Along with these faculties, the Higher Education Council of Türkiye allows some other faculty students to become teachers by getting a certificate called pedagogical formation (Gurbetoğlu, 2015). Faculties that train teachers ensure that teachers are trained in accordance with the spirit of teaching and they try to create the teaching qualities that a teacher should have throughout the learning process of pre-service teachers. However, it is questioned to what extent certificates like pedagogical formation ensure these qualities. In other words, it can be said that these efforts, in the long run, decrease the status of education in the post-professional era in that the status of teachers in education is decreased in both applications although the reasons for lowering the status of teachers are different from each other.

Besides the problematic recruitment in the education system of Türkiye, some positive attempts were achieved with the help of the project made in the coordination of the Higher Education Council and World Bank called “The project of Pre-service Teacher Training” (Seferoğlu, 2004). With this project, the quality of teacher and teacher education was tried to be developed regarding certain norms.

Although some positive attempts were achieved to increase the teaching quality of pre-service programs, there were still problematic recruitments in the education system of Türkiye. According to Gurbetoğlu (2015), recruiting teachers who are not trained to become teachers is not a problem for teachers but an ongoing process since 1860. It is because, in these years, teachers were recruited from other disciplines for once only to compensate for teacher deficiency. Later this regulation was repeated in 1861 and became a law called “Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi” in 1869. These attempts were done for decreasing the demands of teacher requirements since there were enough teachers trained

in teacher education schools. Also, recruiting teachers from other disciplines was not a problem encountered before the foundation of Türkiye but continued throughout the history of the new republic with the implementations like recruiting reserve officers as teachers in the multi-party era. The last significant recruitment which is highly problematic was recruiting teachers from other disciplines to meet the teacher requirements of the education system in 1996 (Gurbetoğlu, 2015).

By the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the new millennium, teachers who were trained by education faculties were more than the needs of the education system. This revealed the fact that not every pre-service teacher who graduates from the education faculties can be recruited as a teacher. It can be said that the ministry of national education in Türkiye did considerable mistakes by recruiting teachers from other disciplines in the past, and now they go on doing mistakes by not planning teacher training faculties on the number of pre-service teachers to be trained by considering the need of the education system of Türkiye in the near future.

2.2.2. A brief history of English teacher education in Türkiye

Just like general teacher education, foreign language teaching in Türkiye dates back to the reform era in the Ottoman Empire. In these years, Arabic and Persian were the languages taught as foreign languages and then western languages started to be taught as a consequence of the changes in the Empire. It is because Western states improved themselves in economy and technology; however, the empire lost its strength against western states. Therefore, in the Second Constitutional Period called “İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi”, some students were sent to western countries to learn a foreign language (Güçlü & Şahan, 2018). Those who were sent to Europe would learn a foreign language and meet the demand for foreign language teachers in schools. At the beginning of the 20th century, a foreign language teaching department called “Elsine” was opened (Pehlivan, 2019) in the faculty of science and literature at the university whose name changed to İstanbul University.

In the first decades of the Turkish Republic, the first attempts to teach foreign languages to the students were made by the Turkish Education Society called “Türk Maarif Cemiyeti” in 1928 (Güçlü & Şahan, 2018). To the end of the Ottoman Empire and at the beginning of the new state, some foreign languages were taught in schools

belonging to minority groups supported by other states. Therefore, teaching foreign languages in national state schools was significant. In this regard, opening schools competing against the schools supported by foreign states was the main aim of the society and they taught foreign languages even to the poorer students in these schools (Çelebi, 2004). This society, which acted under the auspices of the beliefs of Atatürk, became a wall towards the idea of sociocultural alienation of Turkish values.

In the foundation years, French was the main foreign language taught in the schools, because French, apart from Arabic and Persian, was the first western language taught in schools opened in the last era of the Empire because French was more spread than the other western languages like German and English (Demiryürek, 2013). One of the ways of teacher training in these years was to send some students to learn foreign languages abroad and turn back to teach foreign languages in state schools. Among these students, some of them were sent abroad to learn English; therefore, we can say that the new Republic emphasized foreign language teacher training even in the early foundation years.

In 1938, Güçlü and Şahan (2018) stated that there were only 71 English teachers based on the work of Hasan Ali Yücel, who worked as the Minister of Education between 1938- 46 years. Since the need for English teachers was great, a 2-year school of foreign languages was established in cooperation with Istanbul University in 1939. The students in this school were instructed in Türkiye for their first year and then sent abroad for the second year. But the Second World War did not make it possible to send students abroad (Güçlü & Şahan, 2018); henceforth, the growing need for English teachers was not met.

In the Multi-party period, new relationships were established with America and English strengthened its position as a foreign language in Türkiye. Starting from the beginning years of the 1940s, Gazi Teacher Training Institute was established in 1941. Firstly, it gave education in French as a foreign language, and then English teacher training was added to the program in 1944, and German in 1947 (Orhan & Kuyumcu-Vardar, 2019). The Institute, then, increased the number of students in foreign language teaching departments to meet the English teacher needs of schools, and also these schools increased the education year from two to three years to increase the quality of foreign language teachers (Demirel, 1991, Orhan & Kuyumcu-Vardar, 2019). Also, new institutes were opened in different parts of the country.

Education Colleges (Maarif Koleji) were founded in 1956 and considerable support for teaching English was provided by these schools (Çetintaş & Genç, 2001). The government of that time aimed to increase the percentage of citizens who know a foreign language because of an increasing trend in the relationships between other countries. This situation forced people to know a foreign language to a certain level since they had to connect with other nations because of economic and cultural reasons. Education Colleges, to a certain degree, would help meet the need for teaching foreign languages in Türkiye. These schools, which still contribute to teaching English, were renamed Anatolian High Schools in 1975 (Güçlü & Şahan, 2018). By opening these schools nearly in every province of Türkiye, the number of them increased to 193 in the 1992-1993 year (Çetintaş & Genç, 2001).

In 1961, America sent 1201 citizens to Türkiye as Peace Corps (Barış Gönüllüleri) to make the relationship stronger between Türkiye and America (Akbaş, 2006). This institution aimed to make stronger connections between the two states. Nearly 67% of these corps were charged with teaching English. Although this treatment between America and Türkiye, to a great extent, was political in that America intended to increase its influence on developing countries against the Soviet Union, Peace Corps holds an important place in Türkiye's foreign language teaching.

In the 1970s, teacher education institutes increased their capacity by accepting more students to the programs, and two-year programs were associated with the Ministry of Education and four-year programs with the universities (Güçlü & Şahan, 2018). In these years evening schools were opened to increase teacher training for meeting the need for English teachers. The aim here was to use institutes economically and to train teachers as many as they could (Gömleksiz, 1999). The evening schools instructed at the hours between 17 and 23. Besides evening schools, summer schools and correspondence schools accepted students to train English teachers. These attempts were also to increase the capacity of English teacher training and close the teacher needs of the schools; however, such attempts and such approaches caused more problems in the language education of Türkiye since those who were trained in such programs were not qualified enough to become English teachers. By the end of the 1970s, Teacher Education institutes increased the training years from three to four years with regularization in education, and the names of these institutes were changed to "Higher Teacher Education Schools". These schools were then transferred to universities and regularized as the Faculty of

Education in 1982. One of the aims of transferring these schools to universities was to decrease the political influence on teacher training because the system of teacher education before that time was highly vulnerable to external influences (Güçlü & Şahan, 2018). The other aim was also to increase the quality of teacher education by making pre-service teachers gain a scientific perspective for their professional development.

Foreign language teaching departments in Education Faculties aimed to train pre-service teachers to be recruited as foreign language teachers in schools. However, philology students in the faculty of science and literature were also recruited as English teachers though they did not get courses on pedagogy and how to teach foreign languages to learners.

Between 1994-1998, with the cooperation between the World Bank and Higher Education Council, teacher education was restructured and completely transferred to the university and the content of the curriculum was renewed in 2006 and 2009 (Orhan & Kuyumcu-Vardar, 2019). Türkiye also made a significant change in its education policy by combining primary and secondary education under the roof of primary education as an eight-year program in the 1997-1998 education years. In other words, this change led to an increasing demand to learn English, and the new program aimed to teach English as a foreign language to fourth graders whereas the previous system provides English teaching to sixth graders in secondary schools. During these years, the Higher Education Council (HEC) made significant changes in the faculties of education at universities by changing the curricula and forming teacher training departments (Güçlü & Şahan, 2018). With these significant changes, for instance, English became a sub-section of the foreign languages department.

Since primary and secondary schools were combined and the English teaching year decreased to the fourth grade, the demand to recruit English teachers also increased. And then, a new compensation strategy had to be put to work. An alternative to train English teachers in the beginning years of the second millennium in the Turkish education system was to train English teachers through a credited certificate program. With this program, participants who were trained in a different BA program in which English is the medium of instruction were recruited as English teachers after having instruction for a limited time (Seferoğlu, 2004). Even some of them were accepted as English teachers in state schools without getting any teacher training course since they got instruction in a program in which the medium of instruction was English. Also, those who got training in German

and French languages became English teachers after having taken a 40-hour English course (Cangıl, 2004). These were the attempts to meet the demand for English teachers in quantity; however, it was not considered that these attempts would decrease the quality of instruction and open incurable wounds in English language teaching.

Another alternative was an English teacher training project which was organized by Anadolu University and MoNE at the beginning of the 2000s. According to the project, students who got certain points from the National University Entrance Examination (called ÖSS in that year) were accepted to the English teaching BA program under the roof of the Faculty of Distance Education. In the program, students got face-to-face training for the first two years in different provinces of Türkiye such as Ankara, İstanbul, Eskişehir, Erzurum, Diyarbakır, etc. Last two years they had to get training through distance education (Durmuşoğlu Köse, Cantürk, & Ülsever, 2002). The number of students in this project was 2500 in the beginning but later, it was increased to 5000 students enrolled in the program in a year. In the face-to-face program, instructions were given by tutors assigned by MoNE in all provinces of the program, except Eskişehir since pre-service teachers in Eskişehir got training from the staff of Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages.

Among the other alternatives, the project of English teacher training seems more applicable as it prioritizes both quantity and quality. For example, the curriculum of the program included courses that can be put into three categories. The first category included face-to-face instruction focusing on the development of basic language skills of students such as grammar, reading, speaking, writing, and so on. The second category included courses on pedagogy such as “the Introduction to Teaching Practice, Classroom Management”, etc. and the last category included courses focusing on content such as “Approaches to ELT, Introduction to Linguistics, Introduction to Literature” and so on (Durmuşoğlu Köse, Cantürk, Ülsever, 2002). However, some criticisms were raised against all these alternatives to English teacher training. For example, Seferoğlu (2004) investigated the perceptions of instructors and pre-service teachers about alternative programs to train English teachers who were recruited in state schools. She found that both instructors and pre-service teachers were hesitant about these programs and they thought that English teachers trained in these programs would face many teaching problems because of the lack of knowledge of the subject matter and pedagogy. The pre-service teachers were also much angry about the project of Anadolu University since most

of the students in the project were trained by English teachers, not by those who had sufficient knowledge of how to train English teachers.

Lastly, some primary school teachers were given options to change their subject area because of the change in the system of education in 2012 called “4+4+4”. With the 4+4+4 program, nearly 50 thousand surplus primary school teachers were given the right to select other subject areas (Gökyer, 2014) and some of them become English teachers. Providing the qualified English language teachers needed has always become a problem for the Turkish Education system starting from the foundation years to date. For meeting the need for English teachers, MoNE officials attempted many ways to close the gap without considering how true it is for the education system of Türkiye and teaching English. Among these endeavors most of which resulted in despair are (Gömleksiz, 1999):

- Those who completed the departments of Western Languages and Literature in the Literature Faculties of universities
- Those who graduated from Schools of Foreign Languages in universities
- Students who got training in different departments of universities whose medium of instruction is English
- Those who graduated from the foreign languages departments of Education institutes (daytime 1941-1978 and evening 1974-1978).
- Those who completed the foreign languages departments of educational institutes from outside.
- Those who completed the education institutes in summer schools (1974-77)
- Those who got training (one or two months as a correspondence of one year) in cram schools of education institutes (1978-80)
- Those who studied in dual programs of education institutes, one of which is the department of foreign languages.
- Those who have completed two-year (later three years) foreign languages colleges within the body of MoNE.
- Those who pass the teacher assistant exams opened by the MoNE for a short period.
- Those who succeeded in the proficiency exam for teaching held by the MoNE (1941)

- Those who have been to western countries to increase their knowledge and experience.
- Those who attended the courses opened by the MoNE for receiving a teaching certificate (1939)
- Secondary school graduates who were selected by their school principals and graduated from private schools instructing a foreign language.
- American Peace Corps (1963-1970)
- Foreigners especially those working in Anatolian High Schools
- Those who graduated from Foreign Languages Departments of Education Faculties (from 1982 to now)

As seen above, many attempts were tried to meet the teacher needs of the Turkish education system in quantity; however, training qualified foreign language teachers was disregarded most of the time. Therefore, it would be a pipe dream to expect foreign language education to be of high quality when we consider the attempts made in previous years. This indicates how crucial preparing a long-term teacher education program is in terms of both pre-service and in-service teacher training. In this regard, transferring all the teacher education institutes to universities help increase both the quantity and quality of teacher education programs.

2.2.3. Pre-service teacher training

In this section, the programs of ELT departments in education faculties of universities are tried to be identified from the point of program content and the changes in the programs in years. Before the foundation of ELT programs in education faculties, there was not any systematic program for foreign language teacher education. Different types of schools tried to educate English teachers with varied content. The foundation of the Higher Education Council (HEC), which is responsible for managing and organizing the activities of universities and institutes in Türkiye not only enabled the control of the universities but also helped the standardization of teacher education in universities (Şallı-Çopur, 2008).

In the foundation of foreign language teaching departments in education faculties, the professors working at the Department of Humanities, which offers courses like language, linguistics, and literature along with other courses such as philosophy, logic,

etc. (Tezgiden-Cakcak, 2015) were given rights to run the ELT departments in education faculties. In this regard, the courses given in ELT programs were heavily based on teaching English such as grammar, translation, and composition. The program also included subject knowledge of linguistics and literature. However, teaching practice courses were limited and therefore, the first program prepared by HEC could not be successful to train qualified foreign language teachers.

In 1997, the National Committee of Teacher Education called “Öğretmen Yetiştirme Türk Milli Komitesi” which includes members from education faculties and HEC was founded (Salı, 2008). The committee aimed to set national standards for pre-service teacher education, increase the quality of teacher education, and facilitate school-faculty cooperation in teacher training. With these regulations in teacher education programs, practicing opportunities for pre-service teachers were provided. English language teacher training programs including the two school experience courses and one practice teaching course were also regularized to train more competent English teachers (Seferoğlu, 2006).

Based on the new regulation of teacher education programs, the approach of the foreign language teacher education system consisted of three main phases (Demirel, 1991): input phase, process phase, and outcome phase. In the input phase, the facilities of students who were accepted to the programs were considered. In this phase, students’ cognitive skills such as the results of university entrance exams were measured. The students were also accepted to preparatory classes before the foreign language teaching departments. In the second phase, students were educated based on the content of the teacher education program, which included courses related to the subject matter, pedagogical knowledge, and cultural knowledge. In the last phase, foreign language teachers were educated through the internship, teachers’ orientation to the profession with induction programs, and in-service teacher education programs.

In 2007, HEC revised the program of teacher education once more because of the criticism towards the previous program and the changes in the primary education system of Türkiye in 2004 (Salı, 2008). The new program enabled more flexibility to education faculties on the courses selected and more elective courses were added to the program. In this regard, the content of the program included subject-specific courses at 50%, pedagogical courses at 30%, and elective courses at 20%. In other words, the number of

language-related courses decreased to 12 although ELT and pedagogy-related courses were increased to 8 and 7 with this regulation made in 2007 (Tezgiden-Cakcak, 2015).

With the decision of 2017, HEC General Assembly, teacher training programs were rearranged by taking into account the changing needs and requirements (HEC, 2017). In this regard, the main reasons for making changes in the program include ensuring the compatibility of teacher training with MoNE's curriculum changes and ensuring the accreditation of education faculties through the Bologna process. With the new change, the ratio of elective courses was increased to 25% and a pool of elective courses was created. Teaching practices in the program have spread over a longer period and in this way, pre-service teachers' knowledge of their subject matter knowledge and practicing opportunities were tried to be balanced.

With recent arrangements in foreign language teaching programs of education faculties, the practicum opportunities for pre-service teachers were provided, however, the studies made on practicum showed that both pre-service teachers and mentor teachers did not give needed value to get the practice of teaching in practicum schools and they spent their time and energies to the national exam for becoming a teacher called "KPSS (Public Personal Selection Examination)" (Eraslan, 2009). Yet, the exam only tests the knowledge of students at the knowledge level and is far from defining the teachers' skills and attitudes (Mete, 2013). Therefore, it seems that the teacher education system of Türkiye needs to be rearranged based on providing more practicum experiences, which were more meticulously prepared.

2.2.4. In-service teacher training

It is accepted that pre-service teacher education programs are not fully enough for teachers to be effective throughout their careers as teachers; therefore, teachers need support during their actual practices of language teaching. In this regard, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) provides in-service teacher training programs to every teacher recruited in state schools of Türkiye. MoNE (2020) opens different courses in many fields within the scope of in-service training. These courses appeal to different areas of teacher development. Among these, for instance, many courses are opened in the field of education technologies to increase the teacher's technology knowledge of how to integrate them into their classes. Courses such as computer networks, computer

maintenance, and repair, basic algorithm and coding, software development, computer-assisted design, and animation have been opened to support teachers on computer learning in the changing education system. It is aimed to support the knowledge of teachers on educational technologies and skills of the teacher by providing information on developing technologies in these courses.

Another significant area is to enrich the knowledge of teachers about young learners since teaching English to young learners is now a reality of the education system. When compared to other improvements in education, teaching young learners is relatively new for teachers in practice. Therefore, MoNE (2020) also opens courses for teachers related to young learners. MoNE has recently regularized the English teaching program by starting from the 2nd grade of primary schools. Remarkably, the teachers are knowledgeable about the developmental characteristics of children. In this regard, MoNE endeavors to support teachers with many courses such as "role of play in child development, understanding from the eyes of children, development of self-confidence in children, art and creativity in children, and child storytelling". Again, among the courses given to in-service teachers, "students' communication with each other, family, etc. about the problems" are the other topics that are discussed in courses. Among these, courses such as "family counseling, peer mediation, prevention of peer bullying, drug abuse in children and adolescents" are the most important ones that draw attention.

Some courses are also given for teachers to develop themselves socially and culturally. These are courses that appeal to many different areas such as "Turkish handicrafts, Traditional arts (water marbling, calligraphy, gilding, etc.), photography, miniature, origami, short film and shooting techniques, foreign language courses at different levels, instrument playing courses" (MoNE, 2020). Unfortunately, how many of these courses teachers have access to is a mystery. Because one of the most important problems for teachers is the heavy workload and thus, they may not have enough time to attend the courses given to improve the abilities they want.

Various courses are also given to teachers to improve themselves pedagogically. For this purpose, the courses, in which different methods and techniques are specifically explained, draw attention. "Problem-solving methods and techniques course, In-class assessment and evaluation course, pre-service teacher training course, etc." courses are the most important ones given to teachers for pedagogical development.

An important point that draws attention is that the courses given by foreign language teachers for their fields are insufficient. A limited number of courses have been opened for English teachers. One of these was the "Fatih Project Technology Supported Educator Training course", which was called the Fatih project but its fate resulted in a great failure. Within the scope of this course, it was aimed to provide information about foreign language education through the EBA (Education-Technology Network) program developed by MoNE, and attendance to this course requires assessing foreign language knowledge of English teachers with a pre-test, and attendance is limited up to 20 teachers. Trainees are also provided with information about other educational software and mobile applications. Another course for English teachers is the "English Teachers training course". Within the scope of the course, teachers are trained on mentoring, teacher development, professional learning communities, online professional learning environments, understanding special education needs of students, learning technologies, giving effective feedback to their colleagues, understanding assessment of learning, problems anticipated in the learning environment, maximizing interaction among students and understanding test. As can be seen, the course includes many things which are necessary for English teachers, but the question is whether English teachers get sufficient knowledge on all these topics only in a course since the topics mentioned in the course content are very different from each other. In this regard, instead of preparing for such an intense course program, teachers can be trained on these topics with different courses. Again, participation in such a course is limited to only 20 teachers and it is provided within the central organization of MoNE. In other words, the fact that a very limited number of teachers can access this course, which every English teacher should take, shows that teachers may encounter serious problems because of the inadequacy of in-service training. Another course given by the MoNE is the "New Approaches in Foreign Language Teaching" course. Topics of the course include "brain-based learning, in-class, and out-of-class learning environments, rhythmic games and drama-based applications, classroom management, project-based assessment, and evaluation". The trainings are organized as workshops and the active participation of teachers is aimed at these courses. Trainees are evaluated at the end of their training and those who get at least 45 out of 100 points are defined as successful. This also shows that the expectations from the trainees for the training they receive are quite low.

Besides courses, MoNE gives seminars for the professional development of teachers. Seminars are given on a wide variety of topics such as the social position of the teacher, the standards of teacher education, the internationalizing teacher competencies, etc. (MoNE, 2020). Along with the changing paradigms in education, seminars are organized in many areas such as the position of the teacher in society and education. One of the aims of the seminars given is to meet teachers' professional development and needs in the 21st century considering the paradigm shift in teacher training. The seminars prepared by taking into consideration the qualifications and needs of teachers in the 21st century are designed to meet the needs of teachers in general. Among these, for the developmental processes of learners, seminars such as "management of adolescence and their developmental processes" are organized. Also, seminars such as "learning designs with games" since the constructivist teaching model have been adopted, and seminars on the use of information technologies in education attract attention. To ensure the quality of education and teacher professional development in the 21st century, for instance, seminars such as "open-ended question writing and assessment and evaluation" and "family education", which is an important element of education, are organized by MoNE.

In addition to the physical readiness of the school for pandemics such as Covid19, other diseases, and various disasters like earthquakes, it has become important for school staff to have the equipment to help students in such situations. In this regard, seminars on "school health and hygiene" are also organized within the roof of the MoNE.

The seminars given by the MoNE are mostly prepared for general teacher education regardless of the needs of subject areas. Although it is thought that the determined seminar topics will supply the important gaps, not every teacher in the system can participate in the seminars offered. This shows that in-service teachers will still have shortcomings in many aspects. In other words, considering the majority of teachers working in the Turkish national education system, serious planning is required to ensure that the seminars given can be presented to all teachers. In cases where planning is not done correctly, it is seen that adequate in-service training cannot be provided to teachers. Again, the fact that the seminars given are mostly for general teacher needs shows that there is not enough support for subject-area teacher needs. In this regard, subject-area-based seminars should be increased.

2.3. Studies on Induction Programs

The induction process is a critical step in the teaching experience of teachers since English teachers first meet real school environments. Many challenging situations can be experienced in this process; hence, it is valuable for researchers to investigate what is happening during the induction period. In the literature, for instance, Aus, Jõgi, Poom-Valickis, Eisenschmidt, & Kikas, (2017) investigated 118 beginning teachers' views on how their implicit ability beliefs and expectations outcomes affect their teaching approaches and classroom management practices. The subject areas of teachers were varied including classroom teachers, English teachers, Estonian language teachers, etc. The researchers aimed to define whether teachers' views, more optimistic or reserved, affected their views on their roles in student behaviors and academic outcomes. All the teachers who participated in an induction program in the Estonian context were applied questionnaires both at the beginning of the education year and the end of the school year. The first questionnaire which was applied in the autumn season, the beginning of the school year, included questions on teachers' implicit beliefs and expected outcomes. The other questionnaire which was applied at the end of the school year included questions on teachers' approaches to instruction and classroom management practices. The results showed that teachers who had more optimistic views at the beginning of the school year believed that their effects on students' behaviors and academic achievements were positive although teachers who had more reserved views stated that their roles were highly limited to affect students' behaviors and academic achievements. With this study, researchers showed that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs can be associated with developing students' learning potential. Therefore, turning teachers' attitudes from negative to positive and increasing their self-efficacies in the way of fulfilling the job with induction programs may increase teachers' commitment to the job and professional development of teaching.

In the Turkish context, Sağlam and Alan (2018) investigated the perceptions of 9 English teachers working in a state university in Türkiye on an induction program. All the teachers in the study were beginner teachers who had limited or no teaching experience. The data from open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews revealed that the participants found the induction program useful and helpful for being familiar with the context of teaching. When asked whether they wanted to change any

part of the program, they also stated that they did not favor changing any part of the program since they found it beneficial for their teaching experience. The findings also indicated that teachers got benefits from the observations since observations helped them to construct their teacher identities. With the help of the program, they got the chance to know the context of teaching, levels of students and their profiles, etc. and it closed the gap between theory and practice. The participants also stated that they were supported by their more experienced colleagues and administrators in terms of both social and academic perspectives. Although they had positive perceptions towards the induction program applied, the teachers stated that they still experienced some problems such as classroom management, error correction, and the feeling of being confident while teaching in the classroom.

2.4. Studies on INSET Programs

The usefulness of INSET programs is beyond the discussion in that the researchers find these programs invaluable for teachers' professional development. The problem discussed here is to what extent these programs are effective to provide valuable information and expertise fitting the needs of teachers. One of the research on INSET programs made by Karaata (2010) revealed pathetic results to what extent English teachers could find a chance to participate in INSET programs related to English language teaching. The researcher informs in his research that nearly 40% of English teachers in Türkiye did not get an education on approaches and techniques related to foreign language teaching in 2007. In these years, the rate of teachers who work as English teachers was nearly 15% although they graduated from non-English related programs. He also adds that the rate of English teachers who got INSET training once in their teaching career was only 11.49% between the years 2003- 2007. When we consider the increasing number of English teachers and the centrist structure of MoNE, we can say that English teachers may not get the needed education in INSET programs of MoNE, and therefore it seems hard to provide all English teachers to get education in English language teaching through the INSET programs.

Similarly, Odabaşı Cimer, Çakır, and Çimer (2010) investigated the effectiveness of INSET courses on the new curriculum program. A total of 38 teachers in primary and secondary schools, which are located both in rural and urban areas, participated in the

study. The results revealed that teachers found INSET courses ineffective as a consequence of some factors: needs assessment, course content, time and duration of the course, the way of presenting the content of the course, the quality of course instructors, end-of-course evaluation, and provided support and follow-up work after the course. For example, teachers stated that identifying the needs of teachers was critical, however, it was not achieved properly and general information about the content delivered based on the new curriculum was implemented in the 2007-2008 academic year. They also informed that instructors presented the course content through PowerPoint presentations and they did not get any practicing opportunities related to the new curriculum. They believed that the instructors' knowledge of the new curriculum was insufficient and hence they could not get any support from the instructors after the courses in case of experiencing challenges in practicing the new curriculum.

Uysal (2012) also investigated an INSET program provided by MoNe and collected data from 72 English teachers having varying teaching expertise through a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The participants were teachers who had the experience of fewer than five years (8%), who had 5 to 14 years of experience (78%), and who had the experience of more than 15 years (14%). The researcher also collected data from three trainers, and 6 trainee teachers through interviews and materials, and notes for the INSET course. The findings revealed that teachers found the course useful in general, but expressed some problems related to the course in the planning and evaluation phase of the course although they had both negative and positive opinions in the execution phase. From the trainers' perspective the lacking sides of the course were related to the limited time given to trainers for preparation, lack of systematic planning, disregarded needs of teachers, non-functional organization structure, and the underqualified staff of the department of in-serving training at MoNE. From the teachers' perspective, teachers noted that they did not know the aim of the course before, the course content was not relevant to their contextual needs, and they were not given time to discuss the problems and find solutions to the problems. Teachers also stated that the course setting was not compatible with the content because of the crowded group in the INSET program, the length of the course time, power-point presentations making the course boring, insufficient materials and resources provided, and no opportunity given to create new materials for English teaching. Beyond these, the most problematic issue for the participant teachers (76%) was that they had difficulty applying what they have learned in the INSET program.

Another remarkable study made by Yeşilçınar and Çakır (2018) investigated the views of English language teachers on professional development and becoming a teacher researcher in terms of developing professionally in teaching. According to the views of 27 English teachers working in public primary and secondary schools located in seven districts of Ankara, professional development resources for teacher education are various such as the internet and publications on teaching, INSET programs, seminars, workshops, conferences, and so on, however, the participant teachers informed that they only applied to internet resources and movies and TV serials in the target language. The study also revealed that the teachers generally believed in the importance of professional development and teacher research, which may help them to be well-qualified teachers. In addition, they stated some barriers to doing or reading teacher research in the professional development process such as non-support by the MoNE, heavy workload, lack of time, lack of writing skills and motivation to participate in such research, underestimating its value.

The studies in the literature as in the examples above indicate that the INSET programs are not as effective as English teachers expect because of the limited practicing opportunities. They also criticize how the programs are provided to them. In other words, we want teachers to become more creative and find some practical activities to attract students' interests; however, the training is mostly traditional with PowerPoint presentations. It can be regarded as a significant drawback of INSET programs. In other words, INSET programs are away from being satisfactory in that teachers cannot get any opportunity to actively participate in their development and reflect on their experiences of teaching (Atay, 2006). Therefore, she contends that a research-oriented INSET program may have a positive impact on teachers' professional development although some difficulties such as conducting and reporting their research are experienced in such research-oriented programs.

2.5. Studies on Challenges Perceived by Teachers

2.5.1. Various subject areas

Considering the problems faced by teachers in their teaching processes, it is seen that the literature mainly deals with teachers who have just started their profession. Little

research has been done on whether experienced teachers are experiencing possible problems that beginning teachers face. One of these is a study by Day and Gu (2009) on how experienced teachers maintain their commitment to the profession. The researchers investigated the job commitment, motivation, and resilience of 300 teachers working in primary and secondary schools in the UK. For collecting data lasting four years, different tools were used such as semi-structured interviews which were applied two times a year, interviews with school leaders and the groups of students, the students' baseline test results at the beginning of the education, and their national curriculum results at the end of the school year. The researchers divided the teachers into two groups considering their experience in teaching as 24- 30 years of experience in teaching and 31 and more years of experience. The findings revealed that teachers who had 24- 30 years of experience had positive trajectories with 54%, and negative trajectories with 46% to their commitment to teaching. On the other hand, the teachers who had 31 and more years of experience stated that they had positive trajectories with 64% and negative trajectories with 36%. Data gathered from the two teaching stories also revealed that the first teacher (32 years of experience) was supported by the school leader/administrator and therefore she sustained her motivation to continue teaching. The second teacher (30 years of experience) lost his motivation and resilience because of the problems he faced such as pupils' behaviors towards him, personal health, etc. The researchers emphasized in the research that positive relations with students and a supportive school leader were the two important components for teachers to maintain their resilience and motivation to continue teaching. In a similar vein, Hargreaves (2005) identified the outcomes of changes in education among 50 elementary and secondary teachers who have varying teaching experiences, ages, and subject areas. The researcher divided the group into three: early career, mid-career, and late career. The findings revealed that early career teachers have more energy, and emotional enthusiasm for changes although they have occupational uncertainty and employment insecurity. On the other hand, the research revealed that late-career teachers wait for retirement and have emotional distance and relaxation. As a result, they tend not to change their behaviors against the changes occurring in education.

Among studies focusing on induction in the literature, one of the promising studies was applied by Aitken and Harford (2011). In their study, the researchers tried to examine the induction needs of teachers from different stages, namely, pre-service teachers, novice teachers, and experienced teachers in a secondary school in Ireland and this school located

in a socially deprived area of the country. Out of 44 teachers who participated in the study, 11 of them were pre-service teachers, 11 of them were novice teachers and the remaining 22 participants were experienced teachers, four of which had a break from teaching. The findings obtained from the questionnaire and interviews indicated that novice teachers had challenges in experiencing teaching because of emotional confusion and hence it was accompanied by the feeling of isolation and helplessness. Discipline problems and classroom management were the other important problems for novice teachers and they expressed that they did not want to confront these problems. They also stated that they encountered injustice in the behaviors of their colleagues in that the relationship between novice teachers and the other members of the school was not ideal and they did not get adequate support from the management. They also stated that dealing with students who had different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds was also challenging for them. On the other hand, for the experienced teachers, discipline problems, and getting insufficient support from the administration were also important challenging factors for an experienced teacher. Financing their professional development and adapting themselves to the school culture was also challenging for the experienced teachers, especially for those who had a break from teaching. Therefore, it could be said that discipline, staff relations, and adapting yourself to the school culture were the basic challenges for both novice and experienced teachers in this study.

Van der Want, Schellings, & Mommers (2018) focused on the changes in the identity construction of experienced teachers from various subject areas including English language teaching by comparing their start years of teaching and the current situations. 20 teachers worked in eight secondary schools, which had an average socioeconomic status and their mean experience of teaching was 25,5 (SD: 10.4). By collecting data through qualitative methods such as narrative research, the researchers revealed that the teachers realized three identity issues were important for their teaching careers: teacher-parent interaction, time for teaching vs other tasks, and private life vs work. The teachers admitted that these issues were not significant in their early teaching years; however, they became valuable because of the changes in society and education. For instance, the parents started not to obey the advice the teachers gave. One of the teachers said that parents became more assertive in recent years. It is because ICT technologies have become more common and parents get the chance to reach teachers easily by sending messages or e-mails. The teachers also stated that the tasks teachers must do increased

heavily in recent years and it became challenging to balance work and private life for teachers. In terms of time for teaching or other tasks, the research findings indicated that there was an increase in the tasks which was not related to teaching. One of the teachers also said that his core job was teaching at the start of his career; however, the number of other tasks heavily increased in recent years. In other words, teachers with the burden of tasks unrelated to teaching believed that creating a positive identity became challenging for experienced teachers.

An important study by Sethusha (2012) focused on the challenges of classroom assessment practices of primary school teachers in a province of South Africa. The researcher aimed to investigate the challenges of teachers related to their classroom assessment practices and the influence of these challenges on teaching and learning. The data collected from four teachers through interviews, classroom observations, and documents of teachers indicated that teachers experience some major challenges such as the interpretation of the policy, overcrowded classrooms, getting support, involvement of parents, planning assessment, and implementation. For instance, the South African government made some changes in the assessment practices, which are regarded as fair, reliable, and valid; however, many teachers in the country are unwilling to implement the new assessment and believe that it is only a guideline for them. In terms of parental involvement, a teacher sent a perusal not for the families to assess the progress of their children. Unfortunately, parents commented mostly as satisfied with their children and did not give information about the lacking sides.

2.5.2. English teachers

Another remarkable study in the literature made by Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, (2018) investigated the challenges met by Polish and Turkish teachers of English from the perspective of the changes in society, technology, politics, and education. The researchers selected English teachers as the target of the population because there is a vast tendency in the programs of European countries to teach English from the beginning of early years in primary schools. The researchers aimed to explore the contextual differences regarding the challenges faced by Turkish and Polish teachers of English. The participants are 12 Turkish and 12 Polish teachers, working in state schools in their countries. The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews revealed that the

challenges were related to the classroom level, school level, and the changes in the system of education. As themes related to the classroom level, the researchers found that students' lack of motivation to learn English, their emotional inhibitions such as feeling anxious in English classes, being prejudiced about learning English, and teaching in large classes with heterogeneous learners. Concerning challenges at the school level, the participants stated that there was a need for a high-quality in-service training program for their professional development. They also added that their teacher education programs were theory-oriented and they needed to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The astonishing thing here was that this challenge was expressed by teachers who have teaching- experience of fewer than five years. Besides, they stated that their teaching hours were limited to teaching English at schools. The participants stated that pre-service education, attracting people's interest in the teaching profession, and career-path incentives were other important considerations for teachers in terms of the system of education. In other words, the participant teachers expected authoritarians to regularize pre-service education including more practice opportunities, making the teaching profession attractive as a career opportunity by bettering the conditions of teacher salaries and employee rights and finding incentives for those who work in challenging teaching environments. From these studies, we can infer that challenges faced by beginning teachers are inevitable simply because there are some drawbacks in teacher education programs such as unable to provide sufficient experience and guidance in teacher education policies. Therefore, we can say that beginning teachers' delving suddenly into teaching can be problematic for the teachers of both countries although the educational contexts of these countries are different from each other.

Working on a case study, Hayes (2010) investigates the challenges of an English teacher named Sasikarn. When the researcher focuses on the life of an English teacher in Thai, he realizes that the participant has grown up in a small town before she becomes an English teacher. Her enthusiasm for becoming an English teacher led her to study at a college of teacher education. Paradoxically, she get limited practice in teaching in the practicum, and the majority of courses related to teacher preparation were conducted in the Thai language so she could not get subject-specific training. During the practicum, she also received little support from the mentor teachers related to how to become an English teacher. In other words, the process in which Sasikarn gets teacher training follows a sink-or-swim approach. She also stated that support from her colleagues was

limited. Non-teaching responsibilities of teachers took much time in the school as a result of a lack of collaboration. The lack of collaboration also led her to spend less time for the preparation of core tasks. In terms of policy development, Sasikarn informed that it is hard to implement new policies without having sufficient training although the developments in education policy were made with good intentions. She also identified the teachers' need on getting more localized training and practical applications rather than focusing on theory with the centralized courses. Regarding the out-of-school experience, she noted that the motivations of her students were low since they do not have the opportunity to use English outside of class. That is why students see English as a course in the curriculum as the other subjects like Mathematics and Science. Parents were also reluctant for their children to be trained based on the culture of Western societies.

Another study made by Gunawan and Daud (2018) in Indonesia focused on the new curriculum implementation and the problems of English teachers working in rural areas in the implementation of the new curriculum. The data collected from three English teachers revealed four main problems in the implementation of the new curriculum: insufficient teaching hours provided for English language teaching, the students' diversity in their ability to learn, which teachers admit that there are students whose learning abilities good or bad in the same class, some mismatch between the new curriculum and the national exams, and facilities of both students and schools such as lack of various media tools.

Based on the study made by Castro and Villafuerte (2019) in Ecuador, the researchers investigate the motivations of rural and urban English teachers in the use of role-plays in English classes. Out of 45 participants, 30 teachers work in urban schools and the remaining 15 teachers work in rural schools. The results indicate that teachers working in urban places have positive perceptions towards to use of role-play activities in English classes and they feel more comfortable performing the role-play activities when compared to teachers in rural areas. Teachers in urban areas also state that they encourage their students to speak English through role-play activities. It can be inferred that the education provided in urban schools has a better quality in comparison to education provided in rural areas. The differences between the urban and rural areas in terms of education offered to students to learn English can be explained with teachers' knowledge of how to implement role-play activities. In other words, teachers working in urban schools may be more knowledgeable about the pedagogy of applying different activity types.

2.6. Studies on Challenges Perceived by Teachers in Türkiye

2.6.1. Various subject areas

Many studies are focusing on the challenging situations of beginning teachers in the Turkish context. Some of them were conducted with teachers from varied disciplines. For example, Öztürk (2008) collected data through a survey questionnaire regarding the challenges of 465 novice teachers working in eight different provinces of Türkiye. The participants in the study were recruited at different levels, from primary schools to high schools. The findings indicated that teachers had job-related concerns more often than social concerns. The most important challenges were teachers' heavy workload, the change in their social status and identity, and unable to get the needed support from colleagues, principals and supervisors, and classroom management. The study also revealed that the teachers' concerns varied in terms of their ages, subject area, the department where they graduated, school type and level, and the amount of in-service training.

MoNE made a radical change in the 2000s and turned the center of education from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness. The transition to student-centered education is quite painful because teachers have not taken such education before, nor were they educated based on the principles of student-centeredness in their own student lives. In other words, it is very difficult for teachers to turn teaching to a student-based approach as a conceptual change. For this purpose, Isikoglu, Basturk, and Karaca (2009) stated that it is important to determine teachers' beliefs about the concept of student-centeredness. The authors developed a scale on student-centeredness for in-service teachers. The general result of the research is that while teachers have positive beliefs toward student-centeredness as the curriculum goal, their scale scores have decreased in terms of learning/teaching strategy. It can be thought that the reason for this is that teachers do not have enough knowledge about appropriate strategies for the student-centered issue. In this regard, teachers need to gain a constructivist perspective on content, teaching strategies, and assessment with in-service training programs. One of the important results of the study is that experienced teachers have more positive student-centeredness beliefs than inexperienced teachers. It can be thought that experienced teachers have more information about students and how to give instruction related to their

subject areas. However, the authors think that teaching experience is not enough to prove that experience leads teachers to be more student-centered, and only this information cannot be an indicator in that experienced teachers use student-centered approaches more than inexperienced teachers do.

Yeşilyurt and Karakuş (2011) investigated the teaching problems faced by 49 primary school teachers working in Elazığ province in the 2008-2009 academic years. All the participants were beginning teachers and the data were gathered through a structured questionnaire including ten items. The authors found that primary school teachers mostly experienced orientation problems, that is, their adaptation to the teaching context, balancing work and life, insufficient guidance and support, insufficient in-service training, and the gap between theory and practice.

Another study made by Gergin (2010) investigated beginning biology teachers' challenges and their ways to cope with these challenges. The participants were 5 biology teachers working in high schools and they were working in different cities in Türkiye, namely Kütahya, İstanbul, Edirne, and Muş. The reason why these teachers were selected as participants was that their teaching experience varied from 1 to 3 years. Two of the participants were recruited in vocational high schools and the others in general high schools. The findings regarding the challenges experienced by the participants indicated that classroom management and motivational problems were the most important challenges for the participants. The participants were hesitant about setting the classroom discipline because of the crowded classes and the availability of problematic students in high numbers. A teacher also talked about the biased behaviors of the school administration and this caused her to lose her ambition to continue in the teaching profession. One of the participants argued about the ineffectiveness of in-service courses given by MoNE, however, it helped teachers' socialization. The other challenges experienced by the participant teachers were related to the subject matter and not knowing some specific content well and using traditional approaches for teaching biology. The participants also informed that they did not get needed support from their mentor teachers. To overcome these challenges, they asked their colleagues for help, searched on the internet to find any solution to their problems, and used a try- and-making error strategy to handle these problems encountered in the class.

One of the studies on the perceived challenges of novice teachers in the Turkish context was conducted by Öztürk and Yıldırım (2013). In this study, the authors

investigated the adaptation challenges teachers faced in their first year of teaching. The data came from 465 teachers in eight provinces of Türkiye through a questionnaire. Based on the cluster sampling procedure, 8 cities in which the highest number of novice teachers was recruited were selected and teachers in these cities were working in city centers (29%), districts (25%), small towns (23%), and villages (21%). Most of the participants' subject areas were classroom teaching (18.7%) and language teaching (English language 15.7%; Turkish language 12.7%), and the rest of the participants (52%) were from other fields such as Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, etc. The results indicated that workload challenges among job-related challenges were the most important challenges perceived by novice teachers such as having extracurricular tasks and having difficulty managing every responsibility to be done. In terms of instructional challenges, novice teachers prioritized curriculum and planning as the most important challenges for themselves. For the arrangement of the classroom, novice teachers reported that the most difficult thing for them was classroom management as an important part of the teaching profession. In terms of social-related challenges, they informed that they were not happy with their employee rights and salary. They also informed that some emotional support would be provided for their adaptation to the teaching profession.

