FIRST YEAR OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN A RURAL CONTEXT:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN TURKEY

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

FIRST YEAR OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN A RURAL CONTEXT:
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This study aimed to explore how a rural elementary school and community situated English language education in Central Turkey, and how the rural context shaped a beginning English language teacher's professional identity and teaching practices. In order to achieve this goal, a qualitative case study was conducted. The required data were obtained through three major methods; semi-structured interviews, a time and motion study, and an open-ended questionnaire. The interviews were all audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The time and motion study involved the recording of the English language teacher's actions at the school. In this regard, the teacher was observed both in and out of the class during a two-month period and his actions were noted down at 60-second intervals. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire was delivered to the students taking English as a compulsory subject in their curriculum. The data were organized in separate files regularly, and analyzed by coding, and interpreting the emerging themes. The results revealed four keys to being a successful teacher in the rural setting. These included appreciation of rural life, passion for rural teaching, aspiration for teaching profession, and being well-prepared for teaching. It was also concluded that the rural elementary school and its community had general appreciation for quality English language education; however, they did not find teaching practices sufficient for effective language learning. Thus, English was not on the top of their list. Lastly, the results also shed light on the rural challenges that a beginning teacher might face.

Keywords: Rural; English language teaching; beginning teacher; identity

ÖZ

KIRSAL BİR ORTAMDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİNDE İLK YIL: TÜRKİYE'DE BİR İLKÖĞRETİM OKULUNDA NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu çalışma, Orta Anadolu'da kırsal bir ilköğretim okulu ve toplumun İngilizce eğimini nasıl konumlandırdığını ve kırsal ortamın mesleğe yeni başlayan bir İngilizce öğretmenin mesleki kimliği ve eğitim uygulamalarını nasıl şekillendirdiğini incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu amacı gerçekleştirmek için nitel bir durum çalışması yürütülmüştür. Gerekli veriler, üç ana yöntemle elde edilmiştir; yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, zaman ve hareket etüdü, ve açık-uçlu anket. Tüm görüşmeler ses kaydı yapılmış, ve kelimesi kelimesine çözümlenmiştir. Zaman ve hareket etüdü, İngilizce öğretmeninin okuldaki hareketlerinin kaydını içermektedir. Bu bağlamda, öğretmen hem sınıf içi hem sınıf dışında iki ay boyunca gözlemlenmiş ve hareketleri 60 saniye aralıklarla not edilmiştir. Ayrıca, İngilizce'yi programlarında zorunlu ders olarak alan öğrencilere açık-uçlu anket dağıtılmıştır. Veriler düzenli olarak dosyalanmış, kodlama ve ortaya çıkan konuları yorumlama yoluyla analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, kırsal alanlarda başarılı bir öğretmen olabilmenin dört anahtarını ortaya çıkarttı. Bunlar, kırsal yaşamı anlama, kırsalda öğretmenlik için istek, öğretmenlik mesleği için istek, ve öğretmenliğe iyi hazırlanmış olmaktır. Ayrıca, kırsal bir ilköğretim okulu ve toplumunun nitelikli İngilizce eğitimine önem verdiği; fakat, eğitim uygulamalarını etkili dil öğrenmede yeterli bulmadıklarını göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, İngilizce dersine öncelik verilmedi. Son olarak, sonuçlar mesleğe yeni başlayan bir öğretmenin kırsalda karşılaşabileceği zorlukları da açıklamıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kırsal; İngilizce eğitimi; mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmen; kimlik

To My Beloved Family

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In addition, I would like to sincerely thank all the participants in this study. Without their willingness, trust and contributions, this thesis would never have been accomplished. Last but not least, I would like to thank my beloved family, my mother, father, and brother for their unconditional love, self-sacrifice, patience, never-ending support and belief in me.

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INTRODUCTION

1.0 Presentation

This chapter presents an introduction to the study. First of all, it provides a background to the study and explains the overview of the problem. In addition, it justifies the need for and the significance of the study. Moreover, the chapter displays the aims and the questions of the study. Finally, the limitations of the study are also presented in this chapter.

1.1 Study Background

This is a thesis study on how a rural elementary school and its community situate teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Central Turkey and how the rural context shapes a beginning English language teacher's identity and teaching practices.

Many school and community conditions differentiate teaching in rural schools than teaching in their urban counterparts (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; Lingam, 2012). While the globalization and the mediatization seem to have made the rural-urban distinction relatively unimportant (Bonner, 1998), the literature shows that places have an impact upon identity formation, attitudes toward schools, teachers' work in schools and future decision-making, (e.g. Flores & Day, 2006; Goodnough, 2009; Gross, 2008; Haughney & Murphy, 1992). There have been several studies revealing the rural challenges that might discourage teachers to choose rural schools as working places, and constrain their motives and practices. To begin with, Miller (1988) outlined the classroom, school and socio-cultural factors, affecting teachers' success and survival in rural communities. These included multigrade instruction, a variety of responsibilities other than teaching in their own

areas of expertise, limited resources / equipments, lack of professional development opportunities, a greater emphasis on informal and personal communications, invasion of privacy, cultural, linguistic and geographical isolation, and so forth. In her review of rural challenges, Preston (2006) also listed the same factors. Additionally, she remarked that rural lifestyle was difficult to cope with particularly for young beginning teachers because they had few peers with whom they could interact.

More recently, researchers have started to explore specifically how teaching English as a foreign or a second language is influenced by rural challenges. To illustrate, two doctoral dissertations have examined the applicability of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Choudhury (2010) investigated the secondary school English language teachers' perspectives and practices in order to understand whether they were able to adapt to the curricular policy change from the traditional Grammar-Translation method to CLT in rural Bangladesh. She concluded that teachers' qualities, social and economic constraints, schools and communities determined the degree to which teachers employed CLT-based activities in their classrooms, and the teachers continued with the traditional teaching practices despite acknowledging the strengths of CLT. Moreover, Choudhury drew attention to a "blame-game". In this regard, she pointed that the English language teachers held the parents, the primary school teachers and the secondary school authorities resposible for the students' poor proficiency in English. As opposed to her findings, Hamid, Sussex, and Khan (2009) had indicated that the parents and the students held the English language teachers at public secondary schools in rural Bangladesh responsible. In a similar study in rural Taiwan, Huang (2011) listed the challenges of teaching English based on CLT in rural settings. Some of them could be listed as following; teachers' own poor English proficiency, lack of professional development opportunities, students' poor command of English and their low first language cognitive resources, lack of learning motivation, parents' indifferent attitudes, and school arrangements.

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The aforementioned issues raise important questions about the status of teaching English as a foreign language in rural settings. It is clear that rural kids need high quality teachers who understand the importance of place, value their life and education, and are able to create and employ appropriate activities to their context. Thus, Lemke (1994) defined the "ideal" rural teacher as the one who was able to fulfill a number of responsibilities, teach more than one subject, cope with rural challenges, and adjust or fit into the community. Yet, due to these demands of rural teaching, many teachers, especially well-qualified teachers, tend to prefer working at urban schools rather than rural schools (Lingam, 2012; Preston, 2006). Furthermore, researchers suggest that teacher education programs do not equip teachers with specialized skills and knowledge to teach in rural settings (e.g. Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). Besides, the literature is lacking a comprehensive analysis of teaching English as a foreign language in rural settings, which makes it difficult to bring realistic solutions. Even though recently appearing studies (e.g. Choudhury, 2010; Huang, 2011; Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2011) revealed that rural schools do not provide quality English language education and prepare students to use the language confidently, they do not present an in-depth analysis of how a rural school and its community influence English language teaching practices.

1.2 Overview of the Problem

The interest in the distinctions between rural and urban societies goes back to the antiquity. Since then, there have appeared several significant names such as Hesoid, Plato and Aristotle from Ancient Greece; Varro, Virgil and Columella from Ancient Rome; Ibn Khaldun from Middle Ages; and also European thinkers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Francis Bacon, Giovanni Botero and J.B. Vico (Sorokin, Zimmerman, & Galpin, 1930). The thinkers describe both rural and urban societies as the natural groups which exist by necessity. Besides, they all list the positive characteristics of rural people as hardworking, moral, healthy and brave whereas urban people are identified lazier and more dependent, less healthy, more degenerate, and less brave. Rural life is seen as the foundation of social order and stability.

Ibn Khaldun (2005) expanded on the origins and the nature of the rural and urban living, or *bedouin* and *sedentary* with his own terms in *Muqaddimah* as followings:

> Some people live by agriculture, the cultivation of vegetables and grains; other by animal husbandry ... Their social organization and co-operation for the needs of life and civilization such as food, shelter and warmth, do not take them beyond the bare subsistence level, because of their inability (to provide) for anything beyond those (things). Subsequent improvement of their conditions and acquisition of more wealth and comfort than they need, cause them to rest and take it easy. Then, they co-operate for things beyond the bare necessities ... 'Sedentary people' means the inhabitants of cities and countries, some of whom adopt the crafts as their way of making a living, while others adopt commerce. They earn more and live more comfortably than Bedouins, because they live on a level beyond the level of bare necessity, and their way of making a living corresponds to their wealth. (pp. 91-92).

The process of the transition from a rural to a more urban society follows a developmental sequence from the less complex to the more complex, from the less heterogenous to the more heterogenous. If people obtain their basic needs, they look for comforts and luxuries in their life. Hence, Ibn Khaldun believes "urbanization is found to be the goal to which the Bedouins aspires" (p. 93). On the other hand, urban people do not have any desire for rural conditions "unless they are motivated by some urgent necessity or they cannot keep up with their fellow city dwellers" (p. 93). Yet, he still believes that rural people could be regarded better than urban people in three major aspects. First, rural people are believed to be closer to being good as they are close to the natural state. They focus more on the necessities of life, not luxuries or anything causing or calling for desires and pleasures. Second, rural people are more disposed to courage than urban people. According to Ibn Khaldun, the reason is that urban people get used to laziness and ease due to their trust in governor or ruler

for the defense of their lives and property. Third, he says "governmental and educational laws influence sedentary people in that they weaken their souls and diminish their stamina" (p. 97). On the other hand, rural people, by their very nature, are not in the same position as they live far away from the laws of government, instruction and education.

There is also another important difference between rural and urban communities; the presence and strength of social solidarity or group feeling or with Ibn Khaldun's term *asabiyya*. It is believed to be "the cause of change, development and differences among societies" (Azadarmaki, 1992, p. 52). Social solidarity is a feeling of belonging with others. This feeling, as Chambliss (1954) said, "causes an individual to conform to the expectations of the other members of his group" (p. 297), which promotes a sense of cooperation. According to Ibn Khaldun (2005), social solidarity results only from blood relationship or something corresponding to it such as a client-master relationship which also leads to a close contact. Moreover, he believes that social solidarity is strong among rural people because of the kinship ties and mutual dependence whereas it is weak among urban people as they rely on an authority organizing their life, aspire for more luxuries and focus on their own needs.

In short, people's beliefs, actions, and habits are all intertwined with their living conditions. This eventually impacts upon the place of formal education. It is necessary to meet the basic needs so that education could find a place to flourish, hence urban places are identified the ideal. However, the understanding of rural-urban conflict has undergone a change in today's globalizing world. By facilitating the flow of ideas, technology and labor, the process of globalization is expected to compress the geographic and socioeconomic distance among people, and indeed the inequality among countries have decreased; however, the inequality within countries, especially between rural and urban areas, have increased (Giroux, Jah & Eloundou-Enyegue, 2010). Karaman (2008) also highlighted:

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While triggering development at an ever larger scale, globalization led to growing injustice. The polarization of the privileged few and masses of poor evokes one of the greatest threats to peaceful societies. (p. 21).

The consequences of globalization are also evidenced in rural education. Rural schools are believed to be inefficient to prepare students for the demands of a rapidly changing and urban-oriented society (Schafft & Jackson, 2010). The solution could be adopting urban standards and values. Expanding on this, Schafft and Jackson (2010) pointed:

The solution, reformers like Cubberley concluded, was to make rural schools look more like urban schools: larger, bureaucratized, run by educational professionals rather than locals, and informed by the latest pedagogical knowledge. This legacy is now manifested for urban and rural schools alike in the form of school consolidation, the standardization of curricula and assessment, and the increased reliance on business models of school management (p. 2).

In this regard, however, rural schools challenge local identity and community survival. "Schools" as Howley and Howley (2010) said, "facilitate out-migration, in part, by shaping identities that willingly embrace departure. Entire realms of knowledge, experience and affection are abandoned by the once-rural individual as the part of the loss" (p. 46). This has presented one of the principal dilemmas for rural schools and communities. Therefore, the real question of schooling is more than a debate whether to prepare our students for rural society versus urban society, the global versus the local. As Schafft (2010) stated, it is:

… how we prepare ourselves and our children to live lives that are local and global, to understand local phenomena as connected to larger regional -, national-, and global-level processes – and simultenously to understand

how the ways in which lives that are lived locally have precisely global social, political, economic, and environmental implications (p. 286).

In this qualitative case study, English language teaching practices will be explored within a rural elementary school and its community in Turkey. This will reveal how beginning teacher's identity and teaching practices are shaped within this global-local context.

1.3 Need for the Study

This study was needed due to two major reasons. First, no other study has previously combined the data from teachers, school administrators, parents and students by means of a variety of methods as planned in this study, and explored how a rural elementary school and its community situate teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Turkey. Second, no other study has also explored before how a beginning English language teacher's professional identity and teaching practices are shaped within a rural teaching context.

1.4. Aims and Questions of the Study

This study aims to explore how a rural elementary school and its community situate first year of foreign language teaching in a mid-size city located in Central Turkey. Furthermore, the study aims to understand how the rural context shape a beginning English language teacher's professional identity and teaching practices.

The research questions are as following;

(a) How does a rural elementary school and community (administrators, teachers, parents and students) situate first year of foreign language teaching in Central Turkey?

(b) How does a beginning teacher experience first year of teaching at a rural elementary school in Turkey?

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are several factors affecting student achievement such as socio-economic background, parental support, community, a caring school, etc. (Applegate, 2008). While affected by the same variables, the literature shows that rural schools are facing many challenges which turn to be a handicap for many of their students (Huang, 2011), and hence they, in the eyes of general public, are found weaker in instruction when compared to their urban counterparts (Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2011). However, education could also be the starting point for a social change, community development, and a juster society by providing quality education to all our children (e.g. Gibbs, 2005; Hudson & Hudson, 2008; Miller, 1995, Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2011). Besides, the research brings to light that the earlier starting to learn a new language, the better the result would be (e.g. Huang & Jun, 2011). The literature also shed light on the cognitive, social and economic benefits of learning another language (Tochon, 2009). Additionally, considering the image of English in today's globalized world, there can be no justification to blocking rural kids from quality foreign language education. However, teachers are believed to be the key to the success of rural schools (Applegate, 2008). Hence, it is pre-eminent to prepare, as Zeichner (2003) said, best teachers for all students so that we can achieve a success. This study will reveal how a beginning English language teacher is relatively influenced by the context in which his/her teaching is embedded, and to see the implications for teacher education and development so that it could be possible to make these teachers more equipped with the needed skills and knowledge to teach in a rural context, and for teacher recruitment in order to foster teacher sustainability.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This qualitative case study was administered at a rural elementary school in a mid-size city located in Central Turkey. For the purpose of the study, the researcher interviewed different participants including a beginning English language teacher, 4 other teachers, 2 school administrators and 6 parents. Moreover, she observed the English language teacher throughout a two-month period. She noted down his activities at 60-second intervals. Finally, the researcher delivered an open-ended questionnaire to the students at all grades taking English as a compulsory subject. Even though the required data were gathered from different sources by means of various methods in order to strengthen the study and to provide a more comprehensive analysis, there were also some limitations of the study. The researcher was able to observe the beginning English language teacher only starting from the beginning of the spring semester in February due to time constraints and legal procedures. Furthermore, she could not continue the study longer than two months, till the end of the semester. Therefore, this study relies on the teacher's own sayings and memories only about his first months at the school, and his reflections upon his first-year experiences do not extend to the end of the year.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Presentation

The review of literature for this thesis was divided into three major sections. In the first section, the goal was to present the reason why learning English as a foreign language at an elementary school ought to matter for rural kids in Turkey. For this purpose, two titles were determined, and the relevant literature was presented; the importance of early foreign language learning, and globalization and the functions of English in Turkey. The second section focused more on beginning teacher experiences. Lastly, the third section dealt with the discussions related to teaching as a profession in rural settings. This section was based upon the literature regarding the discussions on rural teachers' job satisfaction and its connection to their performance, the interrelationship between schools and communities, and how that interrelationship is shaped by a particular place, and lastly teacher education for rural schools as well as professional development opportunities in rural settings.

2.1 Why English Matters for Rural Kids?

2.1.1 Early Foreign Language Learning

The importance of an early start in learning a foreign language has been debated since the second half of the last century, with the critical period hypothesis put forth by Penfield and Roberts in 1959 and made popular with Lenneberg's biological foundations in 1967 (Tochon, 2009). Opinions have revolved around two poles; one claiming that it would be difficult to achieve a language after puberty, the other arguing that there would be no change. Neurophysiological research, which reveals the structural changes in the brain (e.g. Kim, Relkin, Lee & Hirsch, 1997) as well as developmental psychology, which highlights the cognitive and the affective

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changes that take place in a person around the time of puberty (Krashen, 1975), have appeared as the evidence supporting the claims of early language learning. However, as mentioned, there have been also strong counter-arguments, particularly, the claims that the language acquisition device continues to function in adults in a similar way as in children (Krashen, 1975), and that the more highly developed learning strategies of older people can compensate for the asserted neuro-physiological changes (Doye & Hurrell, 1997). The research has continued in the field of second language acquisition; yet there still appears to be no conclusive evidence either way. What's more, starting age is only one of the factors which have an impact upon the attainment of the ultimate proficiency in another language. There are many other factors at play such as exposure time, motivation, parents' attitudes and support, environmental conditions, etc. (Peçenek, 2010). Hence, Bialystok (2009) indicated:

It is now clear that language acquisition is not a simple matter of biological unfolding, as some had previously believed, but rather a process that is finely tuned to features of the environmental input, the child's attentional and perceptional abilities, and the development of cognitive and conceptual competencies (p. 90).

While an early start is neither the key determinant nor a sufficient condition for learning another language, there is nonetheless a consensus that the ability to learn a language decreases with age because of many causes, among which physiological, cognitive and social factors could be counted (Tochon, 2009). Many studies have also revealed an overall advantage of early language learning (e.g. Oyama, 1976; Huang & Jun, 2011). Above all, children's learning of foreign languages has been found to bring cognitive (Bialystok, 2009; Hommel, et al, 2011; Mechelli, et al., 2004) and academic (Armstrong & Rogers, 1997; Petitto, 2009; Tochon, 2009) benefits and to develop a positive attitude towards other ways of thought and other cultures (Liddicoat, 2008). These arguments also underpin changes in educational policies. National governments, especially across Europe, promote early foreign language education today (Calabrase & Dawes, 2008). In

Turkey, foreign language education would start in the fourth grade, at around the ages of 10-11 at public elementary schools. With the new regulations in the compulsory education system, however, this will even be brought ahead by two years and foreign language education will start in the second grade, at around the ages of 7-8 (Ministry of National Education, 2012). In other words, early foreign language education is also promoted nationwide in Turkey. However, the particular conditions - social, economic, political, cultural - in which teaching takes place, as mentioned before, may constrain the teaching and learning of foreign languages (Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2010). Therefore, while starting age is an important variable, these conditions should be also considered so as to provide quality foreign language education for all children.

2.1.2 Globalization and English in Turkey

With the promotion of early foreign language education at public schools, it is primarily important to be able to choose and teach a foreign language which will address to rural kids' and communities' needs and interests in Turkey. In other words, as King and Mackey (2007) said, this is a crucial step to clarify "*who* can do *what* with *which* language and (*how* they feel doing it!)" in foreign language education (p. 44).

In today's globalizing world, English is by far the most widespread language (Balteiro, 2011). The initial spread of English across the globe started with the British colonial power in the 19th century (Spichtinger, 2003). Then, the role of England as the leading country in industrialisation led to the association of the language with development, thereby making it a requirement for those who wanted to remain up-to-date in the latest technological and scientific issues. This influence of English, as Balteiro (2011) indicated, was reinforced by the role of the media in the late 20th century and placed English as a global language. Today, scholars closely associate the development of globalization and the dominance of English

(e.g. Short et al., 2001). Chang (2006) summarized the interrelationship between globalization and English with the following words:

Growing English competence has speeded up globalisation by facilitating political understanding, economic activities and cultural exchange; meanwhile globalisation has been functioning as a driving force to strengthen the position of English as a global language (p. 515).

This spread of English as a global language has also exerted pressure on governments for regulating their educational policies and practices. However, variations have been seen across countries depending upon the extent to which globalization has influenced and the function(s) of English within each country. In Turkey, the global influence of English was initially felt with the need to open up to the Western world and the increasing contact with the United States after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). The strategic and geographical status of Turkey as both a cultural and a physical bridge between Asia and Europe as well as its proximity to Middle East and Africa makes learning English as the international language particularly important at the crossroads of civilizations (Kırkgöz, 2007). Table 1 below shows the chronological change and relative importance of foreign languages in Turkey.

Table 1.
Chronological change and relative importance of foreign languages in Turkey

Order	Pre 1773	1773-1923	1923-1950	1950-1980	After 1980s
1	Arabic	Arabic	French	**English**	**English**
2	Persian	Persian	**English**	French	German
3	Turkish	French	German	German	French
4		**English**	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
5		German		Persian	Persian

Note: Adapted from Demircan (1988, p. 116 as cited in Doğancay-Aktuna, 1998, p. 28).