Another considerable study made by Koza Çiftçi and Cin (2017) focused on the challenges of 20 teachers working in villages. The researchers collected data from the teachers, and community members. The study revealed that four main difficulties are hindering educational development. These are related to the resources available, insufficient understanding of social and cultural elements as well as economic obstacles that constrain educational attempts in that farm-work oriented lives of the communities create obstacles for students, who believe in staying in their villages and doing village work, lack of collaboration between the teachers and village dwellers, and irrelevant education. In other words, rural students cannot develop skills and knowledge for helping rural life since the education offered is more centralized.

2.6.2. English teachers

Tılfarlıoğlu and Öztürk (2007) investigated the perceptions of English teachers working in state primary schools in Türkiye on the challenges they faced with curriculum implementation. The researchers collected data through a survey questionnaire including

both close-ended and open-ended questions. The teachers participating in the study were a combination of teachers who graduated from ELT departments and primary school teachers teaching English courses because of the scarcity of English teachers recruited to primary schools since Türkiye recently adopted teaching English to the 4th and 5th graders. That is, out of 260 teachers participating in the study, only 37 teachers got training in ELT departments. The research indicated that the challenging situations for the teachers were crowded classrooms, heavy workload (working more than 25 hours a week), not having any training about teaching English to young learners, lack of resource books for learners, insufficient materials and supplies such as head projectors, slides, and computers. The findings of this study are important in that new reforms create some drawbacks such as making primary school teachers teach English to compensate for the scarcity of English teachers as a result of drastic changes in the Turkish education system.

Likewise, Salı (2008) investigated the novice English teachers' perceived challenges and support needs in primary and secondary state schools in two cities in Türkiye. The total number of participants was 104 and their teaching experience varied from 1 year to 4 years. Out of 104 teachers, 7 of them whose experience in teaching was up to one year were the cases of the study. The results revealed that novice English teachers faced important challenges regarding foreign language pedagogy such as classroom management, foreign language teaching and learning, and contextual challenges. The basic challenges experienced by the participants related to classroom management were setting the classroom discipline, planning the instruction, individual learner differences, setting the roles of teachers, that is, becoming an authoritarian teacher or a teacher in the ideal of the participant, managing the lessons and the class time, catching up with the syllabus, and establishing a positive classroom atmosphere. The challenges for novice teachers related to foreign language learning and teaching included the challenges like learner awareness, learner differences, dealing with learner motivation, proficiency, and interest, using different techniques and materials, integrating theory and practice, learning materials provided to teachers and students, and the parents of the students. The challenges related to the context of teaching were also expressed by the participants and they informed that there were not adequate teaching materials at schools, and opportunities for professional development provided to teachers were not enough for their development. The other challenges related to the context of teaching were teaching in large classes, relations with parents, responsibilities that are out of class,

teaching load, and inadequate support provided by the administration of the school, and the other colleagues. The participants also expressed the challenges related to the types of professional support and it included the challenges like the lack of adequate support from school administration, their colleagues, mentors, and courses in the inductive program. Regarding the support needs of the participants, they informed that dealing with unmotivated learners, how to teach to low proficiency level students, developing the speaking skills of students, large classes, and maintaining classroom discipline were the important issues for novice teachers that they needed support in the teaching environment. Therefore, it can be said that novice English teachers in Türkiye experience many challenges of both related to language teaching and learning and pedagogical issues in their environments.

In another study made by Kızıldağ (2009), the challenges of English language teachers working in primary state schools in Türkiye were investigated. The researcher collected data from 20 English teachers whose teaching experience was categorized as a novice (1-3 years), socializing (4-6 years), and experienced (more than 6 years) through semi-structured interviews. The research revealed that novice teachers worked in low-socioeconomic-status schools, and most of the expert teachers worked in high-socioeconomic-status schools. The research indicated that the participant teachers faced institutional, instructional, and socio-economic challenges in their teaching experience. As institutional challenges, lack of understanding of the nature of English teachings such as crowded classrooms and lack of support from school managers or MoNE were the most common challenges for the teachers. In other words, they stated that there was not any attempt to solve the problems and help increase the quality of English teaching. They also stated that the busy curriculum, inappropriate textbooks, and unsatisfactory placement tests were instructional challenges. They perceived that the curriculum presented had unrealistic goals to achieve and that the textbooks were full of inappropriate realities of teaching English in Türkiye. The teachers also stated that the placement test used as a tool for the selection of primary school students to high schools was grammar-oriented and mechanical although communicative language teaching was taken as a reference for language teaching. Lack of parental support was the most important challenge for them in terms of the socio-economic dimension. The teachers informed that parents had a low understanding of the value of English classes and therefore they did not support the learning process of their children.

One of the recent studies made by Şahin (2021) investigated English teachers' professional identity development at rural schools. The participants of the study were five English teachers working in four different regions in Türkiye. The qualitative study revealed that the participant teachers experienced challenges related to the instructional practices such as limited resources and lack of equipment, discrepancies between the practicum and rural teaching experiences, students' lack of exposure to English out of class, students' level of English, students' readiness to English curriculum, lack of infrastructure. The research findings also indicated that English teachers in rural experienced challenges because of the contextual characteristics of rural areas. In other words, students' prejudices towards English classes, their lack of motivation, the hard living conditions of students in rural, and lack of parental support are the most common challenges that English teachers experience in rural contexts.

CHAPTER III

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This research aims to identify the challenges experienced by EFL teachers working in rural areas of Türkiye. To find answers to the research question in the introduction chapter, a qualitative case study design is considered to be applied in this study because a case study design lead researchers to analyze the situation or context with all details intensively (Bryman, 2004, p. 66). According to Yin (2018, p. 50), case study is a phenomenon that is examined within its context. It is done especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and its context are not clear. In other words, it is a way of understanding a real-world case within its contextual conditions without having an intervention. Yin (2018, p.50) also adds that case study has peculiar conditions when compared to other experiments, e.g. experimental studies, in terms of not separating a phenomenon from its context. It is because a phenomenon and its context cannot easily be separated in real-life situations.

Although there are not any agreed characteristics of case study designs (Given, 2008, p. 68), it generally entails a community or people in a specific context, and case studies intend to intensively examine the setting. One of the reasons for this is related to what kind of instruments is used in case studies. In case study research designs, a researcher can apply both qualitative and quantitative methods to have an in-depth understanding of cases, however, qualitative instruments such as observations and interviews are the ones that are used in high percentages. Although it is not totally certain what methods and data collection tools are used in data collection processes and how we combine these methods depends on the case itself, the need for in-depth and contextual analysis brings qualitative approaches to the forefront (Berg & Lune, 2019). The reason for applying similar instruments in case studies is that these tools are helpful for intensely analyzing the case. What is to be considered here is to focus on the aim of the research in which the researcher expects to get an in-depth analysis of a case. In other words, case studies are distinguished by their specific focus on elucidating specific features of cases.

Case studies are used in social studies quite a lot because events and phenomena in social studies have distinctive characteristics and they should be investigated under the

natural conditions of the events (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017, p. 411). The conditions peculiar to events in social studies are highly effective in determining the occurrence of events. Therefore, a different method is needed for in-depth analysis and interpretation of the events in the natural environment. According to Given (2008, p.69), case study research designs, in this regard, are advantageous in some aspects:

- Case studies can be the main sources of theoretical innovations simply because case studies include cases having unique characteristics.
- Case study research has an affinity toward descriptive goals when compared to surveys. This does not mean that the case study is not interested in casual goals but it usually takes the descriptive-interpretive elements more seriously.
- Cases are often concerned with pinning down the specific mechanisms and pathways between causes and effects rather than revealing the average strength of a factor that causes an effect.
- Case studies have a comparative advantage for the depth of the analysis, where depth can be understood as empirical completeness and natural wholeness or as the conceptual richness and theoretical consistency.
- Case studies can use more and more diverse indicators for representing a theoretical concept and for securing the internal validity of causal inferences and/or theoretical interpretations for these cases.

Yin (2018, p.96) identifies that there is a 2x2 design in case studies which must include contextual conditions related to the cases. In other words, the case study designs are divided into two, single-case designs and multiple-case designs. He also divides cases as holistic or embedded and adds that which one to use in the research is relevant to the researcher's decision on the theoretical prepositions. In single cases, for instance, a researcher can use a single case design when the theory can be specified with clear circumstances in that the propositions are thought to be correct.

As understood, the case is a complex, specific, and functional notion (Stake, 1995, p.2). When the research is on the challenges of English teachers working in state schools of Türkiye, it is appropriate to use a qualitative case study research design with a holistic perspective because our aim with this research is to analyze what happens in real foreign language teaching environments and the events, which are sought, have peculiar characteristics based on the context of teaching.

3.2. The Context

The context of the study is the Kars province, which is located in the Eastern part of Türkiye. Nearly two-thirds of the population of this province live in rural and the immigration rate, as being the third province with high immigration in Türkiye, shows that the conditions of this province do not provide needed opportunities to the people of this city in terms of economy, education, and health (Demir, 2015). In other words, it can be said that living in such places has some peculiar conditions and hardships for the people of this province such as getting a quality education. Therefore, people living in this province tend to immigrate to other cities in Türkiye, which provide job and education opportunities. According to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), the immigration rate of the population in this province is ‰ -16.51 (TUIK, 2021) which is high.

With this study, we define the case as the context in which EFL teachers work in rural areas of Türkiye. The context that we focus on is the place where educational conditions are heavily connected with physical conditions such as the abundance of snowy days in winter. In the Eastern Anatolia region, the snowy days in winter are the highest of Türkiye. In Erzurum- Kars plateau, it snows nearly 40- 50 days of the year (Gönel, 2013). As a result, the teaching process is interrupted from time to time because of heavy snow.

Another problem is the number of recruited EFL teachers in this context. Based on an information request from the Kars Directorate of National Education in 2021, we can say that there are limited EFL teachers in Kars province with only 307 teachers (both tenured and contracted) in total in 2021 and henceforth the scarcity of qualified EFL teachers can be regarded as an important problem for providing needed English training in state schools in this province.

One important aspect is related to how rurality is defined. When we examine the rurality in the literature, there are different aspects for defining the rurality such as population density and loss, gain rates of the population, and economic structure of the setting (Gölümser, Baycan Levent, Nijkamp, 2010). Although there is not any agreed definition of rurality, different countries take different criteria to define rurality. Institutions working on rurality such as OECD and European Union use population density for defining rural settings (Aydınlı & Çiftçi, 2015). Some countries also have

rurality definitions based on their criteria. For example, the rurality definition in Austria is defined as whether this place is a city center or not. For the rurality definition in Finland, economic considerations are accepted for defining rural places (Aydınlı & Çiftçi, 2015).

The definition of rurality in Türkiye is accepted by governmental institutions such as the Turkish Statistical Institute. Additionally, village law accepted in 1924 defines rurality based on the population number of a place. According to this definition, when the number of people in a place is lower than 20000, this place is accepted as a rural area and when the number of people is 20000 and above, and then it is accepted as an urban area. When we consider these definitions and check the number of people living in the Kars province with its towns in TUIK data for the 2020 year, the population density of the Kars province is 28, which is very low when compared to the mean population density of Türkiye as it is 109 (TUIK, 2021). The Kars province is composed of the city center and seven districts. When considering the TUIK statistics data for the 2020 year, the population of the city center and one province, namely Kağızman, is above 20000 (TUIK, 2021). The population of the remaining six districts is lower than this number. Therefore, English teachers working in these districts can only be accepted as participants in the study.

Table 3.1. *The population of the Kars province with its districts in 2020*

Year	Location	Population	Number of villages	Village population
2020	Kars city center	90523	72	27678
2020	Kağızman (district center)	20771	62	24687
2020	Sarıkamış (district center)	15557	55	24601
2020	Selim (district center)	5587	53	17384
2020	Digor (district center)	2473	37	19017
2020	Arpaçay (district center)	2384	48	13892
2020	Akyaka (district center)	2025	27	8429
2020	Susuz (district center)	2069	27	7855

3.3. Participants

The participants of this study are English teachers working in rural state schools of Türkiye. Their experience of teaching may vary based on the contextual differences in

the teachers' work. That is, one teacher in a context may experience different teaching situations than other teachers because of the peculiar conditions of the context. Therefore, English teachers working in rural areas of Kars province are selected as the participants of the research. In case studies, the focus can be on a certain point as well as having a broader perspective on society (Berg & Lune, 2019). The current study only focuses on teachers working in rural state schools of Kars province because we believe that rurality and English language teaching can best be understood in this area because of the hard physical conditions of this province, which is explained before.

For the selection of participants, the purposive sampling method is used because purposive sampling permits researchers to select their cases based on some criteria to have a deeper understanding of the issue by providing rich data (Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018). The basic criteria for the selection of the participants for the present research are:

- English teachers who work in rural state schools of Türkiye.
- English teachers who have at least an undergraduate degree from English-related departments of Turkish Universities such as English Language Teaching, English Language and Literature, American Culture and Literature, and Translation and Interpreting.
- English teachers who work full-time in their schools

By taking into consideration these criteria for the selection of the participants, 11 English teachers are the participants of this study. The participants are asked whether they voluntarily become participants of this research after taking ethical permission from the authorities, that is, the ethical committee of Anadolu University Institute of Educational Sciences and the research permission committee of Kars National Education Directorate (Appendix 4). The background information related to the participants is given in table 2 below.

Table 3.2. *Background information related to the participants*

Psydoname	Age	Gender	University	Undergraduate program	Graduation Date	Teaching experience
T1. Ömer	26	male	Dokuz Eylül University	ELT	2018	3
T2.Gaye	26	female	Akdeniz University	ELT	2018	2
T3.Gülden	27	female	Amasya University	ELT	2018	3

Table 3.2. (Continuing) *Background information related to the participants*

T4.İsmail	31	male	Balıkesir University	ELT	2012	6
T5.Meryem	24	female	Anadolu University	ELT	2020	1
T6.Özlem	35	female	Dokuz Eylül University	American Culture and Literature	2009	2
T7.Rasim	32	male	Gazi University	ELT	2014	5
T8.Salih	26	male	Atatürk University	ELT	2017	5
T9.Yasemin	26	female	Uludağ University	ELT	2017	4
T10.Emrah	34	male	Girne American University	Translation and Interpretation	2017	2
T11.Haldun	25	male	Dokuz Eylül University	ELT	2018	2

Participant 1. T1.Ömer says that his desire to become a teacher started when he was a student in secondary school. And he adds that he was talented in English and decided to be an English teacher when he was in high school. After graduating from ETL Department, at Dokuz Eylül University in 2018, he started to work in a village secondary state school in Kars since he and his family were from Kars. He also added that he has relatives living in Kars. This is the first school where he works as a teacher with an experience of nearly 3 years (2 years and 4 months).

Participant 2. T2.Gaye explains that she wanted to be a teacher when she was in primary school. She says that she wanted to become an English teacher because some of her cousins are English teachers and she has some relatives living in Europe she adds that she has lived in an environment where foreign languages are spoken when she was a child. After graduating from the ELT department of Akdeniz University in 2018, she worked in a private language school for one year, and then she started to work in a state secondary school in a village in the Kars district. The village is nearly 25km away from the city center and is located on a mountainside. It snows a lot in this area and the road to the village is closed because of heavy snow and icing from time to time. The classes are small and the number of students in each class is less than 10.

Participant 3. T3.Güliden decided to be an English teacher because of her elder brother. She admits that her idol is her elder brother and she decided to be an English teacher since her brother is an English teacher. After graduating from the ELT department of Amasya University in 2018, she was appointed as a teacher in a state secondary school in a village near Kars. The village is one of the nearest villages, that is, only 11km away from the city center. Some of the students live in the same village but other students come

from other villages that do not have a secondary school. The school building is old and does not have enough space and classes for all the students; therefore, two of the classes are in a different building which was used as a storeroom. Since they are not big enough for teaching, there are some deficiencies such as the smartboard in the classes when compared to other classes in the same school.

Participant 4. T.4.İsmail has the most experience in teaching among the participants. When he was in highschool he was successful in math but throughout his high school years, he encountered a problematic math teacher and his grades decreased because of the negative relationship between the teacher and him. As a result, he decided to choose a program, English, which is not related to math courses. He also adds that he was successful in English, too. After the graduation from ELT Department, at Balıkesir University in 2012. He also thinks that the university education did not contribute anything to his education except going to Europe through the Erasmus program. As a teaching experience, firstly he started to work at a university as a contractual English teacher for two years. He also worked in private schools and the military as an English teacher. Later, He was recruited in a secondary state school in a town, Kars district nearly six years ago, and still he works in the same school.

Participant 5. T5.Meryem admitted that she did not want to be an English teacher in the beginning and her goal was to study Americal Culture and Literature; however, she considered the probability of getting a job and decided to become an English teacher. As a result, she was enrolled in the ELT Department of Anadolu University. After graduating from the program in 2020, she became an English teacher in a village secondary state school in Kars. This school is her first experience as an English teacher for only one month. The school she works is nearly 45 kilometers away from the city center and the village is near the border of Türkiye.

Participant 6. T6.Özlem stated that she wanted to become an English teacher because of the hard conditions of the private sector in Türkiye. After working several years in the private sector except for education, she aimed to change her life by teaching children and getting away from the private sector. She thought that teaching can be more enjoyable and therefore, she decided to be an English teacher when she graduated from American Culture and Literature Department, at Dokuz Eylül University in 2009. She also took a certificate which is called Pedagogical Formation at the same university to become an English teacher. Normally, her dream was not to become an English teacher,

but to study language since she likes studying languages such as English and German; henceforth, she decided to study American Culture and Literature. Because of the hard-working conditions of the private sector in Türkiye, she became an English teacher. She has been working as an English teacher in a village state secondary school in Kars for 2 years. The school is very big because students in the school come from other villages since the school is a regional boarding secondary school. In the school, English courses are taught by three English teachers, two of whom are the participants. The school has a dormitory and the teachers have to work as teacher's aides at least once a week.

Participant 7. T7.Rasim said that he was good at English when he was in highschool and he chose to study in English Language Teaching Department, at Gazi University in 2014. When he was a student at his university, he was interested in music and he was a member of a band and he gave some concerts with the band. He was also interested in tutoring in a private language school after graduation from the university. With the guidance of his elder brother, he wanted to become an English teacher and started to work in a regional boarding secondary school in the town of Kars. Later, he became a contracted school principal of a village state secondary school in the same district. In the end, he turned back to his first school as assistant principle. Most of his time in school pass by doing formal procedures of the school and he also teaches English six hours a week at the same school. Since the school is a regional boarding school, most of the students come from different villages, therefore it is a crowded school. Three English teachers work in the same school, two of whom are the participants in the research. The physical conditions of most classes in the school are acceptable since they have smartboards; however, the other classes do not have the same opportunities since they are in different buildings.

Participant 8. T8.Salih decided to become an English teacher when he was in high school with the guidance of his English teacher in this school. He explains that he was undecided about which program to study; however, he was successful in English. With the help of his English teacher, he chose to study English at university. After he graduated from the ELT Department of Ataturk University in 2017, he started to work in a village school secondary state school in Kars and he still works in the same school. The school is located between Kars and Ardahan districts and it is a regional boarding secondary school whose students are from different villages of Kars. The school is one of the big

schools in this area because each grade in the school has five sections. The teachers in the school have to be teacher aides in the dormitory of the school at least once a week.

Participant 9. T9.Yasemin explained that she liked her English teacher very much when she first met her in the fourth grade of her primary school and decided to become an English teacher. Since she decided to become an English teacher, she studied at English Language Teaching Department, Uludağ University in 2017. After graduating from the university, she worked in a private school as an English teacher, but she explained that the salary was low and the school was paying teacher salaries late; therefore, she dropped out to work in the private sector and decided to work in a state school of Türkiye. She has been working for four years in an Islamic vocational secondary school in the town of Kars district. The students in the school come from different villages on school buses every day. The building of the school is used together with a high school, an Islamic vocational high school. The classes on the first and second floors belong to the secondary school, and the other floors belong to the high school. Each classroom in the school has a smart board. The school also has a multi-purpose hall and some school activities such as poetry recitation are held there.

Participant 10. T10.Emrah stated that he did not plan to be an English teacher. He planned to work in the private sector related to language; therefore, he studied at the Translation and Interpretation Department, Girne American University, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. After graduating from the university in 2017, he decided to become an English teacher because of his family's pressure for working as a teacher. He, therefore, got the certificate of Pedagogical Formation from İzmir Demokrasi University and became an English teacher in a village state secondary school after passing the Public Personal Selection Examination (called KPSS) two years ago. The school he worked in is located next to the Kars-Erzurum highway; therefore, teachers do not experience transportation problems. Some of the students in the school are from other villages and they come to school by school bus. However, the classes are not crowded. The number of students in each class ranges from 9 to 26. Each class in the school has a smart board and there is also an IT class, the class conditions are not good with only having a few computers.

Participant 11. T11.Haldun stated that his dream was to become a teacher when he was a student in his primary school. It is because his grandfather was a teacher in a village institute. But he was undecided in the subject until he first met his English teacher

when he was in highschool. Their relationship with his teacher was very good and therefore he decided to become an English teacher. After graduation from the English Language Teaching Department, at Dokuz Eylül University in 2018, he became an English teacher in a regional boarding secondary school in the town of Kars. The school is big and crowded and three teachers work in the same school, two of whom are the participants in the research. The school has two buildings, one is the main building and the other building consists of an enriched library, an eating hall for students coming from different villages, and some classes. The classes in the main building are in conditions with smart boards; however, the classes in other buildings do not have these opportunities.

3.4. The Researcher

After graduating from Atatürk University English Language Teaching Department in 2011, he worked as an English teacher for two years in a rural state secondary school. Later, he completed his master's degree in Anadolu University English Language Teaching Program in 2017. He is continuing his doctoral studies in teacher education at the same university. His previous rural teaching experience has an undeniable role when deciding on the thesis topic. At this point, it is important whether the role of the researcher is a participant or an observer because, in qualitative research, the role of the researcher greatly affects the approach to the research. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) state that it would be more accurate for the researcher to have both positions rather than an insider, sharing similar roles and experiences with the participants, or an outsider. In this study, although the role of the researcher is an outsider, namely a non-participant observer, the researcher's experience of teaching English in rural shows that he is very close to both perspectives. This may mean that the fact that the researcher is in a position very close to the situation expressed by the researchers helps make qualitative research stronger.

3.5. Data Collection Tools

Triangulation, that is, using different types of data collection tools, is helpful to have a deeper understanding related to the research questions of this study. Since case study designs need a holistic investigation of the research, applying multiple data collection tools is needed. Using different tools also increases the construct validity of the

research (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017, p. 415), therefore, the data collection tools for the present research include:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Reflective diaries
- Classroom observations

3.5.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews as data collection tools are most widely used in qualitative studies because it helps researchers reveal views of participants related to their life experiences. Researchers prepare a set of questions to be asked to the participants, however, it is not structured and both interviewee and interviewer are flexible in asking and answering the questions (Bryman, 2004, p. 471). This flexibility helps participants express their views by letting them give reasons for the events.

The interviews for this research were conducted coordinately with other data processes, that is, classroom observations and reflective diaries. With interviewing, we first aimed to get information about the participants' journey of learning to teach English and the teaching context where they work. In other words, we wanted to know more about the process of becoming an English teacher just before experiencing teaching in real teaching environments. Second, participants were interviewed to get their views on teaching English as a foreign language in Türkiye, what challenges they encountered in their classrooms, and what other factors were challenging for them (Appendix 1).

3.5.2. Reflective diaries

Diaries in qualitative studies enable researchers the first-hand information about the events and experiences occurring during the day. Diaries that are kept in a regular timeline are reflections of events from the perspectives of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 134). Keeping reflective diaries is highly crucial to reveal the views of the participants about the research and they can provide plentiful information, which other tools such as observations and interviews are unable to bring out. It is because diaries are the tools that are used at regular intervals about the research problem and people depict what happens in the research site by writing intimately their thoughts, feelings, etc.

Considering the research problem of the study, we ask participant teachers to write reflective diaries about the challenges they experience during school hours. Keeping diaries can be very different from each other, and they are generally divided into three in terms of how structured they are: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured diaries (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017, p. 430). Diaries used in this research are organized in a way that the participants can express their feelings about the process of teaching and the time spent in their schools with some guidelines because they can lose control over what to write. We also do not want to narrow our participants with a structured diary entry; therefore, we follow a semi-structured diary entry since the participants can express their feelings easily without deviating from the research question. For this purpose, we prepare the guiding questions (Appendix 2) and glue them to the cover pages of the diary notebooks. We also inform participants that the guiding questions are helpful in how to write their reflections in the diary notebooks. We also ask teachers to write an entry in the diary at least once a week.

3.5.3. Classroom observations

Classroom observation is invaluable for researchers because it is a tool that the researcher can get primary data from the field (Yin, 2011, p. 143). That is, a researcher can attain data about the real-life experiences of participants from their natural settings. In this way, the researcher can make comparisons between what the participants say with what he observes. Classroom observations can also provide researchers enough flexibility to collect data for the unexpected sides of the research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 79). Although there are many good sides to observations, researchers should remember that participants can change their behaviors especially when they are observed. In this regard, data gathered from the observations may not reflect the real experiences of the participants (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2017, p. 184). Therefore, researchers should define their roles as observers, that is, participant-observer or non-participant observers, and consider the drawbacks of being an observer in the field.

For this research, we define the role of the participant as a non-participant observer because the observations aim to see what challenges occur in the context of teaching English as a foreign language from an outer perspective to take critical notes related to the process of teaching English. Detailed observation is highly important in qualitative

research because the success of observations is dependent on how detailed and systematic researchers take notes (Tezgiden-Cakcak, 2015). Therefore, our plan for observations is to create a systematic observation sheet to make the data more meaningful (Appendix 3).

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

Before collecting data, we prepared expert opinion forms for all data collection tools. We asked faculty members in the ELT department, English teachers working in MoNE, school managers, and a manager in the provincial directorate of national education to evaluate data collection tools as experts. Expert opinion form was sent online and out of 10 selected experts, 6 experts filled in the forms. In the expert opinion form, the items were evaluated considering the options of “appropriate”, “not appropriate”, “appropriate but needs correction”, and “suggestions”. The options of “appropriate but needs correction” and “suggestion” were considered for making some adjustments to the items. Considering expert opinions in the forms, we made some changes to the tools. For example, in one item of semi-structured interviews, we asked: “In which program did you graduate? To what extent did the program you graduated from contribute to becoming an English language teacher?”. The experts suggested asking this item as two separate questions. Therefore, we prepared the tool by asking this item as two separate questions. After the experts’ suggestions, we included the items in the data collection tools and also distracted some items from the tools and we made some corrections for the other items based on the suggestions of the experts.

The data of this study were collected in the autumn term of 2021, starting from October to December. After getting permission from the authorities for conducting the research, the participants were asked whether they voluntarily wanted to participate in the study. As the first data collection tool, semi-structured interviews were held in two sessions because interviews may last longer and participants can get tired, and bored of talking and hence drop giving detailed information about the process of foreign language teaching. Also, we asked the participants to observe their classes, and the first two weeks were observed but not analyzed because the observer’s acceptance in the school setting by teachers and students is very crucial; otherwise, they may not show their real reactions to the events. Then, the observations for every teacher were conducted for one whole day of a week. For the other days that teachers were not observed, they were asked to write

what challenging situations they encounter in their teaching contexts and what they think about the event of the day. Table 3.3. shows the timeline of the data collection.

Table 3.3. *Data collection procedure*

1- Interviews	Held in two sessions
2 Pilot observations	Two weeks
3 Observations	To the end of the term (one day for each participant)
4 Reflective diaries	To the end of the term (at least one entry for each week)

Interviews were held in different places such as the researcher's office, a café, dormitories of the schools, and the teachers' room. In the selection of interviewing places, teachers' choices were effective. For example, some teachers agreed to come to the researcher's office for the interview, some stated that a café was suitable for them. Two of the teachers were interviewed in the school dormitory because they had to work as teacher aides in their school dormitory because of the limited spare time of the teachers. The last two teachers said that they can only participate in interviews at school, one interview was held in the room of the assistant principal because he was the assistant principal of the school, and the other teacher said that she can only participate in the interview in teachers' room when she has free hours at school. Fortunately, there was an empty room for photocopying in the school, and interviews were conducted without interruption. The interviews were held in Turkish since interviewees can express their views in their mother-tongue with rich descriptions. The duration of the interviews for each participant was between one and half hours to two hours and thirty-nine minutes and the average duration of interviews was one hour and forty-one minutes.

For the reflective diaries given to teachers, we asked them to write at least one entry for each week based on the guiding questions presented on the cover page of the diary notebooks. From time to time, the participants showed what they wrote in the diaries and the researcher realized that they could not write reflectively, especially in the beginning as they write narratively. Ryan (2011) informs that although the value of reflective writing is known, especially in educational settings, it has a complex structure needing high rhetorical demands; therefore, it is difficult to write reflectively unless one can get a systematic education related to reflective writing. Therefore, the researcher informed them how to write a reflective diary and showed a diary example. After we showed them

dairy examples which are written reflectively, they corrected their writing by adding their feelings and thoughts towards the challenges they faced in the process of teaching. Although the teachers learned how to write reflectively, some of their dairy entries were written narratively, especially at the beginning of the data collection process, and henceforth, we excluded these entries from the data.

During the observation sessions we planned to observe every participant throughout the term, therefore, we got the chance of observing the teachers and their teaching environment more than one time. For each day throughout the term, we observed teachers only in one school because the locations of the schools are very different from each other. Some of the schools are in the eastern part of the city, and some are in the south, north, and west. In this regard, we decided to observe the whole day of a participant in the school when we went to the schools that participants work in. As planned, two weeks were observed and these observations were regarded as piloting because teachers and their students should get familiar with the researcher in the class.

By the end of the term, more than 140 hours of classroom observations were conducted. The researcher could not only observe the classes for two weeks since he was quarantined because of Covid-19. The researcher also could not go to school for two days because his new daughter was born. Also, the schools were closed for one day because of heavy snow, thus the observations were not conducted for that day.

3.7. Data Analysis

Since the nature of this study is qualitative, delving into the data and refining the huge data needs elaborate and rigorous investigation. The data needs to be continuously examined in such qualitative studies to reveal the views of English teachers related to challenges encountered in the foreign language teaching process. We, therefore, use the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.101), which investigates the data inductively by creating codes, categories, and concepts in a cyclical way. That is, the researchers do not follow a linear path in the analysis of the data in the constant comparison method and they compare and contrast the codes and categories with the previous ones.

According to Glaser (1965), some diverse approaches are followed in the analysis of qualitative data. Firstly, the researchers aim to analyze the data to test provisionally the

hypothesis by converting data into numerical value as in quantitative data analysis. Secondly, the researchers aim to generate new concepts and hypotheses by continuously redesigning because they believe that coding the data explicitly is unnecessary. However, the constant comparison method seems to be between the two methods and takes the first method of coding explicitly and systematically and the second method of generating new concepts and hypotheses by continuously comparing and contrasting the codes and categories.

By selecting the constant comparison method as the analysis of the data of this research, our purpose is not to test only the challenges experienced by English teachers in their teaching practices, but also to understand the professional development of English teachers with regard to the experience of teaching. Therefore, we follow the guidelines of the constant comparative method, which includes comparisons of participants, then integration of categories and their properties, reduction of some categories, and reaching a general understanding of the issue (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp.105- 111).

During the data analysis, after the transcription of all the data, nearly ten percent of the data were analyzed by two other experts, one of whom has a Ph.D. degree in the English language teaching department and is knowledgeable in qualitative data analysis. The other expert has also a Ph.D. degree in teacher education and is knowledgeable in qualitative data analysis. In order to grant trustworthiness, the researcher randomly selected nearly ten percent of the data and sent the documents to the experts for data analysis. After they analyzed the data, we compared the codes of the experts whether they are matching with each other. Then, we discussed the codes that we could not have an agreement on and reached a consensus. For example, the researcher and one of the raters agreed on being familiar with the school culture as a challenge for teachers, another rater was not agreed since she coded this part since the physical conditions of the school are not good. During the discussion, we conclude that both being familiar with the school culture and the physical conditions of the school can be the codes since the teacher informs the same problems in a sentence. The script of the data is:

Interviewer: Do you remember the first day in school? How did you feel?

Teacher: To tell the truth, I had a fear inside because the environment was completely foreign, and in a village school, the physical conditions are worse than I expected. It was a one-story stone building and it was a disappointment for me.

After all the disagreements are resolved, we included all the documents in the data analysis program, Maxqda. Firstly, we started to code interviews, reflective diaries, and observations for each teacher. By assigning a different color for each participant, the program helps me see the density of the codes related to a challenge. Therefore, we organized the codes considering their density in the coded sections. After finishing first coding with memos, which are more than 1500 codes, sub-categories and then categories are assigned to the codes considering the procedure of constant comparison method in which you make constant comparisons first for finding similarities and dissimilarities among the codes of the data (Yin, 2011, p.197). The following comparison goes similarly and the themes are assigned to sub categories and categories. For instance, the teachers in the study mostly discuss the time limitations of different things. T7 Rasim informs that he teaches present tense to fifth-grade students but he cannot do this because of time limitations. He adds that he needs more time to do game activities related to the topic; however, he has not any time to use a game activity in class. Therefore, we code this part as a time limitation for using game activities. Among the codes related to the teachers' concerns regarding the time provided to them, we define these codes as time limitation as a sub category. For the next step, we realize that time limitations are mostly related to the teaching practices of the teachers and therefore we assigned it under the category of methodology- use. In the last step, again, we define similar categories related to the teaching experience of teachers under the theme of teaching-related challenges.

3.8. Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, criticism against validity and reliability is raised in the literature since the process of data analysis is not straightforward unlike analyses made in quantitative methods. Considering the nature of qualitative methods, the credibility of the data and analysis process is questioned in that to what extent evidence for the results is granted. To enlighten the doubts on the processes in qualitative methods, trustworthiness can be used as a tool which is defined as the inquirer's effort to persuade the audience including himself that the findings of the study are valuable to pay attention to (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.290).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.290), the inquirers need to ask four useful questions related to the truth value of the research, its applicability, consistency, and

neutrality. The questions can be answered by considering the four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is related to confidence in the truth value of the findings. Transferability is related to the applicability of findings in other contexts. Dependability is that the findings are consistent and can be repeated in similar studies. Lastly, confirmability is related to the neutrality of the findings in that the findings are not shaped by researcher bias.

In conventional inquiries, the terms “internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity” cannot be used in qualitative studies; therefore, an inquirer can use the term credibility for internal validity, transferability as for generalizability, dependability as for reliability, and confirmability as for objectivity (Shenton, 2004; Loh, 2013). For granting trustworthiness in qualitative studies, a combination of these criteria can be used by researchers.

In the current study, among the many ways for granting credibility, which is an important aspect of trustworthiness as it provides how the results get along with the reality (Shenton, 2004), we use triangulation of data collection methods including semi-structured interviews, reflective diaries, and classroom observations, and member checks by letting the participants read the transcription of the data.

For the transferability criteria, it is hard to ensure a qualitative study applicable to other contexts since qualitative studies have special characteristics in their focus on particular participants and environments. The only way of granting the transferability criteria in qualitative studies is to depict elaborately the research environment and participants. In this regard, we include the sub-section of the context of the study in the method section, which gives a detailed explanation related to the context of the study. One can decide how transferrable the research is only by reading the explanations related to the context of the study and deciding how close the research context is to his environment. In other words, a study may not be regarded as unworthy when it is not applied to broader contexts, instead, the worthiness of a study is decided by how well the other researchers apply the methods used in research in other contexts (Given, 2008, p. 895).

Dependability criteria are related to how reliable the results are. In quantitative studies, reliability is provided through some techniques showing that it is probable to get similar results when the research is repeated with the same participants and the same methods of data collection in the same environment (Shenton, 2004). However, in

qualitative studies, providing a similar environment for the study is nearly impossible because of the changing nature of the research site. To find a way to dependability criteria in qualitative studies, detailed reporting of the process of the study may grant the following studies to repeat the work although it does not guarantee that they reach similar results to this study. This research, therefore, provides detailed explanations related to the process of data collection and analysis to ensure dependability criteria of trustworthiness.

3.9. Researcher reflexivity

In qualitative studies, reflexivity becomes an indispensable concept since the researcher's subjectivity is one of the main concerns of qualitative studies. It can be said that researchers should account for how subjectivity shapes their inquiries in qualitative studies. In this sense, Berger (2013) informs that reflexivity is an important strategy for understanding how the researcher's characteristics and experiences impact qualitative research. Therefore, understanding the subjectivity of the researcher in the creation of knowledge, and monitoring his beliefs and experiences related to the research is highly valuable to increase trustworthiness in qualitative studies. In other words, Olmos-Vega, et al. (2022) defines reflexivity as "a set of continuous, collaborative, and multifaceted practices through which researchers self-consciously critique, appraise, and evaluate how their subjectivity and context influence the research process".

According to Berger (2013), the researcher's position affects the research process in three major ways. First, the participants' closeness to the researcher can affect their willingness to share their experiences and the researcher can get more informative resources related to his research. When I examine my position towards the participants, I believe that they welcomed me during that process since I experienced teaching in one of the rural schools of MoNE before I started to collect data. During the data collection process, we intrinsically compared the challenges they experienced and my previous experiences in a rural school. Second, it is stated that the nature of the researcher and participant relationship affects the participants' willingness to share information. For instance, a woman participant may feel comfortable with a woman researcher when discussing some special topics because of gender similarities. Although half of the participants are women in the study, I believe that my gender as a male did not affect the data collection process since there were not any critical situations related to gender. My

role as a non-participant observer also neutralized my position in this process. Finally, the worldview and ideologies of the researcher in politics, etc. may affect the questions he poses to the participants, the language he uses, and the information he gathers from the participants, and henceforth, the findings of the study may be shaped according to the worldview of the researcher. To eliminate the researcher's bias, in this regard, the data collection tools were examined by experts who are university professors, English teachers, and school managers. Also, a description of contexts, information related to participants, and the analysis process were identified with details to grant the trustworthiness of the research. Therefore, it can be said that the researcher tried to create a balance in the relationship between the participant teachers, and the research context including other shareholders of education such as school managers during the data collection process.

CHAPTER IV

4. FINDINGS

In this section, challenges experienced by English teachers working in rural state schools in the Kars district are explained. The findings obtained from semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and teacher reflective diaries are presented based on the main themes of the research. The themes include the main challenges of English teachers working in rural state schools of the Kars district. The findings are presented based on the main themes of the study in Figure 4.1. below.

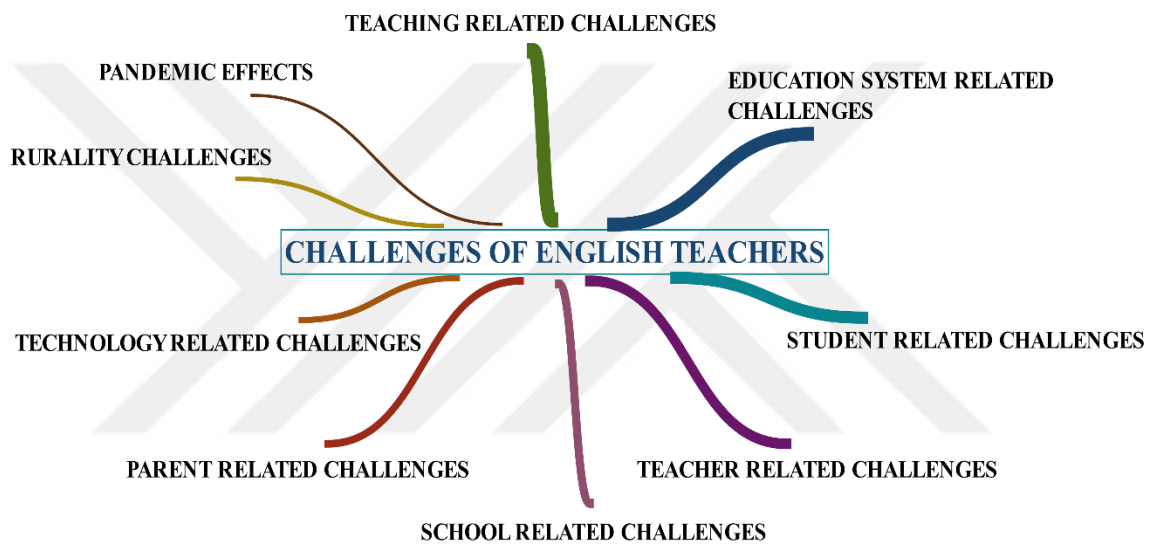


Figure 4.1. *Main themes of the study.*

As shown in figure 4.1, the thicker links between the themes and challenges of English teachers show that there is a strong relationship between the theme and the study. The thinner links also show that the relationship between the two concepts is not as strong as the thicker ones. We use this display throughout the findings section in that readers can easily understand to what extent the relationship between the two concepts is strong. Therefore, we can say that teaching-related challenges have the strongest relationship with the challenges of English teachers since we have a lot of codes related to teaching-related challenges in the study. The education system-related challenges theme is the second strongest link with the study and so on. We present the findings considering how strong the links between the themes and challenges of English teachers working in rural state schools of the Kars district are.

4.1. Teaching-Related Challenges

Figure 4.2. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of teaching related challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of teaching related challenges is given after the figure.

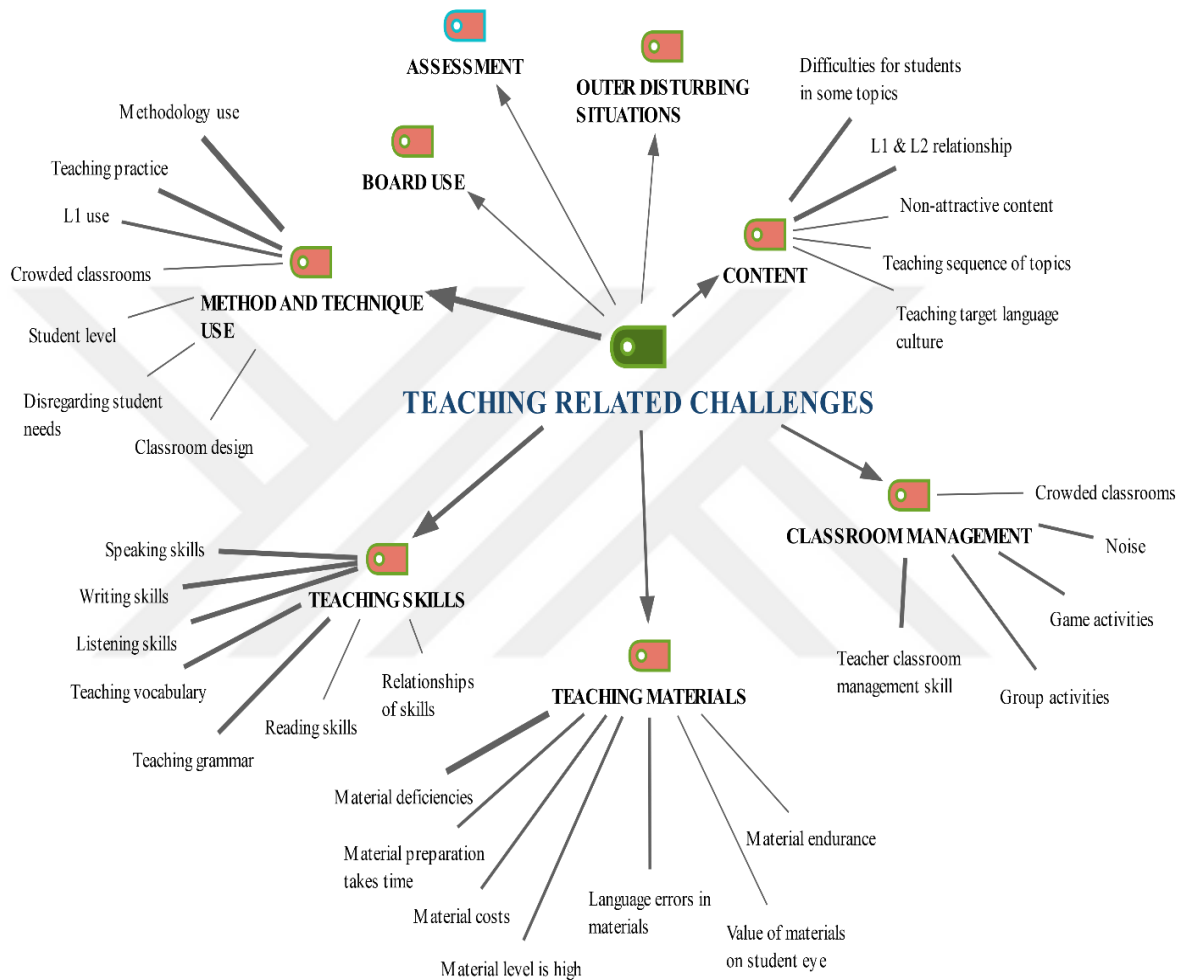


Figure 4.2. *Teaching related challenges*

In the analysis of the semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and reflective diaries of English teachers in Figure 4.2., we find that the most important challenging situations are teaching-related challenges for English teachers. Method and technique use is the most important challenge in this category. It is because most of the participants agree that teachers have problems with methods for some reasons such as students' readiness for the methods, the level of students, and even the methodology knowledge of teachers.

In terms of methodology- use, the participants of the study experience some difficulties in using the correct methods. It can be related to how knowledgeable teachers are about the methods and how to apply methods in the classrooms. Most of the teachers in the study use the so-called traditional way of teaching. An important point in methodology- use is that the participant teachers teach vocabulary and some topics regardless of the context. In other words, they try to teach vocabulary and some topics without making any relations with the context; therefore, students easily forget what is taught since they do not have any chance to use it. For instance, in the observations, T2 Gaye teaches giving directions to the fifth-grade students. There is a reading text which includes direction words such as between, and next to. The teacher wants students to underline these words in the text and asks about their Turkish meanings. The students explain the meaning of words in the text. Reading comprehension related to the text is disregarded by the teacher. In another example, T8 Salih teaches present simple third-person singular form for sixth-grade students. He only writes some verbs on the board with their Turkish meanings. Then, he asks students to write which verbs are added “-s, -es, -ies”. Each student comes to the board one by one and writes the answers. When the students make mistake the teacher corrects the mistake or asks another student to write the answer. The activity is finished when all the verbs are added “-s, -es, -ies”. The teacher does not provide an activity that supports contextual teaching. When the students finish writing the verbs with “-s, -es, -ies” on the board, the teacher writes new verbs and the students find the answers by the end of the lesson.

As an example of incorrect method use, some teachers admit that they purposefully use incorrect methods because of some reasons. For instance, T7 Rasim states that he knows he should not use translation too much in the lessons but he translates texts into Turkish and writes the Turkish meanings of the words on the board and wants his students to write all these words in their notebooks because students in this district do not have any dictionary. Therefore, he expects his students to use their notebooks as a dictionary.

An important challenge for the teachers is the time limitation for using methods. They mostly believe that using modern methods takes time and they have limited hours for every class to teach English through these methods. Nearly all teachers inform that they have limited time to teach English and henceforth, they choose more traditional ways of teaching since it is practical for teaching without needing much time. Considering the curriculum pressure, and other stakeholders’ desire in terms of success in the high-school

entrance exam, some of the teachers do not purposefully use game activities and listening activities. For example, T10 Emrah states: “I do not use new methods if I spend too much time, let’s say, two hours, and if I cannot get benefit from using it.” Similarly, T7 Rasim states: “He generally uses eclectic methods but he passes speaking activities and turns to traditional methods because of time pressure.

As a significant challenge for teachers in terms of method use, the conditions of rurality do not enable opportunities enough for applying new methods and they use traditional ways of teaching in their classes. Particularly, T1 Ömer and T7 Rasim are on the same idea that there should be suitable places and opportunities for using new methods. For instance, T7 Rasim states:

We talk about English methodology-based lessons in this district, the students do understand nothing. It is because we are in a position of a dictionary. We did not learn such a methodology in our university education I agree, that it should not be like this, but it depends on the conditions where you teach.

Another reason is that the teachers agree that they forget their methodology knowledge day by day and henceforth, they do not apply a specific methodology in English teaching. For example, T3 Gülden states that she has forgotten what she has learned in methodology courses and she admits that she follows a way of self-methodology. She states:

I have chosen a style for myself, for example, I have listening activities. Here I play games, sometimes I play games on the smart board. Sometimes I use songs for listening activities. Sometimes I don't apply a different method, so there is no lie, I have my style, and I follow my style.

Considering the teachers’ ways of teaching, as in the observations, T10 Emrah makes some changes in the book activities considering his plan for teaching English. The book activities include pair work activities for teaching speaking; however, the teacher changes the activity into a whole class activity and students only answer the questions in the activity. In another observation, T10 Emrah teaches the unknown words of a listening activity and he uses this activity as a translation exercise.

Teachers also inform that they generally use classical methods but there are some difficulties in the teaching process. For example, the teachers write grammatical rules on the board and give some examples related to the rules. After that, teachers want their students to write the sentences in their notebooks. Therefore, it can be challenging for teachers to teach a grammatical rule only by asking them to write. T9 Yasemin says:

So it is very difficult to teach by writing. When we give a photocopy of paper, it doesn't work. It is because children throw away them, so we write them, but it is difficult to write all the things, and it is also difficult to wait for them to write one by one because they cannot choose the words. We are having difficulties, of course, even in grammar-translation.

Regarding the applicability of the classical way of teaching, T11 Haldun clarifies that they use this method because of some advantageous sides although there are also some lacking sides of the method. He states:

It is the easiest for the teacher. We prefer it since it is economical, fast, and suitable for crowded classes. But it is not fun and I get bored sometimes while teaching. Tell the same thing all the time, and the teacher gets tired of the classical methods, because of what the new methods say, the student should be active as much as possible, the teacher is the observer, the guide, he guides when necessary, and this makes the teacher less tired. Where I understood this, especially when you add these speaking activities to my reading during the weeks we practice, I get less tired. I mean, if I teach like this all the time, I mean it is perfect, neither my feet will ache nor my voice will crack. But you can ask why you don't do it because students this time I know will not learn properly.

When I ask them why they do not use contemporary methods, they state that using such methods is not applicable to the Turkish education system. For another reason, these methods cannot be applied in this district although they learn them in their methodology courses in university education or learn about them in MoNE seminars. For example, T7 Rasim states in the interview:

Where do we get these from, because I am an English teacher, we get them from Europe. Now that school conditions in Europe are not the same as here. You take an article from there, translate it and apply it in Türkiye. There should be some flexibility in education and you should arrange it in the Turkish context.

From the explanations of the teacher, we understand he thinks that any methodology is learned from Europe whose teaching conditions are not appropriate for rural schools in Türkiye. Therefore, applying methods without making any changes may not bring success. Such reasons are explained by other teachers and their beliefs related to the methods and their practices in the classes seem like a remote possibility. We can say that one important challenge for teachers in the usage of methods is their perceptions that contemporary methods are impracticable in rural schools.

One of the participants, T2 Gaye also states that students are not familiar with methods because she states that she tried to use the Total Physical Response Method in her lessons, however, secondary students found this method a bit strange. She also states

that students' potential to learn is low; therefore, she uses classical methods in their courses. Another reason for using the classical method for T9 Yasemin is that they have limited/ no material for other methods and classrooms are crowded. To apply contemporary methods, the teacher believes that the number of students in classes should be lowered. One of the teachers, T1 Ömer also states that he tried to teach English via new methods; however, he dropped using it in a short period since he believed that the new methods are useless in that students cannot learn.

In terms of teaching practices of teachers, it can be said that the teachers in the study generally teach a topic and give some examples, and then, they use a production activity although students are not ready for the production. Therefore, we can say that teachers are not aware that they make mistakes in their lesson plans since they immediately pass the production activity before the controlled activity stage. As a result, students do not answer the questions or fail to produce sentences in the target language. For example, in one of the lessons of T6 Özlem, she teaches connectors such as “but, and, so, because, or”. She first gives the Turkish meaning of these words and she asks students to write the words and their meanings in their notebooks. Then, she gives only one example for each connector. Then, she asks students to produce sentences including connectors. As expected, students do not achieve the task. Then the teacher asks them to say Turkish sentences including connectors. She translates the sentences of students into English and writes them on the board. Then, students write these examples in their notebooks until the end of the lesson. From the teaching practice of T6 Özlem, we can say that students are not ready for uttering a sentence in the target language as they are not fully prepared for the production stage.

In another observation of T5 Meryem, she wants to make a dictation activity about the adverbs of frequency since she has taught the topic before. She does this by dividing the class into two groups and letting them remember the words such as once a year, or twice a week. Then she utters the sentence including the adverbs of frequency. Each student in the group comes to the board one by one and tries to write the sentence correctly. At the beginning of the activity, all the students in the groups focus on the sentences the teacher utters. Later, they lose their attention for some time and start to talk about other things because the teacher gives the responsibility to write the sentences on the board to one student in the group and the other students wait without having any reason for following the activity. Therefore, they lose their attention and make noise. As

a result, the activity becomes ineffective for learning English. We can say that the teacher makes mistakes i.e planning the activity by giving responsibility to only one student at a time.

As a drawback of teachers' teaching practice, they teach a topic and then give a limited number of examples related to the topic. Then, they pass to other topics. The teachers expect their students to grasp the form or meaning of the topic with the limited number of examples presented. For instance, T4 İsmail teaches simple past tense and gives a limited number of examples. Then, he expects learners to understand the form inductively with only one or two examples. After he realizes that they cannot comprehend the topic inductively, he gives the metalinguistic explanation of simple past tense in Turkish. Regarding this observation, we can say that teachers are not aware that any grammatical form in English cannot be conveyed inductively by only providing a limited number of examples.

Regarding the teachers' practices in terms of using different activities, they generally use whole-class activities. Most of them do not present individual and pair work activities to their students. For this reason, the fact that the teaching is more monotonous may cause individual differences to be ignored. Even though the textbooks of MoNE offer different types of activities, some teachers turn these activities into whole-class activities. Therefore, they do not consider the students' needs individually and they focus only on presenting the content. The activities offered by the teachers in their lessons are non-interactive and mostly grammar-based activities. For this reason, it can be said that teachers who emphasize the need to go skill-based are quite classical and contradict themselves in practice. Again, the activities presented are mostly reading and grammar-based. Few teachers provide listening, writing, and speaking activities to students. We also observe that nearly all the teachers in the study often offer non-authentic activities. Therefore, students do not have a chance to see the real target language use.

Considering the L1 use of teachers in classes, teachers mostly speak Turkish in their classes to teach English. In the observations, for instance, we observe that all the teachers use Turkish in their classes; some of them try to make a balance between the two languages and most of the teachers in the study use Turkish throughout their lessons without considering the input provided via teacher's speech. T5 Meryem speaks English most of the time and uses Turkish mostly when she gets angry with students because of their undesired behaviors or when there is an abrupt noise during the activities. T2 Gaye

and T3 Gülden try to balance the two languages in their classes by using both languages, that is, nearly fifty percent. The other teachers use Turkish throughout the courses.

When we ask teachers why they use L1 in their classes all the time, they accuse students immediately in that they have low levels of English. They state that students do not understand when they speak English. In our observations, T4 İsmail always speaks Turkish in his lessons. He implies that most of the students are Kurdish and they have difficulties even in Turkish, and henceforth, he has to teach topics first in Turkish, then he teaches the same topics in English. He also states:

Normally, my preference is definitely the target language, but since my student profile is not suitable for this, unfortunately, I have to explain the topics in the mother tongue. In other words, I can say that I speak Turkish in 70 percent of the courses.

In a similar perspective, T9 Yasemin explains that students do not understand English, and speaking English does not attract their attention although at first, she tried to speak English, and then switched to Turkish. She states:

Of course, they don't understand because as I said, I use Turkish to attract children's attention. Because I tried English. Even at first, I didn't speak Turkish at all. I was speaking English completely everywhere. The children were saying that this teacher did not know Turkish. I realized it wasn't working. Children have nothing to do with English, it does not attract their attention. They don't understand, so I turned to Turkish. I always use Turkish. I have to give some information in English, but mostly in Turkish.

Another considerable challenge for teachers is the crowded classrooms, but I can say that some schools have crowded classrooms but others do not. It is because some schools only accept students from only one village which is far from the city center, but in others like regional boarding secondary schools, students come from different villages; therefore, the number of students in these schools is high. Because of crowded classrooms, for instance, T5 Meryem thinks that when the number of students is high, she cannot find a suitable activity that is attractive like game activities. Therefore, the number of students limits her activity choice in her classes. T6 Özlem expresses her thoughts related to the number of classrooms in line with others and she adds:

The average number of classrooms in Türkiye is generally between 35-40 students, and naturally, when you try to play even a game, the noise surrounds the whole school, so there are a lot of things to do in theory, but it is very difficult in practice.

The teachers also talk about disregarding student needs because of some reasons. According to T11 Haldun, for example, when the number of students is high in a class, teachers cannot consider students' individual differences. He states that you can arrange

any activity with a limited number of students and consider students' individual differences; however, it is really hard to consider these differences when the number of students in a class reaches at least thirty. Therefore, when he plans the lesson, he considers the average student level and disregards individual differences. Additionally, T9 Yasemin informs that they have learned a lot of methods and techniques in university education but they cannot use them since it is difficult to know all students' characters, consider their differences, and find a suitable way to teach. Therefore, they disregard the students' needs and teachers ignore students who have especially much lower academic success and consider successful students in the practice of teaching.

Lastly, for the methodology- usage, in the observation of T11 Haldun's classes, student desks in a classroom are organized in the U- shape. As a result of this classroom design, some students have a hard time seeing the board these students come to the blackboard and read what the teacher writes, and they go back to their seats and write what is written on the board. To express what a student feels in such a situation, he says: "I take both English and gym classes at the same time".

The teachers in the study have difficulties in teaching the correct pronunciation of words. In the reflective diary of T10 Emrah, he states that he faces many challenging situations, especially when teaching the pronunciation of words to fifth-grade students. According to him, the source of the problem is due to many reasons. Among them, students are taught by different teachers since teachers in rural areas generally depart from school in a short period. Another reason is also related to the pandemic process in that students could not fully adapt themselves to online education. T1 Ömer also admits that students' pronunciation is really bad but he disregards their pronunciation skills since he generally focuses on high school entrance exams, in which pronunciation is not needed. Similarly, T7 states that he disregards the students' pronunciation skills in order not to lose students' interest in language learning. It is because he believes that students may lose their confidence to learn English when the teacher corrects them all the time and he also admits that disregarding pronunciation is not the right strategy as it may result in fossilization at later ages. T7 says:

When I constantly make corrections, maybe the kids won't even read the text when I say read the sentence. In order not to have such fear in students, I say read it the way you want. We affect their later life like high school and college as in fossilization.

For another reason, for teaching pronunciation, the teachers admit that teaching pronunciation is difficult and they get tired in such activities. For example, T8 Salih states:

At least you want students to know the pronunciation of the words, even if they know it at a simple level. They don't need to say it perfectly. You want them to know at least some basic words, to be able to read the text properly, and the student asks me why it is written like this, but it is pronounced differently. You are trying to explain this, you are trying to explain that it is not pronounced as it is written, you are trying to explain that there are some changes, and this is tiring.

The participant teachers also talk about the time limitation as the reason for not doing speaking activities. Therefore, they do not use speaking-based activities since such activities are time-consuming. As a result, they pass these activities in their classes. For instance, T11 Haldun explains that he can apply these activities when he has ample time; otherwise, he does not use these activities all the time in his classes.

For writing skills, the participant teachers express that their students experience difficulty in writing because they are not ready enough to write even in Turkish. T8 Salih states that writing skill is difficult for students. They have difficulty writing the words correctly, and they come to the board and write a word by memorizing letter by letter since spelling and pronouncing words in English are very different. Therefore, they write so slowly and T10 Emrah explains that especially fifth-grade students are not ready to be in secondary schools as they write so slowly. We also observe the same problem in other teachers' classes. In a similar vein, T9 Yasemin states the same problem that students have some prejudices about writing in English since they have to write by spelling the words. The students in her classes complain that they have some difficulties in writing English since they write the words by spelling each letter.

From another point, students have difficulties in doing writing activities since they are not knowledgeable students in English. For instance, in the observation of T2 Gaye's classes, we observe that the teacher gives students paper and uses a dictation activity. However, when she utters the sentences, she realizes that students cannot write correctly what is uttered. As a result, she changes it to a listening activity.

From the teachers' perspective, some teachers, namely T1 Ömer and T11 Haldun believe that teaching writing is really difficult because it is a higher skill when compared to other skills; therefore, T11 Haldun admits that he does not use writing activities for teaching English. He says:

What am I doing is that I'm trying to be skill-oriented, here are speaking, listening, and reading. I especially do these and I don't do writing because it's a bit more advanced. Children do not already have such a high level.

Considering the listening skill, some teachers disregard without having a reasonable challenge in that they pass the listening activities of the book they use, or they use these activities for other purposes such as translating the content of the listening texts into Turkish. Although they have the opportunity to present listening audio to the students through smart boards in their classes, their aim is generally to teach vocabulary or tests for the high school entrance exam. Therefore, they follow a teaching plan which does not focus on skills. For instance, in the observation of T7 Rasim's classes, he uses the book prepared by MoNE and teaches the time in English. The book includes a "listen and write" activity; however, he passes the listening part and asks the students to write sentences related to the situations in the pictures. This arrangement in the listening activity, then, turns into a translation activity and writing activity on what is seen in the pictures. In another activity, the same teacher uses the "listen and read" activity for translation, and then he passes the "listen and write" activity. In the activity, he writes the answers and asks the students to write them to the gaps in the activity. Throughout the observations, I can say that nearly half of the teachers disregard listening activities or turns these activities into other activities. What is interesting here is that they generally accuse the MoNE system that skills-based teaching is undervalued. On the contrary, their practice of teaching shows us that teachers themselves disregard teaching listening although they have the opportunity to do these activities.

Other teachers who use listening activities in their classes state that understanding listening texts is really difficult for students. For instance, T6 Özlem states: "Students have difficulties in understanding the listening texts since they have no such background in listening". Similarly, in the observation of T5 Meryem's classes, we realize that the level of listening texts prepared by MoNE is much higher than the levels of students; in consequence, they do not understand the text and the teacher lets them listen to the text once more. We also observe the same difficulty in T3 Gülden's classes.

As an important part of language teaching, teaching vocabulary may be the most important part for the participant teachers since all the teachers in the study focus on teaching vocabulary more than the other aspects of language teaching. The teachers generally agree that the number of words to be taught is high. Therefore, teachers in the

study present many words in a lesson without considering how to teach vocabulary. Instead, they write the words on the board with their Turkish meaning and ask students to write them in their notebooks. It is generally the way how teachers teach vocabulary by disregarding the scientific knowledge of the processes of how to teach vocabulary.

An important problem in vocabulary teaching is also related to some words that both teachers and students do not use in practice. Accordingly, the teachers criticize the books in that they include many unrelated words to the realities of students. For instance, T1 Ömer says that he did not know the meaning of the word “shuttlecock” but has to teach it to students since such words are included in the books. He states:

I have never used that word, and where will children use this word, why are we teaching this word? I gather words from many sources at the beginning of the unit. But there is a word unrelated to those words in the text. Sometimes an unrelated word can appear in the text. What we do is teach that word. As a result, the children are confused. In some parts of the book, it includes such words that I ask where children will use them.

As the other important part of language teaching, the participant teachers inform that they have difficulties in teaching grammar. One of the reasons for these difficulties is that some teachers, e.g. T5 Meryem, confess that they cannot lower their teaching to the level of students. Similarly, T6 Özlem states that it is hard to teach grammar because students do not want to learn grammar and teachers compel students to learn grammar although it is higher than the level of students. She adds: “Grammar is a serious problem, children do not understand. They can't give themselves to learn grammar because they don't understand and they get bored. At this stage, I think teaching grammar is wrong”.

It can also be challenging for some teachers to teach some topics such as the simple present, especially in the third person, to be, verb + verb(ing), and present perfect. For instance, T2 Gaye explains that she teaches simple present tense to fifth, sixth, and seventh-grade students, but the most challenging situation is to teach simple present to fifth-grade students. She says:

I try to teach grammar by making the rules a story. As an example “do and “does” fights against each other and since the third person is lonely, “does” supports her/him. As far as I remember, teaching grammar is not important for younger ages. It is also true for me but the curriculum wants it. It is because the system wants mechanical learning and the pressure of national exams.

In terms of reading skills, most teachers do not see reading as a challenging task. One teacher, T1 Ömer, states that the reading levels of students are low and T2 Gaye

expresses that students do not even read in L1; therefore, they do not have reading habits. That is why when she uses a reading text, she realizes that students' motives decrease. She also adds that students have difficulty answering questions related to reading texts in English as well as in Turkish.

Some teachers also discuss the relationship between skills and they inform that a lack in one skill negatively affects other skills. For instance, T4 İsmail states: "Since students come to school with deficiencies in reading and writing, a student who cannot write also cannot read. I experience difficulties with this. When these skills are lacking, the student cannot achieve speaking". T2 Gaye also says that students closed themselves when she spoke English; therefore, she believes that students first learn reading and writing in English, then, they should learn to speak.

As an important part of teaching, materials are crucial for teachers. However, nearly all teachers in the study accept that teaching materials provided by MoNE have lots of lacking sides such as activities presented in the books, grammar, etc. In this respect, T6 Özlem explains that the content of some units is very dense and others are not. When you teach the content of a unit that is dense, teaching becomes boring. For example, the third unit of the seventh-grade book is so dense and it includes biographies, it is really boring. Similarly, the fifth unit of the eighth-grade book is dense; however, the third and fourth units are not. Thus, there is no balance between the units. T7 Rasim also informs that the activities presented in the books are not enough and he criticizes that the quality of paper is low and the pictures of activities are not realistic. Therefore, he imagines the materials prepared by Oxford and Cambridge Universities as in the times that he was a student. Consequently, T6 Özlem expresses that English books and the content of the books should be more attractive. A teacher, T5 Meryem, also criticizes that MoNE did not provide needed materials, even teacher books when she started teaching. According to T2 Gaye, books are not close to student life. Accordingly, MoNE should not provide the same books to the whole country. She adds:

The same source shouldn't be provided to all the schools. Now, for example, in the culture of Kars, that is, language means culture, language, and culture are indistinguishable, so the more you feel close to your culture, the more it fits your language. For example, now the culture of Kars and the culture in Ankara are not the same. For example, there should be things that make you feel closer, for example, I think teachers and schools should be free in the selection of books, it should not be decided by MoNE itself.

Some teachers also criticize the materials provided in the online platform of MoNE, called EBA (Education Technology Web) in that T4 İsmail, for instance, believes that materials provided in EBA are not convenient. He says:

EBA provides listening materials but the speaker in the videos is a native speaker of English. I think students cannot understand the speech of a native speaker. Even most teachers in Türkiye cannot understand the speech. You put a listening video for students, which even teachers cannot understand.

When we focus on the teacher materials, teachers in the study generally use materials that are prepared by other specialists. It is because they believe that material preparation takes a lot of time. For instance, T6 Özlem confesses that she does not have much time and motivation to prepare her own activities and materials. Only T5 Meryem states that she prefers preparing her own materials because she does not like materials prepared by others and generally pre-prepared materials include words and their Turkish meanings. She wants to increase the percentage of input in L2 even in materials; therefore, she spends most of her time at the weekend preparing her materials.

Teachers generally choose online books and activities because of economic reasons. Nearly all teachers state that money provided by the MoNE at the beginning of the education year is not enough to prepare materials throughout the education process. Additionally, the teachers spend their own money on getting teaching materials since materials in those days are very expensive.

Some teachers inform that the level of teaching materials is higher than the level of students. It is because all teachers admit that the level of students in rural is low. Regarding the level of students and materials prepared by others, a teacher, T2 Gaye agrees that she makes a fault when she does not prepare her teaching materials such as worksheets because some ready worksheets include words that students may not know. When they prepare materials, sometimes, they cannot prepare durable materials; therefore, the materials prepared by teachers can easily be broken. For instance, T9 Yasemin states that she prepared a puppet for speaking activities and she confirms that the puppet was broken in the class.

Related to teaching materials, teachers explain that books include some language errors which may affect language teaching. T11 Haldun, for example, informs that some listening audios are of high quality but others are not. When he passes the ones which are not good, it negatively affects teaching. Another teacher, T5 Meryem explains that there

is a conflict between American English and British English in the listening audio. They are used together in the same book. The book is written based on American English; however, you listen to British English in listening audio. Consequently, students do not understand the listening audio.

Although teachers use different materials in their lessons, they are mostly used for presenting and practicing the topic, and hence the materials are not mostly materials that enable students to interact with each other. Again, since the materials are not authentic and do not provide linguistic interaction between students, it can be said that the materials are insufficient for gaining target language skills. Mostly the materials are used for Turkish- English translation and do not focus on the functional aspect of the language.

Considering teaching materials, some teachers believe that students do not value books since the government provides all the books for free although it is a good thing for families. Some teachers also state that a number of students do not have enough teaching materials such as dictionaries. As a result, teachers spend some of their time writing the words on the board, and then, students write them in their notebooks.

One of the challenging situations for teachers is, no doubt, classroom management. In this regard, teachers' classroom management skills are very crucial since it enables teachers a convenient atmosphere to make their lessons successful. When we ask the participant teachers about classroom management, nearly all the teachers agree that they experience challenging situations in controlling student behaviors. Some teachers, especially, accept that they could not control the class when they first start teaching. For example, T2 Gaye thinks that her classroom management skills are not good, and adds:

I don't know why it's bad. I couldn't solve it either. For example, theoretically, I remember that if you use time efficiently, classroom management will be easy, but I think that I use it efficiently, but I think the possibility of attracting the attention of the student is also important. You can't play games in the class all the time. They want to play a game, you are playing a game, but for example, I teach a topic, and they say, "Are we going to play games from now on?" I say, learn the subject and then we will play. You know, the motivation of children also changes a little. It's a little more effective than me, frankly, so as I said, it's not good to be too softhearted.

For the teachers, group activities and game activities are difficult to organize and keep students calm in class. It is because students take part in these activities a lot and make a lot of noise. For example, in the observation of T3 Gülden's classes, the teacher presents a game activity related to vocabulary teaching. She divides the students into two.

The materials are an egg carton, words of the units for all the holes of the egg carton, and two ping pong balls. Students in each group come to the teacher's desk and throw the ball to the egg carton. Then the teacher asks the word where the ping pong ball is. When the students know the word, they get one point. In the end, one group whose points are high wins the game. In such a game, two students play the game at the same time; however, the other students in the group talk a lot, and the noise in the class increases. Consequently, the activity does not reach its aim and only those who play the game learn the words.

Observations also reveal that the most important factor that makes classroom management difficult is student behavior. It is mostly done in the form of preventing the negative behavior of the student for a short time. Since no long-term measures are taken, the student's misbehaviors continue at different times of the lesson. Again, teachers ignore negative behaviors (e.g. doing unrelated things during the lesson). The aim here is to ensure that the lesson is not interrupted. The fact that the teacher continues to teach the lesson only to the students who attend the activities is a result of ignoring the negative behaviors of non-participant students.

Considering the number of students in the class, some teachers say that classrooms are crowded and it is hard to control the student behaviors in crowded classrooms. In this respect, T9 Yasemin, states that when she first started teaching, the number of students in a class was 36 and it was really hard to manage the classroom.

When we examine the data, content is another important challenging factor for teachers in that teachers agree that they have difficulties in teaching some topics. Among these, they inform that teaching present simple, especially the third person singular form in the affirmative sentences is difficult because students do not understand it. T6 Özlem says that students experience problems with adding “-es” to verbs because they are confused with this form with the plural “-es”. We can say that they do not know the differences between verbs and nouns. Related to the simple present third singular form, T8 Salih explains that he generally uses GTM for language teaching and uses both the native language and target language to compare the grammatical forms. At this point, students are confused because the teacher explains the form considering the plurality of subjects. Some students ask the teacher if the subject “I” is a singular person but they use the plural form. In other words, they do not add “-es” to the verb. Therefore, the teacher says that it is one of the hard topics for them to teach. Likewise, teaching present perfect

structure is really hard for teachers since they teach grammatical structures by comparing the grammatical structures of two languages. However, the Turkish language does not have an equivalence of the present perfect form; hence, students do not understand such grammatical forms.

Some teachers also explain topics like ordinal numbers, and to be, and students use verbs with to be. In the reflective diary of T5 Meryem, the teacher states that she always sees the same problem that students could not solve. The problem is that students use verb tenses with to be. In her diary, she states that they do a fill-in-the-gap activity related to superlatives and they use both structures in the same sentences like “We are bought the best present”. She says that they should have learned these topics in a way that they are two different grammatical forms. One is “to be” and the other is the past form of the verb. She says: “Therefore, I put the curriculum aside and tried to teach how they can comprehend these forms separately”.

In terms of relationships between L1 and L2, the teachers inform that it is hard to teach students who have limited or no knowledge about something in L1, but exist in L2. For example, T8 Salih states that when he teaches telling the time, students do not understand some time expressions like 5.45 meaning a quarter to six. It is because students do not have such an understanding in their minds even in Turkish. Another important problem is that the canonical order of both languages is different from each other; therefore, students have difficulty grasping the structure of English. In this sense, T10 Emrah states: “Students do not use verbs in the right place based on the grammatical rules of English. Students use verbs at the end of the sentence as in Turkish”.

Teachers also express that the curriculum of Turkish lessons and English lessons are not compatible. Henceforth, it is hard to teach a topic that students do not know in Turkish. It is because Turkish and English curriculums do not show parallelism. For instance, T6 Özlem states: “I teach “subject” in English before they learn it in Turkish. Students learn some topics in the seventh and eighth grades, but we teach them in fifth and sixth grades”.

The teachers also discuss that students do not listen to some topics because they are not attractive to students. Some teachers, T8 Salih and T11 Haldun believe that some topics that are added to the curriculum are not convenient for students since they cannot use vocabulary related to topics in their later lives. For example, T8 Salih states:

The book for eighth-grade students includes extreme sports. Students did not hear even the name of these sports such as hang-gliding. As I said, sometimes we meet some vocabulary and situations that students did not hear. Then, students question why they learn such vocabulary and topics.

Some teachers of the study also criticize the sequence of some topics because they say that some topics should be taught later and others should be taught a bit earlier. For example, in the observation of T7 Rasim's classes, the teacher writes sentences not belonging to possessive adjectives although the sentences need possessive adjective form. It is because the teacher did not teach this topic before. Thus, it is understood that such topics should be taught a bit earlier. T4 İsmail criticizes the inclusion of the target language culture and says that it is very early at this stage, especially for those who live in rural areas.

An important challenge for teachers in the class is that some people like parents, other teachers, and school managers come to the class, and hence teaching is interrupted. I observed this situation many times in different schools; therefore, I can say that it is an important problem for teachers because sometimes they may not adapt themselves to teaching after the interruption. For instance, in the observation of T11 Haldun's classes, a school manager comes to the class without informing the teacher and gives some questionnaires to the students, and asks them to answer the items in the questionnaire at the end of the day.

In terms of board use, some teachers do not use the board systematically; therefore, students have difficulties understanding what to write. Sometimes, the teacher writes in very small sizes since the space for writing on the board is limited and therefore students cannot see the sentences on the board easily. In addition, the teacher's pen runs out of ink during the teaching and students cannot see easily what is written.

Lastly, the teachers of the study say that they experience difficulties in the assessment process because of the level of the students. In other words, they want to lower the level of the exams they prepare, but it is a challenging task for them to lower the level of questions to the level of students. As for T4 İsmail, it is really hard to prepare an exam paper that is suitable for both low and high-level students because he believes that it will not be the right thing when you prepare a difficult exam for low-level students and vice versa. Similarly, T10 Emrah states:

The reason why I prepare easily is right now, for example, we have the right to fail a student, and the committee convenes and lets him pass the lesson. Naturally, we prepare 12-13 easy

questions that can be answered by everyone. We experience such a situation and I am having some difficulty in that matter because I think I am not measuring what I want to measure.

Another problem related to the exams for some teachers is that they want to instruct English but they hesitate that students do not understand it and hence they write the instructions in Turkish. Lastly, some teachers want to ask many questions in the exam to provide content validity but the number of questions increases and the teacher has to eliminate some questions in such a situation. For instance, T11 Haldun states:

The thing is, my God, what will I measure and how will I finish it? We teach many subjects. I want to ask everything. I want them to ask a question, even if it's just one point. It's a four-page exam, I'm not kidding. I also want to add a lot of things, different types of questions, that is, filling in the blanks or matching with the picture, etc. The difficult thing for me is to decide which questions to include, and I decide to include all the questions in the end.

4.2. Education System-Related Challenges

Figure 4.3. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of education-system related challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of education-system related challenges is given after the figure.

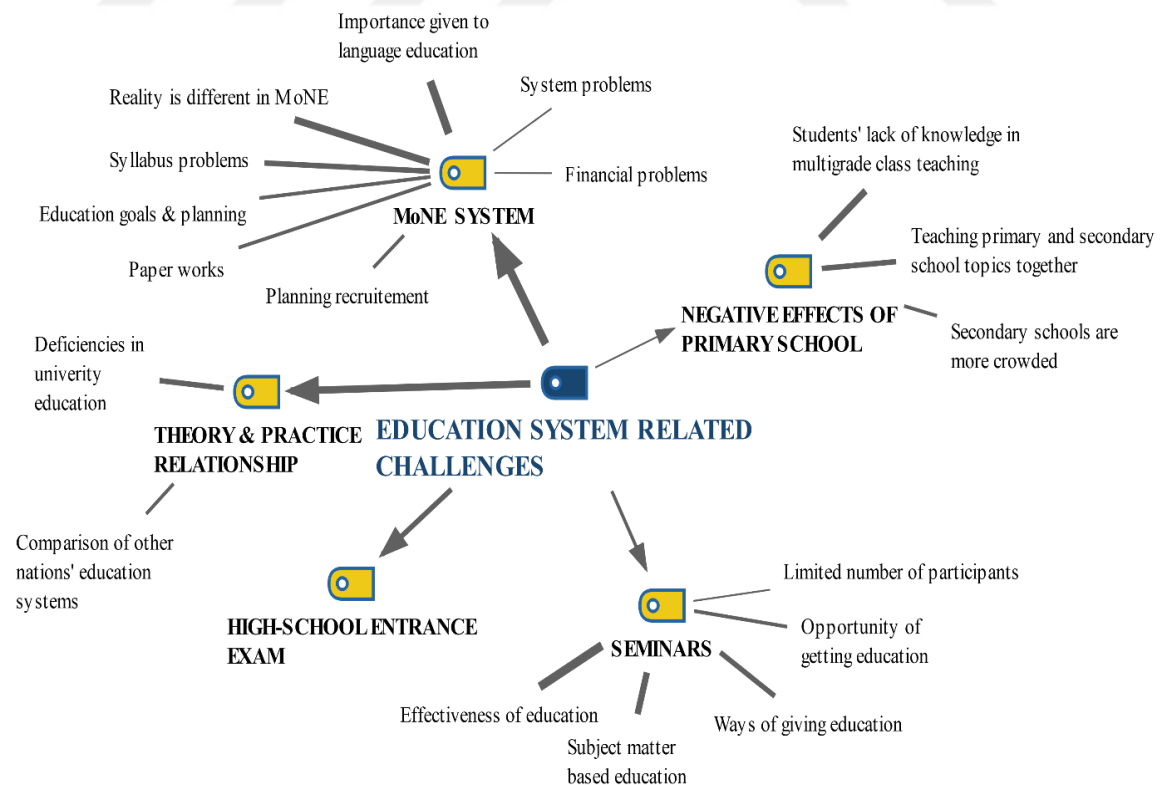


Figure 4.3. Education system-related challenges

When we examine the data, we realize in Figure 4.3. that education system-related challenges are the second most important topic for the participant teachers. With the data analysis, we reach that they mostly criticize MoNE system. All the teachers believe that MoNE does not give value to language teaching enough because they believe that the time allocated for language teaching in a week is very limited. Consequently, some teachers express that they need more teaching hours especially for teaching language skills such as speaking, listening, and writing. In this sense, T1 Ömer states: “Language teaching is not only teaching vocabulary and grammar, but we do not have enough time to do speaking, writing, and listening activities”. Similarly, T7 Rasim states:

I really like doing listening activities and using the audio-lingual method, especially at these ages, but these activities take time. That is, I am teaching in the right stage to teach but unfortunately, I cannot apply these, as I said, because of the limited hours in a week for fifth and sixth graders. Only we can finish the units within the limited time, even if sometimes, we fall behind our plans.

Secondly, the teachers in the study state that MoNE does not give value to English education. It is because the importance of main courses such as Turkish, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies is higher than the English course. You can feel it from the hours a week allocated for these lessons and the situation of English. In this regard, T6 Özlem believes that the value of language teaching has been decreased although its value should be increased. She adds: “I feel language education is getting worse day by day. What can a child do with a limited number of hours for language teaching” Similarly, T5 Meryem states: “Ok, Math and Science courses are important but English is the course that children can use in real life”.

A considerable challenge for the teachers is that MoNE system and the experiences of the teachers are different from each other when they first start to teach in their schools. In other words, the teachers generally experience loneliness in terms of paperwork. For example, T2 Gaye explains that she did not know how to write the needed information in the classroom notebook, that is, the topic of the day. She admits that she did not know anything about the MoNE practice in schools and accepts that she did not do her paperwork and the school manager gets angry about this. Similarly, T5 Meryem states:

I didn't know anything about the system. For example, I did not even know what the annual plan is and how it is prepared. I did not know how to fill in the class notebook; I did not know how to fill in the notebook when I took attendance.

Therefore, we can say that other teachers do not help the school system and mentor teachers who are responsible for guiding such procedures do not do their duties. In practice, the subject area of mentor teachers is not English, and the teachers mostly explain that mentor teachers did not help them. For instance, T11 Haldun states: “She neither come to my class, nor signed the documents, and we argued badly, yes, there was a mentor teacher, but not in reality”.

Teachers also inform that their beginning years, which is called candidacy to being teachers in the MoNE system, were different from each other. Teachers mostly say that they nearly do nothing and learn nothing during this period, and some others say that it was very busy these days, because MoNE changed the candidacy period a number of times and the applications in these periods were different from each other. The most tiring one is, to me, the experiences of T4 İsmail in that he was asked to do many things related to teaching. T4 İsmail states:

There are cultural activities; you have to go to them. Apart from that, the trips you have to do, the other things, the conferences, seminars you need to attend, you need to go to all of these. And after that, you have to write a diary by hand about how that day was. We had movies to watch. We had books to read. So he asked me to do all of them within a certain time. When this process was over, I had a handwritten 500-page file. The thing I regret the most is I don't know where it is right now.

Another important challenging situation is the syllabus. Most of the teachers in the study were hesitant about teaching all the topics in the syllabus on time. Therefore, some teachers mostly focus on the topics, not students' needs because of the pressure of teaching all the topics on time. In the reflective diary of T1 Ömer, for instance, he realizes that students have forgotten some topics after the mid-seminar term. He expresses that he wants to remind the topics of the students but he does not want to spend much time on the topics he previously taught because of syllabus pressure. In a similar vein, T6 Özlem states that the syllabus of the fifth-grade students is busy because these students are not good at English as their language education is lacking in their primary schools. Additionally, T5 Meryem states:

There are ridiculous things, that is, the things children will never use, I wish there should be a more convenient syllabus and we can do many good things with a good syllabus and teachers feel high pressure because of the syllabus.

In terms of educational goals and planning, the teachers state that there are lacking sides in educational planning because one of the teachers, T8 Salih criticizes the education

planning since the syllabus is prepared without considering the conditions of rural areas. He adds: “It snows a lot here and all the roads are closed, but in the planning, you need to continue teaching. But I do not know how to do this”. Similarly, T4 İsmail believes that all the planning in education, books, etc. is made by considering students of rich parents. The books are not prepared for students living in the eastern part of Türkiye. In other words, some teachers criticize education planning and goals considering the comparison of rurality and urbanization. Another teacher, T11 Haldun says that education in his school is divided a lot because of national holidays and other reasons such as snow. Consequently, he cannot teach topics on time and he explains that is why his level of anxiety increases.