Belonging to the "Expanding Circle" in Kachru's concentric circles, English has no recognized official status in Turkey. It does not function as an official or co-

official language as in India, which belongs to the "Outer Circle" (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998, p. 30). Nevertheless, English is taught as a foreign language and has an array of functions in different domains in Turkey on account of its instrumental value as well as being an international language of communication. Doğançay-Aktuna (1998) listed these functions:

> English carries the instrumental function of being the most studied foreign language and the most popular medium of education after Turkish. On an interpersonal level, it is used as a link language for international business and tourism while also providing a code which symbolises modernization and elitism to the educated middle classes and those in the upper strata of the socioeconomic ladder (p. 37).

After a decade later, this analysis of Doğançay-Aktuna does not seem to have changed drastically until today. In Turkey, English functions at both international and national level. At the international level, English helps to build economic and social relations with the rest of the world, to gain access to a vast amount of knowledge and to keep up with the technological and scientific developments. However, the spread of English in Turkey is also driven by the internal needs and interests. At the national level, English also holds an instrumental function for better education and a prestigious job with good benefits.

The perceived advantages of English enhanced its spread in Turkey through educational policy making. The initial spread of English in Turkey started with the modernization and westernization movements. During this period, which started in 1950s, English took the place of two dominant foreign languages, German and French, taught at the level of secondary education. This marks the first phase of the English spread through schooling (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). The second phase in the spread of English coincides with the mid-1980s, the period that Turkey had been increasingly influenced by the forces of globalization (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998). Following this period, English became very prominent, and the number of English-

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medium secondary schools, Anatolian and Super High Schools, which would offer one-year English language education, increased (Kırkgöz, 2007).

With the 1997 education reform in Turkey, elementary and secondary education were integrated into a single stream, extending the duration of elementary education from the previous 5 to 8 years. A further consequence of this reform became the introduction of English as a compulsory subject for Grade 4 and Grade 5 students; hence shifting towards an earlier exposure to the language. Moreover, the objectives of English language curriculum were specificied, and the concept of communicative approach in English language teaching was introduced for the first time (Kırkgöz, 2007). In this regard, the curriculum emphasized the development of communicative capacity in English, promoted student-centered learning, and the role of teacher was identified as facilitator of the learning process (Kırkgöz, 2007).

At the level of higher education, there have been also similar developments. Following the foundation of two English-medium universities, Middle East Technical University in 1956 and Boğaziçi University in 1971, an English-medium university model came into existence (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). Since then, there have appeared many public and private universities that the medium of instruction is English in. Additionally, these universities offer one-year intensive English language preparation to their incoming students if their proficiency is found below the level specified by the university in a preliminary language proficiency examination. In Turkish-medium universities, English is incorporated into the curriculum as a compulsory subject, usually offered to the first-year students.

English is not only a compulsory school subject but also a requirement for entry and advancement in professional life in Turkey. To illustrate, Doğançay-Aktuna (1998) indicated that about 68 % of job openings advertised in two Turkish papers, which were identified "prestigious and competitive" in terms of being higher level and better paid positions, required "a knowledge of English" or "a good level of English proficiency" (pp. 33- 34). This was a decade ago. Since then, the need for

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the applicants who have at least a working knowledge of English have increased in the today's competitive job market. Besides, the English knowledge is a source of financial incentives for government employees. Those who score at least 70 % on the Foreign Language Examination for Civil Servants (KPDS) are granted montly bonuses. The test is administered in several languages. However, according to the resent statistics, 93 % of the test takers in May 2011 took the English language test, followed by 1.9 % Arabic and 1.5 % German (OSYM, 2011). Moreover, different levels of scoring are required to be promoted academically. To illustrate, according to the Higher Education Law, 50% on KPDS or an equivalent score on a proficiency test such as TOEFL is the minimum criteria to apply for a postgraduate degree or a position as a research assistant.

While the spread of English in Turkey is driven by the cultural and economic effects of globalization and promoted by the government, there have been also anti-English movements aroused by the "medium of instruction" debate in educational context, "naming and branding" debate in business context, "degeneration and foreignization" debate in sociocultural context, and "anti-Americanism" in political context (Selvi, 2011, pp. 193-196). What's more, the quality of English language teaching is not satisfying. Many of the graduates of public schools can only be categorised as "false beginners" even after they take English language instruction for years (Doğançay-Aktuna, 1998, p. 32). Exploring cross-country differences, the general profile of Turkey can be more clearly seen. In 2011, for instance, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) ranked Turkey in 43 among 44 countries, just before Kazakhstan at the bottom, and labelled as "very low proficiency" in English. Koru and Akesson (2011) argued two important causes Turkey had fallen behind many countries; lack of funding and education reform. First, comparing with the top-25 countries on the EPI list, they indicated "there is less money and opportunity in teaching, that textbooks are worse… and extracurriculars almost nonexistent" (p. 3). Second, they drew attention to the age at which language instruction began. While the top and mid-ranking countries often start English in the first grade, as mentioned, Turkey starts in the fourth grade. In the past, students graduating from Anatolian or

Super High Schools would at least achieve a higher level of English proficiency because they would be provided one-year intensive English language instruction. However, in 2005, preparation class was cancelled entirely. Therefore, as Koru and Akesson pointed, students no longer receive such intensive English instruction unless they go to a university which offers such a preparatory program. Besides, the gap between the idealized official policy and the actual classroom practices arise from the issues related to teacher education and recruitment in Turkey. As Kırkgöz (2009) said, "Teachers are the key players in implementing macro policy decisions in practice at the micro level" (p. 678). However, research shows that beginning English language teachers find it difficult to adhere to their beliefs of ideal teaching because they are more concerned with managing their classrooms, covering the curriculum on time, preparing students for exams and they are relatively influenced by their own language learning experience, proficiency of English, the range of opportunities and resources, etc. (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). Therefore, Akbulut (2007) said "university based courses equip trainees with the highest values without seriously considering the resistances and difficulties involved in implementing them" (p. 10). In rural areas of Turkey, the situation gets even worse because of the factors such as socioeconomic challenges, the influence of rurality, teacher sustainability and quality issues. In a world where, as Koru and Akesson (2011) said, "English is no longer a neat addition to a resume, but a requirement in any modern economy", rural kids should also be provided with quality English language education (p. 2) . In this regard, preparing quality teachers for the immediate needs of the local appears an important issue. In order to achieve this goal, however, it is primarily important to gain a deeper understanding of rural challenges, the function(s) of English for a rural community in Turkey and a beginning English language teacher's needs.

2.2 Beginning Teacher Experiences

The first year is usually identified as a difficult process in which beginning teachers face several challenges as they are learning to teach and formulating teacher identities. Their ideas about the teaching profession are confronted by the reality of

the classroom. Liston, Witcomb and Borko (2006) used the following adjectives to depict vicissitudes of teachers' experiences in the first year of teaching; "Exhilarated and exhausted, hopeful and cynical, fulfilled and dejected" (p. 351). In addition, Farrell (2009) described this complex process of learning to teach with these words:

> ... the first year of teaching has been called an unpredictable and idiosyncratic activity, an anxiety provoking experience that involves a balancing act between learning to teach (i.e. furthering the professional knowledge and skills that were initiated during the teacher-education program) and attempting to take on identity as a "real" teacher within an established school culture (p. 183).

The studies have outlined typical stages of teacher development. Farrell (2009) pointed the two early stages of the first year. The early stage is recognized as "survival" (p. 184). In this stage, beginning teachers are concerned about their own survival as teachers. The classroom management and the content of instruction are their primary concerns. In the later stage, beginning teachers become more concerned about their teaching performance. This includes, as Farrell asserted, "noticing their perceived limitations and the frustrations of teaching context" (p. 184).

Much research has focused on beginning teachers' concerns and challenges. To illustrate, Hebert and Worthy (2001) pointed some problematic aspects common to the first year of teaching. These included classroom management, dealing with time overload and lesson planning. Moreover, based upon the literature, they asserted that the first year of teaching had been usually described in a negative manner and associated with "frustration, anxiety, isolation, and self-doubt" (p. 898). Veenman (1984) also reviewed the perceived problems of beginning teachers in their first years of teaching. He listed the eight problems in rank order as followings; "classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students" (p. 160).

Besides, Olson and Osborne (1991) claimed that beginning teachers failed to understand the interactive nature of the classroom context, and thus often inappropriately responded to classroom situations (as cited in Zhang, 2007, p. 36). Although there have been many studies on beginning teacher experiences in different countries, and contexts, however, there have not been a similar study in Turkish context, especially regarding beginning English language teachers in rural settings.

Liston, Whitcomb and Borko (2006) offered three basic explanations for beginning teachers' struggles. These were listed as followings:

> First, new teachers say the theoretical grounding learned in teacher preparation does not equip them sufficiently for the demands of daily classroom life; second, they wrestle with the emotional intensity of teaching; and third, they often teach in workplaces that are not adequately organized to support their learning (p. 352).

The first year of teaching is recognized as a critical stage in teachers' career path. It influences teachers' effectiveness, job satisfaction, commitment and future decision-making regarding teaching career. In this regard, Bush (1983) pointed that:

> The conditions under which a person carried out the first years of teaching have a strong influence on the level of effectiveness which that teacher is able to achieve and sustain over the years; on the attitudes which govern teachers' behavior over even a forty year career; and, indeed, on the decision whether or not to continue in the teaching profession. (p. 3 as cited in Zhang, 2007, p. 35).

Farrell (2003) also pointed that beginning teachers had to deal with many influences, among which structural and personal influences prevailed. The former occurs at the classroom, the school and the societal level. The latter, however, comes from other persons that the teacher interacts with such as administrators,

colleagues, parents and students. Therefore, conducting a study on a beginning teacher's experiences in particular contexts can provide insights into the problems related to teacher turnover and their effectiveness where their teaching is embedded.

2.3 Teaching as a Profession in Rural Settings

2.2.1 Rural Teachers' Job Satisfaction

The literature shows that rural challenges make it difficult to recruit qualified teachers who fit in the rural community and school and will stay in the job (Lemke, 1994). The research reveals that teachers' job satisfaction plays a significant role in teachers' performance on the job, commitment to the teaching profession, and keeping them in the workplace (Huysman, 2008; Ouyang & Paprock, 2006; Sargent & Hannum, 2009).

There have been a range of studies demonstrating the relations between teachers' job satisfaction and the context in which teaching takes place. For instance, Sargent and Hannum (2009) looked into teachers' job satisfaction in one of China's poorest area. Based upon the literature, they categorized the factors leading to satisfaction among teachers working in rural communities as *teacher characteristics, school environment,* and *community factors,* and tested their hypotheses accordingly. In consistency with their hypothesis related to teacher characteristics, the researchers found that younger and better-educated teachers were less satisfied with rural teaching. As regards the expectations about the effects of school environment, the results confirmed that teachers were more satisfied in schools with more resources and an organizational climate fostering personal and professional development as well as collaboration among colleagues. However, they were unexpectedly more satisfied with more workload. The researchers interpreted this as an indication that more satisfied teachers would be more engaged in working. Lastly, they found that the effects of community differed considerably from their earlier hypothesis. It was expected that teachers would have higher job satisfation in

less remote locales which had more opportunities and resources. However, they saw that the more alternative jobs through which they could earn more than teaching were available around them, the less satisfied teachers were in their jobs. In other words, as Sargent and Hannum pointed, "job satisfaction decreases as the modern sector develops and as teachers perceive more alternatives to teaching" (p. 203).

In another study, Haughney and Murphy (1982) sought the extent to which rural teachers in British Columbia were satisfied with the quality of their work life. They distributed a questionnaire to 528 rural teachers. Only 22 % were found moderately or highly satisfied with their jobs. The rural teachers were dissatisfied with many aspects of their work, among which society's perception of teaching, non-teaching duties, physical conditions and opportunities for professional development prevailed. However, the major sources of job satisfaction for rural teachers were also determined. These included professional autonomy, a sense of achievement, recognition of their work, relations with students, students' attitudes towards learning, relations with colleagues and in- school administrators. Based upon all these findings, the researchers suggested that teachers' self-esteem and professional affiliation were the primary contributors to rural teachers' level of overall job satisfaction.

In contrast, Huysman (2008) found that a great majority of rural teachers (nearly 85%) were satisfied and intended to remain teaching in the rural Florida school, where he analyzed teachers' beliefs and attitudes affecting job satisfaction. Confirming that multiple factors influence teachers' job satisfaction, Huysman indicated that *intrinsic satisfaction factors*, among which "security, activity, social service, variety, and ability utilization" prevailed, were the best predictors of overall job satisfaction, and that *extrinsic factors*, which included "recognition, company policies, opportunities for advancement, co-workers, and compensation" , were more likely to predict dissatisfaction (p. 35). Moreover, extrinsic factors were further related to the "role confusion" teachers faced while fulfilling their social roles within the community and professional roles as teachers since they were

generally not respected, discouraged because of the conflicting expectations placed on them, and in the case of the homegrown teachers, their returning to the district was not appreciated (p. 36) . However, it was underscored that job satisfaction factors had a greater role in transplanted teachers' decisions to leave the district. During the study, 17 of 56 transplanted teachers left the district because of at least two or more of the five extrinsic factors above, but only 2 of 29 homegrown teachers left because of personal relationships. Huysman underscored that;

> Commitment by investment was the position homegrown teachers used to explain that the rural lifestyle, being close to family, growing up and knowing people in the community, owning property, being vested in the retirement system, and their investment of years of service in the rural district created a situation that made leaving the district an unacceptable option (p. 36).

More recently, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) administered a questionnaire so as to explore the relations between school context variables and teachers' job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession. The researchers measured teachers' perceptions of six aspects of the school context, which are value consonance, supervisory support, relations with colleagues, relations with parents, time pressure, and discipline problems. The participants were 2569 Norwegian teachers in 127 elementary and middle schools. It was concluded that the impact of teachers' perception of the school context on their job satisfaction was mediated through teachers' feeling of belonging and emotional exhaustation.

In Turkey, Yılmaz and Izgar (2009) administered a study exploring the impacts of teachers' educational level, attending social activities, the number of the teachers at the same school, and organizational creativity on teachers' job satisfaction. The study was conducted with 298 teachers working at elementary schools in a city located in Central Turkey. The results showed that the teachers with higher level of education had more innovative expectations. Thus, the

researchers suggested "the same working conditions may lead to receive different reactions by teachers who have different levels of education" (p. 943). Moreover, the teachers attending social activities outside school had a higher level of job satisfaction. The less number of the teachers was, the higher job satisfaction the teacher had. In this regard, the researchers indicated that interpersonal relations between colleagues enhanced with the less number of people at the school. Lastly, organizational creativity appeared a significant predictor for teachers' job satisfaction. Hence, for a higher level of teachers' job satisfaction, the researchers suggested a school environment which would encourage teachers to take risks, produce, express freely, and employ new ideas.

Initial motivation to become a teacher may also determine the level of teachers' job satisfaction, and eventually their work at school. Flores and Day (2006) suggested that intrinsic motivation to become a teacher could have a role in keeping idealism alive under challenging circumstances. In order to understand how contextual factors shape teachers' attitudes and practices, they conducted a study with 14 teachers. According to the findings, extrinsic motivation had an important role for most of the participants. Only 2 of 14 referred to personal factors such as desire to teach and working with kids. The participants were also asked to comment on their teacher education programs. Only those who reported intrinsic motivation highly valued their university education and practice teaching at schools. Additionally, the findings showed that teachers' views of teaching and being a teacher were challenges as a consequence of real world experiences in different contexts. In this regard, most of the teachers (10 of 17) perceived their teaching as more traditional and teacher-centered. A variety of sources for the loss of idealism emerged. These included "individualism, not working as a team, lack of collaborative culture, low morale and commitment amongst teachers, and excessive bureacracy within teaching" (p. 229). However, 4 teachers did not follow these patterns and maintained their enthusiasm. 2 of these exceptional teachers seemed to have recovered their lost idealism and optimism during their second-year teaching in a more positive context. 2 other exceptional teachers were those who reported

intrinsic motivation at the very beginning. Hence, Flores and Day sugggested that pre-service programs provide opportunities to reflect upon personal biographies and school cultures, and ensure aspirations for high quality teaching and learning.

In short, teachers' job satisfaction is influenced by many factors, which may result in negative influences on teachers' relations within the school and community, motivation and performance in teaching, and future decision-making related to working at rural schools. Moroever, the literature brings to light that the factors affecting teachers' job satisfaction and their effects upon teachers' work and future decision-making can vary according to different attributes at the level of community, school, and individual. However, the previous research is very often limited to the beliefs and attitudes of teachers. Hence, they do not provide a deep understanding of the rural community and school effects. By understanding factors that contibute to teachers' job satisfaction, professional needs of rural teachers can be more accurately addressed. With this qualitative case study, how a beginning English language teacher feels about teaching at a rural elementary school in Central Turkey and how his teaching practices and future-decision making are shaped will be comprehensively explored.

2.2.2 Schools, Communities and Places

As mentioned in the previous part, teachers' level of job satisfaction and their perception and interpretation of their environment are influenced by the context in which teaching takes place, which eventually impacts on the quality of their teaching practices, future decision-making related to working at a rural school and professional development. However, this is a complex issue encompassing a wide range of dynamics. In order to reveal how teaching is influenced by cultural, social, institutional, and environmental factors, it is important to understand the interactions between schools, communities and places.

While it is becoming hard to make a clear distinction between rural and urban boundaries under the global economic, social and political circumstances, as Dewey (1960) indicated, the influences of rural and urban environments upon social organizations and individual behaviour remain important as geographical and cultural formations. Thus, there have been several studies to understand the interconnection between rural-urban distinctions and school learning. To begin with, Moll et al. (1992) explored the complex functions of households within their socio-historical contexts through a qualitative research. They coordinated three interrelated activities involving the etnographic analysis of household dynamics, the examination of classroom practices and the after-school study group discussions of teachers and researchers. This allowed a more sophisticated understanding of the students, their lives and how teachers could benefit from this knowledge. Additionally, Moll et al. suggested a brandnew term for teaching, "funds of knowledge", in defining the knowledge and skills that people used to make a living in their socio-historical contexts.

> Notice that household knowledge may include information about farming and animal management, associated with households' rural origins, or knowledge about construction and building, related to urban occupations, as well as knowledge about many other matters, such as trade, business, and finance on both sides of the border. We use the term "funds of knowledge" to refer to these historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being (p. 133).

More importantly, Moll et al. argued that there was a contradiction between students' social networks in their daily life and a typical student-teacher relationship at school. Within rural communities, a child usually has multiple relationships with the same person. For instance, the same person who the child learns crop planting can be actually the child's grandparent. Hence, relationships are decribed as "thick" and "multi-stranded". However, this is in contrast with the typical "thin" and

"single-stranded" student-teacher relationship, which makes teachers' knowledge about their students limited to their performance in the classroom (pp. 133-134). In this regard, Moll et al. highlighted " the classrooms seem encapsulated, if not isolated, from the social worlds and resources of the community ... In classrooms, teachers rarely draw on the resources of 'funds of knowledge' of child's world outside the context of the classroom" (p. 134). Therefore, students' funds of knowledge should not be underestimated as they are important sources for educational change.

The conditions and demands of schools differ from the daily life of a rural kid to an extent which leads to label them most of the time as academically "low-achievers" while indeed they have to deal with transitions between their different worlds. Phelan, Davidson and Cao (1991) described the interrelationships between students' family, peers and school worlds. They explored the strategies young people used to manage transitions between these worlds. For the purpose of the study, they interviewed teachers and students, observed classrooms and gathered student record data. Furthermore, they obtained demographic and decriptive information about students and their families. Based upon the analysis of all these data, they presented a model of four types for the complex interrelationships. However, they underscored that the nature of these interrrelationships were unstable, liable to be influenced by external factors and characterized in different ways by different students. The first type is *Congruent Worlds / Smooth Transitions* in which movement from one to another setting was harmonious and uncomplicated because family, peer and teacher expectations are identical (p. 229). The second type is *Different Worlds / Boundary Crossings Managed*. In this type, adjustment and reorientation are required because family, peer and school worlds are different. However, students are able to manage boundary crossings and adapt to different settings – though not easy at all because, as the researchers stated for a case, "in so doing, she must hide a part of who she is" (p. 237). The third type is *Different Worlds / Boundary Crossings Hazardous*. It also refers to distinct family, peer and school worlds; however, students' multiple worlds are oppositional to one another

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rather than simply different. The last type is *Borders Impenetrable / Boundary Crossings Insurmountable*. The researchers explained the reason that crossings seemed impossible in this type with the following words; "when border crossings attempted, it is frequently so painful that, over time, these students develop reasons and rationales to protect themselves against further stress" (p. 240).

Moreover, Phelan, Davidson and Cao (1991) expanded on how these four types influenced school life, learning achievements and teachers' perspectives. Accordingly, they stated that teachers usually described those students in the first two types (Congruent *Worlds / Smooth Transition* and *Different Worlds / Boundary Crossings Managed)* as unproblematic and academically successful. On the other hand, for those in the third (*Different Worlds / Boundary Crossings Hazardous*) and fourth (*Borders Impenetrable / Boundary Crossings Insurmountable*), school success appeared to be primarily depended upon teachers. The students were perceived as low achievers and teachers were not very often aware of what their problems were. However, the study suggested that caring teachers might play a key role and lead to positive outcomes because students might prefer to concentrate on their school and learning achievement when they were locked in conflicts with their families and peers.

Educational practices which aim to tie the realities of place to formal instruction are important efforts to enhance student engagement. However, there is another extension of the place-based education for rural communities. While it is believed that improved quality of education is essential for overall well-being of rural communities, rural students aspiring for higher education and success in the world of modern economy rarely return and they are likely to give up their cultural heritage (Howley, Harmon and Leopold, 1996). As Gibbs said:

> For many rural places, the loss of young adults who attend college is the primary agent of human capital change. Instead, for rural counties, the connection between education and migration presents a dilemma; do they

educate their children well, only to have them leave? (1998, p. 61 as cited in Azano, 2011, p. 1).