Another important challenging situation is that the teachers say that they have to do many unnecessary paper works. For example, in his diary, T1 Ömer states that some paper works are reduced; however, it is still a lot. It takes a lot of time. Therefore, when he goes home and prepares these documents he feels fatigued and gets tired of doing the work. Regarding the paper works, T3 Gülden also states:

For example, there is a lot of paperwork. Should I take care of my course or prepare the materials until I deal with the paperwork? I should not prepare documents related to subject area meetings or group teacher meetings. Let me spend time on my own lecture instead of these things, but there is nothing to do. So they want paper works from us

Some teachers also explain that they experienced problems in recruitment planning. In other words, MoNE recruited some teachers in the middle of the education year. Therefore, the teachers who were recruited in the middle of education faced problems in getting used to a working school system. Their students also could not get used to them because all the classes were online and they did not attend the online courses since they did not know their teachers. Related to teacher recruitment, some teachers also criticize the way of recruitment in that teacher recruitment is made considering the public personnel selection examination (called KPSS in Turkish) and the exam does not include listening and speaking tests in L2. Some teachers, for instance, T2 Gaye thinks that it is one of the reasons that English teachers have limited knowledge and experience in listening and speaking skills.

Another significant problem for the teachers in the study is that the economic status of teachers is low and MoNE does not support teachers enough. They believe that they do a lot of work but their salaries are low. They also criticize the inequality between the

additional course fees of tenured and contracted teachers. They believe that there should not be such discrimination between the fees of teachers since they do the same job in reality. For example, T11 Haldun states: “My additional course fee is 15 Turkish liras for an hour. It's even lower because I am already a contracted teacher. That's why there is a difference between tenured and contracted teachers”.

Lastly, the participants argue about some problems related to the system of schools. Some teachers are on the idea that schools lag behind age and development. T6 Özlem states: “I believe schools fall behind the age and the system for the schools is outdated. I think individualized learning should be centered. Every student should learn at his/her own pace”. From another perspective, a teacher, T11 Haldun says that he does not want to become a teacher if a second chance is given because MoNE does not meet the expectations of teachers because of not giving autonomy to teachers. In other words, some teachers in the study perceive some different problems related to the school system with regard to their individual experiences although all teachers do not state the same reasons.

In terms of theory and practice relationships, the teachers generally argue that teacher education in universities and teaching practice in MoNE does not show parallelism. This is one of the reasons why they criticize the teacher education programs of universities. As a result, they believe that their university education is lacking in some parts such as practicum teaching, theory-based education, etc. For instance, T5 Meryem states:

So let me tell you, a little more weight could have been given to the practice. We had a lot of theoretical lessons and I can say that we were a little behind in practice. Our lessons could have been more practical and this would have been more useful in real life.

In a similar vein, T11 Haldun states: “We had lessons like, for example, teaching English with sonnets. So trying to teach English with Shakespeare's sonnets is far from reality”. T2 Gaye also states that the expectations in university education are different from the expectations of MoNE. We can say that there is a mismatch between the expectations of university education and teaching practice. T2 Gaye adds:

We are said that we need to speak English in the courses but students do not even know reading in Turkish. How can these children read and write in English, then? They have already difficulties in Turkish. I believe it is hard to speak English throughout the course.

Another considerable problem for teachers is that they believe that practicum teaching has some drawbacks. Many teachers say that practicum teaching does not meet the need for practice and does not give enough responsibility to pre-service teachers in

teaching English. For instance, T4 İsmail states that such practicum teaching activities were procedural and there was no inspection of the practicum school, mentor teacher, and the process of practicum. From another perspective, T2 Gaye explains that the mentor teacher in the practicum school does not give any responsibility to pre-service teachers. She adds:

Yes, we always attend idealized schools in the practicum, and when we go to idealized schools, teachers generally do not want to be interfered with in the classroom. You teach for only one hour, it's done. These are done as a formality. These are not very realistic, I already had this problem, and how can I arrange the classroom notebook? We did not get such an education.

Some teachers also talk about deficiencies of university education such as technology education, the limited number of speaking courses in university education, the information given on how to communicate with parents, knowledge of paper works in MoNE, etc. Teachers generally believe that some courses are irrelevant to teacher education or they find these courses useless. Instead of these courses, they state that they should get other courses, which may help increase their knowledge of teaching practice.

Some teachers inform that MoNE system is shaped based on other countries' educational goals and practices. They state that one thing it should be remembered is that the conditions of every country are different from each other; therefore, integrating the other nations' education system without regulating the theories of other nations' systems does not work and henceforth, it does not work in Türkiye, especially in the rural areas of Türkiye. Regarding this, T7 Rasim states:

Finland is like this or that. All educators know this, so how can you compare Finland with Kars now? First of all, examine what the mothers and fathers of these children are doing, only sociologically. What are the children in Kars dealing with? The family sends and says go to the barn. Take care of the animal rather than the lessons. Raise the geese, do that, do that. So you can't go and bring Finnish education and apply it at the school in Kars.

One of the most challenging things for teachers is the existence of the high school entrance exam (called LGS in Turkish). All teachers feel the pressure of the exam in that both school managers and families compel teachers to organize teaching based on this exam. Therefore, the teachers make some arrangements in their course syllabus and the way of teaching. For example, especially teachers who focus on this exam mostly state that it is the main reason that they disregard skills-based language teaching. In other words, the teachers mostly spend their time on the exam, not skills-based language

teaching. As an example, T1 Ömer states that he disregards the correct pronunciation of words because the exam does not include any speaking skills. Skills-based language teaching is a time loss for him since he only teaches eight-year students in the school. And the two other teachers who are not the participants of the study teach other students in the school. Another teacher, T7 Rasim also informs that he prepares an exam including similar topics in the high school entrance exam. Similarly, T10 Emrah states:

If MoNE says I want a student who speaks, understands what is spoken, and writes an essay in English, we will do it accordingly, but MoNE says that if a student does eight out of ten, he is successful, if he does two out of ten, he is unsuccessful. Maybe the student who scores two out of ten speaks very well or expresses himself better.

With regards to the high school entrance exam, the teachers also criticize English questions in the exam. For instance, the teachers inform that new question types, which are difficult and higher than the level of students, are really challenging for students and they cannot do it well. According to T5 Meryem, the books do not include such types of questions and she says she feels anxious about how she can find sources that include them and how she can adapt to these new types of words. Some teachers also state that the English questions locate in the last part of the exam and henceforth, students do not use their time efficiently to solve English questions. A teacher, T6 Özlem also informs that the value and the number of English questions in the exam are low when compared to other subjects such as Math, Turkish, etc. Therefore, students do not give the needed importance to language education. T6 Özlem adds: "Students buy Math and Turkish test books, not English because the importance of English in the exam is low. In a situation that English includes twenty questions, students most probably give priority to the exam".

Regarding all the problems of the high school entrance exam, one can understand how the pressure is high on teachers. For example, when I was in the observation of T4 İsmail's school, the district director of national education came to the school, and both the teachers and he attended a meeting during teaching hours. The only thing he asked was about the success of the school and the possible success of the school next year in this exam. He even got angry when one of the teachers in the school asked for something not related to the exam. Related to the pressure of the district directorate of national education, T9 Yasemin states:

There is direct pressure. In fact, one of the teachers in the school last year said, "How do they say that we do not work, we are doing our best, but what do you want to say to us?" He

approached with much sharper language, and said, "Why are the grades low? At least it should be an average number. So there is direct pressure, and they said it directly.

For the teachers in the study, an important challenging situation is the seminars given by MoNE. Especially, after the Covid-19 pandemic, seminars started to be given online, however, nearly all teachers are of the same idea that these seminars are ineffective since they are presented with videos, not with a live program. MoNE only asks teachers to watch some of the topics presented with ready-made videos. Regarding the seminars, T11 Haldun states:

It was not related to our subject area. I think that they thought about what we can give about teaching in general, let our teachers know this and this. They were given and not efficient. There is no practice, just sit and watch. They were very little interactive, so mostly non-interactive.

As understood from the script above, teachers are not educated considering their subject matter knowledge. Most of the teachers in the study explain that there was no subject-specific training in seminars and they agree that they did not attend seminars directly related to English. For instance, T6 Özlem expresses that she does not want to attend seminars that are related to English because of having limited free time. She says she teaches six days a week and spends one day for the preparation of the next week. On the other hand, T1 Ömer states that he wants to attend such seminars related to English but they are limited in number and the content of these seminars is not rich.

Besides online seminars, the teachers explain that there are seminars that are held face-to-face; however, these seminars accept limited numbers of participants. The teachers generally state that they want to participate in face-to-face seminars, which are held in different cities in Türkiye, but when they apply to attend them, they are not accepted simply because of the limited number of participants to be accepted. Related to face to face seminars, one teacher, T4 İsmail states that some teachers have friends in high places and only they are accepted to such seminars because these seminars also provide opportunities for having a holiday.

As one of the most important challenges of teachers, I think, students come to secondary schools with limited or no knowledge of English. One of the reasons for this is that many students in villages are educated in multi-grade class teaching; henceforth, the only teacher for these students is their classroom teachers, who most probably do not know English and do not teach English in their classes. Consequently, students learn nothing related to English, and English teachers in secondary schools experience the

dilemma of teaching primary school topics or following the course syllabus. We can say that it is the turning point for teachers how to manage the lack of knowledge of the students and teach secondary school topics. For example, T1 Ömer states:

English is taught in the second graders, and teaching English starts at younger ages in primary schools. In villages, classroom teachers try to teach English, but they cannot teach it. Because students are young and their consciousness is not activated totally. Naturally, they cannot teach, and in secondary school, I fail to teach, and then in high school, English teachers fail to teach. It is like a chain event.

Some teachers also express that students come to secondary schools after primary schools with insufficient knowledge of literacy in L1. Consequently, their insufficient knowledge of their native language affects learning in the target language. T2 Gaye, for instance, states: “They have literacy problems, they cannot write and read. This situation affects English teaching. I do not know how they can read in English”. We can say that students in primary schools have insufficient knowledge both in English and Turkish and this kind of insufficient knowledge of students in primary schools negatively affects English courses in secondary schools. Additionally, a teacher, T9 Yasemin states that the number of students in primary schools is low when compared to secondary schools, especially regional boarding secondary schools; therefore, students experience challenges in the adaptation process of the secondary school system since they are not so much disciplined in primary schools as in secondary schools.

4.3. Student-Related Challenges

Figure 4.4. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of student related challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of student related challenges is given after the figure.

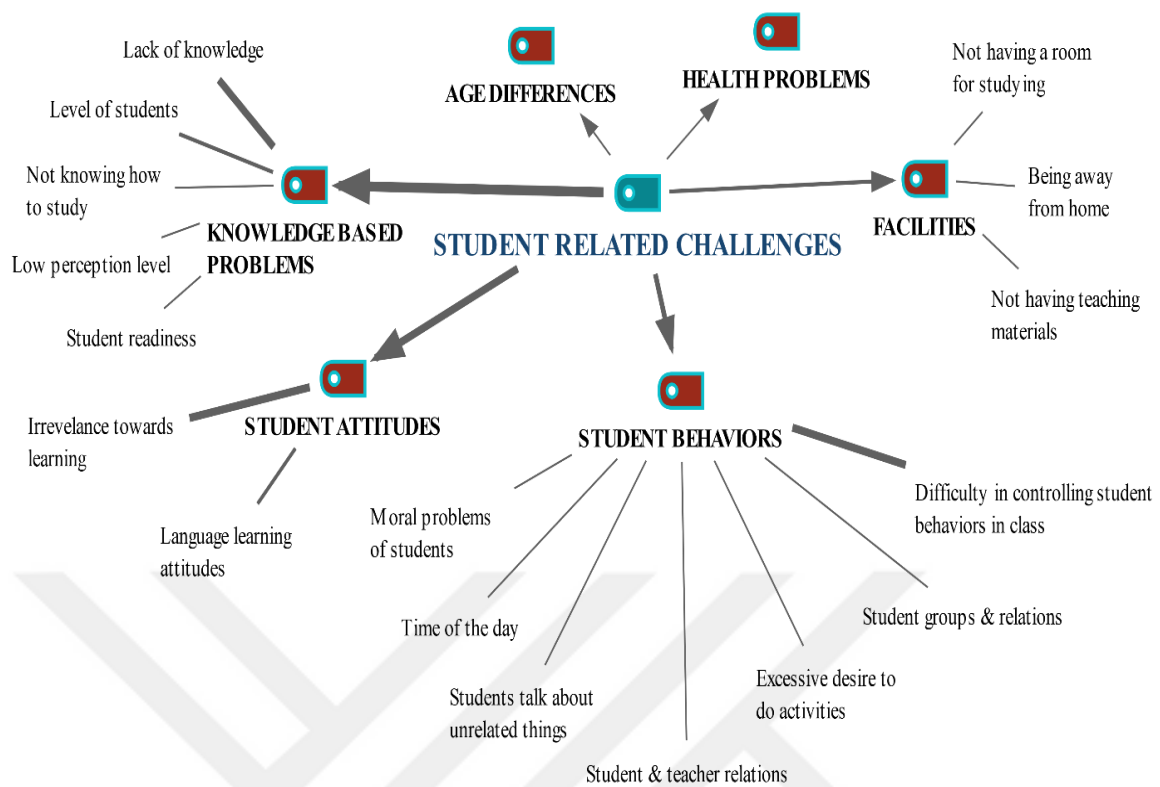


Figure 4.4. *Student related challenges*

In the theme of student-related challenges in Figure 4.4., the teachers explain that the most significant problem is related to knowledge-based problems. All the teachers inform that the English knowledge of their students is very low and such lack of knowledge results in many challenging situations. For example, T9 Yasemin states that it is really hard to speak English when the students do not understand what is said because they always ask for the Turkish meaning of what you said. At that point, the communication gap between you and the students becomes the major problem and hence you need to switch to Turkish. Similarly, T4 İsmail states:

At first, I tried to speak English but some time later, I realized that students do not understand. Consequently, I decreased my English and started to speak Turkish because it was inefficient to speak English for teachers. But I am aware of the importance of speaking English because I am the only source for students to get input in English.

It is understood that the teachers are aware of the value of speaking English in classes but they easily give up speaking English when they realize the lack of knowledge of students in English. They also inform that students lack knowledge in some other topics such as technology. For example, T2 Gaye explains that their students do not know how

to use Microsoft word and it becomes an important problem for teachers, especially in the online teaching process. She says: “I need to teach them how to use Microsoft word after school and it was really a challenging situation for me to teach not English but how to use technology”. She also informs that students’ lack of knowledge in anything they can naturally know is a significant hindrance to teaching English. In one of her lessons, she tries to teach the types of films such as comedy, horror, etc., but students are culturally away from knowing it and at that point, she says:

For example, there is one subject, movies, I think, you can give examples from movies, for example, there are different kinds of movies, horror movies, and adventure movies. You tell the movie to the boy, he looks at you because he doesn't know the movie, or we will teach them the topic of "can, can't". For example, you say superman, he doesn't know. How can I explain the movie, it's like you're stuck. At this moment, teaching English finishes for me.

Considering the knowledge-based problems of students, some teachers state that there are significant differences among students in terms of their level of English. For instance, T4 İsmail says that some students come with the needed knowledge in English but others come to the school even without the knowledge of how to read and write in Turkish. With the successful student, teaching is easy and enough but with students who lack knowledge, you sometimes teach something that should be taught in other lessons. In such a situation, the teachers generally disregard the unsuccessful students and teach only the ones who want to learn something. For example, T6 Özlem states: “Students’ level differences create a challenge for me. That is, I go on with the successful students day by day because others do not want to attend the course. It isn’t possible to conduct the course with unsuccessful students”. It is also difficult for the teachers to arrange the level of the language being used in the class. The dilemma for the teacher is to what level you teach in the class. In this sense, T8 Salih states:

Because when you simplify the subject, the good student gets bored immediately. When you don't simplify, the bad student loses interest in the lesson. This time he is starting to deal with different things. It makes you think that you need to do something different.

Regarding the level differences among students, some schools place the students considering their academic success. The teachers have different ideas about placing the successful students in one class and the others in another class. For instance, T11 Haldun states some positive sides of placing successful students into one class; however, he expresses his concerns. He says:

Level classes are held at our school and they are usually held for 8th graders. So that the good students are not wasted next to the bad ones, the good ones are taken to a class. In this way, we can only send students to good high schools and project high schools as it is our goal. But there is another thing because the class control is very comfortable, you have more time for everything in this class. On the other hand, you can't go anywhere with bad students since they have no intention of reading. Let me tell you, there was an unsuccessful child last year. The child is humming a song in the class and you say, don't do it, and you wrote two sentences and he is humming a song with the same voice. He's making weird noises so he's totally annoying on purpose. What are you going to do now, you came back and intervened once again as a teacher, and there is a student who is preparing for science high school and you want to keep the level high. This child, on the other hand, cannot speak Turkish properly and cannot write. So it's a bit necessary because of that it's not good because you can't progress in any way with that class.

Another problem for the teachers is that students do not know how to study and henceforth the teachers express that they cannot observe any progress in the students' levels of English. Related to students' progress, a teacher, T10 Emrah, in his diary, states that he was bored of teaching the same topics again and again because students do not have any habits of studying. He adds:

There is a problem in the study culture of children, and the reason is known, there are too many distractors for them. Since the teacher, before me, did not consistently check the students' homework, these children also do not have the habit of doing homework now. Therefore, while teaching these children, I really have to teach a topic 3 or 4 times in class from time to time.

Some teachers are not satisfied with the students' perception levels of learning. They state that the students create difficulties even learning the basic things in the lesson. For instance, in the diary of T2 Gaye, she states that she tried to teach some vocabulary related to daily routines by using flash cards. The number of words they learned was only 7-8. Normally, teaching vocabulary takes at most 15-20 minutes; however, she spent two hours teaching only these words. When she realized they did not learn, she used games, and extra activities for teaching the words, but she was unsuccessful. Then, she decided that these students' perception levels were really low. Similarly, T5 Meryem informs that she tries to teach most simply, and especially one student does not understand what is taught although the family of the child is so interested in it and the student tries hard to learn. As a result, she believes that such students have low perception levels toward learning.

Regarding the students, the teachers also inform that they are not ready for secondary school because they behave like primary school students. For example, students ask many unrelated questions during writing. In the observations, T11 Haldun writes some sentences on the board and asks students to write on their notebooks. While students are writing them, he controls some of the students' notebooks and the other students also ask the teacher to control their notebooks. The teacher gets angry with the students and says that they are not in primary school. We also observe the same situation in some other teachers' classes, especially in the classes of fifth-grade students. T11 Haldun also informs that students are not autonomous enough and they expect the teacher to warn them to do something. In other words, they do nothing without their own decisions related to the lesson. In one of the observations of his classes, the teacher shows a video including words of the unit, and the students only watch it. Thus, the teacher gets angry and asks them why they do not write the words in their notebooks.

Another teacher, T8 Salih states that students are not ready for listening and speaking activities because they are not accustomed to doing such activities. The teacher says the students only expect a lesson when the teacher talks and the students listen to the teacher passively. It is, therefore, the teacher thinks that they are not ready for different ways of teaching but only lecture-based teaching.

Another problematic side for the teachers is the students' attitudes toward learning. Nearly all teachers state that they have difficulty motivating students to learn a language because they are irrelevant to learning. Generally, the teachers say that students disregard English as they do not have to practice English in their daily lives. It is because they live in their villages and assume that they do not need to learn English since any tourist will not come to their village to speak English. As a result of the lack of relevance towards learning, students do not do their responsibilities both in the classroom and out of class. In the classroom, for instance, I observe in T5 Meryem's classes that the teacher asks one student to answer a question and the other students in the class do not listen to their friends and talk about different things and the teacher gets angry. T2 Gaye also states that when the students do not want to attend the activities despite the teacher's all efforts; she loses her motivation to teach. In other words, the teachers express that teaching is one of the challenging things in their teaching practice for students who are irrelevant towards learning.

Besides students' irrelevancy towards learning, the teachers also inform that students' attitude towards language learning is a barrier for them to teach English because students generally see English courses as unnecessary. For instance, T4 İsmail states that students have prejudices towards speaking English and he adds: "Students say that speaking English is so difficult. They also say why they are mandated to speak English. Let the English speak Turkish. Breaking such prejudices is really hard for us". In this regard, T9 Yasemin states that students consider learning English as unnecessary and English courses as idle classes. It is because they do not have any inner motivation to learn English and they say what they should do when they learn English. The teacher says this is our basic problem. In other words, the students do not know the value of English. In this regard, T10 Emrah states:

These children, including the people around us, are not affected because they have not yet completed and internalized the importance of English education. No matter how much we explain, in practice, when children do not experience it outside, their interest in this lesson, their relevance, and motivation become different. It does not reveal completely.

Although the teachers inform that the students are not motivated to language learning, one of the reasons for the students' demotivation towards learning can be related to the teachers' practices. For instance, all activities are initiated by the teachers. Therefore, we cannot talk about the existence of an active and autonomous student in the learning process. As a reflection of this, it is seen that the passive students' wishes for participation and learning efforts in the lessons will be low. Again, since the activities offered are teacher-centered, we can say that students do not take a sufficient role in their learning process.

Another important problem is students' behaviors in that the teachers experience hard times controlling student behaviors. One of the challenging things in the classroom is the students' unwanted behaviors. It is really difficult to control student behaviors in classes because some students tend to cause problems, especially the ones who do not have any goal in learning English. T3 Gülden, for example, experiences hard times controlling student behaviors because there are some problematic students in her classes. In her diary, the teacher explains that an eighth-grade student always disturbed the teacher. Although she warned him not to disturb her and the other students in the class, the student continued his behaviors and in the end, she sent the student to the school management to control him. Similarly, T11 Haldun states that a problematic student in

the class is not a problem for himself but when the number of problematic students increases, there occurs problems. Therefore, he hesitates teaching in a class where more than one problematic student is available in the class. T1 Ömer also states that in the existence of the problematic students in the class, he cannot finish the syllabus on time and disregards these students in the class. He adds:

When I try to correct the misbehaviors of students in the class, I hesitate to finish the topic on time; therefore, I focus on students who want to learn something regardless of their level of English. At least, I aim to teach something; maybe they try to learn something because other students do not learn anything. Those are the students who have moral problems.

An important problem for teachers is the relationships of students with each other. Some teachers state that the grouping of students affects their classes. For example, T9 Yasemin informs that students discuss ethnic backgrounds and they make groups as Turkish and Kurdish students. Although they are younger students, as far as we understand they pretend like their families and hence they say some bad words related to their ethnic backgrounds. She adds:

At this point making them stay calm is really difficult and I take such a position, hey, we are living together and we all founded this country together. Remember wars in history. I make remember the Turkish war of independence to them. But it is sometimes difficult.

The grouping among the students is not always related to their ethnic background, but sometimes it is related to where they come from. In the schools of regional boarding secondary schools in which most of the participant teachers work as English teachers, students come from different villages and some of them live in the town. As a result, some students live in the dormitory. In such schools, for instance, T11 Haldun states that students make groups as those who come from villages and those who live in the town. The teacher informs that these students sometimes resort to peer bullying.

Challenging situations do not always occur as a result of misbehaviors. Sometimes, students make a lot of noise as they want to attend the activities. Students make much noise especially in-game activities as a consequence of the excessive desire to participate in game activities. In this regard, T7 Rasim states: “When we play games, especially when we do such activities in the classroom when there is a lot of competition and games with points, the noise increases a bit because the children are very motivated to play”. T4 İsmail says similar things related to the noise in games, but he uses the smart board to present the game to the students. The students’ desire to touch the screen of the smart board causes an increase in the noise in the class.

For the teachers, it is important how you behave towards the students. That is, when the teacher behaves softly to the students, they understand that they can abuse the teacher's character by not obeying the rules in the class and talking about unrelated things. In other words, the students expect teachers to behave traditionally. When the teacher becomes more democratic or behaves in a good manner, the students abuse the way of the teacher's approach to students. T2 Gaye, for instance, states that she does not have a strict character but she feels that she needs to behave so. When the students feel that she has a soft character, they upset the teacher, especially the seventh and eighth-grade students.

Some teachers also state that students' behaviors change in terms of the time of the day. In the first hours of the school day, they are generally calm, but in the afternoon or at the end of the day, their noise increases. One teacher, T7 Rasim also states that discipline problems occur after the gym class.

The teachers also inform that students' success in English is affected by external factors such as their facilities and equipment like having enough teaching materials, having a room for studying, and whether they live with their families or live in the dormitory. For instance, T11 Haldun states that some students come from poor families and they cannot buy some teaching materials but others do in class. Therefore, the teachers cannot use the materials in his classes although he finds it beneficial to teach English with them. Likewise, some students live in dormitories and they have difficulties getting used to living in a dormitory as being away from their families at younger ages. T4 İsmail, therefore, states that students, especially fifth-grade students sometimes cry since it is their first separation from their families. As a result, the students cannot concentrate on their courses but spend their time missing their families.

Some teachers also state that some students have mental disorders and these students need to be educated based on the individualized education plan, but they state that they did not get any education related to these students in their university years; therefore, they do not know how to behave and how to teach English to these students. A teacher, T3 Gülden, for example, states that she cannot control the behaviors of such students and hence it becomes hard to control the class. T5 Meryem, on the other hand, admits that she is not interested in such students enough because she says that she did not get any education on how to behave towards these special students. She adds:

I do not have enough knowledge of what to do with these children and I cannot only be interested in these children in the class. You need to spend much more time with them because they need more interest, but I have 30 students in a class. I do not give enough of my time, to be honest, to these students.

Some teachers also state that the problems of students differ based on the ages of the students. T2 Gaye states in her diary that fifth-grade students forget easily especially when they do not write the words in their notebooks. On the other hand, she adds that students, especially in seventh and eighth grades, create problematic situations since they are in the period of puberty. They deliberately pretend as if they did not hear the teacher in order not to obey the rules. In a similar vein, T4 İsmail explains the situation of students in the period of puberty that their movements are unpredictable and they can give unexpected reactions to simple events.

4.4. Teacher-Related Challenges

Figure 4.5. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of teacher related challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of teacher related challenges is given after the figure.

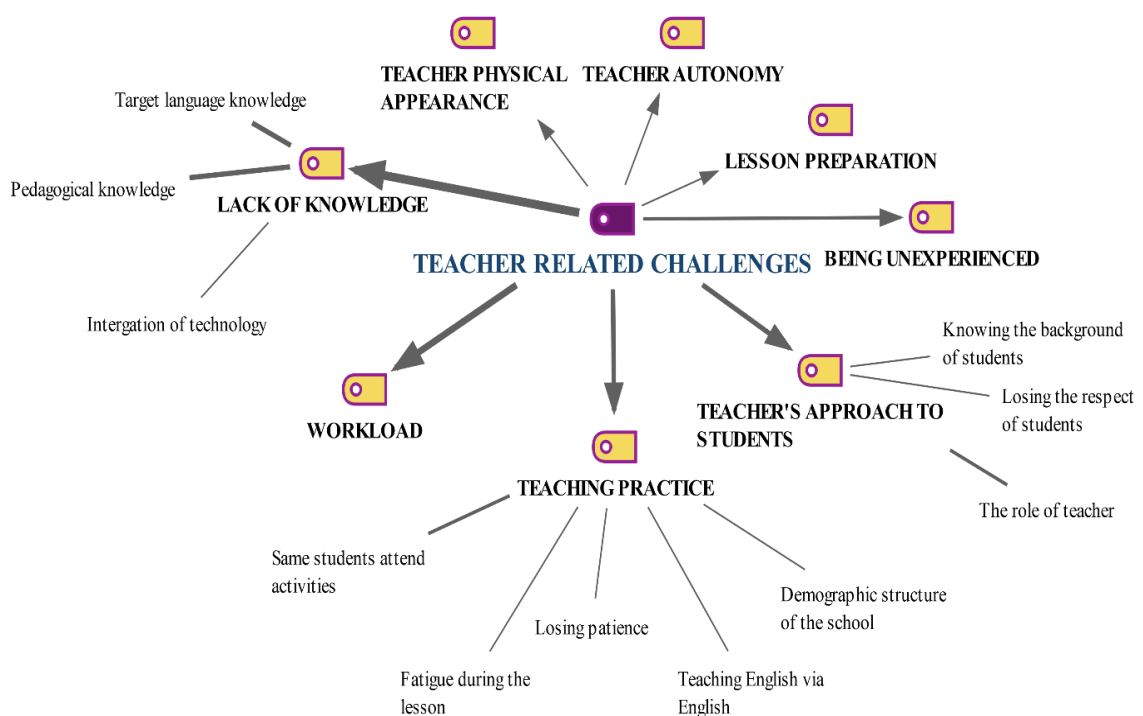


Figure 4.5. *Teacher related challenges*

When we examine the data, we realize in Figure 4.5. that some challenging situations occur related to teachers. Among the most significant of these is the lack of knowledge of the participant teachers. Most of the teachers admit that they lack knowledge of English. For example, some teachers inform that they have limited experience in speaking skills and lack knowledge on how to develop their speaking skills. In this sense, T9 Yasemin states that they do not spend enough effort on developing speaking skills in university education because they get theory-based English, not any speaking practice as expected. Hence, she confesses that most English teachers including her lack of knowledge in speaking skills. Similarly, T3 Gülden states:

The most significant drawback in our language education is speaking. You can do perfectly in multiple-choice language tests; you can get 100 points in the foreign language exam (called YDS in Turkish). Maybe this gives you some opportunities but you cannot properly learn a foreign language unless you do not live in a place in which the target language is spoken. That is, I believe, you are limited to very little information.

Another significant problem for the teachers is that they explain that they forget their knowledge in English day by day because they only teach at the basic level, that is A1; therefore, T7 Rasim states:

We're going backward, that's what the whole English teachers' situation is. We only teach at the beginning level in this teaching environment. But the level of an English teacher is C2, but this teacher loses his knowledge of English day by day. When you do not speak English, or even Turkish, his native language, if this person does not use Turkish for ten days, then he realizes that he cannot use his native language efficiently and makes some errors. But English is a foreign language for us. We cannot use it here. Then, this teacher will forget his knowledge day by day.

In our observation, I realize that some teachers also pronounce some words incorrectly in his/her classes. As an example of this, T8 Salih also admits that he learned the pronunciation of some words such as cucumber and key. Then, he states that it has always been really hard for him to correct the pronunciation of these words; hence, he spends extra time for his students to learn the correct pronunciation of the words he teaches in the class.

Another problematic situation is how the teachers present the language to their students. In other words, they explain that they experience difficulties in using their pedagogical knowledge while teaching English. Some teachers state that they started to forget their pedagogical knowledge after graduation from the university. As a result, they accept that their pedagogical knowledge does not contribute to their teaching. For

example, T8 Salih believes that forgetting his pedagogical knowledge is related to where you work as a teacher. That is, he believes that he forgets his pedagogical knowledge since he works in a rural secondary school because the students do not ask anything different. His teaching has therefore a standard and does not need to try different methodologies. He adds: “If I work in a high school, the student will ask many questions and force you to improve yourself. But there is not such a situation in a secondary school”. Similarly, T9 Yasemin states that she only uses Grammar Translation Method (GTM) for teaching English and expresses that she does not remember the other language teaching methodologies since she does not use them. Therefore, we can say that not using language teaching methodologies in practicing teaching may result in forgetting how to use them.

From another point, T5 Meryem states that it is difficult to teach to the low levels and she believes that it is related to her lack of pedagogical knowledge. T2 Gaye also informs about her learning experience when she was in high school. She states that her English teacher was a knowledgeable person in English, but he could not teach them because of his limited pedagogical knowledge. Therefore, the teachers in the study are aware of the value of pedagogical knowledge in teaching, but they state generally that they do not increase their pedagogical knowledge since they teach in rural. In the observations, for instance, T2 Gaye faces difficulties in giving instructions. In one of her lessons, for example, she uses a pair work activity for teaching speaking. In the activity, she asks the students to wander around the class and make pairs and then speak with each other related to the things they eat for the breakfast by using the present simple form. After the activity, she controls what the pairs do in the activity and she realizes that groups could not understand what they do because of the problem of giving instructions.

A teacher, T10 Emrah also informs that he graduated from the department of translation and interpretation and hence he lacks pedagogical knowledge. But the teachers’ practice of teaching is generally based on traditional methods; therefore, we can say whether having pedagogical knowledge or not reflects their teaching practices.

We can say that teachers also apply one-sided and more output-based assessments. It has been observed that teachers spend more time on whether students learn words and do not make in-class assessments for other areas of English. Again, only the teacher assessment is applied and other assessment types such as peer or self-assessment are not applied. At this point, it is foreseen that the teachers do not provide any variety in the teaching stages and therefore their lessons become ineffective.

Teachers mostly preferred corrective feedback methods by giving feedback. It is acceptable for the teachers to give more explicit and immediate feedback due to the limited number of lessons and time pressure. Again, we observe they used listening, speaking, and writing activities very little, and hence the teachers did not give any feedback on these skills to their students.

Some teachers also inform that they have limited knowledge of technology use and they have difficulties in using such devices effectively. For instance, T5 Meryem states that she has limited knowledge of technology use and she wants to develop herself in the integration of technology into education. She thinks that the new methods and technology are now integrated, and hence I need to develop myself related to technology use. She adds: "I wish there should be a seminar related to the integration of technology into education".

Another important problem for teachers is that they have an excessive workload. The teachers in the study generally work six days a week. In our observations and interviews, the teachers' workload is really high because they teach English on weekdays and generally they teach English to eighth-grade students because of the high school entrance exam. For the last day of the week, they generally state that they are prepared for the next week to make ready their materials and activities, etc. They generally teach nearly 25-30 hours on weekdays and nearly 5-10 hours at the weekend. Regarding the heavy workload, T11 Haldun states:

Think about the lesson hours. We are at school all day and we have a lunch break for an hour. You're already getting tired, here you go and come. I teach for 7 hours a day and some of the teachers also give extra courses, as I did after school last year. Nine hours a day. There was no other teacher at the school. As an English teacher, when you go home at the end of the day, you are dead tired. I go home, sometimes I get under the blanket as soon as I get home. If I sleep, I get great energy to do something, but if I can't sleep then I have no energy. In other words, there are times when I don't prepare the material because of tiredness even though I have it in my mind.

Other than the excessive hours of teaching, the teachers also argue that they do a lot of things, except teaching. For instance, some teachers state that they get tired especially when they are the hall monitor in the school. They also help students to eat their lunch during the lunch break on these days although it is not their duty. For instance, T1 Ömer states that he has to do many things at the same time when he is a hall monitor. He dishes out lunch for the students, monitors the hall, and eats his lunch at the same

time. He says that they work as a robot, which has to do many things in school. T6 Özlem also informs that they need to be teacher aides in the school dormitory in the evening. She states that it is tiring because you have the responsibility to look after the students nearly around 80 students. She also states:

Being a teacher aide is difficult because you have to stay in the dormitory by leaving your home and your habits and it is psychologically tiring. It is also a great responsibility since you are the only responsible person looking after the students. When a student wants to awaken you in the middle of the night, you wake up with nightmares because other teacher aides had bad experiences and you are afraid of experiencing such problems.

Regarding the teachers' teaching practices, students do not always want to participate in the activities. The teachers, therefore, focus on students who want to participate in the activities. In the observations, we realize that the interaction only occurs between the teachers and the successful students. Then, it becomes boring for the students who do not attend the activities in the class and hence some problematic behaviors occur. In one of the lessons of T9 Yasemin, for instance, the teacher gives photocopy papers to the students and starts to ask the answers of the questions to the students. The students give the answers and the teacher focuses on giving the correct answer without considering the student participation in the activity unless they make noise in the class. Throughout the lesson, she only focuses on giving the correct answers to the questions. For a moment, she realizes the decrease in participation and asks a student why she does not participate in the activity and turns back to give the correct answers. Although it is not the end of the lesson, some students who do not participate in the activity, are getting ready to go home and they are not interested in what the teacher says. We understand from the observation that the teacher's intention is not to teach English to the whole class but to focus on the successful students. It is one of the reasons why the teacher does not influence other students.

Another problematic situation, I think, is that the teachers get tired and give up teaching. This occurs especially in the courses of T8 Salih and T10 Emrah. T8 Salih teaches three hours to a class a day and hence he says that the students get bored, especially in the last lesson. T10 Emrah generally gives up teaching when he becomes so tired during the day. It takes nearly half an hour but one day he did not teach anything throughout the lesson and talked with the students about what they did on new years' eve. It was the last lesson of the day. What is problematic here is that the teachers generally

state that they have limited time for teaching but sometimes they do not use the time effectively.

The teachers also state that sometimes they lose their patience when they realize that students always do the same language errors in a day and they state that they do not want to correct the errors of the students after some time. In addition, some teachers also state that they want to teach English via English but there occurs a communication gap between the teacher and students.

An important challenge for the participant teachers is related to the role of the teacher in classes. They express that Turkish students generally want a classical teacher since they can easily abuse the modern roles of the teachers. T11 Haldun states that it is because Turkish students want to see an authority figure in the class and hence they cannot understand you when you behave democratically and they abuse it. Similarly, T5 Meryem states:

Before I was recruited, I said I would never yell at my students, I had no right to shout at them. The first week I tried it softly. You make me sad, I feel bad, and I brought something here for you. I saw that they do not understand, so unfortunately I had to continue the old way. We have a lot of difficulties in disciplining the students, especially in 5th grade, and I realized that what I said is wrong, but I started to feel like a little fear is needed in children. A little bit yeah I think they should refrain from the teacher

Some teachers also explain that they hesitate to lose the respect of students especially when they are teacher aides because they need to be close to the students out of school. T4 İsmail states that the borders are lost between the teacher and the students in the dormitory and they see the teacher as a friend rather than a teacher. Additionally, T1 Ömer states that there is a high number of students in the school and it is really difficult to know the names of all students and remember their backgrounds. T11 Haldun also informs that knowing the backgrounds of students helps you to understand the individual needs of the students. In one of his classes, he calls the mother of a student who does not do his homework and she says that the child's father died; therefore, the student experiences hard times getting used to the school again. At this point, the teacher believes that knowing the background of students is valuable although this may not be realistic all the time because of the crowded classrooms.

The teachers in the study inform that the days when they are inexperienced teachers are the hard times for their teaching career because they accept that they did not know how to behave towards the students, how to make relationships with other teachers, etc.

For example, T8 Salih expresses that he did not know what to do and learned how to behave first. He adds:

I could not manage my anxiety because 30 students were looking at you and you did not make a speech to a number of students. Ok, we did some practicing activities at the university but it is the first time that all the responsibility is on you. I, therefore, suffered from being inexperienced as a teacher

T11 Haldun also informs that he did not know how to teach. He says that he knows the topics but he is undecided related to how to teach and how to use the pedagogy. Similarly, T2 Gaye states that her hands trembled and she was so nervous and then she could do nothing at that moment. On the other hand, T1 Ömer explains that he had some difficulties in the beginning and thought that being a teacher is difficult but after some time now he says that he feels at ease. T4 İsmail says that he was an ideologist approach to teaching and hence he gave chance to all students but realized that he spent too much time even with unpromising students. In later times, he realized that English should not be a mandatory subject for teaching.

Some teachers also inform that lesson preparation takes a lot of time since they have classes at different levels since some of the teachers are the only English teacher in the village. Therefore, spending time for all the levels to prepare materials takes a lot of time for the teachers. Related to this situation, T5 Meryem states:

Preparation for the course takes a lot of time and I find it very difficult. It's been two months since I started teaching here all week, so ask me, I don't know any other place except limited places in the city because I'm coming home from school. I'm already unconscious. I eat my food and then I prepare the materials. Since there is no other English teacher at the school, I cannot consult anyone. I can't ask my other friends who work at other schools, because I'm the only one working at a disadvantaged school.

Although the teachers do not have any difficulty in making new decisions regarding the problems that arise during the lesson, they do not have an alternative plan when a problem arises in the presentation of the lesson content. This is an indication that teachers do not spend enough effort in the preparation stage for the lesson. In addition, the teachers often do not make any additional preparations or activities to increase student participation. For this reason, learning does not take place in students who do not attend the course.

Another important challenge for the teachers of this study is related to how they provide teacher autonomy. The teachers generally state that their autonomy in teaching

English is lacking since they do not have any role in decision-making processes although they are generally seen as the scapegoat when the lacking sides of education are discussed in society. Their wishes related to teaching are always disregarded although they are easily blamed. In this respect, T11 Haldun states:

The teachers are always blamed for the poor quality of education, but the curriculum content, course hours, the physical conditions of the school, and the number of students, are always overlooked. In other words, I don't think we've been very unsuccessful as a country. We have shortcomings in educating teachers, but if you focus on one aspect of the deficiencies and ignore the others, this time the teachers are constantly attached to the thing, that is, we are constantly being played with, so change the structure of my classroom, and give me a smart board.

Lastly, two female teachers, T2 Gaye and T9 Yasemin state that they have a petite appearance and henceforth have difficulties in classroom management. It is because students value them according to their appearances and they do not see them as authority figures.

4.5. School-Related Challenges

Figure 4.6. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of school related challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of school related challenges is given after the figure.

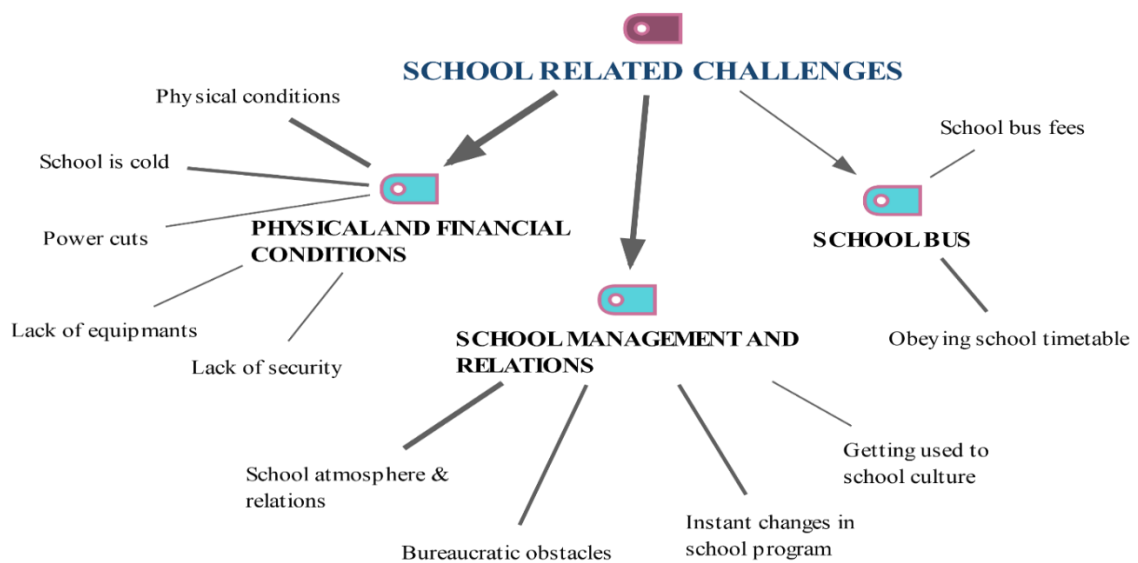


Figure 4.6. *School related challenges*

As an important theme of the study as shown in Figure 4.6., the teachers mostly inform that the physical conditions of schools are not good enough for teaching. The problematic situations are generally related to not having critical equipment such as boards, or the physical conditions are not appropriate for spending their time in the school. For instance, T3 Gülden states that when she was recruited in her school in her first year, the school did not have toilets working properly in the school and they needed to go to the nearest school for meeting their needs. She adds: “There were toilets which are frozen and unusable behind the school and therefore we, both teachers and students, had to go to the toilets of primary school”. Another teacher, T1 Ömer also informs that the roof of the school is problematic and hence it is cold and some birds go into the school. T7 Rasim also states that they did not have enough classrooms in the school and they decided to change science labs, sports classes, etc. into classes. Therefore, the students in these classes do not have some materials such as smart boards. They cannot also do sports because of the lack of physical conditions. That is, the school does not have a gymnasium for sports activities. He adds that the school needs such places because the winter last long and the students cannot do any sports activities throughout the winter season. The same problem exists in the school of T3 Gülden because they use a building that was used as a coal bin for making classes because of the crowded classrooms. It is because the students of the school do not live only in the same village but come from other villages by bus. She states: “There was a classroom like a coal bin; unfortunately, they also became classrooms later because the number of students is too high, and they were turned into a classroom”. Similarly, in T2 Gaye’s school, the physical conditions of the school are lacking in terms of some aspects. For example, the school does not have a teachers’ lounge and they use a container as the teachers’ lounge on the days the weather is nice and they stay in the school halls during break time.