Concerning this paradox of rural education, Azano (2011) investigated whether it was possible to promote the relevance of education while at the same time affirming the value of the place. For the purpose of the study, she identified an eight grade class at a high school in the United States, observed an English language teacher, and interviewed him and a few of his students. She suggested that place could be a relevant vehicle for promoting critical literacy skills and enable to transform education in a way that transcend the classroom activities and deepen rural students' understanding of place and its meaning in their lives.

The literature shows that benefitting an understanding of 'funds of knowledge', and 'multiple worlds' as well as providing 'place-based instruction', well-qualified teachers can forge relevant connections to rural students' schooling. However, the problem for rural schools starts from the very beginning. Many teachers do not desire to work in rural settings. More specifically, Huysman (2007) indicated that teaching positions in rural schools were not the first choice of new teachers even with positive efforts by schools to attract them. The research reveals that teachers' background, how they identify themselves with the rural and even society's perception of rural teaching can be also counted among the important factors. To illustrate, Howley, Harmon and Leopold (1996) pointed that although teachers wished to value sense of place, they faced negative stereotypes of living in rural settings, or places where people who live are perceived "left behind" (p. 152). While the researchers described the situation in rural America, the argument may also be extended to other contexts, where highly educated people are not expected to live or work in rural settings. Besides, Campbell and Yates (2011) proposed *metrocentricity*, or personal identification with the city, as a trait inhibiting teachers from considering themselves as potential rural teachers. They articulated that the idea of city-centredness could be viewed as one type of self-schema, derived from

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past experiences and determining personal preferences. Self-schemata, as they explained:

... effectively predict how people describe themselves, how they recall and structure their experiences, how they react to information, how they assign values and make choices, and the nature of their intentions concerning the future (p. 10).

Campbell and Yates raised the question "what might induce these individuals to consider themselves as future country teachers?" (p. 2). They concluded that individuals who were able to list more positive features of rural teaching were more willing to work at rural schools. Hence, they suggested that it could be possible to encourage prospective teachers through changing the way in which they perceive the advantages of becoming a rural teacher.

Goodnough and Mulcahy (2011) also indicated, "the advantages and disadvantages of rural life have the same source and much depends on how the individual perceives the context and situation" (p. 200). For instance, while rural places provide a safer, quieter and healtier lifestyle, for those who search for a range of facilities as in urban places, rural settings can be restrictive. Furthermore, rural communities, where everyone knows everyone else, enjoy a strong sense of social solidarity. While knowing the members of the community and their way of life can provide teachers a better understanding of their students' needs, the lack of privacy can be frustrating. Goodnough and Mulcahy pointed "Newcomers may find the curiosity of the locals somewhat intrusive and the inevitable gossip annoying" (p. 201).

Exploring the reasons that lead teachers to remain for an extended period of time in rural settings has also revealed supporting evidence. Boylan and McSwan (1998) administered a survey with 427 primary or secondary school teachers who had been teaching in Riverina region of New South Wales for at least 6 years and

not seeking a depart during the following year. The analysis revealed three contributing variables; biographical, work-related, and rural lifestyle. Indeed, the researchers described "There emerged a profile of a professionally satisfied, community integrated, family-oriented teacher who enjoyed the rural lifestyle and environment" (p. 49). The teachers' biographical information appeared a significant predictor for their long-staying. On average, teachers had been teaching for 11 years at the same rural school. Moreover, 72.3 % of them had experienced rural lifestyle in their own upbringing and a great majority of the primary school teachers had attended a rural teacher education institution before. Therefore, the researchers suggested that administrators consider teachers' biographical information in their selection process of staff to rural schools.

In short, the literature shows that the interaction between schools, communities and places is a complex phenomenon. Teachers' personal preferences, experiences and traits differentiate their perception and interpretation of the context in which their teaching is embedded and their attitudes towards living and working in rural settings. Believing the importance of understanding this complexity for improving rural education, this thesis study aims to explore how distinct entities interact with each another in the case of English language teaching at a rural elementary school in Turkey, with a focus on a beginning English language teacher's background, future aspirations and teaching practices.

2.2.3 Teacher Education and Development

Another important issue related to rural education is teacher education for rural schools and professional development of rural teachers. There is a general consensus among scholars that traditional teacher education does not prepare teachers attuned to the needs of rural education (Champbell & Yates, 2011; Hudson and Hudson, 2008).

In Turkey, pre-service teacher education programs are under the governance of Higher Education Council (HEC), which is responsible for organizing and supervising all higher education institutions in Turkey. In 2006-2007 academic year, the council made a reform and introduced the recent English language teacher education program (Çoşkun & Daloğlu, 2010). The undergraduate level program lasts four years (except for one-year English preparation class in addition to the actual program) and consists of a variety of courses including language courses (e.g. contextual grammar, advanced reading and writing, oral communication skills), linguistic and literature courses, and professional courses (both English language teaching methodology and general education courses as well as practice teaching and school experience courses). Besides, in order to meet teacher shortages, certificate programs and distance education opportunities are also offered. For teachers' professional development, Ministry of National Education organize seminars and in-service teacher education workshops for English language teachers working at public schools. Both pre- and in- service teacher education, however, are criticized for being irrelevant to local needs of English language teachers in Turkey. Indeed, the researchers suggested that teacher education programs consider teaching in specific situated contexts and prepare teachers for the immediate needs of their local context (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011; Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). Kumaravadivelu (2001) also expanded on the importance of local with these words:

> All pedagogy, like all politics is local. To ignore local exigencies is to ignore lived experiences. Pedagogies that ignore lived experiences will ultimately prove to "so disturbing for those affected by them – so threatening to their belief systems – that hostility is aroused and learning becomes impossible" (p. 539).

Many challenges compromise the quality of education for rural schools. Therefore, White and Reid (2008) underscored the need for well-prepared teachers who had a sophisticated understanding of the link between the classroom and the community in rural areas. For this, they said that teacher education programs needed

to transcend a classroom focus only and to have a holistic view of the rural community for successful preparation for teaching in rural areas. Since he also did not believe university-initiated education adequate to prepare quality teachers for everyone, Zeichner (2003) added that traditional teacher education model did not have a connection to social justice and equity issues. He articulated:

> What needs to happen though, especially with teacher research and other forms of genuine teacher development, is for teachers to extend their inquiries to consider how their actions challenge and support the access to and achievement of a high quality education by all students (p. 14).

"Place consciousness", as White and Reid (2008) put forth, enables teachers to understand the context in which their teaching is embedded, thereby developing teachers' confidence in their skills and knowledge to teach in rural settings. Place consciousness pedagoies are also important as they seek to raise awareness beyond the immediate and the local with a sense of the relationship of the local to the global (p. 6). Furthermore, White and Reid proposed "a multiple learning space approach" for teacher education. It acknowledges and values each space in which student teachers are engaged as a part of their teacher education preparation such as university lectures, school classroom, local parks, interactions with the rural community and school students instead of privileging classroom only. Hence, the researchers pointed "focused attention to the relationship in and between places can better prepare pre-service teachers in rural and metropolitan teacher education settings to enter and work in places that are different from their own" (pp. 8-9).

The professional development of teachers in rural settings also requires attention. Even when rural schools are staffed to requirements, as Alston and Kent (2006) indicated, "there are fewer experienced teachers to guide new graduates and beginning teachers" (p. 192). Newly-graduate teachers tend to be recruited to rural schools. Older teachers who marry and want to raise children would rather settle down in cities. Furthermore, the research shows that teachers who live far from their

schools before beginning the job are more likely to transfer to another place or quit (Boyd et al., 2005). Beginning teachers replace these teachers who move towards urban places. On the one hand, rural schools offer " a relatively stress-free environment" for a beginning teacher since discipline and organization problems are believed to be fewer (Belay et al., 2007, p. 670). On the other hand, given the challenges and complexity of rural teaching, these teachers also begin their profession in an isolated "sink-or-swim" environment. They have very often difficulty finding professional with whom they can share their experiences, problems and exchange ideas for improving their teaching in early phases of their profession. So, how do teachers develop in rural settings and what factors contibute to this process of development? Concerning thes questions, Belay et al. (2007) administered a study in rural Eritrea. They monitored a small group of beginning teachers over a period of four years. General findings brought to light that beginning teachers were influenced by several factors, some of which appeared to be universal and others more local. Hence, they suggested that an in-service support would only be successful if carried out with also giving place to the local knowledge and teachers' hard-won experiences instead of only relying upon the arguments based on educators' or mentors' universalist knowledge.

Concerned with the preparation of quality teachers for everyone, many faculties of education started to replace the traditional transmission model of teacher education with a community-based model in which teachers combine university-based theory and teaching experience gained at schools from different contexts, reflect upon their practices and exchange ideas (Goodnough & Mulcahy, 2011). More recently, with the developments in technology and the new understanding in teacher education, there has appeared a growing interest in finding alternative ways for teacher preparation and development. These developments can serve to mitigate the isolation of rural teachers who do not have easy access to professional support due to social and economic constraints. In this regard, the use of Internet Communication Tools (ICT) in teacher education and the existence of online professional learning communities are important innovations as they are more

accessible and flexible for teachers and teachers in various settings. There have been also some studies conducted in order to reveal their effectiveness in both pre- and in- service teacher education (e.g. Liu, 2011; Salazar et al., 2010). However, it is not apparent to what extent these are applicable and relevant to and what tools and supports are most needed by rural English language teachers in Turkey. In order to prepare quality teachers for rural schools, provide professional support or offer alternative ways of development in Turkey, it is pre-eminent to clarify what challenges beginning English language teachers face and what they need for better teaching within the rural community with a realistic and comprehensive perspective.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

3.0 Presentation

The primary goal of the study is to understand how a beginning English language teacher is influenced by the rural context in which his teaching is embedded and how a rural elementary school and its community situate first year of English teaching in Central Turkey. In order to achieve this goal, a qualitative case study was conducted. The case studies provide culturally specific and contextually rich data. In this regard, Yin (2009) presented a twofold definition of case studies. Accordingly, the first part began with the scope of a case study:

    1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that

        a. investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when

        b. the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

The second part, however, was more related to other technical characteristics including data collection and analysis strategies:

    2. The case study inquiry

        a. copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result

        b. relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result

        c. benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositons to guide data collection and analysis (p. 18).

As Moll et al. (1992) suggested, a qualitative case study ought to be administered in order to deal with the complexity of rural education. In this regard, the researchers said "Qualitative research offers a range of methodological alternatives that can fathom the array of cultural and intellectual resources available to students and teachers within households" (p. 132). However, there are many types of case studies. In this study, the design of an explanatory, single case study was followed since they are characterised by "how" and "why" research questions, address more complex research issues, and seek to explain why certain behaviours have occurred, their causes and effects, in a particular setting (Yin, 2009).

Bearing all these in mind, the required data were obtained by means of multiple methods including observations, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and a small-scale open-ended questionnaire. Besides, the documents and artifacts demonstrating the students' school success in general and more specifically their performance in English were also collected. Using various kinds of methods and data enabled the researcher to analyze the research questions from multiple perspectives and to provide the minimization of bias, to check and establish reliability and validity in this qualitative case study (Golafshani, 2003). Moreover, triangulation by data sources (including persons; teachers, administrators, parents and students) enabled the corroboration of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.1 Research Setting: The Village School

Snowflake[1] Elementary School, Raindrop[2] , Turkey

Snowflake Elementary School was first built in 1955 with 2 classrooms, 1 teachers' room, 1 toilet and 1 storehouse for coal. In 1973, 2 classrooms and 1 public housing were also added to them and education went on in these buildings until the 2002-2003 academic year. In 2002-2003, they started to use the two-storey

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[1] *Snowflake* is the pseudonym used instead of the village's actual name in order to protect anonymity.

[2] *Raindrop* is the pseudonym used instead of the city's actual name.

new school built in the same area including 12 classrooms, a computer and technology lab. There are approximately 150 students from the village enrolled in the school. In the past, there were also a few students who would bus to the school from the small villages around. Furthermore, there are 1 school principal, 1 vice principal, 11 teachers and 3 caretakers working at the school. The classrooms for the first 5 years are located on the ground and the classrooms for the last 3 years are located on the first floor in the school. Additionally, except the grade 4 class, the classrooms are not equipped with a computer and a projector. Below is a layout of a sample classroom observed during the study.
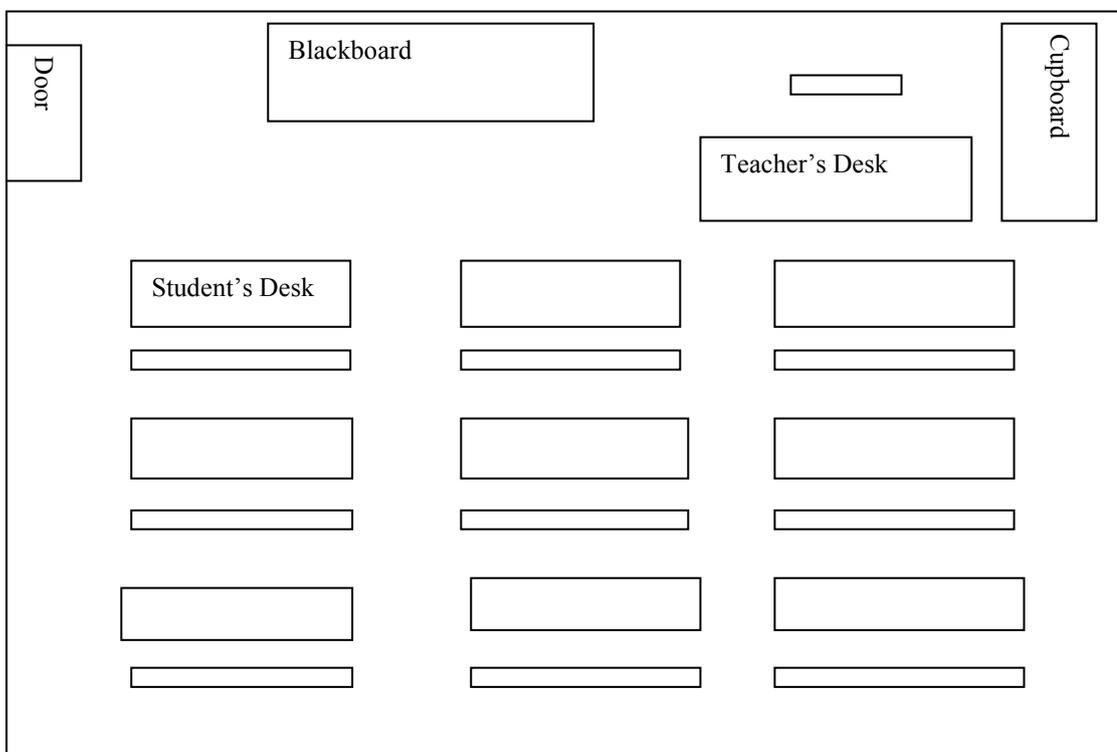
Figure 1. The layout of a sample classroom observed during the study.

The school also has a meeting hall with a computer and a projector. The hall is also allowed to be used in the lessons since the classrooms are not equipped. In addition, the hall is also used as the library. The teachers spent their break time at the school in the teachers' room. They usually drink tea or coffee and talk about the news on the TV or the newspapers that are brought by the teachers themselves early

in the morning. There is also a computer in the room. Moreover, there is a photocopy machine through which the teachers photocopy their notes, multiple choice tests, or exams. Besides, there is not a canteen or or a cafeteria at the school. For lunch, the teachers themselves usually cook and eat in the teachers' room.

3.2 Research Setting: The Village and Its People

Snowflake was a small place in the east of central Raindrop and just 6-7 km away from the city centre. According to the law no. 5747 'Establishing Districts in the Borders of Metropolitan Municipalities and Making Amendments in Some Laws' accepted in 2008, the place became a village to be valid with the first local elections. However, since its request to join the related provincial or district as a neighbourhood was accepted (considering its proximity to the centre was less than 10 km as stated in the law), Snowflake took part in the first local elections in 2009 as a neighbourhood. Even though it is not recognized as a village in the official documents any more, it did not lose anything from its natural characteristics.

There are approximately 350 houses and 1000 people in the village. Most of the people make their living from agriculture and animal husbandry. There are also a small number of people who are civil servants (such as specialist sergeant, municipal official, etc.) or workers. The buildings are similar to shanties although there are few reinforced-concrete houses built in the last 5-10 years. The people usually live in nuclear families including a mother, father and children; however, their houses are still very close to their relatives, parents and siblings. The parents are generally graduate of the 5-year compulsory elementary school, and a few of them are at best graduate of high school. There are also illiterate parents. In the village, the boys, if they continue, go to vocational high schools. Otherwise, they start to work as an apprentice at cafes or small shops. As for the girls, some might start a high school; however, most of them usually get married off at a young age.

For this qualitative case study, Snowflake was purposefully selected. Two major factors played key roles in deciding on this setting. The first one is easy access to the place. Since the researcher lived and worked in Raindrop, she was able to conduct the study for an extended period of time in the research setting, which is essential to achieve the objectives of this qualitative case study. The second one is that community trust has already been established, which is also very important for qualitative case studies. It is the researcher's own hometown and she was an old student of the village school for four years. Hence, the people were not uncomfortable with her presence. Instead, they were enthusiastic about the study.

3.3 Participants

In this qualitative case study, the primary participant is the English language teacher working at the rural school selected by the researcher. However, focusing on teachers only is not a sufficient way to reveal how schools and their communities situate English language education and how the rural context influenced a teacher's professional identity and teaching practices. Therefore, some other participants holding different roles in this context were also involved in the study. The other participants included the school administrators, the teachers other than the English language teacher, the students and the parents. Besides, the researcher herself was the only one interacting with all the participants for the purpose of data collection.

3.3.1 English Language Teacher

In rural settings, there are usually very few students. Thus, rural schools need very few teachers in number when compared to larger, urban schools. Consequently, there is only one, if any, teacher from every field such as maths, language or science. Sometimes, rural schools also employ teachers from different fields of expertise or substitute teachers so as to fill vacancies. The school that the research was conducted in also did not have a permanent English language teacher. Before the 2011-2012 academic year, there was one female English language teacher.

Moreover, she was one of the villagers and the researcher's cousin, which also made it possible to have detailed information about her biography, teaching experience and decision to depart from the school. She had transferred to this school from a neighbouring city in Central Turkey, where she had began her teaching career and taught for 5 years. Upon her decision to move back to her hometown city, she accepted the open position in Snowflake as she had already known the place. Moreover, she worked in Snowflake for almost 3 years. However, at the beginning of this year, she asked for her appointment and transferred to an elementary school much closer to her house in the centre. After she left, a new permanent teacher was not immediately appointed to the school. Thus, Provincial Directorate of National Education assigned a temporary teacher among those who applied for a position.

The English language teacher, Eray[3], is a temporary teacher recruited to this rural elementary school, Snowflake. He is a graduate of English language and literature program at one of the state universities in Turkey. However, he holds a teaching certificate as he also attended pedagogical formation courses in the third year of his undergraduate program offered by his own university. Eray is 24 years old, single and a beginning teacher. He graduated from the university in May, 2011. Actually, he could have graduated one-year earlier considering that he had started the four-year program in 2006. Yet, he could not finish because of his health problem. He could not go to the school in the fall semester of his second year. Moreover, since he already extended his graduation, he decided to go abroad with Erasmus exhange program in his last year. He stayed in Romania for 6 months.

This is Eray's first year in teaching. Upon his graduation, he took State Employee Selection Exam. However, he could not be recruited to a public school in Turkey because he did not score high enough. In Turkey, all teachers who want to work at a public elementary or secondary school have to take this licensure exam. With the results of this exam, teachers are allowed to make 24 choices of schools. Moreover, there is also one more option in which teachers can let the administration

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[3] *Eray* is the pseudonym used instead of the English language teacher's actual name.

send them anywhere in case they are not placed in one of those schools they have opted voluntarily. However, Eray did not check this option. Instead, he decided to apply for a temporary position in Raindrop and study for the forthcoming exam.

This is briefly how Eray began to work as an English language teacher at Snowflake Elementary School and be involved in this qualitative case study. In the following chapter, his biographical information is presented in a more detailed way.

3.3.2 Other Teachers

Excluding the English language teacher, there were 10 teachers from different fields of expertise currently working at the same school. Considering that the researcher monitored Eray's all activities and interactions, the other teachers were also directly or indirectly involved. However, the researcher also interviewed specifically four of them. The researcher selected these four teachers based upon her observations and the other teachers' recommendations. Table 2 displays briefly the information pertaining to them.

Table 2
Information about the other teachers involved in the study

Order	Teaching Expertise	Years of Teaching	Gender
1	Science	13	Male
2	Social Studies	33	Male
3	Classroom	11	Male
4	Technology and Design	6	Female

First, the researcher interviewed the science teacher. He has been teaching at Snowflake Elementary School for more than ten years. Interestingly, he was the researcher's old science teacher as well as the English language and the physcial education teacher all at the same time when she was a student at this school ten years ago because the researcher and her class did not have an English language or a physcial education teacher separately. He does not teach English any more, but he is still a substitute teacher for physical education course at the school. Teacher 1 began

his teaching career in Snowflake. However, he moved to a school in another city in order to fulfill his compulsory teaching service. In Turkey, teachers have to fulfill this service if they work at a public school. Otherwise, they are sent to a compulsory area by the administration and not allowed to work at a certain place without completing this service. This is policy so as to place teachers also in very disadvantaged areas in Turkey. Still, teachers have the right to move back to a place where their spouse works or they attend a postgraduate program. Since his wife was working in Raindrop at that time, he came back very soon. Moreover, his position at the school was still available. However, he indicated that he wanted to leave the school and start teaching at a school in the centre. He said he also made some attempts, applied for his appointment, but he has not been recruited to the school he wanted. Thus, he is still teaching in Snowflake, but he believes he will leave soon.