Considering the lack of physical conditions in education, some teachers explain that their teaching methodologies are negatively affected. For example, T2 Gaye states that when there is a lack of equipment, she uses traditional methods. She says:

The physical conditions of the school, to a certain degree, cause changes in method and technique usage. As an example, children need to listen a lot. Surely it is. They need to watch something in the target language. When you do not have the needed equipment, you decrease your teaching to lower levels. In other words, I turn to traditional methods by using only the book. That is how you go from a three-dimensional level to a two-dimensional level. That is, you use the most minimized type of teaching.

Another teacher, T9 Yasemin states that the school does not support English teachers with materials related to English. For instance, she states that she spent her own money to write some English phrases on the school stairs and the school did not support her economically. From another point, T6 Özlem believes that the schools do not have similar conditions, both physically and socially. Therefore, educating teachers as if all schools have similar conditions is problematic since every school has unique dynamics, that is, geographically, culturally, and physically. Any formal education, which especially focuses on the theory of education does not have the opportunity to give context-specific education. Therefore, she states you need to learn something when you start teaching.

One of the most significant problems of some schools is the cold weather. I do not mean the weather out of class, but the inside of the class. In other words, some schools are really cold and both teachers and students wear their coats during the lessons in these schools. One of the reasons for this is related to the Covid-19 pandemic because some fresh air should be let into the classroom. When you think about the weather in the Kars district, which is one of the coldest places in Türkiye, it becomes inevitable to wear coats during the lesson. Regarding Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs, when the classes are cold, the motivations of both teachers and students decrease.

In the schools where the participant teachers work, power cuts occur very often. Most of the teachers in the study use smart boards for teaching English and in a situation where power cuts occur; the process of teaching is affected negatively. In such situations, the teachers wait for the solution to the problem or change their plans, accordingly. For instance, T11 Haldun informs that when the power cuts occur, his teaching plan completely collapses. As a result, he needs to improvise in the content or he states that he should do some extra materials which can be used in these situations. Similarly, in the diary of T5 Meryem, she states that one day a power cut occurred and she made all her plans based on using the smart board. She admits that she was very confused in the first lesson and she did not know what she could do. At this point, she felt insufficient and irresponsible toward students. During the break, she investigated some activities in the book and used them for the other lessons that day. She confesses that it is an important lesson to be considered.

Some teachers also explain that there is a lack of equipment in the school such as photocopying and therefore, they write all the things they teach on the board, and then, they ask the students to write the examples in their notebooks. T2 Gaye believes that

having the needed equipment is an important part of language teaching because she says that private schools are successful in teaching English because they provide all the equipment to teachers. Similarly, T9 Yasemin states that she worked in a private school before she was recruited by a state school. She states that she felt comfortable in the private school since the school provided her with a lot of materials. One of the challenging situations for her is therefore not having ample materials.

A teacher, T1 Ömer, also expresses that there is a lack of security because his school and a high school share the same building. In other words, their school building will be reconstructed as a precaution against the earthquake and hence they share the building of a high school. Consequently, the students of each school fight against each other. T3 Gülden also talks about the lack of security for the students since a lot of dogs go into the school close and the students are scared of dogs.

An important problem for the teachers is that they believe that school management and relations are problematic in some aspects. Some teachers inform that they experience some problems with other teachers in the school. For instance, T1 Ömer informs that there is a schism among teachers but he states that he has good relations with other English teachers at the school. Another teacher, T9 Yasemin states that the school management asks her to make some activities with the schools but they do not support the teacher both socially and economically. In another example, T1 Ömer states that the school manager decides about the English lesson or the teacher himself without asking his opinion. Similarly, T4 İsmail informs that he was exposed to mobbing especially in his first year of teaching. He also states that discrimination between single and married teachers is observed. He states that single teachers are forced to be charged with other duties such as being the hall monitor or teacher aide more than married teachers. In terms of participating in seminars, T11 Haldun also states that he wanted to participate in a seminar related to language education but his school manager did not give permission. He adds:

They said that I am a newly recruited teacher and I can get more opportunities to participate in such seminars. They said that I must focus on school now not on in-service training for now. As a result, they canceled my application to the language education seminar.

As understood from the examples above, the teachers experience different challenges related to their school atmosphere and relations. Although different teachers experience different challenging situations, the most basic indicator of the problems is related to the lack of communication with other teachers and school management.

A teacher, T11 Haldun also informs that some bureaucratic obstacles occur when he makes some contributions to enrich students' learning. For instance, he states that he wanted to set up an English-speaking club to improve the students' speaking skills in English but he got permission from the school and the district national education directorate although he applied for it last year. During online education, he also asks one of his friends who lives in America. He asks the school whether he can add his friend to the online system because he wants his students to experience speaking to a person other than him, but the school informs him about the bureaucratic processes. As a result, he cannot achieve his plans to give the students the chance to speak English with his friend.

Some teachers also criticize the instant changes in the school program. As the program of the school changes, the teachers need to adapt themselves to the new program and make some changes in their teaching plans. For instance, T3 Güliden informs that she wanted to teach the kitchen tools by using real materials and she wanted to take the kitchen tools to the school from her house. With these tools, she planned to teach the cooking process of a meal. However, she could not do as planned because the school management decided that both teachers and students in the school should be prepared for an official ceremony; therefore, she decided to cancel her plan. As another example, we observe that the classes of some students change in the middle of the term in the school of T9 Yasemin. In one of the classrooms, for instance, T9 Yasemin sees some students first time in her class because the classes of these students have changed. The teacher asks them what they have learned in English lessons so far and she checks their notebooks. She realizes that the new students learned only the topics of the first two units but her students learned the topics of three units. Therefore, she decides to teach the third unit once more to the new students and she hopes that this will be a useful review of the knowledge of the students who already learned the topic.

One of the teachers, T11 Haldun also informs that he had problems getting used to the school culture when he first started teaching in the school. It is because the school management wanted him to put on a white coat, but he did not have one and thus he ordered one, and in this process, the school management warned him to wear it although the ordered coat has not arrived yet. Therefore, he states that he did not understand the reaction of the school management although he wears formal clothes.

Lastly, school buses create a considerable challenge for both the teachers and students since school busses do not obey the rules. T9 Yasemin explains that they have

difficulties in managing the school bus timetable because the drivers of the busses do not come on time from the villages. They sometimes come to school very early and sometimes very late. It is because they need to take the students with three busses in a day, however, sometimes they take the students with only one bus. She states:

For example, 3 busses need to come from a village, but the driver comes with only one bus and all the students are stuck in that bus. All students get on that bus. I say to the students, so you get in first and then we tuck your bags in between. They took out their bags, we put their bags between the children one by one after all the students got on the bus.

As understood from the teacher's words, the school drivers do not obey the regulations and they break the rules to gain unfair income. On the other hand, most of the teachers go to the villages from the city center by school bus and some teachers experience problems such as T2 Gaye and T5 Meryem related to school bus prices because they believe that the prices instantly increased because of economic reasons such as the high rise in the gasoline prices. T5 Meryem states the problem in her diary in that they quarreled with the school manager about the school bus prices during the break and she states that it affected her lessons since she was a bit nervous because of the situation.

4.6. Parent-Related Challenges

Figure 4.7. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of parent related challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of parent related challenges is given after the figure.

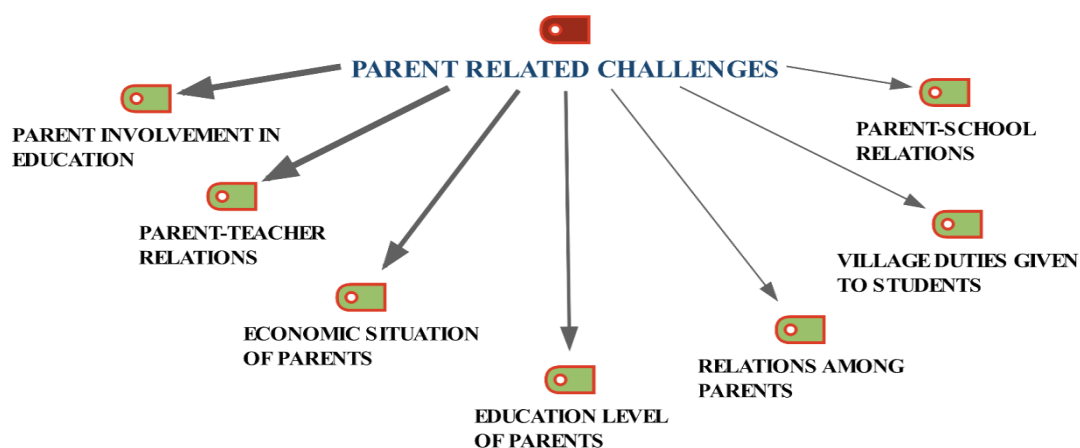


Figure 4.7. *Parent related challenges*

As shown in Figure 4.7., parents can sometimes be problematic for the teachers in the study. Most of the teachers inform that parents are not interested in the education

process of their students. For instance, T6 Özlem states that parents do not come to the school to get information about the academic success of their students since they do not have much time to come to the school because of work they need to do in the village such as livestock raising. T8 Salih who works in the school of T6 Özlem also states that parents are not interested in the academic success of the students and they regard the school as a place that can send away their children. He also adds:

We made a parent-teacher meeting some days ago and only two of the parents attended the meeting but the number of students in my class is 21. We informed them about the meeting through Whatsapp groups, and we sent them an invitation via their students. Believe that there were only the parents of two students in the meeting. And sometimes, when we call the parents, we cannot reach them.

In a similar vein, T2 Gaye informs that the parents are not interested in their students and the success of students whose parents are not interested is low when compared to the successful students. It is because they do not support their students and even they do not buy a notebook for their children and they expect the school to give the notebook.

Another problematic situation related to the parents is that they do not regard their children as valuable enough to support them. For instance, T9 Yasemin informs that the economic situation of the parents is good enough but when she considers the clothes of the students in her school they seem as if they are poor. She states that there are few students whose parents are poor and the school and the teachers in the school support these students economically.

T4 İsmail also informs that the families gain money only with livestock raising and therefore, they are generally rich enough, but the problem with the families is that they give much value to their jobs, but not to their children; therefore, he states that we cannot expect the students to be successful since they do not value their children.

Although the parents are not interested in how the teachers give education in the school, T11 Haldun also informs that he wanted to give technology-based homework; however, some of the parents complained about the homework to the school management. It is because they believe that technology-based activities can be used in online education since their students do not use technology in accordance with its purpose. At this point, the teacher believes that it is the responsibility of parents to control their students' behaviors toward technology use. Because of their behaviors, he believes that parents impede the teaching process. T11 Haldun states:

For example, I was complained twice last week about this homework. I am an English teacher. I taught the sports unit. I found sports dialogues from British Culture and similar places and sent them. I sent dialogues from YouTube. I sent cartoons, I sent pdf. I send them on WhatsApp so that they can practice. And I have been complained about why I am giving homework over the internet. They want to disconnect the children from the computer, and the phone, and because of me the students are not disconnected. I was called to the principal's office because of this reason.

A significant problem for the teachers is to create a positive relationship with the parents. The teachers state that creating a positive relationship with parents is always difficult because you call the parent related to the needs of students and the things they need to do. They agree with you when you talk to them on the phone but they do nothing in practice. For instance, T2 Gaye states:

They do not buy the needed materials such as paper, scissors, etc. for their students to do their homework. When they did not buy these things, you cannot give homework including these materials. Sometimes, I spend my budget to buy these materials and do the activity with them in class. That is, you find a way of communicating with parents but they do nothing in practice.

In a similar vein, T4 İsmail informs that they do not have face-to-face communication with parents since they come to school very few. Sometimes they come to the school when there is a livestock bazaar in the town. T7 Rasim, on the other hand, states that the problems of teachers in rural are different from teachers working in urban. In other words, teachers need to talk about many things about their students, the education they give, and others. For instance, T7 Rasim informs that he wanted the parents to give the code numbers created in the process of the Covid-19 pandemic by the Turkish Ministry of Health to control the spread of the illness at the beginning of the term. After four months, he states that only half of the parents give related information about their students. Therefore, he believes that their responsibility is not only to teach English in classes but to teach parents in some aspects.

The teachers also inform that during the pandemic process, they communicated via WhatsApp groups and they state that the parents started to get involved in the teaching process more but not in a positive way. The teachers criticize that the parents call them even the late hours in the evening. T4 İsmail states that the parents believe that the teachers are in the role of a babysitter in that whenever they call the teacher, he/she should answer them. Therefore, teachers are worried about the integration of the teaching process with their personal lives.

The teachers also criticize parents' behaviors toward their students who make mistakes. In other words, the parents support their students when the students do not obey the school rules or when they behave incorrectly as smoking cigarettes at school. As a result, the misbehaviors of the students increase because of the support of the parents to the child. T7 Rasim states that when they regard the child is right in his misbehaviors, then the teacher does not want to take responsibility to intervene in the misbehaviors of the student. Consequently, the teachers believe that the parents do not value teachers at all and hence the teachers question the place of the teacher in society.

The teachers also inform that the economic situation of parents is generally acceptable however; they do not support the school economically. For instance, T1 Ömer informs that parents are generally rapacious because he says that one of the parents said that the parent always makes excuses especially when the teachers asked why the student did not attend online courses. After some time, the teacher learned that the parent went to the municipality to get a donation as they do not have computers. In other words, parents do not want to spend money on their children although they are rich enough.

When we consider the education levels of the parents, the teachers state that there are some parents with higher education and other parents are not. For instance, T7 Rasim states that most of the parents are not well educated because they only graduated from primary school. The teacher explains that when the education level of the parents decreases, they reveal that these parents' students have some behavioral problems in the school. Some other teachers also inform that the parents do not help their students with their homework and cannot support their students in terms of academic success since their education level is low. Therefore, T6 Özlem, for instance, explains that parents are not interested in their students because they do not have any knowledge of English since they graduated only from primary school. As a result of this, they cannot help their students.

Some teachers also inform that the relationship between parents can be problematic. T4 İsmail states that the parent of one of the students is rich and the parent looks down on the other parents, and he says to the teacher that the teacher should not let other parents contact him as they are arrogant. T9 Yasemin also informs that since some families in the village are at loggerheads, the problems of these families are reflected in the students. The teacher, therefore, believes that it is not a good thing to talk about the problems of their families for the students.

Another problematic situation is that the parents want their students to help with the duties that the parents should do. For instance, T2 Gaye informs that they asked the parents of the children for their lessons, especially during the pandemic process, but the parents took them to the farm. In the observation of T4 İsmail's classes, the teacher asks a student why he did not write his homework properly and the student says that his father wanted him to help with livestock raising. The student says that it is the reason why he could not study and do his homework.

Lastly, some teachers state that the parent-school relationship is weak because T10 Emrah, for instance, states that the school management does not give the needed information to the parents. Therefore, we can say that a disconnection sometimes occurs between the parents and the school management. Similarly, T7 Rasim states that the school tries to make connections with the parents and he admits that when there is a disconnection between the school and the parents, the students' academic successes decrease. Consequently, we can conclude that the school and parent connection is an important element for increasing student success.

4.7. Technology-Related Challenges

Figure 4.8. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of technology related challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of technology related challenges is given after the figure.

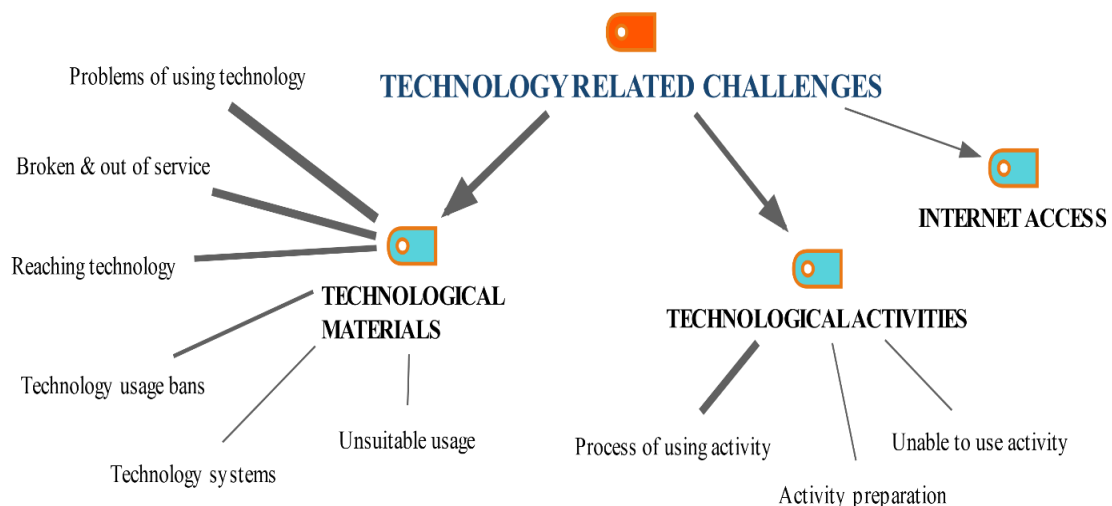


Figure 4.8. *Technology related challenges*

As an important problem for the participant teachers in Figure 4.8., they experience many challenging situations while using technological materials. They mostly state that challenging situations occur with smart boards in the school. The teachers generally inform that the touchscreens of the smart boards do not work properly or the screens are so sensitive to small movements such as flies; therefore, the pages are changed. This situation was observed in different schools. When such problems occur, the teachers spend time to find the activity again. Another problem related to the touchscreens is that the teachers want to use the screen to write on it but they cannot write on some parts of the screen since they do not work properly. In this situation, the writings are not eligible enough to see what is written. Therefore, the teachers use the board instead.

Sometimes, smart boards are broken because of viruses and the virus in the blackboard causes flash memory to be corrupted, too. When the teacher cannot use the flash memory, his/her plan is interrupted because of the virus in the smart board. Concerning the virus of the smart board, for instance, T5 Meryem states:

One day, I prepared a nice lesson plan. I was really excited to teach it. Well, I'm saying to myself, my God, let this lesson go very well. I inserted the flash memory into the smart board. It got infected and everything in it was deleted. I didn't have a backup plan either, and I was stuck in the lesson, I didn't know what to do at first, and I apologized to the students.

Related to the electronic devices other than the smart board, T2 Gaye informs that she uses a rechargeable speaker for the listening activities since they do not have any smart board in the school. She states that when she forgot to recharge the speaker, one day it was out of electricity and it was closed during the activity. Then she passed on another activity since she could not use the speaker. Although it seems a very easy problem, the teacher states that she does not expect to experience any problem related to the speaker and she must decide immediately what to do in the class. The difficulties are not related to the use of the speaker here, but to deciding what to do in the class. Related to the electronic devices, a teacher, T5 Meryem, also states that she experienced problems with the usage of the photocopy machine since she does not know how to use it, especially in her first year of teaching.

Another problematic situation is that the teachers express that many problems occur related to tablets during online teaching. The teachers state that the tablets which are provided by the MoNE are broken or out of service at the beginning of the online teaching process. They say that the students could not use them since the tablets were not mended

or they were not changed with the newest one. T9 Yasemin, for instance, states that there is an IT specialist in the school and they asked for help from him to run the devices but he said that there is a systematic problem related to tablets and the company should provide the newest ones instead of broken tablets. She also adds:

The children said that the first day we distributed the tablets, and the students stated the tablet did not run. We called the customer service of the company many times. Sometimes we could not reach them at all, sometimes they did not answer the phone. Some people ask, if these tablets are not mended at all, so they are not of good quality. Therefore, the students could not use the tablets.

Regarding the technology use, the smart boards freeze for a while during the activity and the teachers generally do not know what to do in this situation. Sometimes, their students help them to solve the problem since they experience the same problems in other lessons. For instance, in the observation of T5 Meryem's classes, the smart board freezes during the activity, and the students show the teacher how the science teacher solves the problem. They close the smart board and reopen it. As a result, the problem is solved but a significant time of the lesson goes for nothing. Similarly, T9 Yasemin experiences the same problem in one of her lessons in that the smart board freezes for some time during the matching activity. They needed to close the smart board and open it again for some time although the students during the activity are eager to do the activity on the smart board.

Some teachers also explain that they do not have any technology to use for the lessons. For instance, in T2 Gaye's school, there is not any technological device when compared to the others schools I visited for the study because all the other schools have smart boards nearly in all classes but not in T2 Gaye's classes. The teacher states that they have only a projector that is difficult to use in the school. On the other hand, some teachers such as T1 Ömer inform that they have problems with the internet connections in the smart boards; therefore, they cannot efficiently use them while teaching English. Similarly, in her diary, T3 Gülden states that they have smart boards in the classes except two of them and in these classes, they cannot use activities that include visuals that help to teach. Since these classes do not have smart boards, she also clarifies that they cannot use interactive technology-based activities. As a result of this, how you teach differs from one class to another and hence we cannot provide a rich learning environment to the students in a class that such devices do not include. She also states: "I try to compensate

this gap by giving them copy papers. We can understand that the teachers in the study want to use technology-based activities in their classes although some of them are disadvantageous in terms of reaching technology in their classes.

Some teachers express that using technology can be advantageous in classes by enabling them technology-based activities through tablets or smartphones, but generally, school managements ban the usage of these tools in classes since they believe that using such tools may create discipline problems. It is because the students regard these tools as game machines and it is agreed that students do not use them for educational purposes. Another reason for not using these tools in classes is related to the privacy of the lessons. In other words, a teacher, T11 Haldun informs that the schools do not want to use these tools to protect classroom privacy. He states:

The teacher sometimes gets angry in the lesson and there is an incident, that is, the privacy of the lesson. You get angry, you shout, sometimes you shouldn't do it as a teacher, and you do, when this scene is falsely portrayed, you lose your job and the people are in a mode, you know social media, so they easily blame you and it's like a witch hunt, that is, lynching and therefore schools do not want to use it.

Although we talk about the teachers' concerns about the usage of these tools out of their aim, it is just the concerns of the teachers and the school management. On the other hand, some teachers inform that they give homework and the students use tablets and smartphones for other purposes such as social media when they are with their families. In his diary, for instance, T10 Emrah states that the students deceive their parents in that they have homework and use tablets and family smartphones for surfing on social media. The teacher expresses his concerns:

I wonder if the fact that the internet is available to everyone at the moment and is used outside of its purpose negatively affects academic success. Also, when I give translation homework, instead of using a dictionary, these children send a photo of the text I gave to the Google Translate site. After 10 seconds, they get the whole translation without considering whether it is right or wrong. Then, they write it down in their notebooks and think that they have done their homework.

Another teacher, T4 İsmail also states that the children cannot use these tools positively for educational purposes. Even in the online teaching process, he informs that the MoNE gave them tablets but they did not attend the lessons by giving some excuses such as lack of internet connection; however, the teacher says that the students had an internet connection but they used it for online games.

When the teachers use technology-based activities in their classes they utilize technology mostly in the form of reflecting the documents (e.g. online books) on the smart board. For this reason, we can say that teachers apply technology as one dimension and do not use technology effectively. Again, we can say that teachers do not make an effort for different technology-based activities and continue with ready-made materials. In other words, the observations reveal that teachers do not use their activities and use other ready-made activities.

The teachers especially use the smart boards to present them with multiple-choice tests related to the topic or they solve some questions for the high school entrance exam. In these multiple-choice tests, some questions include long reading texts and the students cannot see the text on the smart board. T1 Ömer, for instance, asks the students to pull their desks to the front and thus solves the problem although some noise increases during the arrangement of the class. We also observed similar problems in other teachers' classes. For instance, in T9 Yasemin's classes, the teacher uses smart board activities to strengthen the topic; however, the sentences are not seen properly at the back of the classroom. Only the children who are given the right to answer the questions in the activity can see it, therefore, all the students cannot benefit from the activity. On the other hand, in the observation of T3 Gülden's classes, the teacher uses a technology-based activity for teaching the kitchen tools. In the activity, the students drag and drop the answers to the gaps. Although they drag the correct answer to the gap, the program does not accept the answer as the correct one. It is because the students do not answer the questions one by one. Instead, they give the answers to the questions which are easier for them. As a result, the teacher is amazed at why the system does not accept the answer. To the end of the activity, it is understood that the activity does not provide flexibility in the answers. Therefore, using such activities may create unexpected problems for the teachers since the teachers are not permitted to arrange the activity.

We can say that the teachers generally do not prepare their technology-based activities and they use ready-made materials. Hence, they do not have the chance to arrange the activity when a problem occurs in the activity. On the other hand, some teachers inform that they use some platforms to create their activities. For instance, T4 İsmail uses a platform to create word games. He says that he spends a lot of time creating the activity especially when he newly started to use the platform since he was not used to it, but after some time he says that he learned the system of the platform and started to

use it a bit faster. Similarly, T9 Yasemin states that she learned some web2 tools for creating technology-based activities in her university education; however, she admits that she does not use such programs because preparing technology-based activities takes a lot of time; therefore, she uses ready-made activities in her lessons although there are problematic sides of these activities.

Lastly, some teachers express that they wanted to use technology-based activities; however, the activity was not opened on the smart board because of technical reasons that they did not know. Similarly, T5 Meryem states that one day she found a good activity that includes a board game and she believes that it attracts students' interests, but they could not run the activity because when the students touch the options in the activity, they could not see the answers. In other words, she says that it did not work in the class because of a lack of technical knowledge on how to solve the problem. Similarly, T9 Yasemin wants to use a technology-based activity that is interactively used; however, she cannot manage to open it on the online platform. She realizes that she spends time, so she decides to give multiple-choice tests to the students. While the students are solving the questions of the test, she opens the activity after spending a lot of effort. In conclusion, we understand that the teachers should have technical knowledge as well as knowledge of the target language.

The teachers also inform that they have problems with the internet connection in the school and some state that the internet connection pace is so low. Additionally, a teacher, T2 Gaye states that there is not any internet access even for doing procedural tasks at the school and they cannot use even their phones since the phones are out of service in the village. T5 Meryem also states: "We live in the middle of nowhere, however, we have smart boards, but the internet access is weak and our phones are out of service in the village".

4.8. Rurality Challenges

Figure 4.9. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of rurality challenges. Detailed information related to the theme of rurality challenges is given after the figure.

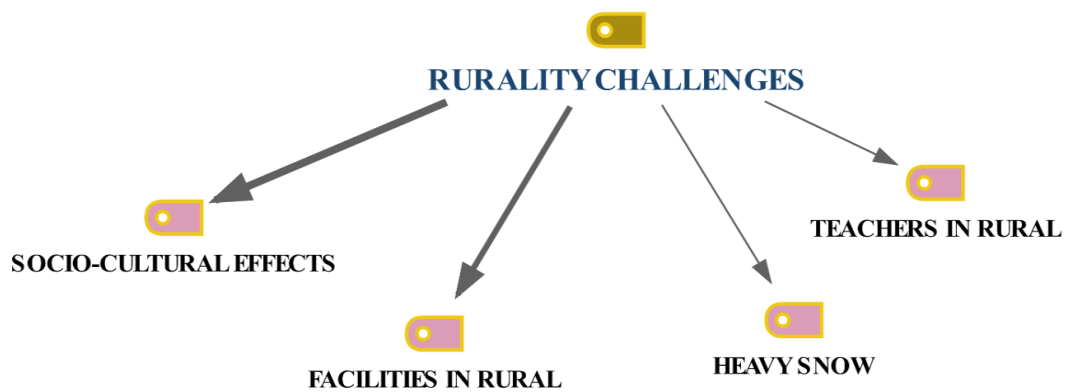


Figure 4.9. *Rurality challenges*

As our focus is on the challenges of English teachers working in rural, the teachers have some concerns related to rurality as in Figure 4.9. One of the important challenges of English teachers working in rural schools is related to the socio-cultural effects of rurality on education. For instance, the teachers in the study explain that the books provided by MoNE include elements that are far from the culture of the people living in rural areas. T4 İsmail informs that the book for eighth-grade students includes the topic of festivals and the content of the topic is not related to the culture of society. As an example of this, Easter is included in the unit on festivals and the teacher states that the students do not know what Easter is and the topic is culturally far for the students. Similarly, in one of the observations of T1 Ömer's classes, the activity includes a picture of the "Jazz Night Concert". The students say that they do not know what jazz means and the teacher states that it is a kind of music. Then, the students ask the teacher what kind of music it is. And the teacher says the students to ask the music teacher of the school about it. As we understand from the questions of the students to the teacher, the topic is not culturally familiar to the students and hence the teacher experiences some difficulties in teaching the topic. Another example is that a teacher, T6 Özlem teaches the expressions "once a week, twice a month, etc." and she asks the students how many times they go on holidays and the students say "never" although the teacher expects the students to answer the question like "once a year, twice a year". The teacher also teaches in her other lessons some indoor and outdoor activities and she teaches "collecting stamps" as an indoor activity, however, the students find this activity a bit strange because they do not have such activities in their lives. Therefore, we can say that presenting such topics which the

students do not know about their lives can be problematic for the teachers since such topics are not culturally close to the students' lives.

Some teachers also believe that a significant problem for the students is the lack of stimulus in the villages. The teachers believe that the perceptions of the students are close to learning because villages do not provide a rich learning environment. For example, T11 Haldun informs that he did not experience difficulties in teaching English in the west of Türkiye. He states:

The perceptions of the students are incredibly closed. I think that it is because of the Covid-19 pandemic that they could not come to school for two years. Moreover, most of our students come from small villages and they always see similar people around them and hence they get the same stimulus. It is why their perceptions are closed and there are two basic differences between rural and urban students. The students in the urban area are a bit self-confident and they have the desire to get responsibility. On the contrary, the perceptions of the students in the rural area are a little closed. In other words, they are accustomed to living in a way that the teacher says something and they do. Otherwise, they do not do something of their own will.

In a similar vein, T6 Özlem states that the students' lives are restricted only to village life. They believe that they only live in their villages to the end of their lives and do the same job, that is, farming or livestock-raising as their fathers do. Therefore, they do not have any dreams about learning new things or going to other places. Consequently, they do not want to learn English since learning a foreign language is an aimless endeavor. She adds: "You teach students living in villages and those who do not have any academic goal. That is, they think that they live in their villages. Maybe, they are in learned helplessness".

Apart from students, the teachers also keep pace with the conditions of the rural. In other words, the teachers generally believe that they do not need to develop themselves in terms of teaching. Some teachers believe that they must develop their understanding of teaching when they start to work in the west of Türkiye such as reviewing their knowledge of teaching pedagogy. For instance, T9 Yasemin admits that it will be difficult for her to teach in the west and therefore, she plans to review her pedagogical knowledge. When I ask her why the teachers have such a perception that they need to advance their knowledge of English and methodology in the west of Türkiye, but not in the east, she explains that she can reach more ample facilities and materials in the west when compared to the school she works now.

The teachers also inform that they use traditional methods in their schools; however, they state that they used communicative-based methods when they worked in private schools in the west. It is because they mostly believe that using contemporary methods in villages is impossible because of some reasons such as the lack of knowledge of the students, lack of materials, etc. For instance, T4 İsmail states that the methods they learned in the university are not appropriate for use in rural schools because the student profiles are different in rural schools. Similarly, T7 Rasim states:

I asked the professor how we can apply these methods in rural and hence I failed the course. In other words, methodology hangs in the air. The physical conditions are not appropriate to use them and it happened to what I said to the professor. We definitely cannot apply our methodology knowledge when teaching English in rural schools.

Considering the conditions of rural areas, some teachers inform that the students cannot find the opportunity to use what they have learned in English; however, it is different for students living in urban. For instance, T11 Haldun expresses that his students' level of English is low. He states that he misses the west since students in the west try to learn English even for understanding online games. They can acquire some words and expressions in English by using computer games. That is, you teach "have/has" in primary school and somehow students are familiar with the topic. On the contrary, the students in his school, he says, are not interested in these things and hence they cannot learn English. They encounter learning English for the first time in school. Therefore, there is a difference in terms of students' familiarity with English.

The teachers in the study inform that the facilities in rural areas are limited and this creates some challenging situations for them. One of the difficulties of rurality for the participant teachers is that they cannot easily reach what they want when they are in their schools. For instance, T6 Özlem states that the village is far from the city center and you cannot reach anything. When you need something you need to go to the city center, however, there is no transportation going to the city center. When you want to eat something, you cannot find anywhere to buy some food. She depicts the scene of the village as somewhere in fairy tales. In other words, village life is not culturally close to her although her family was a resident of the Kars district before. She adds:

The scene that we always see is that we see some women carrying cowpats. While we are coming to the school by car, they carry cowpats and at that moment the reality shocks us, and I could not understand whether this place is real or whether I live in a film frame or a section of a novel. That is, we get real experience in teaching English.

Similarly, T5 Meryem states: “Our school is far from the city center and people living around the school are rare. There is nothing in the village but cowpat”. She also adds that when they want to attend face-to-face in-service training, it takes time to go to the city center since the school is far, and therefore, we can regard being far from the city center as something that hinders teachers’ professional development.

One of the difficulties for some teachers is also finding a place to live when they are recruited for the first time. For instance, T4 İsmail states that he came to the town to give the documents to the school for being recruited and found a place to live but it was difficult for him to get used to living in a place that is really cold even in summer. It is because he says he was wearing flip-flops because of the warm weather in his hometown and now he has to live in one of the coldest places in Türkiye.

As we inform in the method section the Kars district is one of the coldest places in Türkiye and nearly half of the year is snowy. Therefore, heavy snow is an important problem for sustaining education. In this regard, T8 Salih states in his diary that they were stuck in the snow while he was driving on the village road. He adds that unfortunately the other cars were in the same situation and they had to walk to the school because of heavy snow. For this reason, many students could not come to school and the number of students in his class was very low hence he says he could not focus on the lesson because of the problems he experienced while he was going to school. Similarly, T6 Özlem who is one of the colleagues of T8 Salih also informs that the school is cold in winter and she states that this situation affects her teaching badly because she cannot totally adapt herself to the lesson. She also says that she gets cold easily in winter and becomes ill. She adds that she experiences difficulty in even opening or closing the smart board because of the cold. I observe in T6 Özlem’s classes, the teacher and nearly all the students wear their coats in class. Another teacher, T7 Rasim also informs that it is hard to control the students’ behaviors in the school and their school management does not allow the students to play in the schoolyard because one of the students fell on the ice and broke his head. Therefore, the teacher states that it is their responsibility to ensure the students' safety and thus they do not allow the students to play in the schoolyard.

The teachers state that teachers in their schools are not experienced since teachers go to schools in other cities by getting an appointment. The students, therefore, are affected by the appointment of their teachers in a short period. In his diary, T10 Emrah informs that one of the reasons for students having low levels is strongly related to the

teachers' appointments. It is because the students get used to the teaching style of a teacher and then the teacher goes to another city in a short time and the students try to get used to the teaching style of the new teacher. On the other hand, T6 Özlem states that the school timetable changes a lot because the teachers in this area are appointed to other schools and she, therefore, needs to make her plans according to the new timetable.

Related to the teachers' appointment, T4 İsmail informs that all the teachers in the rural want to go to other cities of Türkiye after their conscription ends. He says that it is therefore natural to meet with newly recruited teachers. Similarly, T11 Haldun states that he wants to go to other cities and adds that there are a lot of teachers in the west and some of them should come to the east of Türkiye after they work several years in their schools. He states that it is the only way for recruiting experienced teachers in rural areas.

The teachers in the study explain that the system of mentor teachers does not work and T10 Emrah states that a mentor teacher should have at least five years of experience in teaching; however, the teachers in this area are generally newly recruited because of the appointment of the teachers to other parts of Türkiye. Therefore, the schools charge the teachers as mentors who have at least one year of experience instead of five years of teaching experience. In other words, the teachers who are charged as mentor teachers are also inexperienced and it is one of the reasons that the mentor teacher system is not meaningful.

Lastly, the schools in rural areas cannot recruit teachers for all subject matters as in English. T8 Salih, for instance, informs that the school did not have any English teachers for four years before he was recruited as an English teacher. In this regard, one of the drawbacks of rurality is to find qualified English teachers for every school in this district. Following the curriculum of MoNE, for instance, although teaching English starts in the second grade, there are not any English teachers in primary schools. Therefore, we can say that it is one of the reasons for students' failure in English because they are not taught by an English teacher until they become students in secondary schools.

4.9. Pandemic Effects

Figure 4.10. below illustrates the main categories of the theme of pandemic effects. Detailed information related to the theme of pandemic effects is given after the figure.

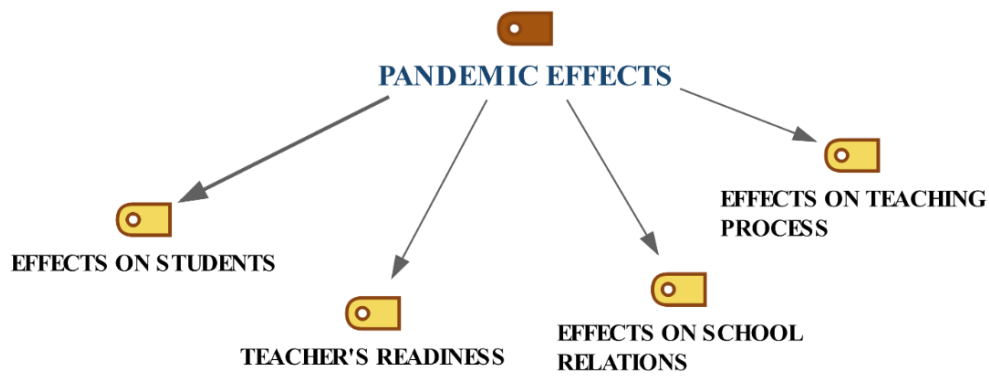


Figure 4.10. *Pandemic effects*

A significant contribution of the study shown in Figure 4.10. is that the challenges of English teachers in the online teaching process are enlightened. According to the teachers in the study, the Covid-19 pandemic has considerable effects on students because the teachers state that students forgot a significant part of their knowledge in English. It is because the students could not attend online courses since they have no equipment or internet access since they generally live in villages. For instance, T5 Meryem was recruited as an English teacher two years after the online education and she states that sometimes she does not consider that the students got online education in the pandemic process and therefore the fifth-grade students are now at the level of the third-grade students. She states that when she forgets this situation, she gets angry since the students do not know even the basic words that they should know. Considering the students' knowledge losses, T3 Gülden explains that their school was successful enough in terms of students' success in the high school entrance exam because at least two or three students won the exam before the Covid-19 pandemic but the students could not be successful enough to pass the exam during the online education. In the observations of T3 Gülden's classes, the students state that they got higher marks during the online education but their grades decreased this term and the students ask the teacher the reason for this. She explains that teachers intentionally gave high marks during online education in order not to aggrieve them because of the lack of facilities they have. Consequently, we can say that online education was not advantageous for the students since they could not fully participate in the online courses, and hence their knowledge of English drastically decreased in this process.

Another problematic situation is that the teachers were not ready to teach online. For instance, T11 Haldun informs that he did not know anything about online education and he hesitated about what to do especially in the first week of online education. He states:

You see how we failed. Immediately, they said that you teach online lessons. I said to myself, I did not get any education in the university regarding online education and I did not have such an experience before. That is, the first ten and fifteen days passed without understanding what we are doing. Later, we, teachers, get used to it because all humans have the ability to get used to anything.

When Covid-19 started, T5 Meryem states that she was a student in the English teaching department and she had to take the practicum course online. Therefore, she states that she did not have face-to-face practicum experience. It is the reason that she states the education she got in the university is theoretically well enough but not in practice. As a result of this, she believes that she lacks teaching practice while changing her role from a student to an English teacher.

Some teachers also state that they were recruited during the pandemic process and hence the system of school and the relations were a bit complicated for them. Since they did not know the school system and the new practices emerged because of the online teaching process, it was hard for them to get used to teaching because they could not get any support from other teachers. For instance, T11 Haldun informs that he wanted to get support from the other English teacher in the school but his colleague did not support him as they did not know each other since they work from home. Similarly, T6 Özlem states that the support of the mentor teacher was not enough in getting used to the school as a result of the online teaching process because they worked from home during this process.

Regarding the teachers' practices in the online teaching process, the teachers explain that it was complicated because the schools gave face-to-face education sometimes and they turned their system to online education when the lockdown started. T7 Rasim, for instance, states that they make their plans for face-to-face education, and immediately they have to turn the system to online education. Therefore, he states that it was a complicated process and hence they cannot adapt themselves to the education process. After the online teaching process, the teachers state that they made some changes in their classes. For instance, T3 Güliden informs that she is anxious about finishing the syllabus this term because of the possibility of giving online education. It is because she

does not like online education since she cannot use her body language effectively in online education. Therefore, she believes that she is not an active teacher when she restricts her body language and does not have eye contact with students. She states:

This year, I do not use games for strengthening the knowledge of students in English because I try to finish the syllabus in case the schools are turned to online education because I do not find online education useful. I pass the game activities and other time-spending activities to finish the syllabus. I plan to use these after I finish the syllabus. If we do not have time, I will have taught all the topics, at least. I do not want the students not to learn the topics in online education because it is not useful.



CHAPTER V

5. DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings are discussed following the main themes of the study. Hence, we can make logical reasoning for the challenges of EFL teachers considering the research question of the study: “What are the challenges of EFL teachers in rural areas of Türkiye?”