Next, the researcher interviewed another experienced teacher who had been teaching for more than ten years in Snowflake. He is the social studies teacher and also a substitute teacher for the religion course. This is his 33rd year in teaching. He began his teaching career in a neigbouring city of Raindrop and also worked in the Black Sea region. Afterwards, he came to Raindrop and worked in different schools and finally stayed in Snowflake. He was also one of her old teachers. He could be assigned wherever he wanted easily because of his teaching experience. However, he indicated that he did not want to transfer to another school in the centre as opposed to Teacher 1. Briefly, he said he did not want to leave the rural school because he came to his last years in teaching and he was of the opinion that he could not get along with the people at an urban school any more. Briefly, Teacher 1 and 2 were the most experienced teachers at the school. They knew the place, the students and the community quite well. Therefore, they were selected as they would provide invaluable information about working as a teacher in Snowflake, the interactions between the school and the community and the importance of schooling and English for the rural kids in this village.

Then, the researcher interviewed one of the classroom teachers. He is the classroom teacher of the 4th grade students. The researcher selected him because he could be entitled to be a special, idealist teacher. This was observable from his classroom. It is the only classroom which has a computer, projector and white board at the school. He has even installed Internet connection to his classroom recently. The researcher learnt the reason for this roughly from the English language teacher and then talked with him about its details. He has been the classroom teacher of the 4th grade from the students' very first day in their 1st year at the school. The school had a projector in the meeting hall and the computer lab on the second floor. However, there was not a projector in his classroom on the first floor as there were not any in all the other classrooms. He had a disabled girl in his class. In their first years, he told me that he was able to take her in her arms to the second floor. However, as she grew up, she started to gain weight. Thus, it became hard for him to carry her. He tried hard to solve this problem talking with the school administrators, parents and some institutions and unions so that they could buy a projector for his classroom, instead of simply giving up the idea of using a projector, and succeeded in the end. Hence, Teacher 3 is a good example of an idealist and caring teacher at the school.

This is the 10th year of Teacher 3 in teaching. He started his teaching career as a temporary teacher in Raindrop. Interestingly, he taught English at an elementary school during this period. Then, he was recruited to a school in Eastern Turkey. A year later, he transferred to a school in a neighbouring city of Raindrop located in Central Turkey because his wife was appointed to a school in this city. After 4 years, he finally came to Snowflake Elementary School. This is his 4th year at the school. However, he intends to transfer to another school in the city centre after his 4th grade students finished the 5th grade in the following year. In Turkey, classroom teachers usually take a class from the 1st grade to the end of the 5th grade at elementary education. Teacher 3 does not want to leave his pupils until they finish the 5th grade because he has made a great effort for them since their 1st grade.

Finally, the researcher interviewed the technology and design teacher. She wanted to hear a female teacher's thoughs about working at a rural school, as well. This is one of the reasons that the researcher selected her. Moreover, the teacher had also worked in another rural setting which was in much worse conditions and thus had invaluable experience. Therefore, the other teachers recommended the researcher to have an interview with her. This is her 6th year in teaching. Previously, she had worked in a village in Eastern Turkey for 3 years. Then, she came to Raindrop, but to a further school than Snowflake Elementary School. Finally, she came to this school this year. However, she also goes to another school because she cannot complete her compulsory teaching hours at this school only. Besides, Teacher 4 reported that she would ask to be appointed to a school in the centre after she completed at least two more years here. She must continue teaching here so that she can collect more points enough to be appointed to such a school in Turkey. Many teachers prefer working in the centre. Hence, she has to collect high points with her years of teaching, certificates and achievements.

3.3.3 School Administrators

The school climate established and the support provided by school administrators have important impacts upon teachers' work, job satisfaction, and commitment to the school. Believing this idea, the school administrators are also involved in this study. There are a school principal and a vice principal working at the school. Both the school principal and the vice principal have started working here recently because of the rotation law regulated by the Ministry of National Education. According to this law, school administrators who have been working at the same school for five or more than five years are supposed to be appointed to another school. Therefore, the school principal asked for his appointment and came to Snowflake Elementary School in 2010. Previously, he had worked as a school principal for six years at another school in Raindrop. Moreover, he had worked as a classroom teacher in different schools before becoming a school principal. As regards the vice principal, he was appointed to the school at the beginning of this

2011-2012 academic year. Previously, he was a vice principal at another school in Raindrop. Moreover, he had also worked as a classroom teacher at elementary schools located in different cities of Turkey for almost 20 years. In addition, both the school principal and the vice principal are familiar with rural settings as they grew up with such a social environment and also taught at rural schools.

The following chapter presents the detailed information about the interviews, their thoughts and experiences about teaching as a profession in rural settings, the school, and the place of English as a foreign language in Snowflake.

3.3.4 Students

In order to reveal the students' thoughts about English language education and the beginning English language teacher, a small-scale open-ended questionnaire was distributed to the students at all grades taking English as a compulsory subject in their curriculum during their class hours. Excluding those absent students on the day that the questionnaire was conducted in their classroom, 74 students participated in the study. Table 3 below shows class sizes, gender distribution and the number of the participants from each grade. However, gender influence was not investigated in this study because the purpose was only to reveal overall student views about the English lesson and their English language teacher's practices.

Table 3
Information about the student participants in this study

Grade	Class Size	Gender Distribution		The Number of the Participants
		Male	Female	
4th Grade	**17**	10	7	**17**
5th Grade	**19**	11	8	**17**
6th Grade	**22**	9	13	**18**
7th Grade	**14**	8	6	**13**
8th Grade	**11**	6	5	**9**

3.3.5 Parents

The interviews with 6 parents were also conducted. The parents were selected after consulting the school administrators and the teachers at the school. First, the purpose was to sample parents with different educational background. Second, the researcher wanted to hear not only caring but also the parents who were identified as indifferent so that she could figure out possible factors that differentiated one from another. Lastly, the researcher tried to include both mother and father participants. In the end, she was able to interview 2 fathers and 4 mothers as the participants. Table 4 below shows the demographic information of the participants involved in this study.

Table 4.

Demographic information of the parents involved in the study

Parents		Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5	Parent 6
Interviewee		Father	Father	Mother	Mother	Mother	Mother
Educational Background	Father	ES(5+3); HS	ES (5+3)	ES(5+3); HS	X	Illiterate	ES (5)
	Mother	ES (5)	ES (5 + 3 DE); HS (DE)	ES (5)	ES (5)	ES (5)	ES (5)
Occupation	Father	Worker	Worker	_____	Worker	(Disabled)	Shepherd
	Mother	Housewife	Housewife	Housewife	Housewife	Housewife	Housewife
Other Sources of Income		Agriculture; Animal Husbandry	_____	Agriculture; Animal Husbadry	_____	Disability Pension; Children's Salary	_____
Children	Female	1	3	4	1	_____	1
	Male	1	_____	1	2	3	1 (+ 1)

Note: The abbreviations are as followings: ES (Elementary School); HS (High School); DE (Distance Education); X (Unknown). The numbers in between the parenthesis by ES show the years that the parents completed at elementary school before 8-year elementary education was mandated and 5-year elementary and 3-year secondary school were integrated into a single stream. As regard the '+1', even though Parent 6 has only one son, the number was indicated as 1+1 as she also raises her brother in law, at the same age with her own son.

The first parent is a graduate of high school in Raindrop. Previously, he also went to Snowflake Elementary School. However, at that time, he had to attend another school in the centre for the last 3 years of the elementary education before the high school. His wife is a graduate of elementary school in another village in Raindrop because she is not from Snowflake. The father is a worker. Before the village turned to a neighbourhood according to the law 'Establishing Districts in the Borders of Metropolitan Municipalities and Making Amendments in Some Laws' accepted in 2008, he was working in the municipality. Now, he is one of the caretakers at the village school. The mother is a housewife. Moreover, they contribute to their living through agriculture and animal husbandry. They have two kids. The daughter was an 8th grade student and the son was a 4th grade student.

The second parent is a graduate of elementary school including both the first 5 and the last 3 years. For the first 5 years, he went to the school in the village selected as the research setting. However, he had to attend another school for the last 3 years. His wife also attended Snowflake Elementary School for the first 5 years. Moreover, he helped his wife complete the last 3 years of the elementary education through distance education. He indicated that she was trying to get a high school degree through distance education. The father is a worker. He works at building sites. As for the mother, she is a housewife. They have three daughters, two of whom are twins and 3rd grade students. The oldest daughter is an 8th grade student.

The third parent is an elementary school graduate, too – though only the first 5 years. She went to the school in the village. However, her husband is a high school graduate. He also went to the school in Snowflake for the first 5 years and completed the last 3 years in the centre. Then, he attended a vocational high school in Raindrop. They make their living through agriculture and animal husbandry only. They have five children, 4 daughters and 1 son. The first two daughters are married. One of them is a graduate of elementary school. The other is a graduate of high school. However, the third daughter is a student at the Department of Public Finance at a state university in Western Turkey. The mother said that she started the school

in the village and continued here until the end of the 4th grade and then moved to an urban school so as to complete her elementary education. Moreover, she also went to a high school in the centre of Raindrop. The fourth daughter is a 4th grade student at the school in Snowflake. As regards the son, he is working as an apprentice at a shop and trying to complete a vocational high school through distance education.

The fourth parent is also an elementary school graduate, only the first 5 years. Since she was from another village in Raindrop, she indicated that she attended the elementary school in her own village. As regard her husband, Parent 4 said he graduated from Snowflake Elementary School for the first 5 years, but she did not know much about the rest of his educational background. She did not have an idea about whether he went to a high school. She is a housewife. Her husband is a worker at Refinery. Although they also have a cow, she said they fed it for milk only, not for the purpose of making a living. They have three children, 1 daughter and 2 sons. The daughter is a 6th grade student. The younger son is a student at kindergarten and the older one is an 8th grade student at the village school.

The fifth parent also graduated from the first 5 years only. However, her husband never attended a school and he is illiterate because he is disabled from birth. They make their living with the father's disability pension paid once three months. They have three sons. The older one was an industrial worker and contibuting to the family income. However, he is on his military service now and thus he cannot earn money for a while. The other one is 17 years old. He also works in the industry. Moreover, he is trying to graduate from high school through distance education. Finally, the youngest is a 6th grade student at the village school.

The last parent is also a graduate of the first 5-year elementary school only. Similarly, her husband also completed the first 5 years only. He is a shepherd and they make their living in this way only. They have two children, 1 son and 1 daughter. Her son is a 5th grade student and her daughter is a 2nd grade student at the school in Snowflake. In addition, Parent 6 also takes care of her brother in law, who

is at the same age with her own son. The reason for this is that his father (or the sixth parent's father in law) died and his mother is disabled and not in a condition that she can take care of him alone. This kid is also a 5th grade student.

3.4 Emic and Etic Standpoints

The neogolisms of 'emic' and 'etic' were coined by American linguist antropologis Pike (1954) from the distinction and the suffixes of the linguistic terms 'phonemic' and 'phonetic'. In their original meanings, phonemic refers to the examination of sounds for their meaning-bearing roles in a particular language while phonetic is related to the scientific study of universal speech sounds. In applying emics and etics to the interpretation of human behaviour and cultural systems, researchers can take an insider or outsider point of view. In Pike's view, the relationship between emics and etics is dynamic, and neither is more important than the other. According to Xia (2010), "Both concepts provide a way of discriminating between various types of data for the study of cultural phenomena" (p. 77).

Basically, the emic approach seeks to discover and describe the native principles of classification and conceptualization from within each cultural system. Hence, an emic-standpoint is culturally-specific. The ultimate goal of the researcher here is to penetrate as deeply as possible into the culture and gain the greatest insight. In contrast, the etic approach is used for cross-cultural understanding. The researcher is primarily concerned with generalized classifications derived in advance of the study. While some studies heavily rely upon one approach over the other, many scholars, who regard emic and etic perspectives as the endpoints of a continuum, are on the side of integrating both according to the stages of a research program (Morris et al., 1999). To illustrate, emic insights about a culture could be useful in refining etic explanations in conclusion. Especially in fieldwork studies, as Xia (2010) said, the applications of the emic-etic distinction are more relevant and practicable. He expands on how both standpoints play a role in a fieldwork study:

With a well-designed fieldwork plan, an ethnographer usually spends an extensive period of time in a group of people, observing their daily routines and thoughts. The cultural norms and behavioral patterns of the group are synthesized based upon the researcher's recordings and observations of what the natives have expressed in verbal and motion forms alongside his or her knowledge and understanding of cultural norms and behavioral patterns from the generation of other previous investigations and even his or her own culture (p. 78).

In this study, the researcher has both emic and etic standpoints. She is one of the local people who grew up in Snowflake. Both of her parents are also from the village. The researcher and her family lived in Snowflake until she completed her first grade at elementary school. Afterwards, they moved to the city centre and the researcher enrolled in an urban school this time. The researcher experienced the difference between these two schools on the very first day of her education at this new school when her teacher tested the researcher's reading ability and she struggled a lot to utter a few words. The researcher's brother also experienced similar things. He started his first year at this urban school when the researcher was a 6ᵗʰ grade student. After two months, however, they moved back to Snowflake and attended the school here. Although the researcher's brother already learnt how to read and write, they saw that the kids in his class at the village school were not still able to do so. The researcher completed her elementary education here and started high school in Raindrop. The researcher's family also decided to enroll her brother in a 'successful' urban public school in the centre of Raindrop before he started his fourth grade, which coincided the year the researcher started high school. However, this time he had to take private courses so that he could keep up with his classmates because he still had some problems with very basic skills. Having finished my high school, the researcher went to university. Throughout her four-year undergraduate program, the researcher stayed at a dormitory located in the campus. However, she came home every weekend, or every other weekend if she could not come at all. Meanwhile, they continued to live in the village. Finally, they moved to the centre

of the city when the researcher graduated and started her job. Still, they visit their home in Snowflake very often. Moreover, they have a lot of relatives and friends, which also connects them to the village.

In short, the researcher was one of the villagers and an old student who knew the place and the school well enough from the point of the local people's or insider's view as well as a student who experienced urban education, an English language teacher (although she did not have such a role in the research setting, this also impacted upon my perception and interpretation of the English language teacher's beliefs and practices) and a researcher looking into her village and school from the point of an outsider's view. Therefore, it was not possible for the researcher to mention an etic-approach only. Furthermore, this would keep her at a distance from the participants and inhibit the researcher from understanding how various elements are related and function within a particular culture. The penalty of ignoring emic-etic distinction was best described by Sapir, which also supports why an emic perspective was needed in this study.

> It is impossible to say what an individual is doing unless we have tacitly accepted the essential arbitrary models of interpretation that social tradition is constantly suggesting to us from the very moment of our birth. Let anyone who doubts this try the experiment of making a painstaking report of the actions of a group of natives engaged in some activity, say religious, to which he has not the cultural key. If he is a skillful writer, he may succeed in giving a picturesque account of what he sees and hears, or thinks he sees and hears, but the chances of his being able to give a relation of what happens, in terms that would be intelligible and acceptable to the natives themselves, are practically nil. He will be quilty of all manner of distortion; his emphasis will be constrantly askew (1985, pp. 546-547).

3.5 Data Collection

It did not take a long time for the people to get used to the researcher's presence in the research setting. The researcher was one of the villagers and the school was her old school. The science and social studies teachers were her old teachers. The others had also heard about her from them and the previous English language teacher, who was the researcher's cousin. Some of the students knew the researcher because they were either her relatives or neighbours in the village. Some also recognized her easily at least as someone from the village. The caretakers were from Snowflake, and hence they also knew her. The researcher has been around the community members since her childhood. In short, there was not anybody uncomfortable with her being there. Instead, they were enthusiastic and willing to help. This made the researcher feel comfortable while doing my research.

The data collection started in such a research setting. The methods, as mentioned before, included semi-structured interviews, observations and an open-ended questionnaire. In addition, I took the photographs of the setting and collected the documents demonstrating the students' school success and performance in English to support the data. The data collection methods are presented under two subheadings. The first part is related to the methods to address the research question 1. The second part deals with the methods to address the question 2.

3.5.1 Data Collection Methods 1

The data collection methods to address the research question 1 "How does a rural elementary school and community (administrators, teachers, parents and students) situate first year of foreign language teaching in Central Turkey?" included the semi-structured interviews with the school administrators, the teachers, and the parents, and a small-scale open-ended questionnaire delievered to the students taking English as a compulsory subject.

3.5.1.1 Semi Structured Interviews

Interviewing is a useful qualitative data collection method in order to obtain a large amount of data. It is optimal for collecting data on personal histories, perspectives and experiences. Interviewing, as Seidman (2006) said, is "a basic mode of inquiry" (p.8). Moreover, Seidman pointed "Interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior" (p.10). He pointed that observing a teacher, a student, or another person provided access to their behaviour; however, observational understanding may not be consistent with how they view their own behaviour. Seidman suggested that interviewing enabled researchers to put behaviour in context and comprehend others by understanding their action.

There are different types of interviewing. The rationale for selecting semi-structured interview model is that it provides a compromise between unstructured and structured interviews. In this type, researchers have more control over the topic of the interview than in unstructured interviews. This enables to explore particular lines of inquiry and to compare people's responses, but in contrast to structured interviews, there is not fixed range of responses to each question (Richards, 2003). Bearing all these in mind, some sets of questions are prepared. These questions were reviewed for content and comprehension by an expert. Furthermore, interviewing a number of participants enabled to "connect their experiences and check the comments of one participant against those of others" (Seidman, 2006, p.24).

First, the researcher interviewed the English language teacher, Eray. She held two interviews with him. The first one sought to obtain biographical information. The researcher interviewed him at the school during the lunchtime. He talked about his family, educational background, how he decided to be a teacher, his teaching experience, and the reason he started to teach in Snowflake (See Appendix A for the questions). It took almost 45 minutes. One month later, they held the second interview at the researcher's workplace this time in order to be out of his

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school. In the second interview, Eray told about his future plans, teaching philosophy and his teaching experience in Snowflake (See Appendix A for the questions). Besides, the interview took an hour.

Second, the researcher interviewed the school administrators, the school principal and the vice principal. The interviews were held in the administrators' own rooms. Each took almost 45 minutes. The researcher asked them about the place of English language education in the rural setting, the impacts of rural life on education, the community's attitudes towards the school, the previous English language teacher, beginning teachers, etc (See Appendix B for the questions).

Third, the researcher also interviewed 4 teachers other than Eray. She interviewed them in the meeting hall. The goal of interviewing with them was to receive their thoughts about teaching in the rural setting, the place of English language education and their cooperation with the beginning English language teacher. Hence, the questions were similar to those asked to the school administrators (See Appendix C for the questions). The interviews took half an hour.

Lastly, the researcher interviewed 6 parents. The parents were invited to the school and the interviews were held one to one in the vice principal's room. The goal of interviewing with the parents was to gather their thoughts about the importance of English, the education at the rural school, their interest in the kids' schooling and the opportunities they provided to them (See Appendix D for the questions). The interviews with the parents took almost 30 minutes.

In addition to all this information, the interviews were all audio-recorded and held in Turkish, the native language of all the participants. The interviewees were all informed beforehand about the purpose of the research, the recording, and the estimated duration. "Listening", as Seidman (2006) pointed, "is the most important skill in interviewing" (p.78). Therefore, the researcher concentrated on the participants' sayings and talked less. She only interrupted them by asking questions

to make things clearer and detail a subject if necessary. Lastly, she transcribed all the interviews verbatim on the same day with their recording.

3.5.1.2 Open-Ended Questionnaire

In order to collect data on the students' views about the English lessons and the beginning English language teacher, a small-scale open-ended questionnaire was conducted. In contrast to close-ended questionnaires, open-ended questionnaires allow participants to respond in their own words. They give opportunity to explain their feelings, thoughts and share their experiences; hence, they are rich and exploratory by nature (Mack et al., 2005). The questionnaire is also more practicable way as it is possible to include a large number of participants in a very short time compared to interviews. In the open-ended questionnaire, the researcher asked two broad questions (See Appendix F for the questions). First, the students described their English language teacher. They wrote their feelings and thoughts about him. Second, they evaluated the English lesson and wrote what they liked and disliked in the lesson. The open-ended questions were also reviewed by an expert beforehand. The questionnaires were distributed to the students taking English as a compulsory subject during their class hour. They did not write their names on the sheets in order to comply with confidentiality requirements. The writing process took almost 25 minutes in each one of the classes. The researcher kept the students' writings in separate files according to their classes in order to make the analysis easier later on.

3.5.2 Data Collection Methods 2

The data collection methods to address the research question 2 "How does a beginning teacher experience first year of teaching at a rural elementary school in Turkey?" included the semi structured interviews with primarily the beginning English language teacher, and also the school administrators, the other teachers and the parents, and in addition to these interviews, the observations of the English language teacher's actions at the rural school.

3.5.2.1 Observations: A Time and Motion Study

A time and motion study is typically a method of establishing employee productivity standards. It provides a technique for finding the most economical way of doing a task and determining the amount of work that should be done in a given period of time. In their origins, as two separate methods, 'Time Study' by Frederick Taylor was used for rate setting while 'Motion Study' by the Gilberths, the husband and wife team, was employed for improving methods (Barnes, 1940). However, both tend to stick in popular terminology as they are concerned inseparable. The time and motion study provides detailed information about workers' specific actions and procedural steps that are followed to perform a task on the job (Shaw, n.d.). For the purpose of collecting the data, a time and motion study was also administered in this study. All the actions of the English language teacher were observed and noted down at 60-second intervals. For this purpose, a sheet including 60 lines for an hour was prepared before starting observations (See Appendix G for the sample sheet). The researcher started observations at the very beginning of the spring semester, February 2012 and continued for 2 months until the end of March 2012. Eray taught 3 days a week; Monday, Thursday and Friday. The researcher was able to observe him on Mondays and Thursdays only. This made 60 hours in total or 11 days of teaching. Moreover, a pilot study had been conducted in order to see and determine the possible problems pertaining to my note-taking of the actions beforehand. The researcher attended Eray's lessons and wrote down about his teaching and interactions with his students at all grades taking English as a compulsory subejct. The researcher sat with him in the teachers' room, drank tea or coffee and ate lunch together. This also made it possible to observe his actions out of the class and relationships with the other people at the school. Remarkably, Eray seemed very comfortable with the researcher's being together with him all the time, observing and taking notes of his all actions. He also stated that he did not feel uncomfortable with the researcher's presence and added that he understood that the purpose of the research was not to judge him. In addition, since the researcher attended his all lessons, the students might be influenced by her presence in their classrooms.

However, they did not feel uncomfortable possibly because most had already known the researcher in the village. Even though some looked back at the researcher at times on the first days, they got used to my presence in their class very soon. The students started to regard the researcher as another teacher, and accepted her as a member of their English lessons. To sum up, the time and motion study provided the researcher with a large amount of data about Eray's activities at the school. It also enabled the researcher to reveal how he designed his lessons and frequencies demonstrating how often he employed various kinds of activities in his classroom.

3.6 Data Analysis

The procedure of data analysis is identified as a complex and challenging part of qualitative research. As Spencer, Ritchie and O'Connor (2003) said, "It requires a mix of creativity and systematic searching, a blend of inspiration and diligent detection" (p. 199). Data analysis can start as early as possible in qualitative research. Even though there is a separate stage dedicated to the analysis of the bulk of the data gathered, as Richards (2003) underscored, "Analysis is neither a distinct stage nor a discrete process; it is something that is happening in one form or another, throughout the whole research process" (p. 268). The researcher starts to form ideas, capture phenomenon and test theories at the beginning of the study. In this regard, the organization process of the data collected is also an important part.

The data sources included semi-structured interviews, a small-scale open-ended questionnaire and observations (a time and motion study). The photographs of the research setting and the documents about the students' performance supported them. The analysis for each type of the data sources is explained below.

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim for accurate analysis and interpretation because as Seidman (2006) said "Each word a participant speaks reflects his or her consciousness" (p. 114). Then, all the transcripts were printed out and organized in separate files as Interviews with the English Language

Teacher, Interviews with Other Teachers, Interviews with School Administrators and Interviews with Parents. Following that, the transcripts are all read and the passages that are interesting are marked with brackets. With the process of reading and marking the trascripts, the researcher began to label the important passages. This process of reading, marking, and labeling is called "coding" (Seidman, 2006, p.125). Codes are used to organize the information compiled during a study. In this way, as Miles and Huberman (1994) said, "the researcher can quickly pull out, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, hypothesis, construct, or theme" (p. 57). In this study, the researcher identified the important patterns in the light of the research questions, and used descriptive codes. For instance, she used ELT-PDO as a code for 'professional development opportunities from the interview with the English language teacher'. Then, she filed the excerpts taken from the transcripts and her initial interpretations of them in the assigned categories. She reread all of them file by file and set aside the ones that seemed to be less of interest at this stage. In this way, the researcher identified the themes. For instance, she combined the codes such as ELT-ERU (for education in rural and urban settings from the interview with the English language teacher), ADM- ERU (for education in rural and urban settings from the interview with the school administrators) and PR-ERU (for education in rural and urban settings from the interview with the parents), and identified the theme "The Impacts of Rural Life on Education".

For the analysis of the data collected through the open-ended questionnaire, the sheets distributed to the students were first grouped class by class so as to compare and see whether the students' thoughts different according to their classes or not. The similar techniques used for analysing the data collected through interviewing were also used to analyze the responses to the open-ended questions. The sheets were first read in order to get the gist. Then, the researcher started the coding procedure. The students' comments were categorized as their positive and negative views about their English language teacher and his teaching practices.

The time and motion study took a long process. It lasted two months starting from the beginning of February to the end of March. The researcher observed the beginning teacher, as mentioned above, over a period of 60 hours in total, or 11 days of teaching. The researcher noted down his all actions at 60-second intervals. For this purpose, she had prepared a sheet with 60 lines for an hour. This eased the noting-taking process. The researcher checked her watch and noted Eray's in-class and out-of-class activities as long as he was at the school. After each observation and filling out the sheets for each day, the researcher re-wrote my notes in narrative form within two days, if she could not manage it on the same day with the observation, when she arrived home. This enabled her also to keep the details about the cases occured during the observation. For the analysis, the researcher organized a frequency grid displaying the types and lenghts of the teaching practices, the activities that Eray employed in each one of his classrooms. In this way, it became possible to see how he designed his lessons; how he started a lesson and follow-up activities he organized. Moreover, the researcher analyzed the narratives of the observations by marking the interesting cases, coding and interpretting them.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.0 Presentation

This chapter displays the results of the analysis of the data gathered. The results are presented through the way of giving answers to the research questions, which are; (i) *How does a rural elementary school and its community (administrators, teachers, parents and students) situate first year of foreign language teaching in Central Turkey?* and (ii) *How does a beginning teacher experience first year of teaching at a rural elementary school in Turkey?* respectively.

4.1 *How does a rural elementary school and its community (administrators, teachers, parents and students) situate first year of foreign language teaching in Central Turkey?*

Following the coding procedure and the interpretative analysis of the data gathered, three themes were identified; *the Importance of Schooling for the Rural Community, the Impacts of the Rural Context on Education,* and lastly *the Place of English in the Rural Context.*

4.1.1 The Importance of Schooling for the Rural Community

The school principal and the vice principal believed that the people in the village did not give much importance to schooling. They said most of the parents sent their kids to the school only as they wanted them to learn how to read and write. They said that they did not care much indeed, but they wanted their kids at least to finish the elementary education since they might need a diploma when they would get a driving licence or apply for something else. However, the school principal also underscored that there were some people who valued their kids' schooling. They

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were very few in number, though. Based upon his observations, the school principal pointed that those who were especially civil servants or had a higher level of educational background wanted their kids to continue their education further, and added that he knew a few people who were from the village and working as teachers.

> In the city centre, we have teachers from the village. I talk with them. They graduated from this school. Did you go to the elementary school here? Yes. They say their fathers supported them. They sent them to private courses or to high school in the centre. They say they were not that rich, either. They did not have lands or much money. They say because they knew that schooling was their only chance ... Their fathers helped and sent them to schools.

The teachers, except Teacher 4 (female teacher), knew the community quite well since they had been teaching in Snowflake for a long time. Teacher 4 started teaching in Snowflake this year. Moreover, she was at the school only one and a half day a week. Therefore, she did not know the people very well. Still, she agreed with all the other three teachers as well as the English language teacher and said that the people had at least respect for teachers. In their opinion, they valued education and believed that schooling was essential for their kids. However, the teachers complained that there were also indifferent parents and most of the parents did not collaborate with them. Additionally, Teacher 2 reported that he found the parents insufficient in terms of providing support because of their low educational level.

> They have respect for teachers. They listen to teachers, yet they are insufficient. For example, I am teaching to the 4th grade. Last year, in the 3th grade the parents would not understand homework I gave. 'Did you do your homework?' 'Yes'. Perhaps, they would do their homework, but they did not take it seriously. The parents would also check it. There were their signatures on it, which would show they checked homework. However, everything was wrong. I ask the parents. They say they do not understand

it. They have love and respect for us. They love the school. They love teachers. Yet, they are insufficient because our parents are at best graduates of high school and they are not more than 1 or 2 people. The rest is all graduate of 5-year elementary school. There are even illiterates.

I also interviewed the parents who were identified as either caring or indifferent parents by the school administrators and the teachers. They were asked their thoughts about their kids' school success, what they wanted them to do in the future, whether they believed they could be academically successful, and how they supported their schooling. Except Parent 4 and Parent 5, the parents indicated that they were hopeful that their kids could succeed at school and get a good job through which they could make their living. For instance, Parent 1 and 2 believed that their students did their best and studied hard. They added that they tried to provide them with all the opportunities as much as they were able to do. To illustrate, Parent 2 said that he installed Internet connection because her daughters needed it for their lessons. Moreover, Parent 1 and 2 sent their kids to private institutions in order not to leave them behind their peers. Additionally, they tried to answer their questions about the lessons as much as they could. Thus, Parent 2 saw himself as if he had been going to a school again.

> Of course. They ask when they do not know. Sometimes when I am in other countries (for work) or not at home, they talk with their mother, more than they do with me. I cannot stay at home long because of my job. However, I can say that I am going to school again now. I am going to one more school. I mean, I did not go to secondary school (the last 3 years of elementary education). I could not, but now my children teach me.

The case for Parent 3 was different because her daughter had a physical disability related to walking. She had to take her to the school every morning and came to take her home back every afternoon. Therefore, Parent 3 was not very sure how she could continue her education further. She said she was happy with her

performance at school and added that she did not expect more since her daughter was heavily dependent on her even for coming to school. Yet, she said that she tried to support her schooling as much as she could and wanted to see that she got a job.

Parent 6 was very interested in her kids' schooling. She was even one of the rare parents who were always in contact with the teachers, came to the school regularly and talked with them. In addition, she mentioned a rule she had obeyed strictly since her kids first started the school. Accordingly, she said she asked them to tell her what they had learned in their lessons everyday when they arrived home after the school. Moreover, Parent 6 indicated she was very happy with her kids' success and added that she wanted to see that they acquired a job through which they were able to make their living and save themselves.

Although they indicated that they valued their kids' schooling, sought to do their best so that they could be successful, and wanted them to acquire a job through which they could make their living, Parent 4 and 5 were not hopeful that their kids could be successful and continued their education further. Indeed, they did not give much importance to their schooling. Parent 4, who was a young mother at the age of 27, said that she did not know much about schools and her husband gave decision about the kids' schooling. Thus, she could not tell me what she wanted her kids to be in the future and which school she wanted them to continue. Thereupon, the researcher asked her whether she wanted them to go to Anatolian High Schools and Vocational Schools and asked her which one she wanted them to continue. Considering that they might at least acquire a job in the end, she simply opted vocational schools for both her son in the 8th grade and daughter in the 6th grade. Moreover, Parent 4 did not know whether her kids are interested in the lessons. She only said that she did not know, especially about her son, and that they said their lessons were good when she asked. As regards Parent 5, the reasons that she did not believe her kid could be successful were different from Parent 4. First, her son needed special education. Parent 5 stated that they had her son tested, he had attention deficit disorder, and thus he was not good at school. Moreover, they did

not have much money to do more for him as they made their living through her husband's disability pension. Hence, she thought that he would be also working as an apprentice in the industry after he finished compulsory elementary education.

4.1.2 The Impacts of the Rural Context on Education

The analysis also revealed important impacts of rural context on education. The school administrators, the teachers and the parents pointed some of the factors leading to these. To illustrate, the vice principal claimed that the only difference between rural and urban schools arised from parents. Otherwise, he was not of the opinion that rural schools were necessarily weaker in instruction when compared to their urban counterparts. In urban settings, the vice principal said that parents were more conscious. The school principal supported this idea stating that there was a great difference between rural and urban parents' attitudes and behaviours. For example, he mentioned that parents in Snowflake could easily come in, say that they had forgotten their key or something else, and take it from their kids during the lesson. However, the case was different in urban schools. Parents did not interrupt the lesson. They simply sat aside and waited outside until the bell rings. Besides, parents in urban settings could afford very often and sent their kids to private courses or hired a tutor. The school principal touched upon, however, that students in Snowflake did not have these pluses. Moreover, the school could not provide students with additional courses within the school as some urban schools did at the weekends. Therefore, as the principal pointed, although urban schools did not have a greater role in students' success when compared to their rural counterparts, additional supports led to a difference between rural and urban settings. Still, the principal was hopeful as free courses are started to be offered within urban schools in 5 districts of Raindrop with the collaboration of Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation, Provincial Directorate of National Education and Public Education Center. The students from Snowflake also attended these additional courses. However, there also appeared some problems. To illustrate, the principal mentioned a female student who did not go to these courses. He said he asked the reason she

did not go and learned that she did not because she could not pay for the bus from the village to the centre. Moreover, the principal added that her parents might not also want to send their daughter to a different environment. Although there were some problems, he believed that if these courses continued to be offered, they would benefit from them to a large extent in the following years. Lastly, the principal pointed to the lack of role models as an important factor affecting the success.

> There must be idols. Because few exemplary students come out (from Snowflake Elementary School), an Anatolian High School does not mean anything to them. It happens that they may not be able to comprehend what a Science High School means. If we can make some students enter Anatolian Teacher Training High School, Anatolian High School, Science High School, I think they will be examples to their elder sisters, siblings, and other students. I think the problem arises from here.

The teachers also agreed that students in Snowflake were not successful at school because they did not have the habit of studying. They regarded the reason for this as the influence of environmental conditions. To illustrate, Teacher 1 mentioned that students spend more time within the community than they do at school.

> This is a rural area. We are living in a village. It is usual in rural life; in their free time, people here, men go to the cafe and women, I am sorry to say but, come together and gossip. Now because children are always with these people until the night ... I mean, They are together with us for 6 of 24 hours. And this is only 6 lesson hours. They are with their families and within this environment for the rest, more than 18 hours. Therefore, it is normal that they are influenced. Also, if families are not aware of this situation, if they are not uncomfortable that their children are in such a bad condition, children come to this situation.

Therefore, Teacher 3 said that students' learning activities were limited to what they did at the school and that they did not put something on what they had learned at the school. On this issue, Teacher 3 added that if they put something on what they learned at school, they could be even more successful than students in urban settings because they were intelligent.

Students content themselves with what they receive at school. I mean, there is not another support at home. I mean, they are with us in the classroom for 6 hours and the extent to which they receive in 6 hours is that much ... We give an assignment. They do it in 10 minutes. And then because the environment is suitable; there is a circle of friends, playing grounds are large and many ... Moreover, in summer they do not study their lessons at home because of farming. In winter, all of the houses are heated by means of stoves. In only one room. Television is on. Mother, father, grandfather, grandmother, children are all together. It is already difficult for them to study in such an environment. So, all we can give them is limited to what we give them here at the school. Let me say openly; we do not have a student who put something at home. I mean, if they did something at home, I believe success here would be higher than in the centre because our kids are intelligent.

Teacher 3 believed that students' lifestyle did not let them do something else at home. While the English language teacher, Eray, was also of the opinion that students were intelligent and could be academically very successful, he emphasized that they did not have the habit of studying. According to him, parents' educational background and rural lifestyle had important impacts on the lack of this. Eray thought that the child of a university-graduate family and the child of a farmer family would not be the same as they would differ in their points of view pertaining to education. While a university-graduate family encouraged their children to study hard, contacted with teachers, checked their assignments, he said parents in Snowflake did not behave in this way. What's more, he mentioned that his students

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complained about their parents. For instance, although students asked their parents to turn off the televison while studying their lessons, they did not and continued to watch the TV series. Thereupon, students also watched them because of physical conditions (as the houses were stove-heated, they all sat together when it was cold). As a result, they could not concentrate on their lessons. Eray underscored that this case was the same with all of the parents, and added that when his students came to school, they talked about the TV series with him all the time.

The workload expected from children by their parents led to another important difference between students in rural and urban places. In this regard, Teacher 1 said that in urban life, children were only expected to fulfill their responsibilities as students and perhaps help prepare meals or bring water to their parents, etc. However, in rural life, he said children had serious responsibilities starting from early ages, even when they were 3rd or 4th grade students, because their families made their living through agriculture and animal husbandry.

Besides, as the school principal underscored, Teacher 1 and 2 also pointed that the lack of role models in front of students was an important factor which impact negatively on students' success in Snowflake. Teacher 2 said because a great majority of parents were only elementary school graduate and did not have a high level of education, there were not good role models in front of rural kids when compared to urban places where parents were well-educated and served in a variety of fields. He clarified the situation with the following words:

> There are very few well-educated people around them (students). There is not someone who could be a role model from a variety of fields such as engineering, medicine, law, accounting, etc. When you ask kids, they only know occupations such as police, teacher and nurse. They do not even know other occupations.

However, both teachers, similar to the school principal, assured that sometimes role models appeared and affected at least people around them positively although they were a small number of people. Teacher 1 expanded on how role models (though few in number) affected others in the place.

In our village, there is such a situation; those who have the same surname, belong to the same familty are influenced from one another. Someone, I do not know, who acquires a good job from that family becomes a good example for them. And the other children (in the family) arrange the way they study accordingly. What's more, their parents are also involved in this process. However, if thre is not a role model in a particular family, they unfortunately continue their daily life as usual. Saving the say is enough for them. They do not make long-range plans for the future.

Teacher 1 and 2 believed that many students did not have goals in front of them and also the habit of studying. Therefore, a small number of those who wanted to be successful could not find another peer who would force them to study hard, to notice what else they could do to improve themselves. In other words, Teacher 2 said that students did not have opponents who would make them feel the need to put something new on their knowledge.

The parents found the solution in transferring their students to urban schools. Except Parent 6, all the parents indicated that they would send their kids to urban schools if they could afford and there were not other handicaps. For instance, Parent 1 said he sent his kids to Snowflake Elementary School because he could not afford to send them to an urban school. Moreover, he believed that this school might be indeed better for them because of small class size as in the private schools. He reminded that the 8th grade class, in which his daughter was also a student, consists of only 11 students. Still, the school was not as successful as they expected. Parent 1 could not identify whether the problem arised from teachers, parents or students, and

added that there had not been a change so far. Hence, he said he would send his kids to an urban school if he could afford, and explained his reason;

> But if I could afford, I would send my kid to the centre. Why? Because there is not an environment in which she can compete. I mean, our kid is the best at the school now. Except her, there is not something. I mean, there is not an environment in which the kid can compete with someone else at the school now.

Parent 2 confirmed that there were some positive aspects of the school such as small class size and better teachers assigned to the school in terms of their cultural level when compared to the past. However, he listed some problems, which impacted negatively on student success. First, he pointed that teachers left the school as soon as possible. He exemplified the case of the previous English language teacher. He said her eldest daughter in the 8th grade had difficulty adapting to the new English language teacher. Since the previous teacher was also from the village, Parent 2 indicated that they were able to comfortably come to her, complain about anything if they had a problem, or request her to do something. Similarly, the school principal also indicated that since the previous English language teacher was one of the villagers, they encouraged her to do more, work hard for the pupils. Moreover, he believed that she had a positive impact on the people in the village because she also had one to one relationship with them. In addition, she happened to be a good model and led many parents to support the kids' schooling as a teacher who grew up in Snowflake. However, the principal indicated she complained that the students were indifferent to the lesson. No matter how she struggled to explain a subject, she could not obtain a result with them. The school principal indicated that achieving a success was too hard in Snowflake.

> It is not easy to be successful here. It is very hard to achieve a success here because students here throw their bags, go outside and wander around

when they arrive home at 3 p.m. They either go farming or deal with animals. I mean students are a bit bland here. They do not want to study.

The excerpt above explains the reason the teachers had difficulty achieving a success with the students in Snowflake. This is also one of the reasons the previous English language teacher departed from the school in addition to the will to be closer to her house in the centre. However, the vice principal added that there was one more reason that might have a role in teacher turnover in small, rural schools. He indicated that teachers did not want to work at rural schools because they could not even complete their compulsory teaching hours, let alone taking fee for additional lessons. In Turkey, English language teachers have to teach 15 hours a week so that they can deserve their montly salary. If they cannot complete it at one school because there may be very few classes or more than the needed number of teachers, they are assigned to another school. Sometimes, they themselves may ask for being assigned to another school so that they can also take additional lesson fee. Hence, as the vice principal implied, teachers prefer to work at urban schools where there are more classes and they can complete their compulsory teaching hours and earn more without visiting other schools.

Excluding teacher turnover, Parent 2 said that there was not another problem arising from the school. However, he said he had thought to enroll his kids in an urban school but he could not because he was afraid of not affording three kids' expenses. In his opinion, urban schools were stronger in the public eyes because of funding and services provided. Additionally, he commented that parents differentiated rural from urban education. He said that parents in urban places gave more importance to their kids' schooling; however, parents in Snowflake were busy with farming, garden work, animals, etc. and hence they did not follow their kids' school activities and did not ask teachers why they were not successful.

As mentioned before, the case for Parent 3 was different. Since her daughter was walking-disabled, she had to send her to the school in the village so that she

could take her to the school everyday and also come easily to the school when she got sick or something else important happened. Besides, she was of the opinion that students could be successful if they wholeheartedly wanted and studied hard no matter where they were, either at a rural or an urban school. However, she pointed that she would send her daughter to an urban school if her daughter had not been disabled. Although Parent 4 and 5 were not hopeful about their kids' schooling, they were also of the opinion that urban schools would be better for their children. However, they did not send them to an urban school. Parent 4 said she did not interfere in her husband's decisions about the kids' schooling. Parent 5 indicated that they could not afford his expenses and did not have high expectations from her kid. In the village, she said her kid could easily complete his elementary education, which was enough for them.

As opposed to the other parents, Parent 6 preferred the school in the village. First, she also confirmed that class size was much smaller when compared to urban schools. Second, she was very happy with the classroom teachers of her both kids (in the 2nd grade and 5th grade). She was also of the opinion that students could be successful wherever they were as long as they studied hard. In short, the school did not have serious problems, excluding teacher turnover; however, there were issues pertaining to parents' attitudes and economic conditions, lack of role models, students' interest in achieving a success, and their habit of studying in the village.

4.1.3 The Place of Learning English in the Rural Context

The participants believed that learning English as a foreign language was also very important for the rural kids in today's rapidly globalizing world. For instance, the school principal indicated that the knowledge of English was important considering its power across globe and the rural kids should be also provide quality English language education here since something should be done for a change although their parents were not well-educated. The vice principal also confirmed the importance of learning English as a foreign language. However, he said that it was

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pre-eminent to improve students' attitudes towards schooling in general here in the rural community before English language education. Besides, he was of the opinion that English language teaching practices were insufficient across the country. He claimed that students could not understand and speak English with the amount of lessons in the curriculum and suggested that the English lessons be given more than 4 hours a week.