5.1. Teaching-Related Challenges

The present study made with eleven English teachers working in a rural area of Türkiye reveals that one of the most challenging situations is related to the methodology usage by teachers in their English classes. When we search the literature related to the challenges of English teachers in methodology usage, we realize that many studies explore that methodology use is a challenging issue in rural settings. For instance, Jeyaraj (2013) states that even simple methodological points are missing in the English language curriculum and teachers become helpless to make contributions to the curriculum for meeting the needs of the students as a consequence of not having well-equipped materials and limited knowledge of methods. According to Copland, Garton, & Burns (2014), teachers are eager to learn about language teaching methodologies, which are mostly related to communicative ways of language teaching since teachers generally find teaching speaking extremely challenging. The concerns of teachers about language teaching methodologies reflect the policies of governments that prioritize communicative approaches to the need for English-speaking labor in the global market. When we consider the shift in language teaching from lecture-based to communicative way, English teachers are much worried about their students’ ability to speak English and consequently, they need to account for methodologies focusing on communicative approaches.

Some curriculum innovations are held in the policies of governments about language teaching; however, teachers continue to apply traditional ways of teaching in their language teaching practices (Lukindo, 2016). In his study of competence-based education for English teachers in rural Tanzania, Lukindo (2016) informs that teachers have an idea of what is competency-based education; however, they do not practice it in their teaching since their way of teaching is more traditional. We can say that similar situations occur in the classes of the teachers of this study. Although the participant

teachers are aware of using more communicative-based approaches in language learning, they state that they generally use traditional ways of language teaching since they teach in rural. For instance, T7 Rasim informs that he consciously translates the sentences into Turkish in rural since some facilities are lacking in rural when compared to cities and the western part of Türkiye. He says students do not have even dictionaries; therefore, they change their language teaching practices to traditional approaches.

The teachers of the study also inform that they apply traditional approaches such as GTM in their classes especially when they need Turkish explanations. They generally believe that students in rural areas have limited knowledge of English and henceforth they need to explain some rules in Turkish; otherwise, they do not learn anything. This situation can also be observed in other contexts. For instance, Shamim (2008) informs that teachers working in rural government schools use L1 in their classes as the medium of instruction, which induces students' lower proficiency in English; however, teachers in elite schools in Pakistan use only English. Therefore, such practices of English language teaching lag behind the current principles that teaching English policies desire to reach. Likewise, Lu, Jiang, and Guo (2022) explain that teachers of English in China use comparing and contrasting methods between English and Chinese expressions, and henceforth, contemporary approaches such as content-based teaching or situational approach are neglected. In other words, the researchers state that a considerable problem for the participant teachers is that they cannot find an efficient method to train students for developing their understanding of English.

One of the reasons for using L1 in language classes is related to the number of students in a class. In other words, the number of students in a class has a strong effect on the decisions of teachers regarding their method use. For instance, a teacher of the study, T5 Meryem informs that she wants to use games and communicative activities; however, it is a challenging task for her to find a suitable game for a class in which the number of students is high. In this regard, Jeyeraj (2013) informs that a crowded classroom is the reality of education. In previous years, this did not constitute a problem since teachers were regarded as the repository of wisdom and hence they passed the knowledge to the students regardless of how many students were in a class in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the phenomenon of language teaching has shifted from lecture-based teaching to a learner-centered approach. Likewise, in another study made by Lukindo (2016) about the challenges of English language teachers in rural Tanzania,

teachers are mandatory of using lecture-based teaching because of some reasons like crowded classrooms, lack of time, and the availability of needed resources.

Regarding the crowds of the classes, in a similar vein, a teacher, T9 Yasemin, informs that she attended some courses which inform about new approaches to language teaching; however, she did not practice it in her classes because of the number and low level of students. Although the number of students in her classes is around 20, she believes that this number is high because of rurality. Considering the observations, I think the number of students in a class is acceptable for her classes; however, for her, the ideal number of students in a class should be around 15 and this is one of the reasons why she does not prefer to use contemporary methods in her classes since she has the idea that she cannot use such contemporary teaching methods in a rural district.

Similar to the findings of the research, some studies in the literature inform that teachers generally apply traditional methods in rural areas instead of using contemporary methods. For instance, Li (1998) informs in his research that the teachers in rural accept that the characteristics of their teaching are based on grammar translation, audio-lingual method, or a combination of these methods. The study also reveals that the teachers tried to use CLT; however, they encountered some difficulties because all the participants in the research informed that they had limited knowledge and practice in CLT methodologies. Hence, this makes it difficult for teachers to leave the security atmosphere of using traditional methods.

Although some teachers in this study blame the low level of their students as the reason for not using contemporary methods, I think the methodology choices of the teachers are not related to the low level of students as a consequence of rurality, but it is a matter of how they apply contemporary methodologies in rural contexts. In other words, the teachers do not have any training about how to adapt these methodologies to language classes regarding the realities of rurality. However, Wu and Tarc (2021) propose both teachers and students not to focus on an understanding that students have some weaknesses in language learning. Instead, they need to collaboratively explore appropriate strategies and methodologies in acquiring a new competence in language learning.

As an important challenge, teaching language skills is highly uttered by the participant teachers of this study. Among the language skills, the most crucial challenging situations occur in teaching speaking and writing, namely productive skills. It is because

some teachers of the study explain that they have not proficient enough in these skills. For instance, T3 Gülden informs that her speaking skills in English are not developed enough and hence she admits that it is one of the reasons why she faces some challenging situations in teaching speaking. Similarly, Jeyeraj (2013) informs that as one of the productive skills, writing is a difficult skill because the Indian education system does not support teachers to encourage students to develop their writing skills. In this respect, it is unlikely that the teacher training policies will change soon in a way that the policies support teachers in developing their productive skills (Copland, Garton, and Burns, 2014).

In a similar vein, Sari (2020) informs that teachers should be more concerned with teaching four language skills; however, there should be some facilities and equipment to support language teaching. However, the problems of the participant teachers regarding language skills are not, to a great extent, related to the facilities and equipment. McNamara (2001), for instance, explains that English teachers should help learners to have more self-awareness of their development in language skills. This can only be achieved through the teachers' endeavors with proposing skills-based activities. However, the present study reveals that the participant teachers are generally not volunteers for supporting students' language skills as they believe that they have limited time for teaching and classrooms are crowded for skills-based teaching. In this respect, Lee (2016) informs that teaching writing is a challenging enterprise as they need to give feedback to their students in conventional feedback practices. Therefore, it can be concluded that following the development processes of students for the teachers in productive skills can be challenging in a situation of time constraints, intense curriculum, and crowded classrooms.

When we consider teaching listening skills, some teachers in the study did not provide any listening tasks during the observations although there are some listening texts in the course books which are provided by MoNE. Instead, they used these texts for translation exercises although the school facilities are appropriate for teaching listening. In other words, the teachers in the study disregard how to develop the listening skills of students. The research results related to teaching listening are in line with the literature in that neglecting listening skills is obvious in previous studies. It is because there is a misconception that students can develop their listening skills by passively listening to their teachers in classes (Jeyeraj, 2013).

Considering the teaching materials, reaching English materials for rural students can be problematic because of the financial drawbacks of the parents in rural. Jeyeraj (2013), for instance, informs that rural students' preparedness for language learning cannot be questioned as they experience some challenges such as financial and social constraints. One of the reasons for this is related to the lack of classroom-based support for teachers, the poor quality of textbooks, and insufficient resources for teaching materials (Iqbal & Arif, 2011). Therefore, reaching the resources can be related to educational policies in that the textbooks are prescribed in some countries like South Korea, but in others like Singapore, the teachers can choose from the books that the government approves (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014). In the Turkish education system, however, the books are provided by MoNE without considering the conditions of rural schools. In this respect, the teachers of this study state that there are some deficiencies in the books such as language errors, the imbalance between the units in terms of content density, the limited number of activities presented, low quality of teaching materials, and being away from the realities of the students. In other words, they state that the books provided for English teaching are not appropriate for teaching in rural schools.

The teachers also inform that the language level of teaching resources is high when compared to the level of rural students. Likewise, Lu, Jiang, & Gou (2022) explain that the content of the topics in teaching materials is difficult for middle and primary school students in rural areas. That is why they can experience challenges in learning English. Henceforth, the teachers of this study do not mainly use the books provided by MoNE. On the other hand, preparing online materials is another problematic issue for the participant teachers. Since most of the teachers use smart boards in their classes, they apply some ready-made online materials, which may create some challenging situations. Sometimes they include some words that are not appropriate for the level of the rural students. Although Kessler and Hubbard (2017) state that interactive activities can provide many diverse activities to promote language learning, the implementations of English teachers in this study fall behind in providing authentic language use since they mostly use these activities for simple reasons such as revisions of the unit or the unknown words of the units. Likewise, the teachers only use online materials including multiple choice tests for the high school entrance exam. Therefore, we can say that even the online materials provided by the teachers of this study are not positively used to increase

students' English language abilities. It shows us that the teachers of this study do not have appropriate knowledge and experience on how to adapt English teaching materials to their courses. In this regard, Kraft and Papay (2014) explain that teachers should learn and experience how to create and modify language teaching materials to meet the needs of students. Regarding the rural conditions and the low level of students, the teachers should have the opportunities to prepare their materials, activities, and games which are appropriate for crowded classes, and low proficiency level students (Uysal, 2012). However, the participant teachers mostly use ready-made online materials which are not appropriate for the conditions of their students although they criticize that materials prepared by other specialists create some problematic situations during the English courses.

According to the literature (e.g., Kraft & Papay, 2014; Öztürk, 2008, Uysal, 2012), classroom management is an important concern of teachers in terms of their professional development. In many studies, controlling the classroom behaviors of students is a significant challenge for novice English teachers. Similarly, the teachers in the study expressed that they sometimes experience difficulties in controlling the classroom and student behaviors. Some state that the classes are crowded and they could not unable to control student behaviors. As a result, we can infer that teachers' classroom management skills play an important role. Some teachers also explain that they could not prevent the noise in their classes simply because they are inexperienced teachers. Thus, they prefer activities that make students passive learners instead of student-centered language learning. In other words, teachers can hesitate of using speaking activities in their classes especially when the preference of the school management is for quiet and well-behaved classrooms (Carless, 2004). Crowded classrooms also cause teachers to believe that they experience difficulties in the implementation of learner-centered teaching since they cannot control students' language use and hence experience difficulties handling pair and group work (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014).

The teachers of this study define the problems encountered in classroom management as an important issue in that they negatively impact their teaching practices and their engagement toward becoming English teachers. It is because the participant teachers believe that when they cannot control the student behaviors, that means they could not achieve to attract the attention of their students to the topic and they could not motivate their students to learn English. In this regard, Confait (2015) informs that

effective teaching practices can be complex for teachers who are not experienced in teaching and the effectiveness of a teacher depends on the conditions of the school, the atmosphere of the class, and individual needs. Therefore, effective teaching practices can be emerged through effective classroom management skills, increasing students' attendance to English courses, and effective use of pedagogical practices. Considering the teachers of this study who are mostly inexperienced in teaching, professional support should be provided on how to maximize their classroom management skills through workshops.

Observations gathered from the English teaching practices of teachers and the interview data reveal that there are considerable problems with the presentation of content. The teachers of the study present the grammatical topics isolated and they teach these topics by comparing the two languages. Therefore, we can say that they mostly experience challenging situations when grammatical content in English is not available in Turkish such as third person singular –s, present perfect tense, or the usage of “to be” in sentences with verbs. We can say that the teachers of this study heavily rely on contrastive analysis in that similarities in both languages ease learning and differences between the target language and mother language makes it difficult to learn (Gass & Selinker, 2008). However, the grammatical structures of English and Turkish are different from each other and hence their way of teaching makes learning English harder. In this regard, teacher training and support about how to present the content and how to find new ways of teaching new concepts play a significant role in teacher professional development (Kırkgöz, 2008). It is because the support provided through in-service training can help develop teachers' understanding of the ways of presenting language structures.

Although teacher training and support given to English teachers are valuable for their professional development, the studies in the literature (e.g. Şahin, 2021) inform that teachers regard in-service training as ineffective for providing necessary support to rural teachers. In other words, the courses in INSET programs do not contribute to the teachers' teaching practices at the desired level since they are deficient in content and irrelevant to teachers' practices in that they do not take into consideration the contextual needs and assume that teachers in both rural and urban areas have similar needs and they cannot practice the new information they get about the ways of practicing the language teaching (Yeşilçınar & Çakır, 2018). It can be one of the reasons that the teachers in this study

heavily rely on the comparison of the language features of the two languages, that is, Turkish and English as they were educated in their learning processes.

Considering the views and practices of teachers related to the assessment processes of teachers, they inform that they experience challenging situations while balancing the difficulty level of the questions in the exams. They state that their students' level of English is low and hence they need to diminish hard questions in the exams. Although they only believe that the assessment practices of the participant teachers are only restricted to the English proficiency levels of the students, the studies (e.g. Lukindo, 2016) informs that their assessment techniques are shaped by the methodologies they use in teaching English. For instance, the teachers in the study of Lukindo accept that they are forced to use lecture-based teaching because of the high number of students in classes and hence the teachers use oral questions and written assignments as the assessment tools. Similarly, in a study made with six English teachers, Do, Sellars, and Le (2022) inform that the success of teaching English in the Northwest region is behind other regions as a consequence of inappropriate applications of English teachers such as inadequate time provided for students, the shortage of teaching resources, and inappropriate pedagogy and assessment.

The fact that the participant teachers mostly dealt with summative assessment methods concerning the assessment process reveals that their teaching processes are also teacher-centered. Therefore, teachers' assessment policy may be in line with the method they use and their educational goals. According to the statements of Mahmudun Nuby, Rashid, and Rakibul Hasan (2019), the incompatibility occurring in the curriculum and evaluation process may cause teachers not to reach their educational goals. Because the assessment methods applied by teachers depend on the curriculum model being implemented (Lumadi, 2013). In this respect, although Turkish education policies have determined contemporary approaches to English education, English teaching practices and assessment methods of the participant teachers have continued to be teacher-centered. In other words, it can be said that English teachers working in rural areas prefer more traditional ways instead of contemporary language education approaches, which indicates the lack of teacher training in terms of pedagogy.

Regarding the assessment processes of the teachers, it is observed that English teachers in rural schools need more training for ongoing professional development and their changing roles for innovative teaching practices (Do, Sellars, & Le, 2022). Confait

(2015) explains that teacher-centered teaching focuses on the presentation of the curriculum, not on the developmental stages of students; however, student-centered teaching focuses on the students' needs and it is engaged in students' learning by promoting collaboration and reflecting on what they learn. Dynamic assessment as the element of process-based assessment is emphasized in that it provides a wealth of information about the performances of students (Jeltova, Birney, Fredine, Jarvin, Sternberg, & Grigorenko, 2007) since testing is not seen as the final step of instruction but rather an involved part of learning. However, what is observed in the data collection process of the research is that the teachers use only one way of assessment, that is, exam-oriented assessment. In this regard, teachers should be aware of a variety of assessment techniques and strategies since the classroom assessment practices of English teachers may shape their teaching practices. In other words, Lumadi (2013) informs that assessment should be regarded as a tool for evaluating the knowledge gaps of learners and an instrument for shaping the teaching practices of teachers. For instance, Kessler and Hubbard (2017) state that computer-generated feedback may become more common, and hence English teachers should be prepared for new ways of assessment with the help of technology.

5.2. Education System-Related Challenges

As an important challenge for the participants of the study, they agree with the idea that the education system creates many problems for English teachers. Firstly, the teachers believe that MoNE does not give importance to language education simply because the time allocated for language classes is reduced. However, they state that they expected MoNE to increase the number of hours for English classes in the curriculum. Considering the rural conditions that students are far away from the environment where English is spoken out of class, the teachers have the right to argue the time allocated for language classes because they believe that they cannot provide the needed input to their students in a limited time. Similar to the participant teachers' ideas, Jeyeraj (2013) agrees that English teachers may not make any miracles because of the limited time allotted to language teaching. When we consider the rural conditions, students' opportunities to reach L2 speaking environments, and other things that can support the English learning

processes of learners, the teachers of this study have the right to say that time for language learning is not enough to develop their students' language skills.

Since introducing English in primary schools is seen as an important policy development in many states, MoNE also initiated English education starting from the second grade in primary education. Although initiating language education at an early age as a consequence of globalization and the need for English speaking workforce is regarded as a positive development (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014), primary schools in rural areas like the Kars district are mostly deprived of English teachers. Hence, giving language education in rural contexts becomes the responsibility of classroom teachers. However, the literature indicates that classroom teachers experience many challenging situations when they are hired in language classes. For instance, Holguin and Morales (2016) explain that despite the differences in culture and environment, teachers of rural contexts experience similar challenges. Because one of the problematic sides of teaching in rural areas is related to the recruitment of teachers, which is the key point of providing quality education.

When compared to teachers in urban areas, those in rural areas are forced to teach multiple subjects although they are only trained in one subject matter. Some English teachers also have to teach English to different grades and age groups. For instance, T2 Gaye and T10 Emrah inform that they also teach some subjects other than English like computer literacy or technology and design courses. T5 Meryem states that she teaches English both in primary school and secondary school although she has been only recruited in the secondary school. Therefore, it can be said that the burden of courses tires the teachers and such situations are not attractive for teachers in rural and it can be considered why teachers are reluctant to work in rural areas (Holguin & Morales, 2016).

English teachers in rural areas are generally inexperienced teachers since they are generally recruited by MoNE after their graduation from English-related departments. In the first year of their teaching, an experienced mentor teacher is hired for the inexperienced teacher to guide them in getting familiar with the school system, and to help prepare for paper works and teaching. Although it seems that such mentorship helps inexperienced teachers learn the system of MoNE, in theory, the participant teachers inform that the mentorship system does not work in reality since mentor teachers are not eager to help newly recruited teachers. Some studies in the literature (eg. Gergin, 2010; Salı, 2008) reach a similar situation in that inexperienced teachers cannot get the needed

support from their mentor teachers. In a similar vein, Salı (2008) enlightens that mentor teachers are to be experienced and in the same subject matter; however, most of the participants of this study state that they are the only English teachers in their school and the mentor teachers are the teachers of different subject matters. As a consequence of teaching in rural, they could not get the needed support and guidance from their mentors.

The teachers of the study explain that they experience some difficulties related to the syllabus. Some teachers state that the syllabus is busy for the students living in rural because prior knowledge of the students in primary school is lacking. In this regard, the participant teachers feel that schools do not have the flexibility to lower the pressure of the syllabus on students. However, the system allows students to pass the class without considering the knowledge gaps of the students. Holguin and Morales (2016) accept that such an automatic promotion affects students in that they need to cope with a difficult level of English when compared to their levels of English. In other words, teachers should provide students with comprehensible input which may be effective for increasing learners' proficiency levels since we understand the language a little beyond our linguistic knowledge (Krashen, 1981).

The teachers also criticize MoNE in terms of educational goals and planning. They state that rural conditions and the needs of students in rural contexts are disregarded in the planning of the curriculum. However, teachers are expected to be active in the process of planning by considering the contextual conditions and the needs of the students. In other words, Hall and Smith (2006) explain that teachers should be able to select the materials and decide on teaching strategies, and set long-term objectives. However, the teachers in the system of MoNE do not have the chance to participate in decision-making processes and henceforth, English teachers in rural settings cannot decide which materials are appropriate for the level of their students.

Some teachers in the study express that they experience some financial problems because of low teacher salaries and the distinction between course fees of tenured and contracted teachers. Studies in the literature (e.g. Barley, 2009; Barton, 2012) also express that getting a low salary is a challenging issue for teachers in rural schools, and hence their willingness to teach in rural schools decreases. Likewise, Noom-ura (2013) informs that most Thai teachers of English need to take additional classes to supply more money as their salaries are relatively meager. It can be said that teacher salaries are discussed in society in that countries started to question the position of teachers and their salaries in

the post-professional age (Hargreaves, 2000). In other words, teacher salaries are not in good condition as society does not assume the position of teachers as important as it was in the past. On the other hand, the teacher salary level is crucial for the recruitment of teachers and making them stay in the profession. It is agreed that a high salary is an important factor in attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and increasing the quality of education in schools. Xuehui (2018), for instance, informs that China made a reform in the educational management system and raised the salaries of teachers, and ensured the security of the teachers' budgets hence it became effective in the supplement of qualified rural teachers. Some fiscal attempts such as raising the salaries of teachers working in rural and remote areas can help retain qualified English teachers in rural schools.

Another point is that the teachers in the study inform that there is a mismatch between the university education and the expectations of MoNE. In other words, the teachers criticize that the education given in English language teaching departments does not fit the realities of the schools they work. In the literature, for instance, Barley (2009) informs that out of 120 teacher training institutions, only 17 of them include programs that emphasize rurality. It can be said that teacher training institutes do not value the conditions of rurality. Therefore, we can say that teacher education programs should include some courses to eliminate misconceptions about teaching in rural schools. In other words, the teachers working in rural areas express that the situation of the rural context is different from idealized language learning situations. For instance, T2 Gaye informs that her students experience challenges even when reading the texts in Turkish. However, pre-service teachers in practicum schools face the idealized learning environment and thus the teachers encounter a reality shock which is a situation in which they experience inappropriate conditions in their first years of teaching in rural areas. In other words, the teachers' perceptions of language teaching are destroyed in some aspects. Veenman (1984) informs that teachers change their beliefs about the ideal way of teaching into the traditional ways of teaching when they start teaching in their schools. That is, their perceptions regarding student-centered teaching are evolved into teacher-centered teaching.

Regarding the theory and practice relationship, some teachers of the study believe that the theories of language teaching are constructed with the systems of developed countries in education like Finland. However, teaching conditions of rural areas as in the

Kars district differ from the conditions of developed countries in terms of physical conditions and even social awareness of parents related to language teaching. Although countries initiate educational reforms, the success of these reforms heavily depends on what teachers think and do (Day & Smethem, 2009). In other words, it can be said that a successful reform can be achieved when the teachers are motivated and committed to applying these reforms considering the contextual differences. Considering the thoughts and practices of English teachers in this study, we can say that although MoNE initiates considerable changes in English teaching from teacher-centered teaching to student-centered teaching, for instance, the teachers' practices and thoughts are different from what the theory proposes. It is for this reason that they believe that the theory and practice are not matching in rural schools.

One of the biggest challenges of the participants is that they feel high pressure on the planning and implementation of English classes because of the high school entrance exam (called LGS, in Turkish). Since the exam is vocabulary and reading oriented, both the school managers and families compel teachers to make arrangements in English classes in line with the exam and hence they change their teaching approaches and disregard competency-based language teaching. The findings of the research are in line with the studies in the literature in that a mismatch between teaching and testing occurs. For instance, Jeyeraj (2013) informs that there is a mismatch between teaching and testing, and students are expected to memorize the knowledge, but not to gain competence in the usage of English. Although the content of English books provided by MoNE and language teaching policies support communicative language teaching, national examinations are not compatible with those policies. Therefore, teachers tend to use exam-based activities in their lessons and disregard skill-based language teaching. As a result, this washback effect influences teachers' language teaching strategies by giving less time for activities that are communicative-oriented (Copland, Garton, & Burns, (2014). In a similar example in the study of Li and Craig (2019), the teacher wanted to use extracurricular activities for the students instead of test-emphasized teaching; however, administrators and colleagues criticized him because of his endeavors, and the teacher felt isolated in the school. Such test-oriented pressure occurred in one of our observations of the teachers in T4 İsmail's school. One day, the district director of national education came to the school where T4 İsmail works to get information about the students and the general success of the school. During the whole meeting, they

discussed only the high school entrance exam and the success of the school in the exam although the teachers of the school aimed to talk about other problems. Therefore, we can say that there is high pressure on teachers regarding the high school entrance exam, which negatively affects the language teaching processes.

As a part of professional development, seminars are not seen efficient tools for teacher development because the teachers of the study criticize seminars provided by MoNE in some aspects. For instance, they state that seminars are ineffective in terms of teacher development because their contents do not include subject matter-based knowledge. The literature (e.g. Li, 1998; Jeyeraaj, 2013) also informs that professional training is lacking for English teachers and hence any changes do not occur in their teaching styles and they continue imitating their teachers. However, problems occurring in teaching practice can be addressed and solutions to these problems can be developed through seminars and in-service training. In other words, seminars can close the gap between theory and practice by increasing teachers' language-teaching competence and problem-solving skills (Uysal, 2012). Although MoNE organizes INSET programs informing about student needs, and how to create a more effective environment for teaching (Yeşilçınar & Çakır, 2018), the teachers inform that these programs are generally held online, especially after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although it seems that online professional development opportunities can solve the problems of rural in terms of remoteness to learning centers such as universities, Reagan et al. (2019) reveals that face-to-face professional learning is more effective in closing the gap between theory and practice. Some face-to-face programs are presented, however, the number of teachers who are accepted to these programs is very limited, and hence we cannot say that such endeavors are far beyond the widespread effect. In other words, INSET programs do not supply the needed knowledge and understanding for the professional development of teachers.

The students' knowledge lacks in English is considerable for the teachers of the study. They inform that the students come to secondary schools with limited or no knowledge of English although language teaching starts in the second grade in primary school. However, the teachers inform that students in rural areas are educated in multi-grade classes and hence classroom teachers become responsible for language teaching in rural areas since there is not any English teacher in the school. Consequently, English teachers are hesitant about teaching primary school topics or presenting the topics of

secondary school since classroom teachers are not proficient enough in English and hence they disregard English teaching in their classes. Similar situations occur not in Türkiye, but in other countries, as well. For instance, Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, and Martinez (2021) explain that 115 Mexican generalist teachers are confident related to the level of their English in grade one with 80 percent, however, this number decreases to 37 percent in grade two and 24 percent in grade three. Their study also reveals that only a few generalist teachers are eager to develop their competence in English. In this regard, we can say that policy changes about teaching English to students at earlier ages cannot be applied in rural contexts because of the lack of qualified English teachers since classroom teachers are not able to teach the basics of English in primary schools. In addition, Kırkgöz (2008) explains that non-ELT teachers who are trained in different subject matters such as biology, and graduates of departments of western languages such as French and German have been accepted as English teachers after having a certain level of English to meet the needed English teachers in primary schools. Therefore, we can say that all English teachers working in primary schools, especially the ones located in rural are not qualified enough to teach English. As a result, English teachers working in secondary schools shed light on the knowledge gaps of students in that they do not know the basics of English.

5.3. Student-Related Challenges

An important challenge for the participant teachers is related to what extent students know something. It can be both in English or other subject areas. The teachers of the study inform that the students in the rural areas have a considerable lack of knowledge both in English and other subjects such as computer literacy. Since most students in rural do not have the chance of reaching such technologies, T2 Gaye states that students cannot use computers to study their lessons. Such problems show up especially in the online education process after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The teachers of the study also inform that the levels of their students are really low and hence they do not understand what their teacher says in English. This finding is also supported in the literature in that many students in rural lack basic knowledge of English. For instance, Jeyeraj (2013) explains that students have a considerable lack of knowledge in language skills. They cannot read even simple texts; they have limited experience in listening to

authentic texts, and their exposure to speaking skills in English is almost nil. In a similar vein, Shamim (2008) informs that the proficiency levels of students in rural Pakistan are very low. As a consequence of students' low level of English, teachers hesitate of using communicative-based activities with those students (Li, 1998) since they do not understand what is said. In our study, T4 İsmail states the same reason why he has dropped speaking English in his classes although he is aware of the value of input for language learning.

In addition to the deficiencies in the students' English, the lack of knowledge of socio-cultural issues and the lack of skills in the use of technology negatively affect English courses. Considering Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory, students' social relationships and sharing experiences with other people significantly increase learning, because, language plays a significant role in the mental lives of individuals (Shabani, 2016). However, the scarcities of people living in rural areas and less interaction prevent students' socio-cultural learning. For example, some teachers complain that students do not even know the characters of the most known animated movies given about the activity of a topic and that their perceptions of learning are seriously closed at this point. Compared to the students in the city, the fact that the students living in the countryside do not live in rich learning environments affects their English learning negatively.

A considerable challenge for the teachers of the study is related to the attitudes of the students toward learning. Most teachers in the study express that students are not eager to learn English since they do not experience speaking English out of class although English is intensely used in the world as a result of globalization and English becoming a lingua franca. However, rural students do not experience the usage of English in their lives and think that they can use English only when they see tourists in their villages, which seems impossible. As a consequence of this, they consider learning English as a redundant thing, and their motivation to learn English gets low. In the literature (Copland, Garton, Burns, 2014; Machfudi, 2016), rural students in other countries experience similar motivational drawbacks to learning English. For instance, Holguin and Morales (2016) explain that students in rural do not realize the importance of English and it remains an abstract concept to the students in that they generally have little contact with the nearest centers and rarely go abroad. Besides, rural students do not understand the importance of English for academic purposes since they do not believe that they live outside of their rural community hence sometimes teachers are involved in discussions

with their students about how valuable language learning is by stating the reasons for learning English for better-paid jobs (Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, & Martinez, 2021).

It is seen that the motivational elements of rural students for learning English are not dependent on the use of English out of class; hence, the motivational factors are mostly instrumental for students such as getting better grades in the examinations. Such exam-oriented motivation may not stimulate rural students all the time. The study made with eight English teachers (Machfudi, 2016) also reveals that a major challenge for English teachers is the lack of students' internal motivation since only a limited number of students are intrinsically motivated to learn English although the teachers in the study employ many strategies to increase the motivation of students towards language learning. They believe that they need to pass the course or get the teacher's praise. Therefore, they can be regarded as the victims of systematic failure (Jeyeraj, 2013).

For the teachers of the study, controlling the student behaviors is a challenging issue, which negatively affects the language teaching processes, teacher-student, and student-student interactions. Some teachers inform that it is natural to see one or two students who are not eager to participate in the activities; however, when this number increases, the teaching process is broken up because of these students' misbehaviors. Because the motivational levels of rural students are low as a result of socio-contextual unfamiliarity to learn English. At the same time, low academic achievements of the students decrease their willingness to participate in English courses and hence result in difficulties in managing the classroom. Therefore, supportive relations with students and well-grounded classroom routines are needed to create a positive learning environment which may lessen behavioral problems (Aus, Jögi, Poom-Valickis, Eisenschmidt, & Kikas, 2017).

Problematic student behaviors are mostly seen in the studies of beginning teachers since they are not experienced in how to maintain classroom discipline since they are not able to give response to the spontaneous behaviors of students and cues about the classroom atmosphere. When we consider the experiences of the teachers in this study, nearly all teachers have teaching experience of fewer than five years. Therefore, they complain about the effects of students' misbehaviors on English teaching. Similarly, Salı (2008) informs that disruptive student behaviors such as bullying, excessive talk, disobedience, lack of learner interest, and disrespect to teachers are recurrent issues that

beginning teachers regard as an important challenge. In other words, unwanted student behaviors may occur as a consequence of both rurality and teachers' being inexperienced.

Facilities in rural are considerably different from facilities in urban; therefore, rural students can be deprived of some fundamental materials for language learning such as activity books in English, computers, etc. For instance, the participant teachers inform that students do not have enough teaching materials and there is not a suitable room for them to study at home. The literature informs that rural students experience difficulties in reaching sufficient teaching materials as a consequence of poverty in rural areas. Kaplan, Baldauf Jr, & Kamwangamalu (2011) explain that teaching English become the main foreign language in many countries in Asia; however, such an abrupt increase in English language teaching hinders learners to reach sufficient materials, especially in developing countries such as Bangladesh. Similarly, Machfudi (2016) informs that the students of rural areas live in underdeveloped and economically poor areas and hence they feel that they are condemned to live in rural. It is for this reason that their self-esteem is low since they live in places far from cities, which provide full of facilities.

5.4. Teacher-Related Challenges

The findings of this study reveal that teachers hesitate about their knowledge of English especially for their speaking skills since they admit that the education related to speaking in their teacher training departments is not enough for their speaking skills. Therefore, some teachers agree that their speaking abilities in English are lacking and this situation negatively affects their teaching. The literature (e.g. Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, & Martinez 2021) also explains that it is difficult to find qualified teachers in rural areas and L2 proficiencies of English teachers in rural are poor. In this respect, Shamim (2008) informs that rural English teachers use the strategy of code-switching in the classroom and avoid using inquiry-based approaches for language teaching because of teachers' inadequate proficiencies in L2. In a similar vein, rural English teachers' low proficiencies or their lack of confidence in English skills cause anxiety about using communicative-based approaches such as CLT, which need some target language practices (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014). Henceforth, they question their teaching skills, especially speaking.

On the other hand, some teachers inform that they believe that they are qualified enough in terms of their language knowledge; however, they have started to lose their competence in English since they work in rural. For instance, T7 Rasim explains that he experienced language teaching for advanced learners in the private sector before he started to teach in rural. After some time, he realized that he started to lose his competence in English day by day since he only teaches beginner students in rural. In other words, teachers' being away from the English-speaking communities as a consequence of rurality causes the deterioration in their L2 competencies.

The teachers of this study accept that their pedagogical knowledge does not contribute to their teaching practice since their pedagogical knowledge is lacking in some aspects. They agree that they have started to forget their knowledge of pedagogy since they work in rural. They believe that they can only foster their pedagogical knowledge in the schools of developed cities in Türkiye. However, Day and Smethem (2009) explain that in a world of change that is occurring in education, understanding how teachers experience and respond to changes is essential because teaching can be made more successful and sustainable when the teachers can react to reforms and improvements in contemporary education. As we consider the teaching process as the efforts of complex, intellectual, moral, and emotional states, it requires teachers to be pedagogically knowledgeable about what to teach and how to teach. Hall (2004, cited in Day and Smethem 2009) also adds that teachers should be enthusiastic and motivated to engage students to get motivated and confident to contribute to their learning. However, Lu, Jiang, and Guo (2022) inform that teachers do not have any method to contribute to their understanding of thinking skills, make distinctions between concepts, and reach generalizations. We can say that the role of English teachers in rural is not to transmit the knowledge of the target language but to guide them in many aspects to facilitate their learning. In this respect, the teachers' procrastination in applying pedagogical knowledge in the practice of teaching English in rural areas cannot be welcomed since students in rural need more guidance and support from their teachers.

We all know that being proficient in the target language and having a well-established pedagogy may not be adequate in terms of teachers' facilities since technology has become an integral part of education in the classroom. Therefore, the knowledge of educational technologies is an indispensable component of teacher competencies. However, the teachers of this study inform that they experience some

challenging situations related to technology use in language teaching. It is not only related to the knowledge of how to use technological devices, but how to adapt them to language classes. With the observations, for instance, the present study reveals that English teachers are not capable of adapting technological activities into their teaching practices although they have knowledgeable enough in the usage of these tools. In other words, although most of the schools in the study provide smart boards nearly in every classroom, the teachers generally use them for presenting the online document on the screen. Therefore, we can say that teachers are not efficiently able to integrate technological innovations into their classes although there is a dramatic influence of new technologies such as the use of new media on communication and learning (Kessler & Hubbard, 2017). Although it is believed that anyone can use these tools without experiencing difficulties in their teaching, teachers are not sure how to implement these tools into English classes. In this respect, Hubbard (2008) explains that language teacher training programs have some deficiencies in terms of technology education although there are some attempts to close this gap. According to Hubbard (2008), there are also some barriers to integrating technology-based training into language teacher education programs. These are the inertia of integrating technology-based education into language teacher education programs, such as insufficient time, the lack of standards in terms of what to teach, lack of established methodology, lack of infrastructure, and lack of experienced educators.

On the other hand, when we regard the online teaching process because of the outbreak of Covid-19, practicing teachers as well as pre-service teachers need to put their efforts to learn how to teach English with the help of technological devices. In this respect, MoNE provides several in-service training programs to increase teachers' knowledge of how to integrate technology into education. Some teachers in this study also inform that they attended these programs and learned how to use web-based programs in language classes; however, they agree that they do not use their prior knowledge of technology since it takes a lot of time.

As one of the challenges of teachers, the heavy workload is expressed by many scholars (e.g. Noom-ura, 2013) in the literature. With the heavy workload, their teaching practices turn to more conventional approaches such as rote learning, translation of target language items into L1, and using teacher-centered approaches and activities. In this study, for instance, the participant teachers inform that they teach nearly 30 hours a week and only one day is left for them to get prepared for the next week hence they cannot fully

be prepared for their lessons as in the example of T11 Haldun. Similarly, Kızıldağ (2009) informs that teachers feel burn-out with the burden of the heavy workload and they cannot put their energies into their classes, and hence their teaching becomes ineffective. Likewise, Tılfarlıoğlu & Öztürk (2007) states that the teachers believe that they are ineffective in teaching because of their overloaded weekly timetable. In this regard, Li (1998) informs that the teachers of his study have limited time and expertise to prepare communicative-based materials since the books are prepared under the influence of grammar-based language teaching. In other words, preparing new materials can be understood as a burden by the teachers since they are already under the pressure of workload.

The participant teachers also inform that they have other duties such as being hall monitors or teacher aides in the school dormitories. In a similar vein, Kızıldağ (2009) explains that English teachers are not happy with their work since they are the only English teacher in their schools and they have to manage extracurricular duties such as helping disabled students and managing the social problems of the students.

A considerable challenge for the participant teachers is to present what the topic is. In other words, they do not consider their students' needs in the classes and they generally focus on successful students and do not do anything for the students who are unmotivated to learn. Instead, their aim is only to present the topic on a certain day of the week as a consequence of the heavy syllabus. That is, some teachers disregard student participation in their lessons unless they make noise. As a result, nothing changes in terms of students' motivation to learn a language. Ushioda (2011), however, informs that motivated students are autonomous learners who take responsibility for learning, and hence teachers should help students maintain the motivation of language to turn classrooms into more positive and motivating places to learn.

The teachers of the study also inform that they lose their patience easily when they see students who are not interested in language learning and then they drop teaching as a consequence of both behaviors of unmotivated students and fatigue, especially at the end of the day. For increasing teachers' motivation, INSET programs can be used to provide plenty of information on how to manage the behaviors of unmotivated students. The teachers can evaluate their teaching processes with some techniques that they learn in in-service training programs, which foster their professional development in language teaching. However, Mak (2010) informs that teachers generally tend to choose

professional development activities that facilitate their teaching in a short time. Therefore, they are not eager to apply activities such as action research, which may provide useful ways of understanding teaching in the long run.

The teachers also inform that students can show misbehaviors towards teachers especially when they see a teacher who is patient and behaves democratically. In other words, the students expect their teachers to behave traditionally although the teachers, in their first days of teaching, agree on the idea that their roles have changed from authority figures to more democratic ones. However, their ideals abruptly change from the counselor to the traditional teacher. Similar to the literature, Gao (2010) states that younger teachers leave teaching as they experience many challenging situations such as discipline problems since students constantly compel the teachers' authority, which makes teachers vulnerable. Likewise, Salı and Keçik (2018) inform that English teachers choose the ideal teacher role such as tolerant, caring, and friendly; however, this ideal image is sharply deserted to an authoritarian teacher. As a consequence of this dilemma, the teachers sink into feelings of unhappiness and demotivation. The participant teachers in this study also hesitate about how to behave towards students in that they are concerned about losing the respect of students in the school dormitory since the teachers share their time with them all day.

The teachers working in rural schools are generally inexperienced since rural schools are generally their first places for experiencing teaching. In this study, some teachers also admit that they are inexperienced and do not know what to do and how to behave in their classes because they are the only responsible teachers in their classes. The literature informs that being experienced in teaching is valuable and taking decisions during the teaching process is a challenging issue for inexperienced teachers. For instance, Hayes (1999) expresses that experienced teachers make effortless decisions about classroom practices although inexperienced teachers find it baffling. However, it should be known that teaching is a dynamic and ongoing process (Kozikoğlu, 2017), and inexperienced teachers can become experienced by practicing teaching. Therefore, we cannot say that getting experience in teaching never ends. We can conclude that the challenges experienced by English teachers in rural schools may be related to the inexperience of the teachers as well as the rural conditions.

Lesson preparation is a valuable tool for effective teaching. For instance, Basil (2021) explains that careful planning is an important characteristic of an effective teacher

in that it helps define and shape good teaching and shows that teachers have responsibilities to their learners. In other words, planning the lesson constitutes a significant cornerstone for teaching and it scatters the uncertainty of what to teach. However, the present research findings indicate that the teachers are not fully prepared for their classes. They admit that they have limited time to make efficient lesson plans because of their heavy workload and because of teaching multiple grades since most of them are the only English teacher in their schools. Although the teachers state some excuses related to the lack of preparation, Plews and Zhao (2010) inform that one of the sources of common negative attitudes towards language learning is related to the time allocated for the preparation as well as other issues such as classroom management, the low language proficiency of teachers, and lack of professional development. Because some challenging situations in rural schools can be arised from the lack of lesson preparation by the participant teachers. In this regard, some teachers confess that they do not have any alternative plan when a problem occurs during teaching such as power cuts.

The participant teachers also inform that their roles in decision-making processes are lacking. In this sense, they state that they are not autonomous teachers in that they do not decide on the processes of English teaching. For instance, they inform that they are stuck with teaching some topics and vocabulary in the student book although they believe that students cannot use these expressions in their daily lives. Although literature (e.g. Pearson & Moomaw, 2005) informs that there is a strong link between teacher autonomy and teacher motivation, satisfaction, and professionalism, we cannot say that teachers have sufficient autonomy in lesson planning which consider the rurality. According to Parker (2015), there is a strong consensus that teacher autonomy is the prerequisite to learner autonomy. Regarding this, the teachers' sense of not being autonomous may result in student learning in that they cannot initiate their learning. The findings of the present research also confirm that lack of teacher autonomy shapes the understanding of teaching. In the observations, we reveal that all the classroom activities were initiated by the teachers. The notion of student-centeredness as being an important concept of education in the contemporary age, in this respect, was not observed in the classes of the participant teachers.

Some eroded concept of autonomy is highly related to the professional transformation of the teacher into a technician. From this point of view, when the existence of teachers in the teaching process is discussed, it can be said that their

professionalism is weakened by both political and social pressure for accountability. The things that are effective in deprofessionalization are the initiatives suppressed by the governments, curriculum changes, the school administration's perspective on education, and the effects of standardized tests on language teaching (Wilkins, 2011). In other words, Parker (2015) expresses that when the teachers' autonomy is diminished, it contributes to teachers' deprofessionalization. In this regard, we can conclude that the English teachers of this study are far from being autonomous and hence they do not have strong powers and initiatives in shaping their teaching practices and facilitating students' learning.

5.5. School-Related Challenges

An important challenge for the teachers of the study is related to the physical and financial conditions of the school. Since rural areas are deprived of following contemporary developments, the conditions of rural schools are not good enough to provide plenty of materials for language teaching. The literature informs that the schools also lack some educational resources, appropriate conditions for language teaching as well as crowded classrooms because of the unavailability of the classrooms needed (Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, & Martinez, 2021). Similar conditions are observed in the rural areas of Türkiye as in the example of T3 Güliden since her students are educated in classes that are turned from the coal bins. Studies in the literature (e.g. Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Hansen-Thomas, Grosso Richins, Kakkar, & Okeyo, 2016) are in the same line with the present study in that rural schools have some financial and physical constraints in that they cannot necessarily support learners in rural areas for the qualified education.