Pointing to the global spread of the language, all the teachers agreed that rural schools should not be excluded in terms of providing quality English language education. Furthermore, they highlighted that English was important for the rural kids in order to be successful in their lives. To illustrate, Teacher 1 believed that learning English was important for eveyone today but it was even more important for the rural kids. In this regard, he said:

> English is important in every platform, but I think for rural communities, it is even more important because there is something called ill-fate waiting our kids, young people, especially girls here. Education is their only chance to save themselves from this village, this environment. I mean, only getting a good job can save our female and male students from this village environment, this village and life ... I think English is one of the best ways (for them) to open up to other worlds.

In addition, Teacher 2 and 4 underscored that learning English was also important so as to follow and benefit from technological developments, gain access to a vast of knowledge in this rapidly changing world. However, they affirmed that English was only important at schools because some questions appeared in exams. Moreover, they complained that although English was a compulsory subject at elementary school for 5 years (starting from the 4th grade to the end of 8th grade), at high school for 4 years and even at university, students cannot command the language. Teacher 2 expands on the situation with these words:

English is important in terms of exams. I mean, English is really a global language. It is used from America to England, many places of Europe to many countries of Africa, and even in many places in Asia. It is a very important language in using computers, televisions, and following all other technological products. English should be really developed. Yet, in Turkey, people only study it for exams. Because at elementary school, there is no ... There is not a student who can speak English after the elementary school. Only those who finish private schools, Anatolian High Schools, Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools and those who study in the department of foreign languages can learn English.

The excerpt above shows that, similar to the administrators and the other teachers, Teacher 2 also did not find English language teaching practices sufficient, and believed that the process of studying English as a foreign language did not extend beyond exam preparation, resulting in low proficiency in English, especially at public elementary schools. Additionally, Teacher 1, who had been teaching in Snowflake for more than 10 years, highlighted that the school had had only one permanent English language teacher since he started teaching in the village and also she departed after working for 3 years. The others were all temporary teachers or substitute teachers such as Teacher 1 himself. Since temporary teachers were still trying to find a permanent job or they had other plans, he was not satisfied with their performance at the school. Therefore, he believed that, first of all, they needed a permanent English language teacher for a better English language education in Snowflake.

In his first year in teaching, the English language teacher indicated that he came to the awareness of how difficult teaching English was. He believed that the reason for this was the lack of student interest in learning English. He said he had only 1 or 2 students who were eager to learn English in each grade. To his students, he claimed that English was only a purposeless, compulsory subject. Moreover, he complained about his students' nationalist words such as 'Why do we have to learn

English?' or 'Why don't they learn Turkish?'. He said that he pointed that English became a means of international communication today and they needed to learn English for following developments, but they did not understand him. On this issue, Eray pointed to the importance of parent support. He was of the opinion that a great majority of parents in Snowflake did not encourage their children to learn English and they only cared about their grades, scores on tests and whether they passed the class or not. Eray indicated that only 2 or 3 parents had come to talk with him since he started teaching. He identified the kids of these parents as 'conscious learners' who knows what they are doing and learning in the lessons. Furthermore, he added that their English was improving continously and they are more active in the lessons when compared to their peers. Hence, he invited parents to visit him and exchange ideas so as to raise their kids' interest in English.

The parents were also of the opinion that English as a foreign language had an increasing importance in today's world. Therefore, they all indicated that learning English was important for their kids considering that they might need it one day. However, similar to the school administrators and the teachers, Parent 1 and 2 also found English language teaching practices insufficient, especially with the inexperienced temporary English language teacher. Parent 3 and 6 did not comment on the English lessons and the beginning teacher; yet they pointed that their kids were interested in learning English and mentioned how they studied English at home. Moreover, they indicated that the kids' success in English depended upon their own efforts and interest. Lastly, Parent 4 and 5 did not have an idea about the English lessons, the beginning teacher and their own kids' interest and success.

Parent 1 indicated that he wanted his kids to learn English. However, he was not happy with the quality of English language education provided at the school. According to him, English was only another compulsory subject that students needed to pass for graduation. Since he was one of the caretakers at the school, he had opportunity to observe the English language teacher's activities and students' behaviours towards him. He assured that they only read the lesson notes in the

English lessons; they did not learn the language indeed. Moreover, he indicated that he had difficulty managing the students and did not have an authority on them. Thus, he said that they, at least his own daughter, did not have respect for him. Before the previous teacher left, he indicated that the students studied hard, could learn if they gave importance to the lesson, and do English on the tests. Based upon his observation, he said that the students did not do much about English at home. Thus, he suggested that the teacher should do more in the lesson, expect more from the students so that they could take the lesson more seriously and study hard.

Parent 3 did not have an idea about the beginning teacher, and thus he did not comment on his lessons, either. However, she highlighted that the success in learning English in the village depended upon the students themselves. Moreover, Parent 3 indicated that her daughter liked the English lessons and mentioned her way of studying English at home.

> There was a topic about English yesterday evening. This; table, desk, and then cupboard, ... She told me their English. Because I did not understand, I said I did not know. She said "let me give an example, mum", and said we had it in our house; we used it in the kitchen. Then I said "fridge". In this way, I try to help her.

Considering the importance of learning English today, Parent 6 also said she wanted her son to learn English as a foreign language. However, she did not have an idea about the English language education at the school. Moreover, she pointed that she had not talked with the beginning teacher. Furthermore, she added that neither she nor her husband could help their son in his English lessons since she did not understand it and her husband was disabled and illiterate. Thus, she said his success in English depended upon his own efforts only.

Along with the thoughts of the administrators, the teachers and the parents, the students' comments are also important in understanding how teaching and

learning English as a foreign language were situated within a rural school and its community. In general, all the students from different grades taking English as a compulsory subject reported that they loved their English lessons, English language teacher and believed that learning English was very important for them. Above all, they defined their teacher as a warm-hearted, lovely, funny, and honest man, who loved his students and wanted them to be successful. For instance, one of the 6th grade students defined the English language teacher with these words;

He is a nice, honest and helpful person. He is a person who always wants and does his best to help us. He is possibly one of the best people I have ever met. He does his best for us. He is a teacher who always wants to help us.

Moreover, most of the students said that they liked his way of teaching English and they usually found the English lessons entertaining because he tried not to bore them and made jokes at times. Especially the 5th grade students indicated that they liked the English lessons because they had fun watching cartoons every week. Besides, there were even a few students reporting that they liked the English lessons with this beginning English language teacher and they did not want him to leave them and transfer to another school. One of the 5th grade students articulated his thoughts about Eray's teaching; "He makes us watch cartoons on Fridays ... He teaches the lesson very well. And he speaks very clearly". However, there were also negative things that the students observed. Above all, a great majority, particularly those in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade indicated that Eray got very angry at times when his students misbehaved and they did not like his shouting loudly. In this regard, one of the 6th grade students said "I love my teacher very much ... The thing I do not like about him is his shouting very often, but still I understand him because he cannot quite anybody down". Besides, some students reported that they did not understand the lesson and found it difficult. Some, except 4th and 5th grade students, also indicated that they did not find the English language teaching practices sufficient.

Thus, they suggested Eray to take the lessons more seriously and teach intensively. Below are a few suggestions of one of the 7th grade students.

> Our English lessons are good. However, for instance, if we go to the meeting hall, watch movies there, and do the lesson pausing and translating the sentences into Turkish, we will have a better time and won't get bored with the lesson.

In short, the administrators, the teachers and the parents confirm the importance of English. The students reported that they liked the English lessons. In other words, the people have general appreciation of learning the language. However, they find the English language teaching practices issufficient. Moreover, for the community, English is not on the top of the list and it is currently important only for graduation and success on the achievement tests.

4.2 *How does a beginning teacher experience first year of teaching at a rural elementary school in Turkey?*

The recent literature on teacher education highlights the importance of identity in teacher development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). As Goodnough and Mulcahy (2011) indicated, "teacher identity is viewed as involving teacher beliefs, values, and emotions about many facets of teaching and being and becoming teachers" (p. 203). Moreover, there is a common notion that identity is dynamic and shifts with time and context. In search of a more complete definition, Akkerman & Meijer (2011) have conceptualized teacher identity with a dialogical approach recently. In this regard, they view identity as "simultaneously unitary and multiple, continuous and discontinuous, and individual and social" (p.315), proposing that "identity formation involves a negotiation of multiple positions in relation to a teacher's self "(p.317). In studying professional development, therefore, they suggest to dissect the tensions, dilemmas, and uncertainties that teachers experience

as they hold the clue to their struggles between diverse I- positions and a unitary self, and bring an understanding of the complexity.

In this qualitative study, as a result of the interpretative analysis of the data gathered, I identified the following themes reflecting the English language teacher's experiences and additionally the administrators and the other teachers' thoughts and feelings pertaining to beginning teaching career with rural teaching in Turkey; *Teacher's Biography, Aspiration for Teaching Profession, Passion for Rural Teaching, Development of Teaching Philosophy, English Language Teaching Practices,* and lastly *Beginning Career with Rural Teaching.*

4.2.1 Teacher's Biography

Eray was born in Raindrop although his father is from Eastern Turkey and his mother from Cyprus since his parents came to work as teachers in Raindrop years ago. Both his mother and father are retired today, however, they continue their life in Raindrop. His mother was a geography teacher and his father was a classroom teacher. Eray started his elementary education at the school where his father was teaching – though he was not his classroom teacher. The school is located in the city centre and also close to their house. He completed the first 5 years at the same school. Then, upon his father's retirement, he enrolled in a different school, which is at the heart of the city and popular as being as one of the most successful schools in the eyes of general public. However, he explained that he transferred to this school because of some problems he had with the new teachers at the school. In the meantime, they bought a place in a village of Raindrop. Since then, they have lived in the centre of Raindrop from October to April and stayed in the village after the end of April. In Turkey, schools close in June. Hence, he had to commute from the village to the school by bus every week day for two months, May and June until he went to university in a different city. For his high school, Eray went to an Anatolian High School in Raindrop, which is located in between the city centre and the village where this study was conducted. He came to school by either by school bus or

public bus because the school was a bit far from the centre. In the period, during which they stayed in the village, he had to change 2 buses so as to arrive at school; one from the village to the centre, the other from the centre to the school. However, since he experienced rural life throughout his childhood and early youth, Eray indicated that he developed a sympathetic understanding of rural life and community.

Eray went to a university in Western Turkey and studied English language and literature. The score he obtained in the university entrance exam had an important role in his placement to this university. However, Eray also added that he decided on this university because his cousin was also a student at the same university and this would make life easier for him. He stayed with him at a house until his cousin graduated. Upon his cousin's graduation, he rented a house with one of his old friends from the high school in Raindrop and stayed with him. Eray mentioned that his university had two separate campuses, one in the city centre and the other out of the city. His faculty was located out of the city, 10 km away from the centre. It was not a problem for him, though. He could get on the bus in front of his house. He graduated from the university in May, 2011. Considering that he started the university in 2006, he could finish the 4-year program earlier. As indicated before, he could not go to school in the fall semester of his second year because he had to deal with his health problems, thus suspended the program for one semester and extended his graduation. In his last year, most of his friends graduated. Thereupon, he decided to go abroad with Erasmus exchange program in his last year. He went to Romania and stayed there for 6 months. He stayed in a house wih 2 French and 2 Italian roommates. He completed his Bachelor's Degree taking 12 courses including both linguistics and literature courses. Besides, since he did not graduate from a teacher education program, he could not be appointed as an English language teacher to a public school in Turkey. Hence, in the 3rd year of his undergraduate program, he also attended pedagogical formation courses offered within his own university.

4.2.2 Aspiration for Teaching Profession

Eray indicated that he had been interested in the English language since his childhood. Indeed, he was interested in places and his elder brother used to buy magazines about planes for him because he knew he liked them. However, they were published in English. Hence, Eray said he was exposed to the language at his early ages. Moreover, he added that he started to write English letters such as w, x, q, etc. before learning Turkish.

In Turkey, after completing the first-year at high schools except vocational and science high schools, students used to choose one of the four tracks; Turkish language-Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, and Foreign Languages according to their interests and success in the related courses (Yet, there will be no tracks any more as of the 2010-2011 academic year according to the decision of the Turkish Ministry of National Education). At first, Eray wanted to choose Science. However, his grades in the related courses such as maths were not high enough. Since he was better at English, he decided on Foreign Languages in the end. Eray added that he did not regret his decision. However, he considered whether it would be better if he had studied English language teaching or linguistics instead of English language and literature. He indicated that he did not like pedagogical courses at all. Thus, English language and literature happened to be a better choice. Yet, he pointed that he liked linguistics a lot while studying at the university. Therefore, he wished he had studied English linguistics instead of English language and literature.

In short, Eray has always been into English with an interest arising from his love for planes in his childhood. However, he does not seem to have as aspiration for teaching profession. He still dreams of doing something about flying such as at least being a cabin attendant. Moreover, appertaining to his future plans, he mentioned about applying for a graduate program in International Relations and a position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, especially in a consulate. Eray indicated that he also made attempts to succeed his goals.

My future plans ... I wanted to have a master's degree in International Relations very much. Regarding European Union ... I have applied to a few places, but I haven't received positive results yet. I have received a positive result from one place, but as I mentioned, I could not go there because of financial reasons. I plan to take a score over 70% on ALES (Graduate Examination), and then to transfer to International Relations. However, of course, I want a career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or a consulate. I want to go abroad and represent Turkey.

The excerpt above shows that he has plans other than teaching in his future life. Eray said he also liked teaching, however, it remains a second option for him for the time being as he would rather work in a consulate than teach English as a foreign language. He mentioned that he had a friend working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and he would be assigned to a consulate abroad after two years of training. Eray also explained the reason he could not apply for a position although he liked it that much. This year was the first time he had ever taken State Employee Selection Exam and he was not aware of that he had to do and obtain a score from foreign language part in the exam so as to apply for the position. He assumed that his score on Foreign Language Examination for Civil Servants would be sufficient, but he was wrong. Now, he is studying for the next State Employee Selection Exam, and points that only if he cannot get this job will he continue his teaching career.

4.2.3 Passion for Rural Teaching

Since Eray could not get prepared for State Employee Selection Exam spending his last year mostly in Romania and dealing with his graduation affairs, he could not succeed to get a high score enough to be recruited to a public school as a permanent English language teacher. Thus, he decided to study one more year. Meanwhile, he intended to start his teaching career and gain experience with the encouragement of his parents who both are retired teachers. For this purpose, he applied for a temporary position in Raindrop to the Provincial Directorate of

National Education. Thereupon, they called him from the Directorate very soon and asked whether he liked to work at the rural school where this study was administered. Eray indicated that he became very happy when he heard he was assigned to a rural school. Indeed, he added that he wanted to work at the school of the village he used to know because his friends shared some of their unappealing experiences in some urban schools and his family advised him that beginning career with rural teaching would be useful for him. Eray was also of the opinion that a rural school would facilitate a more smooth transition to the teaching profession from being a student. Moreover, he expanded on the reason why teaching at a rural school would be easier according to him. He pointed that he could establish a better relationship with his students at a rural school and supported his assumption with the challenges that his friends encountered at urban schools in Raindrop.

> Challenges ... More crowded. The students, of course, have a better command of English. They might have a better quality of education, but they cannot manage them. They say they do not have love and respect for their teachers. I saw that they had difficulty. Therefore, I wanted to work here. If I at least had a good communication, and they showed me love and respect, I thought everything would be easier; otherwise not because of their (English) level.

He had two friends from his high school in Raindrop. They all had started working as temporary English language teachers. However, they quit their jobs soon. He pointed that one of the teachers who quitted was working at a vocational high school for girls while the other was at an elementary school in the centre. They both had problems with their students. Eray said they were not able to motivate them and also they complained that students misbehaved towards them. Furthermore, these teachers were also preparing for State Employee Selection Exam at the same time. Eray compared his school with theirs and underscored that he had none of these problems here and his school was much better in terms of love and respect for teachers when compared to his friends' schools in the urban settings.

Moreover, Eray pointed that he did not like urban life, and thus he would rather work in rural settings where both himself and his students are involved in natural environment. He said "Rural life is more attractive to me. I do not like living in the apartments, cities, noise, etc.". However, Eray also indicated that he planned to work at rural schools only for 4 or 5 years. He had three major factors forcing him to give this decision. First, he accepted that rural settings are limited in terms of opportunities when compared to urban settings. He is young and single today, but he intends to settle down and raise his family in an urban setting. Second, he indicated that he wanted to work with a foreign language class. He said "I want to work with a foreign language class after rural teaching". Third, he complained about the physical conditions and lack of resources at the rural school. He mentioned some of them:

> We cannot even find a tape. We find a tape but this time we cannot find the cassette of the book. I did not even have my teacher's book. It came later. The books were missing. As I said, physical conditions ... Why are they insufficient? They might not be for other courses, but as I said, it is very insufficient for listening and speaking. It would be better if each class had a projector. In the first semester, I went (to the meeting hall) for the projector, but I could not work it. The computer is too old. You cannot connect to the Internet. If you can, it does not work a video. Nothing.

To sum up, Eray likes rural lifestyle and has passion for rural teaching. If he continues his teaching career after KPSS, he also wants to be assigned as a permanent teacher to a rural school. However, he still intends to transfer to an urban school after 4 or 5 years of rural teaching because of the aforesaid causes which primarily arise from rural constraints.

4.2.4 Development of Teaching Philosophy

Eray did not have any previous teaching experience except his practice teaching at university. Within the scope of his practice teaching course, he was

assigned to an elementary school in the suburb (Eray's own description of the place) of the city where his university was located. He had heard that the school was the worst in the city centre according to the success in SBS (high school entrance exam) beforehand. In his 3rd year, while taking pedagogical formation courses, he went to the school three days a week for a semester. Generally, he only observed his mentor teacher in the classroom. He also found opportunity to teach twice. However, they were supposed to divide a lesson into three parts as three student-teachers were attending. Additionally, they had an assigned teaching session at the end of the semester since their supervisor from the university came to observe and grade their teaching. It became their last opportunity before teaching in their own classroom. They never taught an entire lesson of 40 minutes on their own before. Thus, Eray was of the opinion that they had difficulty overcoming their anxiety when they started teaching. Moreover, he added that he had gone through a difficult process in his first year in Snowflake Elementary School. He said that it had taken a long time for him to learn about the educational system, the school and his students' background. Above all, he pointed that he could not decide how he should behave towards his students when he first started the job.

> I could not know how to approach to the kids at first. Should I have a good communication or be a strict teacher? Should I be a calm, sweet teacher? I could not know. I am trying to find a middle path. If I find, I believe I will be successful. Now, I seem more easy-going, but I plan to be stricter.

Therefore, as a beginning teacher, his teaching philosophy is still changing. However, Eray also touched upon his thoughts about teaching. Above all, he mentioned that he wanted to be a teacher who had a good communication with his students. He believed that this increased students' motivation and promoted their concentration on the lesson to a large extent. As regards teaching English as a foreign language, he pointed that he did not approve Grammar-Translation method and did not want to focus grammar only. Additionally, he was of the opinion that it was difficult to teach grammar to elementary students as they did not even know

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what their equivalents were and how to identify these rules in Turkish. Thus, he supported the idea of developing students' listening and speaking skills through making use of software, making students watch cartoons, movies in English. However, he complained that he had to focus on grammar in his lessons and make students write grammar rules due to the influence of achievement tests such as high school entrance exam (SBS), which were regarded as the only measure of success. For instance, in SBS, there are 17 English questions, which can make an important difference in entering a better high school.

In terms of being an ideal English language teacher, Eray pointed that he had a role model in his mind, his high school teacher. He said he liked his teaching style a lot and intended to be a teacher like him. However, he was a high school teacher and of a foreign language class. Thus, Eray indicated that he could not be like him at an elementary school. As mentioned above, even though he observed an elementary school teacher in his practice teaching, he said he did not approve her way of teaching at all. He criticized that he always did the lesson over the coursebook and never came on the board, write something. Moreover, he said she asked the students to do the activities at home and they simply checked them. Besides all these, Eray did not believe that he benefitted from the courses he had taken within the scope of pedagogical formation, excluding the material development course, today.

> Actually, I did not learn much in practice teaching at university. The only thing that made a difference ... We had a course called 'Material Development'. We developed many materials within the scope of this course. I plan to make use of them. But we ourselves developed the materials there. I plan to make students develop them ... To be honest, the other courses are not very ... The other courses are not practical but theoretical. I do not think they can be very useful.

Based upon all these, Eray indicated that he was struggling to shape his own way of teaching in his first year. For instance, he mentioned how he realized that

making students write grammar rules or words was more useful than simply distributing photocopies to them.

It was at the beginning of the semester. I wanted to do a test to the students. I had a material, photocopied and distributed it. Some (students) did not care. Some simply made up. I felt this. Then, I said 'how shall I do in the lesson?'. I decided to take the book and make students write. What's more, as they write on their notebook, their writing can develop. I did. When I did so, the students wrote things looking the words up in their dictionary. When they wrote the words, they became more interested. Making students write is better than giving photocopies. I realized this.

The reason behind his tendency to writing is also that he could not make students speak or simply read aloud a line and thus gave up the idea of making them speak. He believed that writing at least could enable them to gain self-confidence in using English.

Writing is essential for students. Otherwise, they cannot learn. Speaking ... You cannot make the children speak. You cannot even make them read aloud what they themselves write. Thus, it is too difficult. First, they should write and gain self-confidence. Thus, I want to make them write. They can gain self-confidence and say that they can do it. Then, speaking ... Speaking is the second stage.

Moreover, the same reason led Eray to use the native language of both himself and the students in his classrooms instead of English. At first, he said he tried to use English starting with some small expressions such as 'Good morning class', 'How are you?', etc. However, he realized soon that he could not ask anything else in English. He could not involve his students in this process of using English in the lesson. He decided to start with reading aloud activities first so that they could gain self-confidence, but as mentioned above, he could not make them

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read aloud even a line. Thereupon, he gave up uttering even those small expressions because it started to seem unnatural and meaningless to him.

Lastly, Eray regarded himself as a teacher who was insufficient in terms of integrating computer technology in his English lessons although he believed in its power in enhancing listening and speaking skills specifically. Thus, he did not use them at all in his first semester in Snowflake. However, he wanted to make students, especially those in 4th and 5th grade, watch cartoons and do activities on computers. Hence, he said he started to search for what he could do. For instance, he mentioned that he found a few CDs, softwares so as to teach vocabulary and movies and videos he planned to make them watch, and also examined the DynEd Solution software (which is offered by the Ministry of National Education).

4.2.5 English Language Teaching Practices

The analysis of the data obtained through the time and motion study revealed what instructional activities the beginning English language teacher relied upon in his lessons and how frequently he employed each one of them. Generally, he followed his coursebooks step by step and supported his lessons with additional exercises when needed. Typically, he began a new unit in the coursebook translating the title of the unit with his students and talking about what they would learn in this unit. Accordingly, he introduced either a new grammar topic or new vocabulary. It also happened that he simply continued with coursebook activities. Moreover, he distributed multiple choice tests pertaining to grammar topics or vocabulary and as mentioned before, provided additional exercises when needed. Figure 2 shows the in-class instructional activities and their relative percentages of occurrence.

In-Class Activities
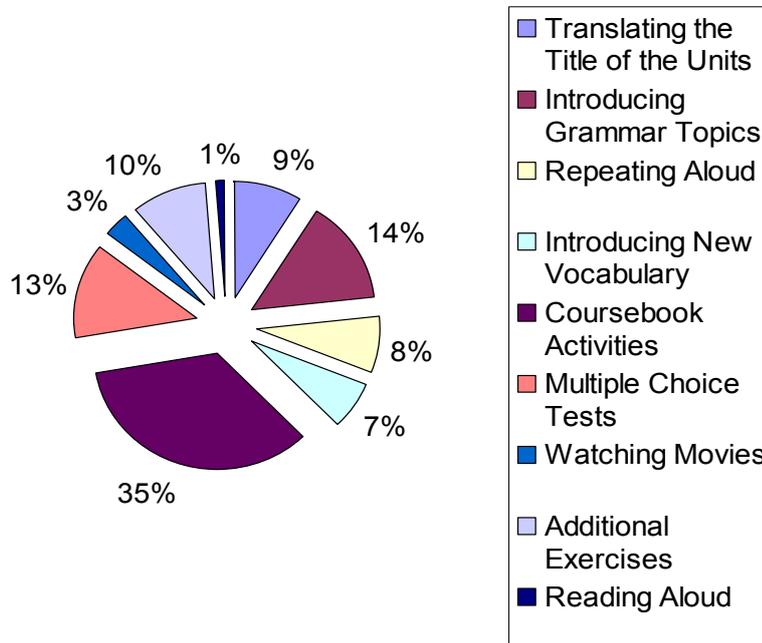
Figure 2. In-class instructional activities and their relative percentages of occurrence.

Before touching upon how the English language teacher employed these activities in his lessons, it is also important to note here that the diversity of these activities and their relative percentages also varied according to the classes he was teaching. To illustrate, he elaborated his lessons with a variety of activities in the 4th and 5th grade. In addition, he focused mostly on vocabulary teaching and improving their pronunciation rather than grammar teaching only. On the other hand, his activities, especially in the 7th and 8th grade, were restricted to the exercises pertaining to grammar topics and also coursebook activities. Figure 3 below shows the distribution of activities according to the classes taking the English lesson.
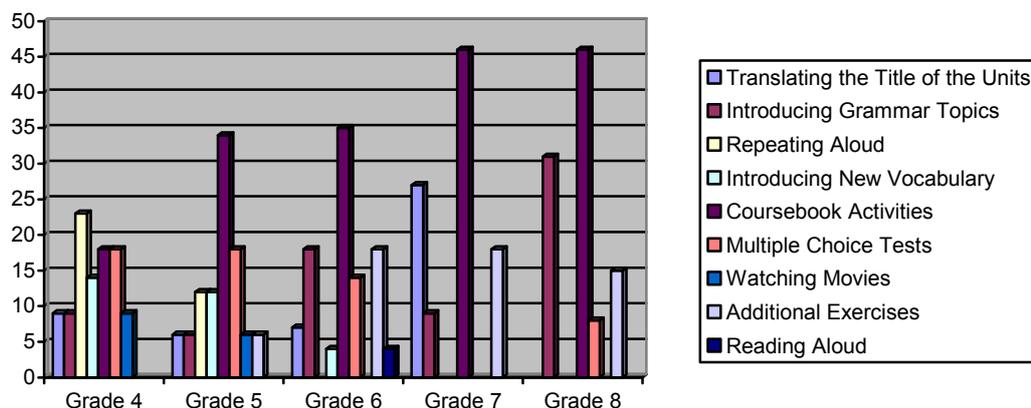
Figure 3. Distribution of the in-class instructional activities according to the classes.

The teacher began every unit in the coursebooks *translating the title of the unit* and talking about what they would learn in the unit with his students, which also happened to be a warm-up session to introducing grammar topics or introducing new vocabulary very often. For instance, the title was "Leisure Time Activities" in one of his lessons with grade 5 students. The teacher also wrote it on the board. He asked what their new unit could be about and what the title was in Turkish. Then, he asked what the students did in their leisure time before listing leisure time activities on the board (Obs. 1; Feb. 9) (In this discussion, the following abbreviation "Obs." is used instead of "Observation"). In another lesson with grade 6 students, the title was "Planning a Party". They first translated the title. Then, he asked whose birthday they last celebrated. In the end, he suggested to plan a birthday party for one of the students. First, he wrote an example question and answer; *When is your birthday? It is on 19th May.* The students immediately asked what the suffix "-th" was. Thereupon, the teacher said they would learn it, and wrote "Ordinal Numbers" on the board (Observation 1; Feb.9).

Translating the title of the units, the teacher mostly continued with *introducing grammar topics* as well as introducing new vocabulary, or simply following coursebook activities. The teacher introduced grammar topics through writing examples on the board and underlining or tabulating segments in order to

make things easier to comprehend. In addition, he gives further explanation, and makes students write notes about it on their notebooks. To illustrate, in one of his lessons with the grade 8 students, he taught "conditional sentences". First, he made the students write explanation. He did not forget to warn them to read these notes when they went home. For a while, he moved around the classroom and observed whether they all wrote it or not. After finishing this stage, he drew a table on the board, divided it into two columns as the conditional clause and the main clause. He wrote a few examples under these titles, translated them and talked about their structures (Obs.9; Mar.19).

Introducing new vocabulary was another in-class activity observed. The teacher introduced new vocabulary simply writing a list of new words on the board. To illustrate, in one of his lessons with the grade 4 students, he started a new unit translating the title "My Weekly Schedule" and asking the students to guess what they would do in this new unit. Looking into the coursebook, a student said they might do their weekly lesson schedule. The teacher came on the board and wrote another title "My Lessons". He said they would learn the names of their lessons at school, and started to list them on the board (Obs. 3; Feb. 16).

Looking into Figure 3, it is seen that the teacher mostly relied upon *Coursebook Activities* in his lessons. These activities included;

- o Writing Full Answers to Questions
- o Multiple Choice Questions
- o Puzzles / Painting
- o Rephrasing Sentences
- o Matching Activities
- o Looking Unknown Words up
- o Fill-in-the-Blanks Questions, and
- o Translating Sentences.

Even though there appeared some listening activities at times, they simply skipped them because they did not have the cassette / CD according to what the

teacher said. Furthermore, there was not a tape or computer in each class, which was another challenge.

In order to do these activities, the teacher would simply tell his students on which page they were and the activities that he wanted them to do. However, he would not give further instructions regarding what they were supposed to do. Still, he would monitor the classroom all the time, and give explanations when he noticed that the students did not understand, or answer their questions when they asked. To illustrate, in one of his lessons with the grade 4 students, he asked them to answer the questions on a page. However, the students were confused and they asked for an example in the end. To give an example, he wrote the first question on the board and answered it together with the students (Obs.1; Feb. 9).

Multiple choice tests were another most frequently employed activity in the English lessons. In the lessons, he distributed tests to the students, and monitored them. He usually allowed them to use their dictionaries while they were doing tests. In addition, he helped them when they had a question. After the students finished tests, they checked answers all together as a class, or the teacher collected, checked, and said how many right and wrong answers they had. Furthermore, the teacher gave further explanation about questions when needed. For instance, he photocopied and distributed a test to the grade 8 students. He started monitoring and answering the students' questions. The students did not know what "once" meant in the test. He explained it. The students finished the test, and he started to give the right answers. Yet, after a few questions, the students continued. They said what they did and the teacher corrected them when their answers were wrong. In the end, the teacher said that they mostly confused "for" and "since" in the test. Hence, he had a student open his notebook, read the explanations they wrote about them before, and went over the questions (Obs.4; Feb. 20).

In addition, since they did multiple choice tests in the lessons very often, the English language teacher decided to turn it to a competition among the students,

believing that it could be stimulating for them. Hence, on the 3rd observation day, he announced in his lessons that he would count their right answers on the tests that they would do until the end of the spring semester and also buy a gift for those who would do best in each class. He also decided what to buy as a gift with his students. To illustrate, they decided on a watch in the grade 4 class.

Repeating aloud was also observed in the English lessons, particularly in his lessons with the 4th and 5th grade students. The teacher did not speak English in his classrooms. Nor did the students. Furthermore, he complained that he could not make students read aloud even a line, and he would rarely ask them to read aloud. Therefore, repeating aloud was the only speaking activity the teacher preferred in order to improve the students' pronunciation. He would ask the students to repeat aloud words after him all together, as a whole class or he would simply ask individual students to repeat aloud a single word or a list of words on the board. For instance, in one of his lessons with the 4th grade students, he wrote the names of lessons in both Turkish and English on the board, and asked the students to repeat aloud them after him. The students repeated them as a whole class. However, when it came to "Physical Education", the students could not pronounce it correctly. Each said something different, which led to a funny moment in the class. Thereupon, the teacher chose a few students and asked them to repeat one by one. They finished repeating them all. Lastly, the teacher chose a student and asked him to repeat all the words alone. He started to repeat them alone, but towards the end, the other students also repeated together with him (Obs. 3; Feb.16).

Reading aloud was another in-class activity the teacher employed in the lessons. However, the teacher complained that the students were not eager to do it. Hence, I coincided with a reading aloud activity only once throughout all the observations at the school. It was the second hour of a lesson with the grade 6 students. The students would group animal names under 4 titles; reptiles, mammals, birds, insects. In order to do this, there was a dialogue they needed to study on. The teacher first said that he would read aloud the dialogue and the students would write

the animals into the table accordingly. He explained that there were two people talking in a zoo. Then, he stood up and changed his mind. He wanted two students to read it. He chose two students, but they did not want to read it. He chose another two students. The students started to read aloud. He also corrected their pronunciation mistakes. Moroever, he stopped them at times and translated what they said into Turkish. Finally, he also read aloud the dialogue once again (Obs.4; Feb. 20).

W*atching movies* was another activity observed especially in the lessons with the grade 4 and 5 students. As mentioned before, there were a computer and a projector in the grade 4 class. Thus, the 4th grade students were able to watch movies in their own classroom. Yet, the teacher would take the 5th grade students to the meeting hall upstairs. Besides, the movies were not in English (at least the ones I observed). They did not have English subtitles, either. They were simply Turkish dubbed. Moreover, they did not do any pre- or post- activities related to these movies. Hence, their instructional purposes were not definite at all. However, the teacher indicated that they would start watching English movies step by step; first as Turkish dubbed, then with subtitles, and finally in its original language, English.

Lastly, there were also some *additional exercises*. The teacher would bring exercises from additional sources, and either he himself would write or he would make a student write them on the board. Furthermore, he would take photocopies, though not very frequently. The additional exercises that were observed throughout all the observations included;

- o Forming Sentences,
- o Fill-in-the-Blanks Questions,
- o Multiple Choice Questions, and
- o Translating Sentences.

To illustrate, in one of his lessons with the grade 6 students, he distributed a photocopy including some exercises about there is / there are structure. In the first exercise, the teacher chose the students and they translated the English sentences into Turkish. Then, they moved to another exercise. The teacher explained the example

given. They were supposed to form sentences by using there is / there are structure and the expressions given such as tomatoes / fridge. He asked the students to start doing the exercise (Obs. 10; Mar.22).

4.2.6 Beginning Career with Rural Teaching

Both the school principal and the vice principal believed that beginning teachers should not be assigned to rural schools for their first year in teaching. According to them, teachers should start working at an urban school so that they can learn better how to act properly as a teacher in 1 or 2 years. Moreover, they added that they should work with mentors in this period, and observe them in their lessons and even in their interactions with students and parents. The school principal explained his thoughs with the following words;

> Now it is a bit different here (at the rural school). There is a group of students at a certain level there (at urban schools). Things are settled. (Students') behaviours are settled. Families' educational level, cultural level and economic level are good. Moreover, teachers professionally grow better there. They understand it better. Then, I think they should be sent to such places. Here, I do not know ... It seems that they do not develop much. They work here for 2 years, learn a little. Then, when they go there ... If you conduct such a survey, you will see this. Conduct a questionnaire with our teachers working in rural settings, 90% of them abstain from going to the urban. They wonder whether they can do it or not.

The school administrators believed that beginning teachers were insufficient in practice while they know how to teach in theory. Moreover, they indicated that the biggest problem that beginning teachers had was the communication with their students and other people in rural settings. The school principal pointed that parents were different in rural settings. For instance, he exemplified their way of communication and said that they said what they were supposed to say all of a

sudden at the very beginning instead of at the end of their conversation, thereby making it difficult for teachers and rural people to understand each other. Similarly, the vice principal also underscored that teachers' attitudes towards people in rural settings should be different from those in urban settings. In this regard, he stated:

For example, I talk with you in a certain way, with them in another way. If I approach them in the way I talk with you or I approach you, nobody comes up to me. In this way, there is nothing that this teacher can do here. S/he only fills in time.

The excerpt above shows that the vice principal believed the importance of dialogue with people in rural teaching. In this regard, he also exemplified his first year of teaching in a village located in Eastern Turkey. He said they did not have electricity, water, road, and even toilet at the school where he was assigned. However, he said he loved the village so much and never gave up. He touched upon that his dialogue with his students was good. He built a toilet, carried woods to the school together with his students. Even after almost 20 years, he added that he was still in touch with these people. In short, the administrators were of the opinion that for a beginning teacher who grew up in urban settings, it was hard to adapt to rural setting, and thus they had difficulty in their communication with the people.

In Turkey, beginning teachers are usually assigned to rural school for their first years of teaching career. The other teachers also shared their experience of rural teaching. They all indicated that all teachers should experience rural teaching and learn the challenging conditions of their own country. For instance, Teacher 3, who started her teaching career in a village in Eastern Turkey, highlighted the importance of this experience with these words;

My first appointment was to the east and I definitely believe that every teacher should go and see these places. I worked there for almost 3 years. And I experienced all physical contraints. We carried water. I do not know.

We could not communicate with the villagers because of the language. They knew Kurdish. And when I came to a village here (in Raindrop), it was like Paris for me ... And those who were first assigned to my second school here (the previous school in Raindrop before Snowflake Elementary School) were unhappy. (They say) There is nothing. I mean, they were not happy. They did not like it. I believe that if they come towards here after such a place, this will build a positive view of the teaching context. Because when they start directly from the west, they cannot accept anything.

In short, all the teachers supported the idea that beginning teachers should start with some challenges before easier teaching conditions. However, Teacher 1 underscored that they should not be assigned to schools in which there is not another teacher who can guide them. He added that beginning with rural teaching could be useful only if there were at least a few teachers around the teachers who can support them. He said that awareness differed a beginning teacher from an experienced teacher. Since beginning teachers seek to employ what they have learned at university considering ideal teaching conditions, rural challenges can wear them down. Hence, he said that they should have other teachers around them and additionally they should be willing to work in rural settings and self-sacrificing when needed. Based upon the interviews with Eray, the school administrators and the other teachers as well as the multiple observations, it is seen that he had a circle of people who were always ready to help him and encouraged him to do more. For instance, he stated that the school principal encouraged him to integrate computer technology in his lessons, and use at least the computer and tecnology lab although they did not have a separate language lab or technological equipments in each class. Moreover, he added that some teachers provided him additional sources for English language teaching. They taught him how to use e-school management information system. Therefore, Eray did not have such a problem in Snowflake.

From a different perspective, supporting the idea that beginning with rural teaching would be useful for a newly-gradute teacher, Teacher 4 touched upon that they would feel more comfortable during the most stressful period of teaching profession since there were not many people who would question and interfere in their practices in rural settings. He said teachers had opportunity to individualize the instruction and encourage themselves while entering the classroom. He said " they find ways to show themselves as individual teachers".

Besides all these, the teachers were of the opinion that beginning teachers could increase school success in rural settings because they were more idealist and enthusiastic when they start teaching profession and try to do their best at the school. In this regard, Teacher 2 said " First, they were very enthusiastic. They are very excited. They love children. Hence, they always become interested in students and the success increases". Moreover, Teacher 3 added that these beginning teachers could increase the school success because they did not have anything else, any social activities to do other than school work. Hence, she said they only cared about what they could do for their students at rural schools.

> Their only social activity is sitting with friends, at least we would do so, and watching series on a TV channel. There were not many TV channels operating, either. I mean, this is your only social activity. Besides, what can we give to the children? ... For instance, we did not have a printer; hence we would write everything. I was teaching there, too. I was teaching English there. I mean, I would prepare practice sheets for students. I mean, productivity is higher in the first years.

Moreover, Teacher 3 touched upon teachers' emotional connection to the rural place and community emerging with time. Based upon the days he had at rural schools, he mentioned that beginning teachers gained unforgettable experiences in rural settings.

For example, they want to establish good friendship in the village... but then they fall in love with the village. They want to stay in that village. I mean, they can never forget those days ... I worked in the villages. Those were beautiful days. I do not know. I was the only teacher. I mean, we would sit together, chat and eat with the village headman, imam, parents, and young people in the garden.

Teacher 3 indicated that beginning teachers built strong relationships with the community with time, which raised the feeling of belonging to the place. However, Teacher 2 pointed that beginning teachers did not have previous teaching experience. Thus, they come to rural schools without knowing exactly what they should do, how they should behave as a teacher. Believing that a beginning teacher could not be regarded as a fully-fledged teacher, as they are still struggling to build their professional identity, he suggested that teachers complete their first year in crowded schools and then be assigned to rural settings.

In this study, the English language teacher also had passion for rural teaching. He was also of the opinion that rural schools enabled a smooth transition to the teaching profession and he could establish a stronger relationship with his students. The results also showed that he succeeded to gain love and respect of his students. However, the parents were not in touch with Eray as much as they were with the previous teacher who was from the village. He could not develop a feeling of belonging to the place. Moreover, as some teachers and the school administrators indicated, he was not able to develop himself professionally in Snowflake because there was not any other English language teacher whom he could exchange ideas- though the other teachers and administrators were eager to support him as much as they were able to, their knowledge in terms of language teaching was not sufficient. Additionally, as indicated, because students do not have the habit of studying, parents do not interact with teachers and support their students much, teachers lose their idealism with time and do not feel the need to do more and develop themselves in their first years of teaching. Besides, Eray was a temporary teacher and also

preparing State Employee Selection Exam. Thus, he confessed that he did not have time to do much for his professional development for the time being. Moreover, he said he missed the seminars within the scope of in-service teacher education programs. He said he could not attend the first one in the fall semester because he started one week late. However, he did not know that he could attend the second one in the spring semester. He said he regretted not having gone to this because all the English language teachers in Raindrop came together and talked about the current issues regarding English language teaching.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Presentation

The present study explored how a rural elementary school and community situated teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Central Turkey. For this purpose, a qualitative case study was administered in Raindrop. The data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with the English language teacher, the school administrators, the other teachers working at Snowflake Elementary School, and the parents, observations, and lastly a small-scale open-ended questionnaire. Besides, the documents pertaining to students' and school success were collected and the photographs of the research setting were taken. The interviews were all transcribed verbatim. The data obtained through the time and motion study was re-written in the narrative within two days after each observation at the school. As regards the open-ended questionnaire, the sheets collected from each grade were organized in separate files. The data were prepared for analysis. They were all coded and interpreted. The coding procedure revealed the major themes in Chapter 4. In this chapter, a discussion of the results is presented. In addition, the chapter also provides the conclusion and also recommendations for further research.

5.1 DISCUSSION

In this part, a discussion of the results in Chapter 4 is presented under two sub-titles; (a) the place of English in the rural context and (b) teacher's identity and teaching practices.

5.1.1 The Place of English in the Rural Context

The results revealed how the differences between rural and urban education influenced teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the rural setting in Turkey. The factors leading to these differences can be listed as followings; parents' awareness and attitudes, students' out-of-school life and habit of studying, lack of role models and teacher turnover.

In previous studies (e.g. Huang, 2011), parents' indifferent attitudes towards their kids' schooling had been counted among the most important challenges in rural teaching. Hence, teachers had asked for more responsibility and involvement. Similarly, this study also revealed that parent involvement was weak in the rural setting. First of all, the participants including Eray, the school administrators and the other teachers were all of the opinion that parents in urban settings were more conscious. In this regard, they give more importance to education, contact with teachers, follow their kids' studies, check their assignments, etc. However, parents in rural settings mostly send their kids to the school so that they can learn how to read and write and receive at least an elementary school degree. They do not help their kids in their lessons. The reasons for this included low educational level and workload as the parents generally make their living through agriculture and animal husbandry. Moreover, they cannot afford to send their kids to private courses or hire a tutor, which appears to be another factor leaving them behind their peers in urban settings. It seems that this is aimed to be overcome through a project with the collaboration of Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation, Provincial Directorate of National Education and Public Education Centre although there are still some who cannot even afford bus fare to attend the courses.