We can say that the physical conditions of schools for language education are considerable elements in the success of students. When the school conditions are appropriate for language learning, the success rates of the students are to increase to a certain level. In other words, Shamim (2008) explains that learners from high-income students become more fluent in English than learners from non-elite schools as a consequence of the opportunities available in schools for language education. In this regard, T2 Gaye, for instance, informs that lack of facilities such as the equipment for supplying input through videos and listening texts negatively affects her teaching in that she must adapt her lessons considering the unavailability of such materials.

Another considerable challenge for the teachers is the power cuts occurring during the teaching sessions because the teachers inform that they use some technological materials such as smart boards for language teaching and when the power cuts occur, their lesson plans are interrupted. Hence, it is important to have electricity when they use these materials. Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, and Martinez (2021) clarify that rural communities generally face power constraints and this causes learners to have limited time for using technological resources.

Some teachers also inform that the school is cold and both the teachers and the students wear their coats during the lessons and it is challenging for them to concentrate on teaching English. In this respect, Tanner (2008) informs that many educational decision-makers believe that educational facilities, that is, schools structured with dark, long corridors have little influence on the process of learning, however, even the new school buildings in the United States have some structural problems such as inadequate lightening, lack of instructional places, and inefficient energy systems that cause uncomfortable indoor climate. Therefore, the physical environment of schools should be planned in a way that facilitates learning by providing today's tools such as information technologies which promote learning opportunities (Lippman, 2010). However, the physical conditions of rural schools, to a great extent, are not appropriate for comfortable learning.

The participant teachers inform that the relations with their colleagues and school managers are broken down from time to time because of some reasons such as schisms and pressures made by the school managers. However, the studies (e.g. Li & Craig, 2019; Şahin, 2021) in the literature explain that a positive and welcoming atmosphere among teachers can be helpful for overwhelming isolation and the creation of the feeling that they are members of a teaching community. In this regard, Barley (2009) expresses that getting help from other teachers facilitates understanding the nature of teaching in rural contexts although newly recruited teachers in rural schools experience some important challenges such as collegial isolation, and being unfamiliar with rural schools and communities.

Although getting support from other members of the school is crucial, especially for those who are newly recruited to rural schools, this cannot always be achieved as it is expected. Similar to the findings of the present study, the literature informs some lacking sides of getting support from other colleagues in the school. For instance, Confait (2015)

informs in his study that a teacher named Ryan got limited support from his colleagues. He explains that he could not expand his pedagogical knowledge since he felt a bit alone in teaching and the other teachers were reluctant to speak about teaching issues. It is because the school did not have any formal mentorship program and the other colleagues approached him as if he knows everything related to teaching. A similar situation also occurs in the present study in that the teachers of this study are the only English teachers in their schools and the mentorship program does not properly work although it is formally structured. Therefore, English teachers in rural schools feel isolated and lose their chance to work collaboratively and discuss and share good classroom practices.

Scholars inform that the drop rates of teachers are high because of the challenges they experience and hence the relationships between school management and the newly recruited teachers are highly important to retain them in rural schools. In this respect, teacher training gains prominence in that they should be prepared for the realities of rural life with the help of rural administrators to acculturate teachers for the rural school conditions; therefore, school managers should enable opportunities for professional development by creating supportive teacher communities and developing the relationships between teachers and parents (Barton, 2012).

Although we appreciate the value of support provided by school managers, some teachers explain that they have to deal with some bureaucratic obstacles when they want to apply new initiatives for language teaching. For instance, T11 Haldun expresses that he wanted to invite one of his friends who are native English to his online lessons and he believed that his students become more motivated to learn English when they speak with a native speaker of English. However, he stated that the school management did not allow him to invite his friend to an online class because of bureaucratic reasons. Since the only source of input in English is the teacher in rural areas, the teacher aimed to increase input variety with the help of communication technologies in the online teaching process and overcome the barriers of living far away from the communities where English is spoken. We can say that the teacher's initiatives for making language teaching more meaningful and enjoyable are hindered because of school principals' disapproval. However, Hallinger and Liu (2016) state that the variety of practices supported and motivated by school principals fosters teacher development.

As a consequence of leaving schools or their appointments to other places, especially in urban areas, the school management instantly changes the school program

or the students from one section to another. Therefore, the language teaching process is affected negatively since T9 Yasemin expresses that there occurs a knowledge gap between the students of a class and the new students in the same class. As we explain that the teachers of this study are mostly inexperienced and therefore, their decision-making practices cannot be practical as experienced teachers can. In other words, Gün (2014) informs that experienced teachers have a wealthy knowledge structure of teaching and hence they can easily maneuver when they encounter a problem since their backup plans are expected to be wider.

Most of the teachers in this study live in the city center and go to their rural schools via transportation. Therefore, they spend some of their money on school buses. In the literature (e.g. Maher & Prescott, 2017), it is agreed that transporting can be difficult and costly, especially for rural and remote schools. When we think about the economic conditions of Türkiye and the salaries of teachers, an increase in gasoline prices negatively affects their prosperity and they become demoralized and this situation decreases their willingness to teach in rural areas. Therefore, governments should support teachers to foster their professional development and increase their motivation to teach in rural by providing an affordable living standard. In other words, monetary incentives can be helpful for the teachers through salary increases, affordable housing, and meeting transportation costs although community factors such as getting support from the school principals and colleagues play a significant role in motivating teachers to continue teaching in rural (Barton, 2012).

The participant teachers also inform that rural schools are far from the city center and hence they cannot reach facilities in urban areas because of some deficiencies in transportation. Durdukoca (2018), for instance, explains that the lack of transportation opportunities and high costs for transportation because of the remoteness of rural schools are the main reasons for inadequate teacher professional development opportunities. Similarly, Şahin (2021) informs that the findings of the study show parallelism because of high travel costs, being far from universities, and experiencing transportation problems, reaching in-service teacher training programs as being the main challenges for rural English teachers. Therefore, English teachers are of the idea that they miss both the personal and professional development opportunities in rural.

5.6. Parent-Related Challenges

According to the teachers of this study, parents are one of the components of education; however, parent involvement in education is highly low. They state that parents generally earn their lives through livestock raising, and hence they do not come to schools or they do not support their students' academic successes. Although we know that parental involvement is an important element for increasing student learning (Shim, 2013), parental involvement in the learning process is highly limited in the schools where the participant teachers work. In other words, parental involvement is lacking and this situation is questioned by the teachers in that the lack of parental involvement in education hinders student learning. As an example of this, T2 Gaye informs that students whose parents are interested in the learning processes of their children become more successful in English than the students of uninterested parents. Similarly, Cox (2005) identified 18 empirical studies focusing on home-school collaboration interventions based on the outcomes of the schools. The researcher found that collaborations between parents and schools are effective in the achievement of the desired outcomes of children, including both school achievement and behaviors.

Cox (2005) informs that the most effective factor in home-school relations is the collaborative work of teachers and parents. In this regard, we can say that parent-teacher relations are valuable for language learning; however, the participant teachers clarify that this relationship is lacking in some aspects such as face-to-face communications with parents, their understanding towards learning, WhatsApp groups, late calls of parents and lack of trust towards teachers. Wasserman and Zwebner (2017) inform that the use of new media such as smartphones and their social media applications becomes central to the involvement of parents in teaching. In other words, the use of such technologies creates opportunities to increase the access of parents to the teacher.

With the outbreak of Covid 19, communication between parents and the teacher was mostly done through new technologies. However, the teachers sometimes became frustrated because of the parents' behaviors toward the teachers. In other words, most of the teachers regard such practices as if they are limited to parents' beliefs. On the other hand, Shim (2013) explains that parents feel intimidated because of teachers' prejudice that parents are not interested in learning and they do not help their children to be successful in lessons. It can be said that there is a misunderstanding between teachers and

parents, which may be a sign of a lack of teacher knowledge on how to make connections with parents. For instance, T1 Ömer states that he did not know anything about how to behave and talk to the parents. He admits that he regarded that becoming a teacher was only to teach English, however, the reality was different for his experiences when he started to understand that teachers are responsible for many things including providing connections between parents and the school.

The findings of this research also revealed that the participant teachers regard the economic situation of parents as an important challenge. Some teachers state that some families are really poor in terms of providing support for their children. Such poverty was unearthed especially during the pandemic process because families could not afford computers and internet access during this process. In the literature, for instance, Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, and Martinez (2021) explain that the economic conditions of rural families may create some educational obstacles since they struggle with serious economic problems. However, some teachers (e.g. T1 Ömer) state that some families are rapacious and do not want to spend money for the education of their children and ask for donations from the municipality to get computers for online education. Therefore, we can say that the economic situations of parents in rural are not weak and spending money for their children depends on how valuable education is in the eyes of parents.

The teachers state that most of the parents' education levels are low and hence they cannot support their children since they do not know English. For instance, T6 Özlem informs that parents are not interested in the academic success of their children since parents' education levels are generally low in rural. It is true especially for rural communities because parents lag behind the expectations of the schools to motivate their children, help them in planning the time for studying, and organize the conditions in which their children do their homework (Holguin & Morales, 2016).

Parents are not also aware of the importance of foreign languages in this age since they were not born in modern times in which the world become more globalized hence English is taught in many countries. As a result, they can hardly understand the value of learning English when compared to parents living in urban areas because the lives of parents, as well as their children, get stuck in living in their villages. Lindgren and Muñoz (2013), in a similar vein, reveal that the students' foreign language reading scores are significantly affected by the levels of parents. Therefore, the findings of our study reveal that the success rates of students are highly affected by the education level of parents.

Because well-educated parents have the opportunity to help their students do their homework and support their learning. In this respect, for instance, Chang (2008) expresses that asking the opinions of parents related to foreign language policy implementation is valuable because his study revealed that the parents have positive attitudes towards foreign language learning; however, most of the parents agree that they do not help their students study English.

When we consider the conditions of rural, the parents in Kars district live off livestock raising, and hence, they ask their students to help them do the village duties. Therefore, some teachers inform that some parents do not value the academic achievement of their students since they expect them to stay in the village to do their jobs in the future. In this regard, parents cannot understand the value of language learning since some parents believe that their children become farmers and raise livestock as their future job. In other words, parents do not understand why English is important and they do not support their children with their homework (Kızıldağ, 2009). We can say that it can be the reason why some rural students cannot achieve learning English and the success of rural schools become low.

A parent-school relationship is considered as a positive impact on students' success. The studies in the literature (e.g. Van der Want, Schellings, Mommers, 2018) inform that the mentality of students' parents has changed with the help of information and communication technologies in that it increased teacher and parent interactions. In other words, Wasserman and Zwebnar (2017) inform that parental involvement has a positive effect when continuous communication occurs between the teachers and the parents. However, Wanat (2010) informs that establishing a collaborative relationship between parents and the school is challenging since they need to endeavor for balancing school involvement and their work lives. The researcher also explains that the teachers should share the learning environment with parents and the school needs to find ways of solving bureaucratic obstacles that hinder the collaboration between parents and the school.

Some studies (e.g. Kızıldağ, 2009) inform that when there is a lack of relationship between parents and the school and a lack of parental understanding and support, the academic achievements of students decrease. In this regard, Wanat (2010) informs that establishing a positive relationship between parents and schools involves uncertainties because parents and schools may have conflicting feelings and responsibilities for their children. There can be parents who are satisfied with the school-parent relationship or

parents who are not satisfied with the process of education. In this respect, satisfied parents may want to participate in teaching processes and dissatisfied teachers may not value the interaction between the school and parents. The teachers of this study, throughout the research, identify that parents are reluctant to be involved in teaching processes although they are regarded as one of the stakeholders of education. Henceforth, the achievement rates of rural schools remain very low.

5.7. Technology-Related Challenges

Technology is now an indispensable element of language teaching. The participant teachers inform that the existence of technological materials in rural schools helps them create a rich learning environment for students; however, they point out their dissatisfaction especially when they encounter some problems related to the usage of these materials. Contrary to the literature (e.g. Cruz Arcila, 2018; Mishra, 2015) informing that rural schools face some difficulties in reaching technological materials, the schools of the participant teachers, except one, have smart boards in their classes. When the teachers try to use them, they realize that the smart boards do not properly work during teaching hours or broken materials are sent to the schools. In other words, the teachers cannot fully adapt these materials to their lessons since they cannot find ways of getting technological support when they encounter problems related to technological devices. During the pandemic process, MoNE initiated an aid campaign to provide rural students tablets and some companies sent these tools, especially to rural schools; however, one of the teachers, T9 Yasemin states that the tablets sent are broken. She states that they could not solve the problem although they called the company many times to ask how to mend the tablets and they could not get an answer related to their problems.

When we examine how teachers use technological devices and which activities they use, we reveal that the teachers cannot fully use technological devices especially when they encounter some problems related to the usage of these technologies. It shows that teachers' competencies in technology use are not at the desired level although they are younger. Therefore, using technological activities needs knowledgeable teachers on how to use these tools and how to adapt activities in technology-based lessons. In other words, an English teacher should have knowledge of both technology use and the ways of adapting activities in technology-based platforms (Reinders, 2009). In our study, most of

the teachers know how to use technology; however, they are not talented enough to create technology-based activities, which may meet the needs of rural students. Instead, they use ready-made online activities and during the usage of these activities, they encounter some challenges such as being unable to correct the mistakes in the activities. In this regard, it can be said that the shortcomings in the usage of technology-based activities can be related to a general lack of preparation of teachers, not knowing how to enlarge the breadth of activity types, lack of needed training, and lack of contextualization of activities. We can therefore conclude the integration of technology can make the teaching process more complex as well as make language teaching easier (Kessler & Hubbard, 2017). For this reason, it shows that today's language teaching approaches should be reorganized by considering technological developments and teachers should prepare themselves for the future.

The teachers of the study also inform that they cannot use tablets and smartphones during the lesson since the schools do not allow them to use these materials because of the worries about teachers' losing control of the class. The teachers also inform that they cannot use such devices because of the limited or no internet connection in the village. Similar conditions are stated in other studies (e.g. Amenyedzi, Lartey, and Dzomeku, 2011) in that integration of information and communication technologies in Ghanaian school systems results in major problems such as lack of adequate computers and poor internet connections, especially in rural schools. The researchers inform that although the government initiated a major innovation in terms of integrating technology into education, most of the teachers did not organize computer-based lessons since the number of computers and the internet connection were lacking in computer laboratories. It can be said that language classes can be enriched with plenty of resources provided through internet access; however, rural students may experience the drawback of reaching these resources because of limited or no internet access.

5.8. Rurality Challenges

The participant teachers state that the book content is not familiar to the peculiarities of this context and therefore students cannot understand the topic hence they develop resistance towards such topics. For instance, T4 Ismail informs that the curriculum includes festival examples such as Easter, which is not close to the lives of students. In

this regard, MoNE should consider the socio-cultural differences of students and add topics that are familiar to the students. Holguin and Morales (2016) clarify that programs should include elements that are particular to rural areas to increase students' motivation because it can be demotivating for students to study unrelated topics in their daily lives.

Some teachers also inform that rural students are closed to learning since the learning environment has some constraints such as providing plenty of input. Therefore, they state that teaching English to rural students is difficult when compared to teaching English to urban students. In this regard, one of the teachers in the study of Lu, Jiang, and Guo (2022) expresses the difficulties of teaching English to rural students as a consequence of some constraints related to the learning environment. In a similar vein, T11 Haldun informs that the students living in urban areas can acquire some topics easily as they experience them in their daily lives through online games, however, rural students do not have such facilities which make English a part of their daily lives. Therefore, he believes that it is difficult to increase students' knowledge of English and develop their language skills.

In terms of the facilities in rural, some participant teachers state that the schools where they work are far from the city center and there is nothing in the villages like a place for buying food or the things that they need. For instance, T5 Meryem informs that the school is in the middle of nowhere. In other words, she expresses her astonishment because of culturally how far the school and the conditions of the village are from the city center. We understand that the teachers of this study are not familiar with rural conditions and they experience a feeling of isolation although they go to school with their colleagues via the school bus. In this respect, making teachers familiar with rural conditions through teaching practices in the pre-service training can help them be aware of these remote schools, and hence they can give appropriate decisions about working in rural areas (Barton, 2012).

For English education in rural, the teachers also inform that facilities of rural areas are not convenient for the students' learning. Since they regard language teaching as something that can be achieved only with students in urban areas, they have indisputable barriers in their understanding of rurality in terms of both facilities such as infrastructure and socio-cultural barriers the teachers mentioned. For instance, T4 İsmail informs that they had to teach in a school where there is not any electricity and boards in the classrooms for a while because of the lack of these facilities in the school. The literature

(e.g. Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, & Martinez, 2021) refers to such challenges as a significant barrier to teaching English in rural areas. For instance, Barton (2012) states that challenges such as housing shortages, access to health services, banks, stores, and even in-service training may be the factors that negatively affect teacher recruitment in rural areas. In other words, the geographical locations of the schools have a considerable impact on the challenges that teachers experience (Sari, 2020). Therefore, such challenges lead teachers to be unhappy about teaching English in rural schools and then they try to get an appointment in other parts of the country, namely to the west of Türkiye as in this study.

Since heavy snow is an important reality of the Kars district, education may be interrupted, especially due to the closure of village roads and consequently, both the teachers and the students cannot reach their schools on that day. However, education is less disrupted due to snow in cities compared to villages, as there are generally more opportunities and snow removal vehicles in the city center to combat snow. The unexpected interruption of the education process negatively affects the learning of the students because while the students living in the villages cannot go to their schools, the students in the city center continue their education. In this respect, unexpected snow interruptions may be one of the reasons for failure in language teaching in rural areas. This situation does not occur only in the areas with heavy snowfall in Türkiye. For example, Groppo and Kraehnert (2017) inform that as a result of the extreme winters in Mongolia, many children could not complete their compulsory education. In this regard, we can say that one of the reasons for becoming unsuccessful in teaching English can be strongly related to the weather conditions of the areas where the schools are located.

Some teachers of the study inform that it is quite natural to find inexperienced teachers working in rural schools since teachers want to get appointed to developed areas such as the western cities of Türkiye. It is for this reason that a shortage of qualified English teachers is faced in rural areas. In this sense, a teacher, T10 Emrah, expresses that the success rates of rural schools decrease because of the appointments of the teachers to other cities of Türkiye because the rural students get familiar with the teacher and his teaching style; however, the teacher gets appointed to the urban schools. Then, the students spend a great effort to get accustomed to the teaching way of the new teacher. In addition, T8 Salih informs that the students of his school did not get any education in English for four years since he was the first English teacher in the school after a long

period. One of the reasons for this can be related to the policy change in that the MoNE decided to include English education starting from the second graders; however, the number of English teachers recruited in state schools of Türkiye is limited when it is compared with the need for English teachers. Therefore, some schools, especially rural schools, could not provide English education because of the lack of English teachers recruited in their schools. For instance, there were not any English teachers appointed to rural primary schools in the Kars district and hence the students come to the secondary schools with a great lack of knowledge of English. Considering the government's duties in terms of providing an equal chance for all students, facilitative efforts should be planned to close the gap between the education provided in rural and urban areas. In this regard, teachers should be in a condition they should not think of changing their careers for financial reasons (Day & Gu, 2009) and they also should not lose their sense of commitment to teaching. On the other hand, families leave the rural areas and move to urban areas where they can find successful schools with qualified teachers. It can be said that such situations ruin the educational planning of the government in the long run since rural schools lose both students and qualified teachers. In other words, rural education gradually loses qualified teachers and the academic discipline structure of teachers (Xuehui, 2018).

5.9. Pandemic Effects

The teachers of the study inform that students could not get online education since they did not have any computers or could not get internet access. Therefore, they could not get any education properly when compared to students living in urban areas. Consequently, students forget even the basic knowledge they should know during the Covid-19 pandemic. The teachers inform that the learning losses of students affect their teaching as they need to teach the basic things that should be gained in online education. Studies in the literature (e.g. Engzell, Frey, & Verhagen, 2021) inform that learning losses in the process of Covid-19 have a considerable impact on education. The researchers explain that learning losses reach up to 60% among students from less educated homes in the Netherlands. Therefore, it proves the teachers' worries right since rural students lack some facilities such as computers and internet access. Similarly, Aytaç (2021) expresses that initiatives of MoNE such as supporting students through an online teaching platform

(called EBA in Turkish) can be regarded as positive; however, students encountered problems in terms of accessing the system, infrastructure, and content. For instance, on the first day of online teaching, the EBA platform cannot be reached for some time because of infrastructure deficiencies. On the other hand, Bezen and Demirkasımoğlu (2022) inform that teachers believe that students encountered some problems such as communication, social development, and motivation to do their responsibilities during the online education process. In this respect, we can say that students whose self-regulation skills are low could not effectively plan the time for their learning.

A problematic situation for teachers is that they did not get any education related to online teaching and they explain that they did not know anything about the processes of online education. Some teachers, for instance, state that they did not know anything about online teaching platforms and how to use them. In this regard, Aytaç (2021) informs that teachers in Türkiye do not have the required skills and motivation to use educational technologies in the online education process. He also explains that teachers are inexperienced in terms of both how to use these tools and which methods they use in the online teaching process. Therefore, it can be said that teachers needed urgent support related to the integration of technology into education. It is because teachers play a crucial role in the implementation of teaching in the online process. In other words, teachers are essential since they can guide students learning although the value of other elements such as online teaching platforms and technological infrastructure is undeniable in this process (OECD, 2020).

Some teachers also explain that they were recruited during the pandemic process and hence they could not get any support from other teachers since they work from home. Although the online teaching process may have some peculiar advantages such as limiting the transportation costs to rural schools, it can be said that online education obliges teachers, especially newly recruited ones, to isolation. Kraft and Papay (2014), for instance, clarify that the social context of work including collaboration among colleagues has a considerable impact on student learning. Therefore, isolation and lack of support from other stakeholders of education in the pandemic process negatively affect the teachers' adaptation to the teaching process as well as students' learning.

The teachers of the study also hesitate about how they manage to teach topics since the government decides whether the education should be online or face-to-face. The teachers express that they make all their plans for face-to-face education since they

believe that online education does not provide success. Therefore, some teachers, e.g. T3 Gülden, state that they make some arrangements in their lesson plans and remove the games they prepared for practicing the topics. We can say that the participant teachers are not eager to teach online since they regard themselves as restricted in some aspects such as communication barriers between the teacher and the students. In a comparison of face-to-face education and online education, Aytaç (2021) explains that the importance of the face to face education has been recognized because teachers experience challenges in communicating with their students, and the teachers believe that parental support is insufficient in the online education process.



CHAPTER VI

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

This study investigated the challenges of English teachers working in rural state schools of Türkiye. Since the nature of this study is qualitative in nature, we will briefly summarize the main findings and discuss the role of challenges that teachers experience in the professional development processes of English teachers working in rural schools.

6.1. A Brief Summary of the Research Findings

The focus of this study is the challenges experienced by English teachers working in rural state schools of Türkiye. The data obtained from eleven English teachers working in rural areas of the Kars district, which is one of the underdeveloped areas of Türkiye, reveal that the challenges of English teachers are mostly related to teaching. In other words, the participant teachers inform that they could not use contemporary methods in language teaching because of rural conditions such as low level of students, the teachers' lack of knowledge or experience about how to implement these methods, crowded classrooms, lack of facilities and resources and lack of support from other shareholders of education like school management and parents.

Besides, teaching skills, especially productive ones are difficult to implement for English teachers; therefore, to a great extent, they disregard teaching speaking and writing. As an excuse for not teaching these skills, they criticize the mismatch between theory and practice in that what is expected in the syllabus is far from the realities of rural schools. That is, they believe that the English levels of students are low and the time allocated for language classes is limited; therefore, they cannot practice speaking and writing and other language skills.

A mismatch also occurs between the level of students and the student books in that the teachers believe that the books are prepared for the students living in urban areas and the content of some topics is dense and boring for the students living in rural areas. Most of the teachers, in this regard, do not use the books provided by MoNE. Instead, they use some other materials which were prepared by other specialists and only few of them spend their time creating their materials.

A considerable issue for English teachers in this study is related to classroom management. They explain that they experience difficulties in controlling the student behaviors in their classes because most of them are inexperienced teachers and they

hesitate about using group and game activities in their lessons because of the fear that students make noise and they lose control of the class. In other words, most of the teachers recruited in rural schools are inexperienced, and hence teaching environment in these areas is limited to a certain degree to get control of the class during the language teaching although there is not any observable difference in the behaviors of both rural and urban students.

As the second important theme of the findings, education system-related challenges are vital for the participant teachers. For instance, they explain that the drawbacks of rural schools in language education are strongly related to the MoNE system in that English education is not prioritized and the practices of MoNE are far from ideal in some aspects such as paper works, mentor teachers, and the candidacy process. In other words, although the ideal of teacher recruitment and support given during the candidacy period seems like a perfect system, numerous drawbacks are experienced in reality.

The teachers also inform that the idealized language education in universities and the realities of language teaching in rural areas do not overlap to a great extent. Teacher education in universities does not provide practice of teaching enough, especially when we consider the conditions of rural schools. Therefore, the teachers inform that what they have learned such as new methods remains only in theory and they do not practice them with their teachers. In this regard, the high school entrance exam (called LGS in Turkish) has a strong influence on their teaching practices and it can be one of the reasons why they do not implement the things they learned in university education as a result of high pressure of the exam on teachers' understanding towards English teaching.

Seminars given by MoNE are also criticized in that the teachers of this study find them ineffective since most of the seminars are given to all teachers regardless of subject matter knowledge. Especially after the outbreak of Covid-19 disease, the seminars are provided through online platforms in a way that teachers could only watch them and there is not any interaction between the teachers and the spokesmen in the seminars. On the other hand, face-to-face seminars are limited in number and participants as well.

The teachers also inform that rural students could not get any English education in primary schools. As a consequence of the negative effects of primary schools in rural, the teachers state that students come to secondary schools with a lack of primary knowledge and they need to teach both primary and secondary school topics at the same time. The

knowledge gap of rural students forces the teacher to decide whether to follow the syllabus or teach what is lacking.

Regarding the student-related challenges, all the teachers of this study inform that rural students lack considerable knowledge gaps and their level of English is low. In other words, they are not ready to learn the topics of English since they have limited or no knowledge of English. Most students' attitudes towards learning in general and English in specific are very low since they are not relevant to learn. Since they live in their villages, they believe that they do not need to learn English as they have the idea that they cannot use it out of school.

For the teachers of this study, controlling the student behaviors in the class is very difficult because of several reasons such as students' motivational problems towards English classes, their expectations from the teacher, students of different ethnic backgrounds or villages, redundant talks during the teaching, etc. Therefore, teachers should consider many things in planning their lessons and their behaviors toward learners. They also need to find different ways of increasing students' motivation to learn English since they live in rural.

The teachers also explain that the facilities of students are lacking in some aspects and it affects their learning. In other words, rural students generally have limited resources and materials for language learning and they do not have any room for studying; therefore, they mostly rely on the teacher's knowledge and materials provided by the school. Besides, those who are students of regional boarding secondary schools are away from their homes and they miss their families hence they cannot concentrate on their lessons and lose their willingness to learn English.

From the point of teacher-related challenges, a significant problem is that they state that they lack knowledge both in English and pedagogy. Most of them admit that their speaking and writing abilities in English are lacking and hence they cannot be successful enough in teaching productive skills. They also admit that their pedagogical knowledge is lacking in terms of both how to teach topics in English and how to manage the classroom behaviors of students. It is also observed that they experience difficulties in the integration of technology into language education and thus they only use basic things such as showing the electronic version of the books on the screen.

The workload is a considerable challenge for the teachers of this study because most of them teach nearly 30 hours a week including Saturdays. Therefore, they have limited

time to get prepared for the lessons and make new materials and activities for the other weeks. They also explain that they have some other duties such as becoming a teacher aide. Such workload negatively affects their teaching practices and they are easily got tired because they teach nearly seven or eight hours a day, and this creates fatigue during the lesson and they lose their patience when students do similar language errors and get angry with their students. Instead, they need to be patient and help their students learn from their errors. In their teaching practices, they cannot fully control the classroom and they only continue with the students who want to participate in the lessons.

Teachers' approach toward students is also a challenging issue in that students expect their teachers to behave traditionally; however, some teachers believe that they need to behave democratically and teacher roles should be modernized. Unfortunately, such views are abused by students and teachers need to revise their roles from modern to traditional. On the other hand, some teachers believe that they can lose respect in the eyes of students especially when they work as teacher aides in school dormitories because students witness every pose of the teacher in a day. Therefore, teachers who work in regional boarding secondary schools are on the idea that they can lose their authority over students since they need to have closer life experiences in the school dormitories.

According to the teachers of this study, becoming inexperienced in teaching creates challenging situations since they are newly recruited. They state that they did not know how to teach English, or how to behave students and other members of the school in their first experiences of teaching. When we consider the rural conditions, teachers in rural are probably inexperienced since it is difficult to find qualified and experienced teachers in rural areas. Therefore, they face many challenging situations simply because they are not experienced in teaching in rural areas. For instance, they state that lesson preparation is difficult for them because they need to prepare different lesson plans since they, as the only English teacher in the school, teach students of different levels.

When we consider the school-related challenges, rural teachers state that some school building deficiencies affect their teaching. Among these, the lack of properly working toilets, teachers' lounges, and the limited number of classrooms for teaching are the most significant ones. For instance, when the school does not have sufficient classrooms for teaching, they use some buildings such as coal bins as classrooms because of the high number of students in these schools. Henceforth, students who get training in

these classes are deprived of having needed equipment for language teaching such as smart boards.

As one of the coldest areas of Türkiye, the schools in the Kars district have to struggle with cold weather and the school should provide both teachers and students with warm conditions for teaching. However, some schools cannot achieve this and both teachers and students wear their coats during English teaching hence such situations lower their readiness to learn. Besides, the teachers in these schools experience power cuts very often and hence their teaching process is interrupted especially when they use technological materials such as smart boards. In this respect, most of the teachers confess that they do not have any other option to apply and hence they become helpless about what to do in such situations.

Another problematic side of schools is the relationships of teachers with other teachers and the school management. Some teachers in the study inform that they experience difficulties in creating positive relations with their colleagues since there is a schism among teachers in some schools and the support provided to the teachers is lacking for English teaching. In addition, some teachers inform that they experience some bureaucratic obstacles or they cannot get the needed support from their school management for the enrichment of English teaching processes. In other words, the teachers of this study state that they did not experience a welcoming atmosphere for teaching since the school managements discriminate some teachers from others, especially those who are newly recruited. As a result, they cannot adapt themselves to the school culture because of the negative attitudes of both school management and other teachers in the school.

Among all, all the teachers in villages go to their school by school bus and students of some schools need to use school buses. Considering the long winter days and heavy snow in this district, some problematic situations occur in transportation because of both weather conditions and misbehaviors of bus drivers such as not taking the students on time. Therefore, both teachers and students in this study are negatively affected because of deficiencies in the management of transportation.

According to teachers, the relationship with parents can also be problematic in some aspects such as the lack of parental involvement in education and the limited interaction and relationship between teachers and parents although parents are regarded as the indispensable stakeholders in education. For instance, the teachers agree that parents are

not related to language learning since they lack knowledge of English. Because the education levels of parents, to a great extent, are low in rural and the parents' education levels strongly affect their students' attitudes towards language learning since they believe that they can live as their parents do, that is, by not having interaction with the people of other places or foreign people who speak English.

When we consider the economic situation of parents, most of them live off livestock raising and the teachers explain that they do not value their students' education and do not support them although their economic situations are not bad. In other words, the teachers state that parents do value their jobs more than the education of their students and henceforth the teachers give up their hopes for an increase in the academic achievement of rural students because parents make their students work in village duties.

Using technology is now an indispensable part of English education and even rural schools provide some technological devices to be used in classes for teaching; however, some problems occur during the usage of these tools in the class. It is probable to experience technology problems such as broken tablets regardless of where you teach; however, the situation for the teachers in rural is different from the teachers in urban in that rural teachers need to repair these devices since there is not any IT specialist in the rural schools. In this regard, teachers are expected to become both English teachers and IT specialists at the same time. Some teachers also clarify that they could not get the opportunity to reach technological devices to support English teaching although some other schools have; therefore, we can say that the facilities of schools are not similar even though they are located in the same district and this causes an injustice among students at the point of achieving a better education for students.

Another significant point is related to how teachers adapt technological-based activities into their teaching practices. In this study, we observe that teachers mostly use these tools to reflect online materials on the screen of the smart board. In other words, teachers do not use technology-based activities effectively and they mostly use technologies for providing multiple-choice tests for the high school exam. They generally use ready-made activities and materials and do not provide their activities by using technological devices. Although teachers are younger and expected to use them efficiently, they do not know how to use their knowledge of technology and how to enrich the learning environment by providing different kinds of online examples. In this regard, they state that they have limited time to prepare these activities and there is a high pressure

of workload on their teaching hence they use ready-made online activities which are created by other specialists. Some teachers also inform that they experience some difficulties in the internet connections in the school and therefore they cannot use smart boards efficiently in their English classes. Lack of internet access constraints their teaching in that they cannot provide plenty of materials including real language use.

The research findings indicate that rurality has strong effects on the understanding of both teachers and students. According to teachers, students are not interested in learning English since their lives are restricted only to their villages and hence they do not even dream of going anywhere apart from their villages and practicing a foreign language. From the teachers' perspective, they realize that they cannot develop their teaching in rural settings; therefore, they wait to get appointed to the western part of Türkiye to refresh their knowledge in both the target language and pedagogy.

The teachers of this study also criticize the facilities of rural in that they cannot reach even simple things like a place to buy something or eat. Therefore, they become hungry, especially in the afternoon and they may lose their concentration on teaching as they could not meet their basic needs for a living. Related to rurality and the peculiar conditions of the Kars district in which heavy snow is observed nearly for half of a year, the roads can be closed because of heavy snow and both teachers and students face some challenges in safely reaching the school. Because of the hard living conditions, teachers' beliefs that they can withstand the long winter days weaken considerably; henceforth, they try to get an appointment to other parts of Türkiye, namely, the west, which is more attractive for a living. It can be accepted that it is one of the reasons that most of the teachers in rural are newly recruited teachers because they start to teach in other parts of Türkiye after they get some experience in how to teach in rural areas.

The last important issue of this study is that students lost much of their knowledge in English since they could not attend online classrooms during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is because they lack equipment and internet connection in their villages and hence their knowledge of English is not sufficient for secondary school topics as they could not remember even the basic things in English. On the other hand, teachers are not ready to teach English through online platforms because most of them accept that they did not even know the names of the online platforms they can teach. In other words, the teachers are not ready to teach online in terms of knowledge of both technology and pedagogy.

Some teachers of this study also inform that they were recruited during the pandemic process and hence they could not adapt themselves to the school environment and they could not get any support from other teachers since all of them work from home. That is, they could not get in contact with other teachers in the school. They also state that they sometimes gave face-to-face education and then turned to online education as a consequence of the pandemic process. In other words, when the number of infected people increases in their district, the officials decide that education should be provided online, and when the number of infected people decreases, face-to-face education is decided to be applied. In such a situation, the teachers could not know when to teach face-to-face or online and could not plan their teaching for the long term.

6.2. Professional Development of English Teachers in Rural Türkiye

Teacher professional development follows the principles that enlarge teacher understanding and instructional purposes to support students' learning. Effective professional development of teachers in this respect includes ongoing and sustained opportunities, cooperation with students' learning goals, the presence of strong leadership, effective practices that support student learning, meeting the teachers' needs, a supportive collegial environment, and the assessment of students' learning for identifying how to shape instruction (Parsons, Ankrum & Morewood, 2016). Although the professional development of teachers places a significant role in developing teachers' understanding, the awareness levels of English teachers working in rural areas of Türkiye should be questioned. In other words, this study aims to clarify to what extent English teachers in rural districts of Türkiye get the opportunity of being included in the communities of teacher professionalism or isolated from the stream of teacher education.

Concerning the challenges of English teachers working in rural areas, the present study reaches numerous challenges that English teachers encounter during their teaching practices. Participating in professional development programs for the teachers of the study and contributing to their teaching is nothing more than a dream. In other words, they inform that in-service teacher training programs are not effective, especially for English teachers in that such programs do not provide subject-specific education or only a limited number of English teachers get the chance of participating in INSET programs. In Karaata's study (2010), for instance, most English teachers could not find a chance to participate in these programs. In a similar vein, Timar and Carter (2017) inform that rural

teachers must struggle with many things to attend professional development programs such as enabling high travel costs, finding a suitable place to stay overnight, and finding substitute teachers. Likewise, Gao (2010) adds that rural teachers believe that they cannot reach professional development opportunities because English teachers in rural schools have no chance to be included in an environment for learning. They explain that attending professional development programs is impossible because of the lack of funds for attending such programs. We can therefore state that teachers' professional development in rural areas is different from the professional development of teachers in urban areas (Bonilla Medina & Cruz Arcila, 2013).

As one of the effects of technology on education, it can be considered as paving the way for English teachers in rural areas to participate in online in-service teacher training programs. Teachers' attendance to online professional development programs helps them become a member of virtual learning communities and thus they can overcome feelings of isolation (Barton, 2012). Becoming a member of teacher communities, which is critical for teachers' professional development, is valuable in that they can share their daily teaching practices and develop collaborative learning activities. In these communities, teachers can share their ideas regarding teaching strategies that they apply, advance teaching materials and lesson plans, and provide feedback (Romero & Vasipulous, 2020). In this regard, English teachers are expected to be eager to participate in these virtual communities.

It has been stated in many studies that professional development is very important for teachers. One is conducted by Romero and Vasilopulous (2020) with 17 Chinese teachers participating in a professional development program in Canada. The study reveals that teachers are open to sharing inside and outside the classroom and are motivated to work with their colleagues when they return to their schools. This program has aimed to apply the student-centered communicative approach practices rather than the teacher-centered model, and thus ensure the professional development of teachers working in the changing language learning understanding, especially in more rural areas and where opportunities are limited. After returning to China, the teachers have expanded their network and practices to remain in contact with the other teachers in the program, to support their English use, and to share information for professional advice through a virtual program for English teachers. Henceforth, they could strengthen their ties among English teachers to foster professional development.

This research reveals that English teachers' expectations are not in the way that they are eager to participate in these communities because of several reasons. One is that they state that they have a heavy workload and there is not much time to do extra things related to professional development. When an application related to teachers' professional development increases their workload, it does not help teachers progress in their understanding of teaching (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). For instance, MoNE tries to give some courses for teachers to engage in socio-cultural activities such as Turkish handicrafts, traditional Turkish arts, musical instrument courses, etc., however, only two of the participant teachers attended an online course that teaches how to play guitar. The others state that a significant problem is the heavy workload and they have limited time to attend such courses.

Different from the literature, this study reveals that becoming a teacher is their ideal in that most of them decided to become English teachers at an early age. This shows that they are motivated enough to become teachers. However, their commitment to do their jobs is strongly related to positive experiences towards teaching. In other words, their satisfaction with teaching and their sense of achievement can be undermined by the challenges they experience (Gao, 2010) in the teaching processes. On the other hand, teachers' lack of professional development may cause them to face different challenges such as how to cope with noisy classes, struggle with linguistic problems of students, create positive psychology in learning English, and arrange the time allocated for teaching (Sari, 2020). It can be said that the challenges of teachers and their professional development needs are strongly related to each other in that challenges can be overcome through teacher professionalization. English teachers can handle the challenges they face by spending their time and energy to increase their interest in teacher development, attending L2 competence development events such as L2 courses, short stays in English-speaking countries, or virtual L2 teaching tutorials (Izquierdo, Aquino Zúñiga, & Martinez, 2021).

Teacher professional development is also heavily related to how they instruct in their classes. To develop their understanding of teaching methodologies with regard to new approaches to foreign language education, English teachers should attend teacher professional development programs because numerous interesting pedagogic practices remain unknown (Cruz Arcila, 2018). Professional development programs can underpin what teachers need to do, and how to implement other alternatives in English courses. In

other words, English teachers' theoretical knowledge and teaching practices can be enriched through these programs. It may also close the gap between what is known as the ideal of teaching and what is to be done in the practices of teachers; henceforth, it has increased the power of teachers to participate more in the decision-making stages of language teaching and to implement them.

When we investigate the English teachers' practices in this study, we can state that they generally apply so-called traditional approaches in language learning although some of them accept that their teaching practices are not convenient for English teaching, at least theoretically. Considering the conditions of rurality, they state that no option suits the realities of rural such as limited resources to be used, learners' low motivation and low proficiency levels, crowded classrooms, etc. In this respect, they apply conventional approaches in their teaching practices although such approaches are not appropriate for meeting the educational needs of students or teaching situations. This situation can be explained with the notion of the "post method condition" Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggested. According to this notion, language teaching methods can work in idealized circumstances, and hence they can be ineffective in less ideal situations as in teaching English in rural. In this regard, English teachers follow their own strategies and practices instead of pre-established mainstream methods. In other words, teachers are expected to be more autonomous in designing and reflecting upon their teaching practices. The importance of what teachers know and practice, therefore, becomes more important in the teaching process and the presence of teachers may not be ignored.

Although Kumaravadivelu's post-method pedagogy explains that teachers encounter problems in applying the basic methods, observations, and interviews reveal that teachers' practices are not unique, but rather the result of their learning. From this point of view, it can be said that the experiences of the teachers in the study are lacking in how to apply the methods. Findings from the study reveal that English teachers do not develop their autonomy in enlarging teaching knowledge and skills. In other words, teachers state that the theoretical parts are more intense in teacher education, and teaching practice in university education is ignored. In this regard, it is seen that the internship practice offered to pre-service teachers and the in-service training afterward do not reflect enough on their teaching practices. We can therefore conclude that the problem arises because of the lack of practice opportunities provided in teacher training, not because of the conditions of the teaching setting. In this respect, Eraslan (2009) explains that both

pre-service teachers and their mentor teachers in practicum schools do not prioritize getting the experience of teaching; instead, they value the national exam, which measures the theoretical knowledge of pre-service teachers.

It can be stated that teacher preparation is a key element for recruiting qualified teachers in rural schools. When teachers are informed about the realities of rural and the realities of teaching in rural schools, it will help teachers continue teaching rural schools. This can be done by providing opportunities for professionalization, making teachers connected with teacher communities, and promoting relationships with other members of the school such as parents and colleagues (Barton, 2012). The literature (e.g. Hallinger & Liu, 2016) also supports the efforts to build trust among teachers and foster a learning culture through professional development.

It should be considered that traditional teacher education programs are standardized in that teachers are educated regardless of where they are recruited, that is, rural or urban. In this sense, socio-cultural differences between rural contexts and the differences in educational settings of rural schools are disregarded, which leads to the failure of teacher education programs as they do not include a rural-oriented understanding of teacher training. Therefore, urban-oriented teacher education programs fail to adapt to sociocultural and professional differences associated with teaching conditions in rural areas (Kızılaslan, 2012). In other words, a standardized teacher education program cannot be successful in meeting the needs of English teachers working in rural schools since the standardized urban-oriented teacher education programs miss out on the contextual factors and learner needs. Therefore, increasing the quality of teaching in rural, to a certain extent, depends on how much importance is given to contextual factors and learner needs (Eppley, 2009). On the other hand, giving priority to every contextual factor in the teacher education program of such big countries as Türkiye seems unreasonable. This is because Türkiye has diverse contextual settings and the educational conditions of these settings vary from one to another. Therefore, the reconciliation of teacher needs and rural realities can only be met by in-service teacher training opportunities provided by MoNE.

6.3. Suggestions for the Stakeholders of English Education in Rural Türkiye

This study, which deals with the difficulties faced by English teachers working in rural areas, is important in terms of revealing the faulty aspects of teacher education and English teaching processes in the Turkish education system in rural areas. With the spread

of the importance of English teaching in the global world and in countries that prioritize equality in education, it is necessary to lean on English education in rural at least as much as in urban schools. In this regard, this study is important in terms of revealing the challenges experienced by English teachers in the Kars district, which is one of the underdeveloped areas of Türkiye. Although the study focuses on the challenges experienced by rural English teachers, the findings reveal the deficiencies in the teacher training process, the negative effects of the English teacher's relations with other stakeholders on English education, and the deficiencies in English teaching processes in rural schools.

One of the main reasons for the challenges faced by teachers living in rural areas can be mentioned as the incompatibility of the teacher education they receive in universities with the conditions of rural schools. In other words, it is necessary to clearly mention the advantages and disadvantages of teaching in rural areas in pre-service teacher education. At this point, examples of teaching English in rural can be shown or teaching stories about the challenges experienced by teachers working in the countryside can be conveyed to pre-service teachers. The solution suggestions of the pre-service teachers against the stated problems can be discussed in the courses they get. In this regard, Salı (2008) proposes that teacher educators sensitize their students toward the difficulties of being English teachers in rural. For instance, they can be lost, and become on a slippery, winding, and rough road, and henceforth, teacher educators should show how to survive on such a road in their journey of practicing English teaching.

According to Powell (2000), case-based ideology for teacher education may help increase pre-service teachers' understanding of professional development since this ideology reveals how experienced teachers teach in their classrooms. Case-based teaching can also show the dilemmas that teachers experience in their classes. As one of the techniques of case-based ideology, classroom-based dilemmas can be used in the courses of teacher education in that pre-service teachers explore how diverse the contexts of teaching are. In other words, pre-service teachers cannot only solve the complexities of teaching with limited knowledge of language teaching methodologies. It is therefore agreed that teaching dilemmas in different contexts are shaped by culturally diverse and situated contexts and hence pre-service teachers should examine these dilemmas considering the situational and contextual factors (Powell, 2000). In this sense, being familiar with the conditions of rural schools can help pre-service teachers understand

possible difficulties and find ways of solving problems when they experience teaching in rural schools.

One of the things that the English teachers working in the rural emphasized the most is that the teacher education they received at universities is more theoretical-based and the practice opportunities are not provided enough. For this reason, most of the teachers stated that they did not know what to do when they first entered the class and that they were indecisive if they encountered any challenges. One of the most important reasons for this is the lack of importance given to practicum. In addition, it can be said that the conditions of the practicum schools are quite good compared to schools in rural. Thus, although pre-service teachers experience teaching in practicum schools, they are not in line with the conditions of a school in the rural where they work for the first time. Practicum schools are schools located in cities where both physical conditions and student success are good enough. Therefore, when teachers are assigned to schools in rural areas with poor physical conditions and low student levels, they encounter difficulties that they have never encountered before. In this respect, it may be expected that pre-service teachers should be provided with practicum opportunities in rural schools, but it may not be possible when we consider the conditions of Türkiye, as it requires too much planning and budget.

One of the important problems is that teachers, who encounter village life for the first time in their lives, have insufficient support from school management and colleagues in the adaptation process, the relations between school staff are not strong and eventually, newly recruited teachers are pushed to loneliness. The appointment of one of the experienced teachers as a mentor teacher for the beginning teachers is theoretically thought to contribute to the adaptation process of these teachers; however, the reality is quite different from what it should be. That is, the mentor teacher does not establish a healthy relationship with the newly recruited English teacher. In addition, school administrations often treat teachers differently. At this point, instead of supporting the English teaching process, school administrations hinder teachers' additional efforts to teach English with bureaucratic obstacles. Moreover, school administrations do not provide any support for the professional development of English teachers and expect them to teach in their classes regardless of the quality of the teaching. This may be one of the situations that directly affect student achievement. Similar to the studies in the literature, Salı (2008) informs that English teachers do not find themselves in environments where

they are supported by the school management and other colleagues and hence the professional development of teachers is not fostered. It can be said that support structures of the schools such as mentoring should be reconsidered as it is not helpful for the adaptation of newly recruited teachers in rural schools.

The expectation of school administrations from teachers in teaching English should be the implementation of activities that will enable students to practice English. Whereas, schools focus on the grades that students will get from the high school entrance exam. The fact that English teachers are forced into exam-oriented education may also be an answer to the question of why we can't learn English in Türkiye. Because the high school entrance exam is not skill-based, even if students succeed in the exam in the short term, they will become individuals who cannot learn English or use what they have learned in practice in the long run. One of the ways to get out of this vicious circle would be to support the correct practices of English teachers. On the other hand, Gruenewald (2003) contends that it is assumed that standardized test scores can measure the achievement of students, teachers, and schools only by considering classroom implementations. According to the researcher, disregarding the value of place and focusing on conventional accountability notions such as standard-based testing can be problematic because they are unable to recognize the mediating role of contexts since they hinder the boost of the achievement of rural pedagogies.

One of the most important answers to the question of what policymakers should do in teaching English will be to understand how education is maintained in rural areas. Most of the teachers in this study state that the contemporary approaches offered during their university education and in-service training do not work in rural schools. Although contemporary English teaching approaches have theoretical aspects that may contribute to English education, English teachers working in rural have very weak beliefs that these approaches do not work in village schools. One of the main reasons for this is that the teachers do not have any information about the rural schools and educational conditions before they are recruited. Another reason is that any practical application of teachers on how to enrich English teaching in rural schools has not been shown both in the teacher training processes and in the in-service processes. In other words, English teaching policies heavily focus on urban-oriented language teaching, and hence it fails in the professional development of teachers since the social and professional differences related to rural areas are not reserved (Kızılaslan, 2012). However, the challenges and practices

of English teachers in rural schools are important for understanding how applicable the curriculum policy is in language education. In this regard, Hu (2005) acknowledges that contextual factors are significant in that congruency between the official curriculum and teaching in a particular context should be needed; otherwise, it can be one of the primary causes of failures in rural schools.

Similar to the situation in Türkiye, Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) examined a new language reform in a study conducted in Thailand by considering CLT and learner-centered approaches. The research aimed to investigate the levels of policy and practice by including English teachers teaching fifth and sixth graders because communicative activities were expected to be done at these levels. Studies and observations showed that language education was not given in the classroom concerning communicative approaches. Teachers also complained that they were worried about their English level and that the education they received was inadequate. They also stated the lack of resources and the lack of professional support. In addition, the study revealed that the reform was not compatible with classroom practices. Likewise, Do, Sellars, and Le (2022) found in their study that primary English teaching in Vietnam was very different from what was expected in remote rural areas. The research revealed that policymakers were aware that well-trained teachers play a key role in achieving the goals, but contextual factors should be taken into account. However, the research revealed that the knowledge and skills required for English education did not match with English teacher competencies in Vietnam, and the curriculum policy and classroom practices did not match. In other words, although teachers were expected to strictly follow the policies for teaching English, they adjusted the policy requirements according to their interpretations and choices.

It can be understood from the examples above that there are some mismatches between what is ideal and what is practiced. In other words, English teachers in rural schools should not be seen as practitioners of language teaching, but as intellectuals (Cruz Arcila, 2018) who are responsible for constructing their language teaching practices. Regarding this perspective, what rural teachers already practice in their classrooms can be more advantageous from the efforts of making familiarizing teachers with contemporary language teaching approaches. In other words, English teachers should be provided with areas where they can make curriculum changes when necessary.

As understood, there is a significant gap between the ideal and the practice. It should be considered that the problems arising between the ideal and the practice of English teaching cannot be resolved only through pre-service education. In this respect, in-service training can play a significant role in that professional teacher education programs of universities and the teaching experiences of teachers are insufficient for rural teacher education (Şahin, 2021). Therefore, in-service teacher training programs provided by MoNE play a crucial role to prepare English teachers for rural schools. However, both the findings of this study and the other studies in the literature (e.g. Barton, 2012; Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018; Yeşilyurt & Karakuş, 2011) state the insufficiency of in-service teacher training for the professional development of teachers. For instance, the teachers of this study explain that they do not generally find online in-service teacher training useful since it is not interactive and does not provide practical solutions to their challenges in teaching English, and face-to-face in-service teacher training programs are limited in terms of the number of participants. Considering all the challenges of in-service teacher training programs provided by MoNE, the teachers expect to learn new things about how to solve problems they face during language teaching such as the misbehaviors of students, their unwillingness to the learning, and so on. For that reason, MoNE needs to provide more practical in-service teacher training programs related to their subject matters. MoNE also should find ways of providing in-service teacher training programs only for the teachers working in rural as their difficulties differ from the difficulties of urban schools.

The teachers working in rural schools generally feel isolated and find the facilities of rural insufficient for both their teacher development and socio-cultural reasons. Therefore, teachers tend to drop teaching in rural schools, or they lose their commitment to teaching in such conditions. In this regard, MoNE should find ways of minimizing the drawbacks of rural areas by supporting teachers both economically and socially. Otherwise, unsupported teachers, as in the case of a teacher in the study of Day and Gu (2009), may fail in maintaining their commitment, enthusiasm, and job fulfillment. Since recruiting high-quality teachers in rural areas is a challenging issue for governments, some researchers (e.g. Barton, 2012) suggest several approaches to make them stay in rural schools. Some suggestions can be listed as preparing teachers for the reality of teaching in rural schools, enhancing professional development opportunities, and letting them develop their programs for training teachers in rural schools, encouraging teachers

who want to turn to their hometown to teach after graduation from the teacher education program. In terms of providing experienced teachers in rural schools, for instance, T11 Haldun proposes that government should introduce compulsory appointments to underdeveloped areas for teachers as well as for police officers. He states that the accumulation of teachers in the cities can be prevented and thus the number of experienced and inexperienced teachers is balanced in rural schools.

Another solution can be to eliminate the sense of isolation of teachers in rural schools so that English teachers can continue teaching and to create a teacher communities project instead of a non-working mentoring system. It is because the teachers of this study inform that they are the only English teachers in their schools and they cannot get adequate support from other teachers since their mentor teachers are generally from other subject areas. Therefore, teacher communities that are peculiar to rural schools can eliminate the teachers' feelings in terms of being alone and isolated from the teacher communities. Because teachers working in more supportive environments can help students' achievement of English (Kraft & Papay, 2014) when compared to those who work in non-supportive environments.

We, teachers, have to go beyond complaints about the current situation. In other words, teachers should not see others as the main source of the challenges they encountered and should spend efforts towards solving the problems. For example, teachers should not wait to be promoted to another city or school with better facilities for their professional development. Instead, they should bring different perspectives to the conditions that are not suitable for education and take initiative to enhance students' learning. However, research findings reveal that teachers accept the challenges they face and wait until they are promoted to other schools instead of looking for ways to cope. For example, T9 Yasemin states that she wants to start her pedagogical development only when she is promoted to the west and that she wants to relearn the methods and approaches she forgot when she starts teaching in the west. In this regard, the main obstacle to the professional development of teachers may be the unwillingness of teachers to take responsibility for their professional development (Zein, 2017). As a result, many reasons can be cited for the challenges experienced by English teachers in rural schools, especially starting from their unwillingness to teach in rural schools. All the factors such as the inadequacy of the support provided during the in-service training process and the challenging school conditions negatively affect the teaching processes and

professionalism of teachers and may even cause teacher attrition in the long run (Farrell, 2012).

In terms of teachers' perspectives, working in rural areas is not attractive because of the number of difficulties encountered and the lack of facilities and professional development opportunities. However, it should be noted that societies are not expecting teachers to prepare students for the needs of the present, but for the needs of tomorrow, which do not exist yet although it is difficult to determine the educational values and a model to follow for teachers. Therefore, becoming a teacher should be valued not in the eyes of other stakeholders, but the teachers as well.

A summary of the suggestions can be listed below.

For teacher training institutes:

- Examples of teaching English in rural can be presented with teacher stories to pre-service teachers.
- Pre-service teachers should be sensitized toward the difficulties of being English teachers in rural.
- Case-based teaching ideology can be followed in the teacher training process to enlighten the dilemmas teachers experience among teachers and students.
- Considering the situational and contextual factors, teaching dilemmas in different contexts can be used to prepare pre-service teachers for the conditions of rural education, and relations with other stakeholders.
- Practice-based courses should be increased in teacher education programs.
- Compatibility of practicum schools and rural schools should be granted in a way that pre-service teachers should be aware of the differences in terms of the facilities of practicum schools and rural schools.

For MoNE system and schools:

- The mentorship system should be revised in a way that beginning teachers get the needed support from their colleagues.
- School administrations should be aware of the importance of language teaching and support English teachers in skills-based language teaching.
- The high school entrance exam should not be the only indicator of language teaching success because it hinders the mediating role of contexts and the development of rural pedagogies.

For policymakers:

- Teachers should be convinced about the effectiveness of contemporary language teaching approaches since most English teachers do not believe that they work well in rural schools.
- Practical implementations of contemporary methods should be presented in INSET programs.
- Professional development of rural teachers fails since social and professional differences related to rural areas are not reserved in in-service training.
- A congruency between the official curriculum and teaching in a particular context should be provided.
- More subject matter INSET programs should be provided for English teachers working in rural schools.
- The drawbacks of rural areas should be minimized by supporting rural teachers both economically and socially.
- The number of experienced and inexperienced teachers should be balanced in rural schools since nearly all English teachers are inexperienced in village schools.
- A teachers' community project in rural can be used to overcome rural English teachers' feelings of isolation.

For English teachers in rural:

- They should be the only practitioners of language teaching, but intellectuals responsible for constructing their language teaching practices.
- English teachers should be provided with areas where they can make curriculum changes to satisfy the needs of rural students.
- English teachers should not see others as the main sources of the challenges and spend efforts to solve problems in rural schools.
- English teachers should not wait for being promoted to other cities and developed areas for their teacher development.
- Becoming a teacher should gain its values as it was in previous years and becoming a teacher should be valued in the eyes of other stakeholders as well as teachers.

6.4. Limitation of the study

Since the data of this study were collected during the Covid-19 process, that is, in the autumn term of the 2021-2022 years, some teachers admitted that they made some arrangements in their lesson plans. For instance, T3 Gülden stated that she was not happy with the online education hence she fastened her teaching by omitting the activities that may take time such as games and communicative activities. Therefore, we can say that the participant teachers' classroom practices for English teaching may vary on days that such illnesses do not affect their teaching. As a result, some of the challenges they experience cannot be observed in ordinary times. In addition, some teachers in the study did not understand how to write reflective diaries at the beginning of the research and wrote them narratively. Therefore, we distracted these diaries from the study and gave some reflective diary examples, and asked them to write reflectively. This resulted in some data loss although it did not affect much of the data as explained in the methodology section.

6.5. Suggestions for the Further Research

Since the focus of the research is on the challenges of English teachers working in rural state schools in Türkiye, a comparison of rural and urban schools and teachers' experiences can be investigated as further research to identify the similarities between the experiences of English teachers working in rural and urban areas. In a similar vein, the changes and the challenges in the teaching practice of a teacher can be investigated longitudinally since comparison studies related to English teachers' professional development are limited in the Turkish context.

The teachers generally inform in the research that they have limited opportunities to get teaching practice and limited knowledge about teaching English in rural schools. Therefore, pre-service teachers can be educated about teaching in rural and their perceptions can be sought towards teaching in rural. With such studies, the pre-service teachers' understanding of teaching in rural can be developed and the gap between theory and practice can be minimized.

The present research is qualitative in nature and therefore the number of participants is limited. Studies with a large number of participants can also be made with quantitative or mixed methods. Henceforth, more generalizable results can be obtained to enlighten the challenges of English teachers working in other rural settings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

- a. *Katılımcıların dil eğitimi geçmişine, öğretmen eğitimine ve öğretmenliğe bakışına yönelik sorular*
1. İngilizce öğretmeni olmaya nasıl karar verdiniz?
 2. Hangi programdan mezun oldunuz?
 3. Mezun olduğunuz program İngilizce öğretmeni olmanızda size ne ölçüde katkı sağladı?
 4. Mezun olduğunuz program öğretmenliğe bakışınızı etkiledi mi? Nasıl?
 5. Türkiye’de dil eğitimi hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Dil eğitiminin problemleri/eksik yönleri var mı?
 6. Kaç yıldır İngilizce öğretmenliği yapıyorsunuz?
 - a) Kaç yıldır bu okulda çalışıyorsunuz?
 - b) Daha önce nerelerde öğretmenlik yaptınız?
 7. Öğretmenlik yapmaya başlamadan önce öğretmenlik hakkında ne düşünüyordunuz? Şimdi ne düşünüyorsunuz?
 8. Eğitim aldığınız programın size sağladığı öğretmenliğe dair eğitim çıktıları çalıştığınız okulun koşullarıyla uyumlu?
 9. Üniversitede aldığınız dil eğitimi teorilerine yönelik bilgiler uygulamada size ne sağladı?
 10. Aldığınız eğitimin İngilizce öğretmenliği yapmak için yeterli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
 11. Tekrar meslek seçme şansınız olsa öğretmen olmak ister misiniz? Neden?
- b. *Katılımcıların öğretmenliğe ilk başladığı yıllara ve Contexte yönelik sorular*
12. Öğretmenliğe ilk başladığınız günü hatırlıyor musunuz? Neler hissetmişsiniz?
 13. İlk öğretmenlik yaptığınız yer ile ilgili izlenimleriniz nasıldı?
 14. Mesleğe yeni başladığınız zamanlarda öğretmenlikle ilgili ne düşünüyordunuz?
 - a) Şimdi ne düşünüyorsunuz?
 15. Öğretmenliğe ilk başladığınız zamanlarda herhangi bir destek/ eğitim/ oryantasyon aldınız mı?
 16. Öğretmenliğinizin ilk zamanlarında en çok zorlandığınız şeyler nelerdi?
 17. Öğretmenliğe başladığınız okulun fiziki durumu nasıldı?

- a) Okulun fiziki durumunun İngilizce öğretime ve öğretmenliğimize yansımaları oldu mu?
18. Öğretmenliğe başladığınız okulun öğrenci profili ve veliler hakkında ne söyleyebilirsiniz?
19. Öğrencilerin ve ailelerinin sosyo-ekonomik durumlarının eğitime yansımaları nasıl?
20. Farklı sosyo-ekonomik yapılardan gelen öğrencileriniz var mı? Öğrencilerin ve ailelerin sosyo-ekonomik durumları İngilizce öğretiminizi nasıl etkilemektedir?
21. Öğretmenlik yaptığınız okulda diğer öğretmenler ve idarenin İngilizce öğretime, öğretmenliğe ve size karşı tutumu nasıl?
22. Öğretmenliğe başladığınızda mentor (rehber) öğretmen atandı mı?
- a) Cevabınız evet ise: Mentor öğretmenin size katkıları veya sizi olumsuz etkileyen yönleri oldu mu?
23. Mesleğe ilk başladığınızda eğitimle ilgili herhangi bir konuda (öğrenciler, İngilizce, vb.) yardım talebinde bulundunuz mu?
24. Çalıştığınız okul İngilizce eğitimi için size ne tür olanaklar sağlıyor?
- a) Çalıştığınız okulun sağladığı olanaklar dil eğitimi için tatmin edici mi? Nedenleriyle açıklayınız.
25. Haftada kaç saat ders veriyorsunuz? Derslere hazırlanmak ne kadar vaktinizi alıyor?
26. Çalıştığınız okul yönetiminin İngilizce öğretime yönelik tutumları nasıl?
- a) Çalıştığınız okulun İngilizce öğretime yönelik tutumları sizi nasıl etkiliyor?
27. Çalıştığınız okulun genel prensip ve kurallarını nasıl buluyorsunuz?
- a) Çalıştığınız okulun kurallarına uymada herhangi bir zorluk yaşıyor musunuz?
28. Çalıştığınız okul İngilizce öğretimi konusunda size destek oluyor mu?
- a) Kendinizi profesyonel anlamda geliştirmek için çalıştığınız okul size fırsatlar sunuyor mu?
- b) Sunulan fırsatlar sizin için yeterli mi?
- c. *Sınıf yönetimi üzerine sorular*
29. İlk derse girdiğinizde sınıf yönetimi ile ilgili neler yaşadınız, ne hissettiniz?

30. Derste öğrencilerle ilişkinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?
31. Derste problem çıkaran bir öğrenci oluyor mu? Derste sorun çıkaran bir öğrenci olduğunda ne yapıyorsunuz?
32. Sınıf yönetimi konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?
33. Sınıfı organize etmede problem yaşıyor musunuz?
34. Sınıftaki öğrencileri ne kadar tanıyorsunuz?
- a) Öğrencilerin hangi özellikleri İngilizce öğretimiyle ilişkili?
- b) Onların genel ve özel ihtiyaçlarına göre derste değişiklik yapmak zorunda olduğunuz zamanlar oluyor mu?
35. Öğrencilerin İngilizce öğrenimine karşı tutumlarının derse bir etkisi var mı? Varsa açıklayınız.
- a) İngilizce öğrenimine olumsuz tutum sergileyen öğrencileriniz oluyor mu? Böyle öğrencileriniz varsa onlara nasıl davranıyorsunuz?
36. Ders planında öğrencilerin özelliklerini dikkate alabiliyor musunuz?
37. Derste beklenmedik bir problem çıktığında nasıl tepki veriyorsunuz?
38. Öğrencilerin derse karşı ilgilerinin az olması durumunda nasıl tepki veriyorsunuz?
39. Öğrencilerin öğrenmede bireysel farklılıkları var mı?
- a) Eğer varsa bu farklılıklarına karşı nasıl bir yöntem uyguluyorsunuz?
- b) Eğer varsa öğrencilerin bireysel farklılıkları sınıf yönetiminizi nasıl etkiliyor?
40. Eğitimde ortaya konan farklı yaklaşım ve yöntemleri takip edebiliyor musunuz?
41. Yeni yöntem ve teknikleri uygularken karşılaştığınız zorluklar var mı?
42. Sınıfta vücut dili, ses, çoğunlukla durduğunuz yer, tahta kullanımı vb. hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
43. Benimsediğiniz öğretmen rolü genelde nasıldır? Benimsediğiniz öğretmen rolünün İngilizce öğretime olumlu/olumsuz etkileri nelerdir?
- d. *İngilizce öğretime (Content) yönelik sorular*
44. Dil becerilerinden hangilerinin öğretiminde kendinizi daha rahat hissediyorsunuz, hangilerinin öğretiminde zorlandığınızı düşünüyorsunuz?
45. Dersin içeriğine nasıl karar veriyorsunuz?
46. Ders içeriği oluştururken herhangi bir zorluk yaşıyor musunuz?

47. İngilizce öğretirken zorlandığınız konular var mı? varsa açıklayınız?
48. Öğrencilerin davranışlarını kontrol etmekte zorlandığınız aktivite(ler) varmı?
varsa açıklayınız
49. Yeni bir konu/üniteye geçtiğinizde o konu/üniteyle ilgili herhangi bir problem yaşıyor musunuz? Açıklayınız.
50. Hangi öğretim yöntemlerini kullanıyorsunuz?
- a) Bu yöntemlerden hangisini uygularken zorluk yaşıyorsunuz?
51. Öğrenciler İngilizce kullanımında hata yaptıkları zaman nasıl davranıyorsunuz?
52. İngilizce bilginizin öğretmenlik için yeterli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
53. Konuları yetiştirememek gibi bir kaygınız var mı? Açıklayınız.
54. Yeni yaklaşımlar ışığında dil eğitimi vermeye kendinizi adapte edebildiğinizi düşünüyor musunuz?
55. Öğrencilerin İngilizce bilgisini nasıl ölçüyorsunuz?
56. Sınav hazırlarken karşılaştığınız zorluklar var mı? Varsa neler?
57. Size sağlanan öğretim materyallerini (kitap vb.) nasıl buluyorsunuz?
- a) Öğretim materyallerinin ya da aktivitelerin derse adaptasyonu hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- b) Öğretim materyalleri sizin öğrencilerinize ne kadar uygun?
58. Ek öğrenme materyalleri/ aktiviteler hazırlıyor musunuz?
- a) Evet ise bunları hazırlarken zorlandığınız oluyor mu?
59. Dersi anlatırken hangi dili (Türkçe veya İngilizce) kullanmayı tercih ediyorsunuz? Neden?
60. Öğrencilerin İngilizce seviyeleri hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
61. Farklı seviyelerde olan öğrencilerin aynı sınıfta olması sizin için zorluk çıkarır mı?
- e. *Teknoloji kullanımına yönelik sorular*
62. Çalıştığınız okulda İngilizce öğretimi için hangi teknolojik aletler mevcut?
63. Eğitim teknolojilerinin sınıfta kullanımında ne ölçüde yeterli olduğunuzu düşünüyorsunuz?
64. Eğitim teknolojilerini kullanımına yönelik herhangi bir eğitim adınız mı?
65. Kullandığınız herhangi bir teknolojik aletin derste çalışmaması/bozulması durumu hiç başınıza geldi mi?

- a) Böyle bir durum olunca ne yapıyorsunuz?
66. Öğrencilerin derste telefon, tablet vb. araçları ders içerisinde eğitim amaçlı kullanımına izin veriyor musunuz?
- a) Derste öğrencilerin telefon, tablet vb. araçları ders dışı amaçlarla kullandığı oldu mu? Olduysa ne yaptınız?
67. Dil eğitimi için teknoloji tabanlı aktiviteler hazırlıyor veya kullanıyor musunuz?
- a) Bu tür aktivitelerin kullanımını hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- f. *Hizmet içi eğitim, eğitim politikaları ve profesyonelliğe yönelik sorular*
68. Öğretmenliğe başladığınızda milli eğitim tarafından hangi eğitimler size verildi?
- a) Bu eğitimlerin öğretmenliğinize olumlu veya olumsuz yansımaları nelerdir?
69. Hizmet içi eğitim sürecinde dil eğitimiyle ilgili herhangi bir eğitim aldınız mı?
- a) Verilen eğitimlerin İngilizce öğretiminize herhangi bir etkisi oldu mu?
70. Milli Eğitim tarafından İngilizce öğretimine ayrılan ders saatinin dil öğretimi için yeterli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
71. Milli Eğitimin dil eğitimi için sağladığı kaynaklar hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Milli eğitimin İngilizce öğretimi için sağladığı kaynakların (ör. Kitap, online materyal vb.) dersinize yansımaları neler?
72. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı kendinizi alanınızda geliştirmeniz için fırsat (yüksek lisans, konferanslara katılım vb.) sağlıyor mu?
73. Milli Eğitimin dil eğitimine yönelik yaklaşımlarındaki değişiklikler hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
- a) Siz olsanız dil eğitimi nasıl şekillendirirdiniz?

Appendix 2. Reflective Diary Questions

1. Bugünkü dersinizin başarılı geçtiğini düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?
2. Bugünkü dersinizin temel güçlü yönleri nelerdir? Neden?
3. Bugünkü dersinizin temel zayıf yönleri nelerdir? Bir sonraki dersinizde bu zayıf yönleri gidermek için ne yapmayı düşünürsünüz?
4. Bugünkü dersinizde dersinizi olumsuz etkileyecek herhangi bir durum oldu mu? Böyle bir durumda ne düşündünüz?
5. Bugün ders dışında okulda önemli bir olay oldu mu? Olduysa, bu öğretmenliğinize nasıl yansıdı?
6. Gün içerisinde öğretmen arkadaşlarınız, idare vb. ile ilişkilerinizde eğitimle ilgili bir nedenden ötürü problem yaşadınız mı? Eğer yaşadıysanız yaşadığınız bu durum size ne hissettirdi?

Appendix 3. Classroom observation forms

1- Aktivite türleri

Sınıf gözlem formu						
Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmenin adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: Aktivite türleri						
Hangi aktivite türü kullanılmaktadır?			Bireysel	ikili (Çift)	Grup	
Aktiviteler iletişim odaklı mı?			İletişim odaklı	Geleneksel/gramer temelli		
Aktivite hangi kişiler arası etkileşimi sağlıyor?			Öğrenci-öğrenci	Öğrenci-öğretmen	etkileşimsiz	
Aktivite hangi beceri odaklı?			Dinleme	Okuma	Konuşma	yazma
Aktivite kim tarafından başlatılıyor?			Öğrenci tarafından		Öğretmen tarafından	
Aktivite hangi öğrenme stilini destekliyor?			görsel	İşitsel		Kinestetik
Aktivite dersin hangi aşamasında kullanılıyor?			Başında	ortasında		sonunda
Aktiviteyle hangi dil girdisi sağlanıyor?			Otantik	Yarı otantik		Otantik değil
Aktivitedeki dil bilgisi hangi yolla sunuluyor?			Tümevarım (inductive)		Tümdengelim (deductive)	
Aktivitelerin uygulanmasında hangi yaklaşım uygulanmaktadır?			Öğretmen merkezli		Öğrenci merkezli	
Aktivite türüne öğrenciler aşına mı?				Evet		Hayır
Öğrencilerin bireysel farklılıkları hangi aktivite türünü daha çok etkiliyor?				Dil bilgisi (form)		Anlam (meaning)
Aktivitede ortaya çıkan dil yanlışları nasıl düzeltiliyor?				Aktivite süreci içerisinde		Aktiviteden sonra
Aktivite nasıl sonlandırılıyor?						
Gözlem:						

2- Teknoloji kullanımı

Sınıf gözlem formu

Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmenin adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: Teknoloji kullanımı						
Sınıfta hangi teknolojik araçlar var?		Bilgisayar	Akıllı tahta	Projektör	Telefon/ tablet	
Teknoloji kullanımı sınıfta hangi öğrenme davranışını destekliyor?			Bilişsel	Duyuşsal	Sosyal	
Teknoloji kullanımında öğretmen desteği yeterli mi?		Yeterli	Kabul edilebilir		Yetersiz	
Sınıfta hangi teknoloji uygulamaları kullanılıyor?		Sunum (powerpoint)	Poster	Online network	Döküman (animasyon vb)	
Öğretmen teknolojiyi hangi dil becerisi için kullanıyor?		Dinleme	Okuma	Konuşma	yazma	
Hangi amaçla teknoloji kullanılıyor		İçerik sunumu	Konuya ilişkin alıştırmalar	Öğrencinin değerlendirilmesi		
Öğretmen eğitim teknolojilerini kullanarak ingilizce öğretimiyle ilgili içerik hazırlıyor mu?				Evet	Hayır	
Derste kim teknolojiyi kullanıyor?				Öğretmen	Öğrenci	
Derste teknoloji kullanımı niteliksel olarak yeterli mi?			Evet	Kısmen	Hayır	
Gözlem:						

3- Sınıf içi değerlendirme

Sınıf gözlem formu						
Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmenin adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: Sınıf İçi Değerlendirme						
Öğretmen hangi amaçlarla değerlendirme yapıyor?			Ürün (çıktı temelli)	Süreç temelli	Akran/ kendini değerlendirme	
Dersin değerlendirme sürecinde öğrenci katılımı var mı?			Evet	Kısmen	hayır	
Değerlendirme daha çok hangi beceri üzerine yapılmaktadır?			Dinleme	Okuma	Konuşma	Yazma

Ölçme araçları ders müfredatının hedefleriyle ne kadar uyumlu?		Düşük	Orta	Yüksek	
Ölçme araçları dersin öğrenme çıktılarıyla ne kadar uyumlu?		Düşük	Orta	Yüksek	
Ölçme aracı kim tarafından geliştirilmiştir?			Öğretmen	Diğer (uzman vb.)	
Değerlendirme bilginin hangi basamağına yönelik?	Hatırlama	Kavrama	Uygulama	Analiz	Sentez
Değerlendirme için ders süresinin ne kadarı kullanılıyor?			(ortalama dk.)		
Sınıfta farklı değerlendirme araçları kullanılıyor mu?			Evet	Hayır	
Sınıf içi değerlendirme sonuçlarına öğretmen ve öğrenciler kısa sürede ulaşıyor mu?			Evet	Hayır	
Gözlem:					

4- Dönüt verme

Sınıf gözlem formu						
Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmen adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: Dönüt verme						
Öğretmen hangi tür dönütü kullanmaktadır?			Negatif	Pozitif	Düzeltilici (corrective)	
Verilen dönütler girdi (input) sağlamaya yönelik mi yoksa çıktı (output) oluşumuna yönelik mi?				Girdi (input)	Çıktı (Output)	
Verilen dönütler açık (explicit) mi yoksa kapalı (implicit) mi?				Açık (explicit)	Kapalı (implicit)	
Verilen dönütler dilin hangi boyutuna yönelik?				Dil bilgisi	Anlam	
Dil yanlışlarına kim tarafından dönüt veriliyor?			Öğretmen	Akran (Peer)	Kendisi (Self)	
Dönüt ne zaman veriliyor?			Hemen	Geciktirilmiş		
Hangi dil yanlışlarına dönüt veriliyor?			Global	Local		
Hangi dil becerisine daha çok dönüt veriliyor?			Dinleme	Okuma	Konuşma	Yazma
Farklı dönüt verme araçlarından (ör. teknoloji) yararlanılıyor mu?					Evet	Hayır
Dönüt nasıl veriliyor?					Bireysel	Grup
Verilen dönütler sonrası öğrencilerin hedef dil kullanımı etkileniyor mu?				Artıyor	Değişmiyor	Azalıyor

Verilen dönütlerde öğrencilerin bireysel farklılıklarına dikkat ediliyor mu?	Evet	Kısmen	Hayır
Ders içerisinde farklı dönüt türleri kullanılıyor mu?	Evet	Hayır	
Aktivite sürecinde kaç kez dönüt veriliyor?	(frekans)		
Gözlem:			

5- Sınıf yönetimi

Sınıf gözlem formu						
Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmenin adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: Sınıf yönetimi						
Öğretmenin ders içerisinde takip ettiği bir rutini var mı?					Evet	Hayır
Farklı dil becerilerinin öğretiminde dersin akışında değişiklik yapılıyor mu?					Evet	Hayır
Sınıfta beklenmedik bir durum ortaya çıkması neyle ilişkilidir?			Öğrenci davranışları	Öğretmen	Ders içeriği	
Öğretmen sınıfta beklenmeyen bir durum olduğunda hangi stratejiyi kullanıyor?						
Öğretmen öğrenci problemlerinin ne kadarını ders içerisinde ele alıyor?			Hiçbir zaman	Bazen	Her zaman	
Öğretmen dersi bozan davranışlar için ne kadar zaman harcar?			Çok az	Ortalama	Aşırı	
Ders içerisinde gelişen ani bir durumda öğretmen yeni durumla ilgili karar vermekte zorlanıyor mu?				Evet	Hayır	
Dersin akışına uygun olmayan bir durumda öğretmenin takip ettiği alternatif bir plan var mı?				Var	Yok	
Derste problem ortaya çıktığında öğretmen daha çok hangisine odaklanıyor?				Ders planına	Öğrenci ihtiyaçlarına	
Gözlem:						

6- Öğrenci katılımı

Sınıf gözlem formu						
Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmenin adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: öğrenci katılımı						
Aktiviteler kim tarafından başlatılıyor?			Öğretmen		Öğrenci	
Öğrencilerin aktivitelere katılımında öğrenciler kiminle etkileşime geçiyor?			Öğretmenle		Diğer öğrencilerle	
Öğretmen öğrencilere çoğunlukla nasıl söz hakkı veriyor?				Grup		Bireysel
Öğrenci katılımında öğretmen desteği yeterli mi?				Yeterli	Kısmen	Yetersiz
Öğrenci katılımı öğrencinin konuyu öğrenme performansını etkiliyor mu?				Evet	Kısmen	Hayır
Öğrenciler konuya aşina mı?					Evet	Hayır
Benzer aktiviteler tekrar öğrenciye sunuluyor mu?					Evet	Hayır
Öğrencinin derse katılmaması ders akışını etkiliyor mu?				Evet	Kısmen	Hayır
Öğrencinin derse katılımını artırmak için öğretmenin ek hazırlığı var mı?					Evet	Hayır
Gözlem:						

7- Ana dil kullanımı

Sınıf gözlem formu						
Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmenin adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: Ana dil kullanımı						
Öğretmen derste ana dil kullanıyor mu?				evet		hayır
Öğretmen hangi oranda ana dil kullanıyor?						
Hangi durumlarda ana dil kullanılıyor?		Öğrenci motivasyonu	İçerik sunumu	Disiplin sağlama	Değerlendirme	
Bir derste kaç kez öğretmen ana dil-hedef dil arasında geçiş yapıyor?						
Öğretmenin ana dil kullanımı öğrencilerin hedef dil kullanımını etkiliyor mu?				Evet	Kısmen	Hayır
Gözlem:						

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8- Materyal seçimi ve kullanımı

Sınıf gözlem formu						
Tarih	Gözlem sayısı	Okul adı	Öğretmenin adı	Sınıf	Öğrenci sayısı	Gözlemci rolü
Gözlem konusu: Materyal seçimi ve kullanımı						
Materyalin niteliği nedir?		Ders kitabı		Öğretmenin hazırladığı materyal		
Ders kitabı kullanımı öğretmenin ders akışını kolaylaştırıyor mu?					Evet	Hayır
Ders kitabı kullanımında öğretmen içerikle ilgili değişiklik yapıyor mu?					Evet	Hayır
Öğretmen derste hangi materyalleri kullanıyor?		kitap	Görsel-ışitsel materyaller	Teknoloji destekli materyaller		Gerçek nesneler
Öğretmen hangi amaçla materyali kullanıyor?		Öğretimsel	pratik	açıklayıcı	keşfedici	
Kullanılan materyaller öğrenciler arasında dilsel etkileşim sağlıyor mu?				evet	kısmen	hayır
Kullanılan materyaller dil öğretiminin hangi boyutuna odaklanılarak kullanılıyor?				yapı	anlam	fonksiyon
Öğretmen öğrencilere otantik materyal sağlıyor mu?				otantik	Yarı-otantik	Otantik değil
Öğrencinin dil gelişimi dikkate alındığında kullanılan materyaller birbiriyle ilişkili mi?					Evet	Hayır
Kullanılan materyaller hedef kültüre ait öğeler barındırıyor mu?					Evet	Hayır
Kullanılan materyaller öğrencilere hedef dil becerisini kazandırması için yeterli mi?					Evet	Hayır
Gözlem:						

Appendix 4. Ethical Permissions

Evrak Kayıt Tarihi: 04.06.2021		Protokol No: 76699		Tarih: 29.06.2021	
					
ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU KARAR BELGESİ					
ÇALIŞMANIN TÜRÜ:	Doktora Tez Çalışması				
KONU:	Eğitim Bilimleri				
BAŞLIK:	Türkiye'deki Kırsal Devlet Okullarında İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Profesyonel Olma Yolunda Yaşadıkları Zorluklar				
PROJE/TEZ YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ:	Doç. Dr. Özgür YILDIRIM				
TEZ YAZARI:	Gökhan YİĞİT				
ALT KOMİSYON GÖRÜŞÜ:	-				
KARAR:	Olumlu				
[Redacted Signature]					
[Redacted Signature]		[Redacted Signature]			
[Redacted Signature]		[Redacted Signature]			
[Redacted Signature]		[Redacted Signature]			



T.C.
KARS VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : E-91782061-605.01-33254576
Konu : Gökhan YİĞİT'in Doktora Tezi
Uygulama İzin Talebi

28/09/2021

VALİLİK MAKAMINA
KARS

Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Doktora Programı Öğrencisi Gökhan YİĞİT'in "Türkiye'deki Kırsal Devlet Okullarında İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Profesyonel Olma Yolunda Yaşadıkları Zorluklar" konulu doktora tez çalışmasını İlimiz merkez ve ilçelerdeki ortaokullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerine uygulanması ile ilgili Anadolu Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Genel Sekreterlik Yazı İşleri Müdürlüğü'nün 20/09/2021 tarih ve 152715 sayılı yazılarında belirtilmektedir.

Doktora tez çalışmasında uygulanacak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme ve gözlem forumları Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğü'nün "Araştırma, Uygulama İzinleri" konulu 2020/2 nolu Genelgeleri gereğince oluşturulan komisyon tarafından incelenmiş olup, çalışmanın 2021-2022 eğitim öğretim yılında, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası, Millî Eğitim Temel Kanunu ile Türk Millî Eğitiminin Genel Amaçlarına uygun olarak, ilgili yasal düzenlemelerde belirtilen ilke, esas ve amaçlara aykırılık teşkil etmeyecek, 6698 sayılı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Hakkındaki Kanun ile yürürlükte olan tüm yasal düzenlemeler gözönünde bulundurularak, eğitim öğretim faaliyetlerini aksatmayacak şekilde, gönüllülük esas olmak koşuluyla İlimiz merkez ve ilçelerdeki ortaokullarda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerine COVID-19 tedbirleri kapsamında doktora tezinin uygulanması ve tez sahibi tarafından tezin bitiminde sonuç raporunu CD ortamında Müdürlüğümüz Strateji Geliştirme Şubesine teslim edilmesi müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

Makamlarınızca da uygun görülmesi halinde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Aydın ACAY
İl Millî Eğitim Müdür V.

OLUR
Tahir YILMAZ
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

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2013 – 2022 : Research Assistant, Kafkas University, Dede Korkut Faculty of Education, Foreign Languages Teaching Department, English Language Teaching Program, Kars.

2011 – 2013 : English Teacher, Ministry of National Education, Erzurum

Publications:

1. Yigit, G. (2021). The influence of L1 on the acquisition of L2 collocations: Turkish ELT students. *TESL-EJ*, 25(3), 1–13.

2. Yigit, G. & Yıldırım, Ö. (2018). Perceptions of ELT students related to learner autonomy in language learning. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 7(4), 76- 89, <https://dx.doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v7n4p76>