The participants indicated that the students in Snowflake are indeed intelligent, can succeed anything and become even more successful than their peers in urban settings. However, they are not successful at the school today because they do not have the habit of studying. After school, they simply throw their bags, do their

homework if they want to do, and go outside to play with their friends since everywhere is suitable and children influence one another. Moreover, rural kids are expected to fulfill more serious responsibilities starting from early ages such as dealing with animals, helping in the garden, cleaning house, selling crops, etc. in addition to going to school, especially when spring comes. In winter, the students also have difficulty studying their lessons because of physical conditions of their house since most are stove-heated and hence they all sit, sleep and eat together in only one room. In this regard, Eray's example was remarkable. He mentioned that the parents did not turn off the television and thus the students knew TV series better than they did their lessons.

In this study, the lack of role models for the students also appeared to be another factor leading to a difference in students' academic success in rural settings. Role models can be other students, their elder brothers or sisters who achieved a success; their peers who want to continue their education further, hence those whom they can compete with; or their parents or other members of the community from high educational background and a variety of occupational groups. In rural settings, as the school principal stated, success is not something that can be easily achieved. Thus, the number of academically successful students (those who enter prestigious high schools and universities and acquire a job to make their living without being dependent on others according to the participants's description) is very small. Hence, neither the parents nor the students are much aware of what a good high school or university means for their future life. Additionally, since the students whose parents encourage them to continue their education and who wholeheartedly study hard are very rare, they do not have another student who will enable them to see their own missing sides and motivate them to study harder. Finally, since rural parents do not have high educational level, they mostly make their living through similar ways, particularly agriculture and animal husbandry. Thus, the students have less idea about other paths they can follow when compared to their peers in urban settings that offer a more heterogenous environment. The teachers believed that the parents played an important role in Snowflake because families influenced each other a lot.

Based upon their observations, they said that those with the same surname had similar attitudes towards schooling. Hence, if they see that a kid from a family succeeds in an area, they direct their kids towards that way, too. In other words, as Teacher 1 said, families also encourage their kids in this process. Neither the parents nor the students are opposed to schooling or unwilling to continue education further. Hence, it is important to raise parents and students' awareness of the life out of the borders of their village so as to obtain succcess.

Lastly, teacher turnover, as the previous studies (e.g. Lemke, 1994) pointed, is another factor affecting success in rural settings. Snowflake Elementary School has many pluses such as its proximity to the centre, small class size, technological equipments, etc. when compared to other rural schools around. However, teachers do not want to stay at the school for a long time and thus they transfer to another school in the centre once they find opportunity. This affects students because not only it takes a long time for students to get accustomed to a new teacher, but also it takes a long time for the teacher to get accustomed to the place. To illustrate, although there were some teachers such as the science and social studies teachers who had been working at the school for a long time, there have not been a permanent English language teacher, except the previous one who had also grown up in Snowflake and worked for 3 years. In this regard, it is also seen that the homegrown teacher was not motivated to remain teaching in the village although, as opposed to Huysman (2008) 's study, her return to the village was appreciated by the community and also increased teacher-parent interaction.

In terms of the place of English as a foreign language, the results showed that although the rural elementary school and its community had general appreciation of learning and teaching the language, it was not on the top of their list as they gave importance to it just for obtaining success on the achivement tests such as high school entrance exam and graduation for the time being. Indeed, the students loved their teacher and the English lessons. Thus, they were willing to learn the language. Even though there appeared some students who found it difficult, they reported that

they intended to succeed in it. However, except the 4th and 5th grade students, the students were not happy with Eray's teaching. They wanted their English language teacher to take the lesson more seriously and teach intensively. The parents considered English as a global language and supported the idea of teaching English as a foreign language to their kids at the elementary school in the village. However, they did not find the education sufficient in terms of learning the language effectively. Therefore, English appeared to be important for the parents because it was another compulsory subject that the kids had to pass and also they needed to do some questions testing their knowledge of English in high school entrance exam so as to enter a better high school. The school administrators and the teachers also had the same thoughts and feelings about the current place of English as a foreign language at the school. In other words, everyone had positive attitudes towards the English language education at the school; however, there were inadequacies in terms of English language teaching practices. The school had technological equipments that could be used in teaching English as a foreign language. Even though there were not a computer and a projector in each class, there was at least a computer and technology lab and a meeting hall with a computer and a projector. Moreover, both the school administrators and the other teachers encouraged the English language teacher to use them both in his lesson when needed. The parents were not very interested in the English lessons although they believed it would be useful for their kids. However, the students loved the English language and some were very really eager to participate in the lesson and to learn the language. In addition, the students were very few in number, almost 10 in each class. Therefore, as the teachers, administrators, and parents also suggested and the students desired, there is a need for a high quality teacher. In other words, as Applegate (2008) indicated, teachers appeared to be the key to the success of rural education.

5.1.2 Teacher's Identity and Teaching Practices

The results supported the literature showing that teachers' background and how they identify themselves with the rural shaped their decision on working in rural

settings (e.g. Boylan & McSwan, 1998). Moreover, as Campbell & Yates (2011) indicated, those who are able to list more positive features of rural teaching are also willing to work in such settings. In this study, the English language teacher stated that he wanted to work at a rural school more than he wanted to work at an urban school when he applied for a position to the Provincial Directorate of National Education. There were two major reasons leading to this. First, he had an *appreciation of rural life* as he also grew up in a village in Raindrop. Second, he had *passion for rural teaching* as he preferred rural life and also, as Belay et al. (2007) also put forth, he thought that rural schools could facilitate a more smooth transition to the first year in the teaching profession because he could establish better relationships with the people, his students, parents and colleagues. Hence, he said that he wanted to be recruited as a permanent teacher to a rural school again if he continued to teach after State Employee Selection Exam.

The teacher did not have an *aspiration for teaching profession*. For Eray, teaching was a second option that he considered to do unless he could not succeed to get his dream job in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Flores and Day (2006) implied, intrinsic motivation to become a teacher is one of the most important factors keeping idealism in teaching even under challenging circumstances such as in resource-constrained rural settings where many teachers seek out ways to leave the place as soon as possible or simply quit the job. Moreover, Flores and Day indicated that those with extrinsic motivation started to perceive their teaching more traditional and teacher-centered since they were not able to overcome those challenges. Similarly, Eray appeared to rely upon the traditional methods, grammar teaching, translation, multiple choice tests, repeating aloud, etc although he did not approve. Besides, he did not believe that the teacher education program neither facilitated his transition to being a teacher nor contributed to his teaching in practice again in consistency with the findings related to those with extrinsic motivation to be a teacher.

In other words, aspiration for teaching profession appears to be the primary factor which can enable a teacher to cope with the challenges of rural teaching

whereas appreciation of rural life and passion for rural teaching are important for willingness to work in rural settings. However, according to the interviews with Eray and multiple observations of his teaching practices, he did not attain much from his teacher education program. Eray never aspired to be a teacher and he attended the pedagogical formation for the sake of receiving a certificate in case. However, the program did not sound very effective in terms of preparing a teacher especially for rural schools. Above all, Eray openly stated that theoretical courses did not help him at all today because he could not know how to relate them to real classroom. He regarded only one course practical and useful; Material Development. Concerning the practice teaching, which lasted only one semester, he said he did not learn much from it, either. First, he complained about his mentor teacher because she could not be a good role model. Second, he pointed that they did not have much opportunity to be in front of a real classroom. Additionally, Eray regarded himself insufficient in terms of integrating technology in his lessons. Each class did not have a computer and a projector, except the 4th grade. However, there was a computer and technology lab and also a meeting hall with a computer and a projector, both of which he could use whenever he wanted. However, he did not benefit much from them. Towards the end of the year, he started to make the 4th and 5th grade students watch movies; that was all he did with the technology in his hand. In short, the findings of this study confirms the previous studies such as Çakıroğlu and Çakıroğlu (2003) and Alptekin and Tatar (2011) claiming that teacher education programs in Turkey did not seem to prepare high quality teachers for rural schools. However, it should be also noted that the English language teacher involved in this study completed only a year-long teacher certification program.

In their recent studies, Choudhury (2010) and Huang (2011) concluded that teachers had difficulty employing Communicative Language Teaching methods at rural schools because of many causes resulting from teachers themselves, students, parents and school system. Similarly, Eray also mentioned the same challenges he had for not being able to employ instructional activities he desired. For instance, he mentioned his being unprepared in stepping into the profession, students' lack of

learning motivation, parents' indifferent attitudes and achievement tests which are regarded as the only measure of success. Hence, he turned to more traditional language teaching methods instead of those contemporary methods.

To sum up, the results showed that Eray's appreciation of rural life and passion for rural teaching led him to choose a rural elementary school for his first year in teaching. However, his lack of aspiration for teaching profession, hence carrying other plans in his mind such as applying for a position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stepping into the profession before getting prepared to teach in his own classroom, and also the rural challenges arising from students, parents and insufficiency of opportunities and recources, and himself as the teacher, according to Eray, caused him to have difficulty in his first year in teaching.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study explored how a rural elementary school and its community situated teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Central Turkey and how the rural context shaped a beginning teacher's professional identity and teaching practices. The collected data displayed the thoughts of different participants including the English language teacher, the other teachers, the school administrators, the parents and the students). Additionally, the teaching practices and the daily routine of a beginning English language teacher at a rural elementary school were identified. The results of the study revealed important themes pertaining to these issues and there are three major conclusions made.

First, this study concluded that there were four keys to being a successful teacher in rural settings. These included; appreciation of rural life, passion for rural teaching, aspiration for teaching profession and finally being well-prepared for teaching. The first one is important for a sympathetic understanding of rural life and the community. The second, passion for rural teaching is crucial for willingness to work at rural schools. Since many teachers do not intend to be assigned to rural

schools, they do not go to these schools. Even if they are assigned to rural schools, they do not stay long, and either quit their jobs or seek out ways to leave the place very soon. The third, aspiration for teaching profession, appears to be the key source enabling teachers to keep their idealism under rural challenges. The last, being well-prepared to work at rural schools, is possibly the most important key to achieving a success in rural teaching. Even when teachers have the previous qualifications, they may not provide quality English language education unless they are equipped with necessary skills and knowledge.
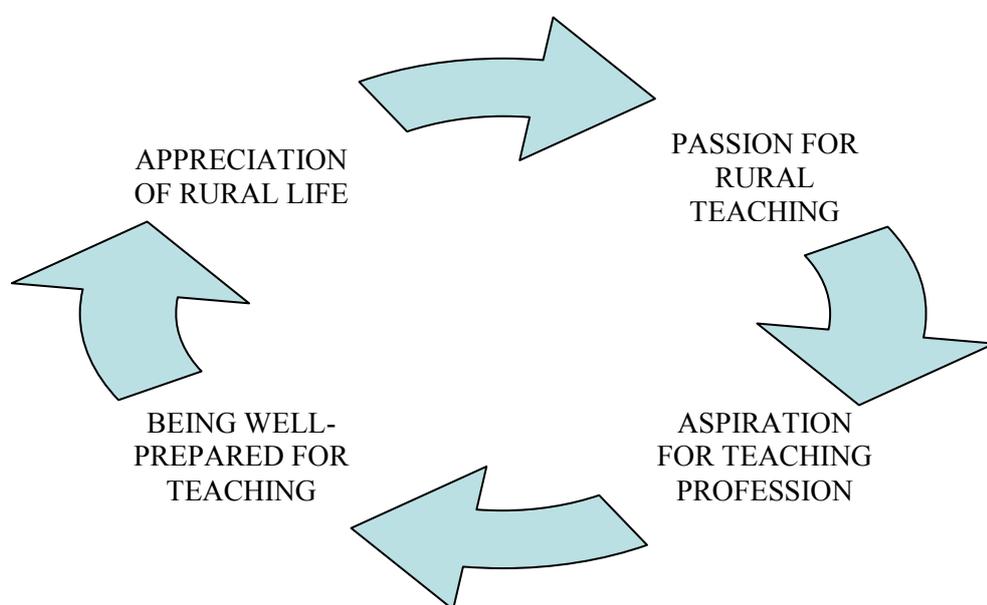

Figure 4. Four keys to being a successful teacher in the rural setting.

The ultimate goal of this qualitative study was to understand the place of English language education in a rural teaching context in Turkey. The results shed light on that both the school and the community had general appreciation for quality English language education. However, the participants did not find English language teaching practices satisfying in terms of acquiring effective language skills. Hence,

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the English lesson was valued only for graduation from the elementary school and for obtaining success on achievement tests. English was not on the top of their list.

Lastly, since the primary participant, Eray, was a beginning English language teacher, this study also revealed important results pertaining to beginning career with rural teaching. It was observed that the teacher was idealist and enthusiastic as he was in the first years of his teaching career and thus could have increased the success at the rural school if he had stepped into the profession as well-prepared from his teacher education program. The biggest challenge that beginning teachers might face in rural settings appeared to be communication problems. In this regard, the results showed that the rural community preferred the homegrown teacher at the school. Additionally, it was concluded that beginning teachers might lose their idealism, and stick to traditional methods if they could not cope with the rural challenges arising from parents, students, and school system. Hence, it is important that beginning teachers are provided professional support in their first years in rural teaching.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study revealed how a rural elementary school and its community situated first year of foreign language teaching in Central Turkey and how a beginning teacher experiences first year of teaching in a rural context, how his professional identity and teaching practices are shaped. In addition, the rural challenges of teaching English as a foreign language are identified. As a result, important recommendations for beginning teachers, teacher educators and researchers emerged. They are presented below.

5.3.1 Recommendations for Beginning Teachers

1. Aspiration for teaching profession is an important factor that keeps teachers' idealism even under challenging circumstances. Thus, teachers first love their

profession. In addition, teaching is a noble labour. It should not be regarded as a second option which can be done in case of not acquiring another job.

2. In order to succeed in rural teaching, it is important to develop an appreciation of rural life and have passion for rural teaching. It can be useful for beginning teachers to consider over the advantages of rural teaching.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Teacher Educators

1. Teacher education for rural schools requires special attention. It is important to prepare high-quality teachers for rural schools. For this purpose, prospective teachers can be assigned to rural schools for practicum. Additionally, rural teaching conditions can be discussed in university-based courses. Moreover, prospective teachers can have exposure to a course in rural sociology for a better understanding of the nature of rural life.

2. Beginning teachers have difficulty deciding how to behave towards their students. Hence, teacher educators should also draw attention to student-teacher relationships. For instance, prospective teachers can be asked to reflect upon their own or their mentor's relationships with students they observe and interact with at schools during their practicum.

3. Teachers do not step into the profession ready to cope with rural challenges. As a result, they might lose their idealism and stick to traditional foreign langauge teaching methods. Hence, it is important to provide support and mentoring to beginning teachers in rural settings.

5.3.3 Recommendations for Researchers

1. The study should be replicated in the same rural elementary school with a new English language teacher. In this way, it might be possible to see how a

teacher from a different background (for instance, a teacher from an urban background and does not have an appreciation of rural life) infuences or is influenced by the context where her / his teaching is embedded. Moreover, different results might be also obtained with the impact of working as a permanent teacher if the new teacher is not another temporary teacher.

2. Also, similar studies should be replicated in other rural settings in Turkey, in different regions as all have varying characteristics, unique to them.

3. A similar study should start when a teacher is first assigned to a school so that researchers can make observations and conduct interviews at certain intervals such as at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the study.

4. The influence of teachers who return to their own villages graduating from a bachelor's degree in English language teaching should be also investigated.

5. A team of researchers should also examine beginning teachers before and after they are recruited as permanent teachers to rural schools. This will present a more comprehensive analysis of teachers' professional journeys and also enable to evaluate specifically teacher education programs in terms of their effectiveness in preparing teachers for rural schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Interview Questions for English Language Teacher

a. Interview 1 (Autobiographical Interview)

1. Where were you born and raised? (in a city or country)

2. How long have you been there?

3. Tell about your educational background. (elementary school, high school and university; where are they located? Did you stay in a dorm or a house near or far from the schools?)

4. Why did you decided to be an English language teacher?

5. When have you graduted from the university?

6. Tell about your teaching experiences. (including your school experience and practice teaching courses)

7. When did you decided to work at this school? And Why?

8. How long have you been teaching here?

9. Where do you stay ? Is it close or far from the school ? How do you come to school? How long does it take ?

b. Interview 2 (Teaching English in a Rural School)

1. What are your future plans about your teaching career? Why?

2. What do your family and friends think about the school that you are currently teaching? How do you feel about them?

3. What is your teaching philosophy? How should English be taught/learned? Can you realize them here? Why or Why not? Did your teaching philosophy change after you started teaching in this school?

4. How do you design your lessons? In your opinion, how important is English for the students here?

5. What kind of activities do you ask your students to do? Do they prepare a project, keep a portfolio, etc.? How do you follow their progress?

6. Are your students interested in learning English? How is their attitude towards the English lesson?

7. Are the parents interested in their kids' English lessons? What are their expectations? Have you ever talked with them about these issues?

8. What are your expectations from the kids and the parents ?

9. How are the attitudes of the administrators and the other teachers towards the place of English language education in this school? Do they encourage the students to learn English? Do you collaborate with them? How?

(The teacher is a temporary teacher at the school, he will take State Employee Selection Exam again this year, and probably he will be teaching somewhere else next year, the following first two questions will be related to this issue.)

10. How do you think the fact that you can leave this school whenever you want, and you will be most probably teaching somewhere else next year affects / affected your teaching and people's (students, parents, and other school staff) attitude towards the English lessons and you as the teacher ?

11. Would you continue to teach in this school or another rural school if possible? How long would you stay here ? Why ?

12. What are the difficulties of teaching in a rural school? How do you deal with them?

13. What are the advantages of teaching in a rural school that you have taken so far?

14. How is your relationship with the community here? How is their attitude towards you? How do you think the parents/ family life affect students' success at school?

15. How is your relationship with the students? Is there any change in the students' performance or interest in English that you have noticed so far?

16. What do you think about your students' achievements? Do you think some students are more successful? Why do you think the reasons of their success could be?

17. How do you evaluate your own teaching ? What are the weak or strong points that you see in yourself? Do you reflect on your own teaching? What do you do to improve your teaching? What special support / in-service education do you need ?

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions for School Administrators

1. What is the place of English in a rural community? How important is it? Why should English be taught in a rural elementary school?

2. What do the students and parents think about learning English as a foreign language?

3. What do you think about the general profile of your students ? How is their attitude towards the school? How successful do you find them ?

4. Why do you think rural education is weak in instruction in the public eyes ? What could be the possible reasons ?

5. How long did the previous English language teachers teach in this school ? Why did they leave the school ?

6. The beginning teachers are usually recruited to rural schools. How do you think this affect both their development and school achievement in rural places ?

7. What are the challenges that these beginning teachers might encounter in rural schools? or What are the good sides of starting to teach in a rural school?

8. In your opinion, to what extent does the school provide necessary equipments / materials for teaching and learning English as a foreign language ? What else do you think it is needed?

9. Do the school take part in any project with foreign schools, etc? Are there any such forthcoming projects, etc. If yes, what are the outcomes or expectations?, If no, how effective would it be ? How would it contribute to English language education here?

10. What do you do to encourage teaching and learning English at the school ?

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions for Other Teachers

1. How long have you been teaching here? Are you happy with teaching in this school? Why ? Why not ? Have you ever wanted to transfer to another school? / Are you planning to transfer to another school ? Why ?

2. What is the general view of the community about the schooling here ?

3. What do you think about the general profile of your students ? How is their attitude towards the school? How successful do you find them ?

4. What is the place of English in a rural community? How important is it? Why should English be taught in a rural elementary school? Do you think it is successful in your school ? Why? or Why not?

5. How do you think being a kid in a rural community affect students' school achievement ? What are the factors that affect their school success ?

6. The beginning teachers are usually recruited to rural schools . How do you think this affect both their development and school achievement in rural places ?

7. What are the challenges that these beginning teachers might encounter in rural schools? or What are the good sides of starting to teach in a rural school?

8. Do you collaborate with the English language teacher ? What do you talk with him / give suggestions about being a teacher in a rural school ?

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions for Parents

1. Tell about your educational background. (elementary, high school, university ?)

2. What is your job ? / How do you make a living ?

3. How many people live in your house ?

4. Are both mother and father alive ? Are they married or divorced ?

5. How many rooms do you have in your house ? Is there a room for your kid ?

6. Why do you send your kid(s) to the rural school ? Would you send your kid (s) to an urban school if possible ? Why ? How do rural and urban schools differ ?

7. What do you expect your kid (s) to be in the future ? Do you believe they can ? How do you support your kid(s) ? Does your kid's gender matter in your decisions?

8. Can you follow your kid(s) progress in their lessons ? Are you happy with their success at school ? How important is it for you ?

9. How is your relationship with the school teachers and administrators ?

10. What do you think about the English lessons ? Why do you think your kid(s) should learn English ? How effective do you find the elementary school here in terms of teaching English as a foreign language ? What are the pluses or minuses of the school?

11. Are your kids interested in learning English ? Do they want you to buy something related to English lessons, do they ask your help while studying ? How do you help them to learn English ?

APPENDIX E: Open-Ended Questionnaire for Students

1. How do you describe your English language teacher? Could you please explain your thoughts about him?

2. How do you find your English lessons? Could you please evaluate your English lessons?

APPENDIX F: Observation Sheet

GÖZLEM	[TARİH: SAAT:]
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APPENDIX G: Tez Fotokopi İzin Formu

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı   : Başer
Adı   : Zeynep
Bölümü   : İngiliz Dili Öğretimi

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : First Year of English Teaching in a Rural Context: A Qualitative Study at an Elementary School in Turkey

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐   Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın. ☐

2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullancılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) ☐

3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.) ☐

Yazarın imzası   ....   Tarih ....